

No. 74992

Report

on

The General condition and
resources

of the

Amindivi Islands of the
Laccadive Group

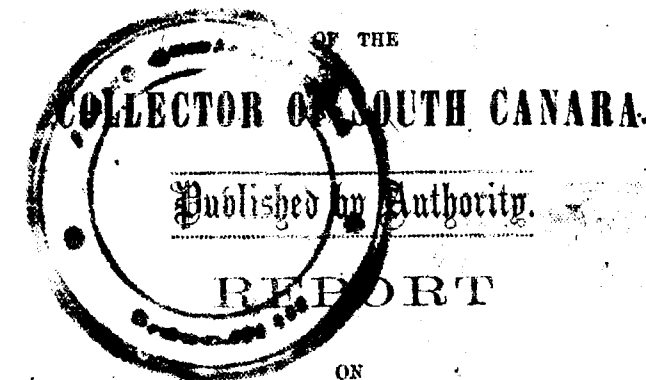
1869



R
V218.A.8 v M69
M69

74992

SELECTION FROM THE RECORDS



ON
THE GENERAL CONDITION AND RESOURCES

OF THE

AMINDIVI ISLANDS OF THE
.LACCADIVE GROUP

ATTACHED TO THE

DISTRICT OF SOUTH CANARA

IN THE

PRESIDENCY OF MADRAS.

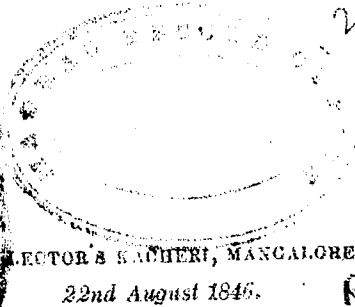
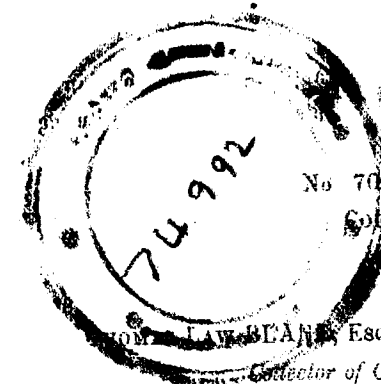
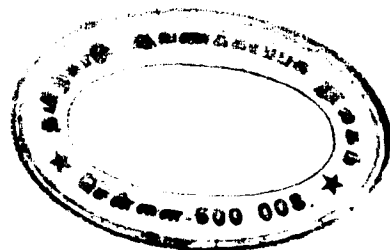
*These papers are printed for convenience of reference and do not
acquire any authority from their being printed in this form.*

MANGALORE.

PRINTED AT THE COLLECTORATE PRESS, SOUTH CANARA.

1869.

செப்பிடுபவர் பெயர்
 செப்பிடுபதற்காக எடுத்துக்
 கொள்ளப்பட்ட நாள். 1992
 செப்பிடு மீது நாள் 1992
 சர்பார்சுக்கும்
 மு. பா. எ. இதுவரையில்
 கையொப்பம். இதவியாது
 கையொப்பம்



T. PYCROFT, Esq.,
 Secretary to the Board of Revenue,
 Madras.

I have the honor to transmit copy of a Report drawn up by my Assistant Mr. Robinson, on the general condition and resources of the Amindivi or Laccadive Islands attached to this District. They were visited by him in early part of 1845, and it was upon that occasion that he was so successful in saving the cargo of the ship "Ceylon" which had been wrecked and abandoned on one of the reefs. Mr. Robinson is the first European authority in this District who has visited these Islands since they have come under the protection of the British Government, and the manner in which he has availed himself of this opportunity for gathering information upon every subject of importance connected with this interesting Group, cannot I think fail to meet with the high approbation of the Board. His Report contains the fullest statistical account of each Island with respect to its population and resources, the state of their cultivation and trade, and the comparative prosperity of each, as well as the general character of the people, the state of crime, and the mode of administering justice, and he has added a very full and complete account of the former and present state of the Coir Monopoly shewing the amount of Revenue derived from that source since the commencement of the Company's Government. The information furnished by Mr. Robinson is in short so complete that it appears unnecessary for me to do more in submitting it for the Board's perusal than to add a few observations upon such of the topics embraced in his Report as appear more immediately to require attention.

