Working Paper No. 166

A Study of Enathimelpakkam village At the Millennium Threshold

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February 2002

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to capture some of the crucial changes brought about in the village economy and society which have produced differential impacts on the economic conditions of weaker sections. The village is demographically dominated by Scheduled Caste population for over a period of two to three decades. It continued to be mainly an agricultural village with a monocropped cultivation of HYV paddy. Its land ownership and economy was dominated by a few upper caste Mudaliar households . The increased mechanisation of agriculture resulted in the fast depletion of livestock resources, especially previously owned by low caste, landless, agricultural labourers. This group along with marginal farmers and tenants had not only lost their livestock but also their meagre land resources in the village. Hence landlessness has increased considerably over the years. Between our survey years of 1993-94 and 2000-01, we also found the tenancy declining both in terms of the number of tenants leasing-in land and the total extent of land leased-in by them. The reverse tenancy which we observed earlier had also gone by the year 2000. However, in both the survey years we found the inverse relationship prevailing between farm size and productivity. This is because the ownership of agriculturally related assets such as pumpsets, tractors and capital by large land owners helped them to achieve higher per acre yield rates of paddy. This goes against the usual argument that small farms are efficient and productive compared to big farms. The non-possession of these agriculturally related assets also crippled the small land owning farmers to carry on cultivation as a profitable proposition. Moreover, the modernisation of agriculture for over two decades had not pushed up the per acre yield rates of paddy. The average efficiency levels of cultivation also remained the same for over two decades. The modernisation of agriculture, however, attracted the influx of in-migrant agricultural labourers and reduced the average number of days of employment secured by resident male or female casual agricultural labourers. But the same factor had not deterred wage improvements for agricultural labourers. Between our survey years, while the money wage rates had more than doubled; the real wage rates went up by more than one-third. By 2000-01, there had been a complete monetisation of wage payments in agriculture. The previous decade had also witnessed the complete attenuation of jajmani relationships. However, the socio-economic power structure and its concentration as well as power relations remained unaltered over the years.

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* Acknowledgements: We are grateful to the financial support provided by the Kerala Research Program on Local Level Development (KRPLLD), Centre for Development Studies (CDS) through the Institute of Development Alternatives, Chennai. I thank Mr. Vincent for his painful efforts at collection of field data and information. I also thank the participants of a seminar conducted at MIDS in early 2001 for their views on the earlier version of the paper. I vow a debt of gratitude to P.S. Syamala for word processing the manuscript. However, usual caveats apply.

There had been a gradual but slow diversification of occupational structure and employment among the adult male workers of the village. While there developed no worthwhile non-agricultural occupations within the village; the adult male workers of the village took advantage of the urban and industrial growth centers which came up in their neighbourhoods. But the major beneficiaries of such non-agricultural occupations available outside the village came to be the land owning, upper caste, educated workers rather than the low caste, land less, uneducated workers. Between 1993-94 and 2000-01, there were no governmental programmes implemented for the benefit