2. The most important of these appears to be the plan which has discussed in the latter part of his Report of substituting a land assessment, for the present means of collecting a small revenue from monopoly of coir, but to any such arrangement I think there exist strong objections. It appears from several passages of Mr. Robinson's Report that any measure even remotely tending towards this, such as the marking uncultivated spots, is extremely distasteful to the inhabitants, and an attempt to introduce a general system of Land Assessment might possibly lead to discontent, if not to resistance. Although the affairs of these little Islands happen from their contiguity to be administered by the same public authority as one of the Honorable Company's maritime Districts, yet the system of Land Revenue appears to be as unknown and strange to them as in any country in the world and we should not I think be misled by Indian analogies to attempt to impose a system on them to which they appear to entertain so strong an objection. It is difficult to foresee what effect any such experiment might have upon these rude, but at present well-affected Islanders, but it has been seen that they were capable of rebelling under the Cannanore rulers against what they considered injustice or oppression, and whilst any feeling of alienation which might be produced in the minds of the Islanders by an injudicious attempt at innovation, would be but ill repaid by so small an increase of revenue as could be gained, it is clear that the expense of controlling them if they were tempted to open resistance would be greater than would perhaps be repaid by the revenue they contribute in fifty years. Their remote and inaccessible situation is also a strong argument against the introduction of any system requiring much supervision and control without which they would be subject to oppression without any effectual means of redress, and their inability to make any payment except in kind appears to be a further objection to a land assessment.

3. It was never probably in the contemplation of Government to look upon these small islands as a source of revenue, and indeed the very mention of the term "land" as connected with revenue, appears almost a misnomer when applied to a coral formation covered with a thin layer of sand and producing little but cocoanuts. But it is of importance to retain the good will and obedience of the inhabitants, and it may I think be considered fortunate that this has been hitherto effectually done and our influence over them maintained on a satisfactory and secure footing without any expense beyond what is supplied from their own resources.

4. With the above sentiments I must confess that I should not be inclined to recommend that the plan referred by Mr. Robinson in paras: 12, 36 & 44 for asserting the right of Government to waste spots should be carried out or that any restriction should be placed upon their occupation by the inhabitants according to the custom which has hitherto prevailed; and for the same reason I think that the arrangement for an equal division of the produce of certain gardens referred to in para: 59 which Mr. Robinson notices as bearing so hard upon the owners, and which appears to have been inconsiderately ordered by one of the Assistant Collectors in former days and without the authority of the Collector, should at once be put a stop to, and the owners allowed to occupy them on the same terms as are enjoyed by the other inhabitants.

5. The island of Kadamat appears to be in much the least prosperous condition of any of the group, and I think that the suggestion contained in Mr. Robinson's 36th paragraph for making them a small advance, which he states would be easily recovered, to enable them to build a couple of the larger class of boats by which they might hold independent communication with the main land, is worthy of attention. He states that about Rs. 500 or Rs. 250 for each boat would be sufficient for this purpose.

6. From the 68th to the 70th paragraphs he makes mention of the Tobacco and Salt monopolies which the situation and circumstances of these Islands render it impossible to enforce. The Salt monopoly has never been in operation and the Tobacco monopoly to be almost nominal and to produce little or no revenue; but they have never been declared by authority to be abolished; and whilst this state of uncertainty continues they cannot fail to be more or less vexatious to the inhabitants particularly in respect of Tobacco and on this ground I would venture to recommend that their abolition should be publicly declared. It occurs to me at the same time to observe that I think it very probable that it was never the intention that these monopolies should be extended to the Amindivi Islands, and that it might perhaps, as a general rule, be well not to consider all Rules and Regulations affecting this province as necessarily extending to those Islands unless specially so directed by Govt.

7. This last observation seems to me to be more particularly applicable to the administration of justice and of Police. Mr. Robinson has made some sensible remarks upon this subject to which I would refer the Board. Fortuna-

Paras 72 & 74.

tely crime appears to be very rare in these Islands and what there is, is confined almost entirely to petty act of robbery, but as the Regula-

tions are considered to extend to these islands it appears to be extremely difficult to prepare any case which under the law in force on the continent of India it is necessary to commit to the Criminal Court, so much so that the people either refuse to come forward at all or withhold their evidence, and the crime goes unpunished. This indeed is nothing more than was to be expected for the communication with the main land is wholly cut off during many months in the year, and even in the best season the winds which are favorable for a voyage either to or from the Islands render the return passage tedious and difficult extending as it frequently does from ten days to three weeks or a month and the inhabitants are naturally averse to undertaking a long and often dangerous voyage with a lengthened absence from their homes and a residence of some time in a country entirely strange to them. The assembly of Head men or elders in each of the Islands appears to be an excellent means of investigating and deciding complaints of a criminal as well as of a civil nature, and I am inclined to think that they might advantageously be entrusted with settlement of all cases except crimes of an heinous nature and that their authority and influence which appears to have in a great measure fallen into a state of abeyance should be encouraged and upheld.

8. The Karani noticed in para 71 appears to be a most useful and valuable local officer; but, as stated by Mr. Robinson, he is very inadequately remunerated. It seems desirable that this defect should be remedied, and the office made more respectable and an object of greater ambition. With this view and for the purpose of placing him more in the position of a Karnam

in an Indian village, I can see no better means of increasing his emolument than making over to the Karanis in each Island some of the Gar-

dens which are stated to have been forfeited to Government in former days. They are quite unimportant in themselves, and of small value, but they would no doubt be a desirable acquisition to a native of these Islands and would tend to raise his consequence and increase his means at the same time that they would probably be better managed than they now are.

I have &c.

Signed: T. L. BLANE.

Collector.

MANGALORE, 18th July 1846.

From

W. ROBINSON Esq.,

Assistant Collector of Canara.

To

T. L. BLANE Esq.,

Collector of Canara.

Sir,

1. I have the honor to submit for your perusal a description of the Islands of the Luccadive group attached to the district of Canara and visited by me in 1844 & 1845. Though unable to visit the islands under the Beeby of Cannanore I made such enquiries into their condition as appeared necessary to enable me to compare the two divisions of this group.

2. The Luccadive group occupies a space extending from 8° 30' to 12° North Latitude and from 71° to 73° 40' East Longitude. It consists of 8 or 10 more or less inhabited and cultivated, and one or two uninhabited islands, besides a few isolated rocks. Beyond the group to the North West stretch the extensive reefs of Cheriapanni and Belliapanni.

NAMES OF THE ISLANDS.

Attached to the District of Canara.	Chellat.
	Kilian.
	Betra (uninhabited island).
	Kadamul.
	Amindivi.
Attached to the Beeby of Cannanore.	Beliapanni.
	Cheriapanni. } open reefs.
	Permalla.
	Alati.
	Kourati.
	Androt.
	Kalpeni.
	Suheel (uninhabited).
	Menkat.

The group runs nearly parallel to the line of the coast at a distance of 170 to 200 miles & is nearly equally divided between the Beeby of Cannanore and the district of Canara.

3. Unlike coral formations of this description the islands and reefs on which they stand lie 16 or 20 miles distant from each other and are all separated by channels of great breadth and perfectly

free from shoals and rocks. With one exception they are out of sight of each other.

Each of the islands is situated on an extensive coral shoal and contains from 2 to 3 square miles superficial area. Their surface is flat and no part of any of these formations is more than 10 or 15 feet above the level of the sea. All round a more or less extensive fringe of coral reef extends broader and more shelving on the West where the island naturally most requires protection, and narrow and abrupt on the East.

The outer edges are higher than the body of these shoals and extending in a semicircle at a distance of 500 yards to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile round the west enclose a regularly formed lagoon in which the water is so still that in the worst weather coir may be soaked within the low water mark without danger of being washed away. The body of the islands is the more perfect development of the Eastern and protected side of the coral formation. The same feature characterizes all these shoals and leads to the conjecture that they rose to the surface in the form of circular or oval shallow basins and that under the protection of the shoal the East rim gradually developed itself towards the centre and formed an island. This conjecture is strengthened by the fact that in some of the islands this gradual increase towards the lagoon is still going on.

The receding tide leaves the outer edge of the reef nearly dry and the water gets out of the lagoon by two or three breaches in the outer rim sufficiently large to admit the light native craft into the natural harbour, several feet deep even at low tide, which the lagoon forms.

4. The foundation of the soil in all these islands is a stratum of coral or lime stone which, varying from one foot to one and a half foot in thickness is seemingly above the highest level of the water,

and of a piece with the whole formation shoal, stretches uniformly throughout the portion of the formation which is above water. Within this crust contains loose wet sand and by removing a few spadefuls to allow the water to accumulate a pool of fresh water may be obtained in any part. All the wells, tanks and pits for soaking coir, where soaked in fresh water, are made by breaking through this crust and taking out the sand. The sand gradually presses towards this excavation, and from the constant removal of it, some of the wells and tanks are very extensive under this vault of coral. The water in these wells is quite fresh but is affected by the tide, rising and falling several inches, the effect probably of the in-

ing and decreasing external pressure on the porous cistern in which contained. Water is abundant and never fails but is said not to be wholesome.

5. Above this crust the soil lies to a depth varying from two to six feet and is generally composed of light coral sand finer but quite as common sea sand. In some parts the soil is entirely composed of loose pieces of coral without any other soil and thus is said to be singularly well adapted to the cocoanut.

The surface of the soil is naturally so barren that there is little or spontaneous vegetation in most of the islands and though during monsoon some small crops of coarse dry grains are produced, their increase shows that the prosperity of the islands must ever depend on cocoanut.

6. The inhabitants are now Mussalmans but are probably of pure Hindoo origin from Maliyala. The tradition preserved among them is that their forefathers formed a part of an expedition from Maliyala

Inhabitants. which set out for Mecca in search of their apostate King Bharman Permal, and was wrecked on these islands. They certainly were Hindoos for long after their first settlement, and were probably converted not more than 250 or 300 years back.

7. They retain some of the general distinctions of caste, as well as the law of Affa Santana but with some local modifications. This law is still adhered to strictly on the island of Amindivi where distinctions of caste and a numerous population have been obstacles to the gradual change by which the custom of regular filial descent is supplanting it on the islands of Kadamat, Kiltan and Chetlat.

In Amindivi there are four castes, said to correspond with castes in Malabar, the Tarway and Tanaka porandony correspond with Namboories and Nairs. Of these there are but a few families of the chief inhabitants; the two lower and more numerous castes are the Kadgaher and the Metacherry and correspond with the Fishermen and Tiers of Malabar. The higher and lower castes at least do not intermarry. These distinctions are confined to the island of Amindivi, all the inhabitants of the others being of the Metacherry caste.

8. The people are quiet and inoffensive, many read and write, and some find employment on the coast as Teachers and Mookries. They also make good Pilots and several have been so entertained on Arab Ships.

Their language is a dialect of Malayalam, which they write in A character.

9. The group was discovered by Vasco da Gama on his return his first voyage in the end of the 13th Century, and has probably visited from time to time by ships on the Goa Trade. It is even that there were once European settlers on Amindivi one of the islands the tradition probably arose from the detention of some ship-wrecked on the island where it is said they were murdered; there could be no inducement to European adventurers to settle there. Of their subsequent history the islanders seem to know nothing, but for some centuries have been subject to the small Kingdom of Cannanore; the circumstances which first placed them under that rule, are preserved among the islanders only in improbable and vague legend. Under the Cannanore system still obtaining in the islands which remain to the Beeby tended over the whole group. The local management was entrusted to an Officer on a nominal salary in kind who lived on contributions &c. from the islanders. Their powers were frequently abused, and it was the oppressive conduct of one of these Kavilgaras, as they are called, towards the inhabitants of Amindivi which produced the revolt of that island and the 3 others to the north of it in 1786 or 89. The islanders then brought their coir to Mangalore, and proffered their allegiance to Tippoo's Officers here. The supply of good coir was probably found at the time convenient, although it is said that several unsuccessful attempts were made to induce the islanders to return to their allegiance, at length an equivalent from the Cherical Rajah's Territory was found for the Cannanore House by the Sultan and Amini, Kadamat, Kiltan and Chellat with Betra and the other shoals north of Amini remained in the hands of the Sultan. When the Cherical Rajah's territories were ceded to the British in 1792, the Rajah was allowed to resume this equivalent, the islands still remaining under Mysore and attached to Canara. In the bond executed to the Hon'ble East India Company by the House of Cannanore in October 1793 these islands are specifically excluded and no mention of an equivalent is made.

"The Laccadives being thus attached to Canara, came along with that province under the dominion of the British; but as they had constituted a part of the Mysore possessions at the close of the war in which Tippoo fell and the Beeby had not previously the slightest prospect of recovering them, her claim in 1803 to the Northern most, not

being ruled by the laws of nations, stood in need of indulgent consideration, the result was, that the claims were declared inadmissible on the ground that she had no right to be placed by the conquest of Mysore in any other situation, than that in which she would have stood had no such event taken place. In addition to which, it was thought inexpedient to vest the Beeby with authority over the Laccadives, under the declared aversion of the islanders to her Government" (Hamilton's Gazetteer).

Notwithstanding this determination the claim must have been persisted in for a remission of revenue of 1500 Pagodas (5250 Rupees) was I believe sanctioned by the Court of Directors in compensation under date 27th June 1822, and is now remitted as Enam Jaree from the assessment paid by the Beeby to Government in Malabar. The correspondence connected with this will probably be found on record in that district.

10. The salary of the Kavilgar of the Beeby's island is I understand, a nominal one still of 12 to 16 moodas of Rice per annum, and the appointment is conferred for a Nazzer of 50 to 70 Rupees. His household and other expenses are probably found by the islanders and he is allowed to exact a considerable per centage on all that is introduced into the islands, and on the small surplus produce which they export; besides appropriating all the tortoise shell and ambergris got by the islanders, with various other little perquisites given up by us on assuming the management of the northern islands in 1805.

11. The condition of the islanders attached to Canara is perhaps as good as it could be where the soil is so poor; and the advantages of their condition is the more felt by our islanders from the contrast being so near. Entirely exempted from direct burdens on the land and all official interference they have a ready and never failing market for their principal surplus produce at fair and unchanging prices. Communication being open during 3 or 4 months of the year only, were their whole surplus raw produce on their own hands they might find difficulty in watching the market, and the same cause would render it easy to cheat and oppress them. In practice at least they are quite unaffected by the Salt Monopoly, and the Tobacco Monopoly only reaches them indirectly by enabling the smugglers of Bengal Tobacco to demand higher prices than a mere remuneration.

In the islands subject to Cannanore all surplus produce of Coconuts as well as of coir is monopolized by the rulers, for the former, the islanders are paid 4 Rupees per 1000, probably 50 per cent. below

the market value, for the latter only 11 1/4 Rupees per Candy are allowed. A good deal of land also, I understand, is cultivated on account of the Beeby by her Kavilgar probably mainly by means of pressed labour. Intercourse between the islands is a good deal discouraged as our islanders smuggle for the Beeby's subjects. The population of the Beeby's island is stated to be about 3000.

12. The proprietary right in the soil seems never to have been a question of much importance on these islands.

Rights to the Soil, Grants, Monopoly of the surplus produce became originally the fund from which a revenue was derived, and soon proved more productive than any equitable assessment.

As increased production only could augment this fund, every facility for the occupation of waste land seems to have been afforded. Nazzers were never demanded and no traces of grants exist, or were ever heard of no enclosures or land marks exist throughout the islands except in the Tot of Amindivi nor does it appear that there ever was any system for the occupation of waste land. Each ryot planted as he was able and claimed no other right than that of replanting where his tree had formerly stood. The properties in Trees are consequently detached, and intermixed in the most extraordinary manner; often single trees at great distances from each other and known only to the proprietor. The custom prevails of marking the trees with certain house marks, as we do sheep in large droves belonging to different owners. In Amindivi where the whole soil has been long fully occupied, immemorial enjoyment has given certain persons a prescriptive right to plots of ground but on the other islands no proprietary rights in certain parts of the soil as against each other is contended for, though strenuously and most unreasonably sought to be substantiated as against our right to mark off certain spots of waste land with a view to introducing a regular system of granting it for cultivation. In the Tot of Amindivi, which will be described afterwards, it was probably otherwise, it was kept for other than coconut cultivation. The crust of coral could only be removed with great labour, and a regular system of land marks here too exists. Still no grants of this land exist, and I have not been able to discover how the families now enjoying it came first into possession, immemorial enjoyment seems the only claim. This is the most extraordinary, as its produce under the coir monopoly system could yield

nothing towards the support of the Government. Small Nazzers of 4 to 8 Hoons were required on the death of each of the head inhabitants (Kuromar or Moopah) for the continuance to their families of small local rights such as sitting at the Koots or Panchayats, wearing certain ornaments, carrying umbrellas &c. but no grants of land ever accompanied privileges.

13. No proprietary right to land existing, perpetual alienation is quite unknown as yet, on trees mortgages are secured at the rate of one Rupee per tree of good quality, the mortgagee entering on possession. Bonds or documents of these transactions have never been preserved, the recollection of the principal inhabitants and oral tradition is the only guarantee for these rights. The fall of the tree is equivalent to the redemption of the mortgage.

The principal inhabitants, varying in different islands from 10 to 20 individuals, own generally considerable numbers of trees the greater part of which they prefer keeping in their own hands. Most of the inhabitants however have small independent properties in trees; for where no proprietary right was acknowledged or claimed in the soil, each individual became an owner for the trouble of planting. The larger tree owners let trees to those who have none on service rents only, stipulating that the tenant carry on his master's dry cultivation, serve in his boat, and though he has the enjoyment of the whole produce of the trees, and receives also the price of the coir produced on them, he is obliged to export all his coir on his Master's boats. If a neera drawn (neerah is the local name for the unfermented juice of the Cocco palm used by the islanders as a drink or boiled down into Jagery) he supplies his Master's family with one third of the raw produce, boiling the rest down into Jagery which he sells entirely on his own account. This is the only species of produce rent existing on the island. Money rents are as yet quite unknown and generally rents may be said to be confined to labour rent.

The facilities of becoming owners or establishing themselves on less thickly occupied islands are so great, that these tenants enjoy of course favorable terms and the allowance is generally from 30 to 50 trees per man. Quarrels between these tenants and their Masters are there the principal source of dispute.

It seems too to have been customary for the poorer families in former days to put themselves under the protection of the richer, engaging to send their coir to the coast in their boats and to work as Kalasias on these occasions. In many cases also those good-will services were mortgaged the former was probably necessary under the Native Government, but these are claims which the dependants are now often unwilling to acknowledge, and give rise to frequent disagreements.

14. The Cocoanut may be said generally to be the only production which can be taken into account, for with the exception of small quantity of plantain and dry grains produced in the Tot of Amindivi

any other agricultural production is very insignificant. On some spots not yet occupied by trees a little coarse grain is sown during the monsoon but the quantity is very limited, and its value certainly not greater than that of the Hakkal cultivated in this district.

15. Like all fishing communities the generality of the inhabitants are very poor, and prefer that agreeable employment or pastime to the labours of agriculture. The soil is however so well adapted

by nature to the Cocoanut that the life of the tree, and at least a certain degree of productive power, seem to be quite independent of agricultural attention, artificial manuring or frequent watering. In most of the islands it is necessary to rear the plants with some attention for the 1st year, and after transplanting, to water them for a few weeks till they strike root, the tree is then left entirely to itself and comes into bearing at periods varying according to the situation and soil as well as in different islands, from 10 to 20 years; it will then continue in full bearing for 70 or 80 years. Some were pointed out to me which were confidently asserted to be upwards of a century old. The full grown trees are never watered.

16. The tree is not so large and strong as that of the coast, and the nut about $\frac{2}{3}$ is of the size only and rounder in shape. The husk is smaller and less woody, and the fibre finer and more delicate, but stronger than that of the Coast nut. The nut also is said to be more compact and oily and to keep better than the Coast nut, although for the sake of the coir the nut is cut before being quite ripe. It seems doubtful whether more manuring and watering would make the tree more powerful and the fruit larger, but a very little more attention would make the tree much more

productive. The Palmyra and date palms are unknown on these islands.

17. The productiveness of trees depends on the soil and situation. Trees on the drier parts of the islands, with a westerly or south-westerly exposure are of little value while in the beds of old banks and where the coral has been removed, or with an eastern exposure trees are highly productive. In the different islands the average produce varies, that of Kadamat and Kiltan stand fifth or sixth higher than that of Amindivi or Chetlat. In describing the islands separately the probable average fixed by the islanders themselves whom I questioned on this subject, will be mentioned.

18. The natives state that the Cocoanut palm should throw out one leaf and a flowering branch once a month, but this is an exception of rare occurrence, and the best tree will only produce 9 or 10 flowering branches a year, bearing on an average 15 to 20 nuts while the annual produce of other trees will not exceed 50 or 55 nuts. A general average of 60 or 70 nuts per tree per annum would probably be a pretty fair one for the islands taken together.

19. The principal food being the cocoanut, by far the greater portion of the produce is consumed at home, but for the small quantity they are enabled to export, prices varying from 6 to 8 Rupees per thousand are obtained if, after making the necessary deduction for the expense of transport to the coast &c. we take 5 Rs. per 100 as the value of nuts on the island, it will be a fair average, and give the value of the cocoanut produce of a tree from $4\frac{2}{3}$ annas to $5\frac{1}{3}$ and that of 100 trees about 30 Rupees.

20. As the husk gets hard and woody if the fruit is allowed to become quite ripe, the proper time for cutting it is about the 10th month: if cut before, the coir will be weak, if later, it will be coarse and hard, and require to be longer in the soaking

Coir and methods of soaking. pit it will be difficult to rid it of the woody particles, and it will be darker in colour and more difficult to twist. When cut the husk is severed from the nut and thrown into soaking pits to loosen the woody parts. In all the islands except Amindivi, the coral reefs beyond the lagoon are well formed and protect the shores of the island from the

surf, their soaking pits are therefore holes in the sand just within the influence of the astringent salt water. In these the husks are buried and lie for a year, and are kept down by heaps of stones thrown over them to protect them from the ripple. The island of Amindivi occupies nearly the whole of the shoal on which it stands, and its shores are but imperfectly protected, the soaking pits are consequently all fresh water tanks under the crust of coral; in these the water never changes; and the decay of a quantity of vegetable matter makes it foul and dark coloured: this tinge is imparted to the coir, and is the cause of frequent complaint by the buyers of the coir, but one over which the islanders have no control. A further effect of the fresh water is to weaken the coir in some degree. When thoroughly soaked the fibrous parts are easily separated from the wood by beating; if taken out of the pits too early the coir is difficult to rid of impurities; if neglected too long the fibre will be weakened.

In these islands coir is one of the chief commodities of barter for the necessities of life rice, salt, tobacco &c. and

Use of coir in petty traffic and its effect. the temptation is naturally great to take from the pit the coir before the wood is perfectly rotted and twist it hastily up to meet more immediate

necessities. As the Government receives it by weight and at certain fixed rates, the quality, colour and care in twisting are scarcely considerations among the barterers. The coir is made up for their petty traffic in short Rats of a fixed length and weight, and at the end of the year these are collected and made up into lengths of 70 to 75 fathoms as received by the Government. The making up the Government remittance at a certain time every year is another temptation to anticipate the proper periods of cutting the fruit and soaking the husks. To these causes I mainly attribute the dirty and ill twisted state of Amindivi coir, which is so frequently complained of. There the population is greater and consequently the use of coir in this way most general.

21. The difference in the quantity of coir manufactured from a coast nut and an island nut is very considerable.

Quantity of coir produced and its value. Three large coarse coast nuts will yield one lb. of coir measuring 22 fathoms whereas 10 small fine island nuts go to about a lb. of coir but this will measure 35 fathoms, 2 lbs. of such yarn measuring from 70 to 75 fathoms are made up into Soodies of which there are fourteen to a bundle averaging

about a pound of 23 lbs. A Mangalore Candy of 560 lbs. will therefore be the produce of 5600 nuts and should contain about 20,000 fathoms of yarn. Thus if the annual produce of a tree be about 60 or 70 nuts on an average a man would be the produce of 4 or 5 trees and the candy that of 80 to 100 trees. The actual price of coir received by the islanders is about 13 Rs. per candy, the produce of 5600 nuts; the value of the coir produce of a tree would therefore be from 2 to 2½ Annas, and that of the produce of 100 trees from 14 to 15 Rupees. The average value of the total raw produce of a tree bearing fruit would thus be 7 Annas to 1½ a Rupee, and that of a plot of 100 trees about 15 Rupees.

22. The manufacture of coir is entirely entrusted to the women, the male population is frequently absent on fishing expeditions, and in navigating their boats during the season to the coast; the women never leave

the islands and seem industrious. When the coir has soaked sufficiently long, it is taken out of the pit and beaten with a heavy mallet, when quite clean, it is arranged into a loose roving preparatory to being twisted, which is done between the palms of the hand in a very ingenious way so as to produce a yarn of two strands at once. No mechanical aid, even of the rudest description, has yet found its way into these islands.

23. A considerable number of trees are cut for the juice which is much used in its unfermented state by the islanders.

Noera, Jagery &c. They are still so strict in the abstinence from all fermented liquors that the manufacture of toddy would not be tolerated in the islands. The juice is drawn frequently and fermentation is checked by chunam. When this noerah, as it is called, is used in the raw state, it is drunk warm, and is sweet and thickish and said to be very nutritious but is not wholesome for strangers. What remains after supplying the demand the raw article is boiled into Jagery. The Jagery of these islands is in a partially liquid state, but appears highly granular and seems to contain a considerable quantity of saccharine matter. It is a good deal used on the coast.

A tree yields from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ a seer of noerah per diem, and bleeding for 6 months of the year will produce 60 to 90 seers

Quantity and Value. of the juice. This will yield after boiling 6 to 8 Seers of Jagery, which at the rate of 1 Anna or 1½ anna per seer would give the annual produce of the tree a value of 6 Annas to half a Rupee. When the trouble of cutting the trees and gather-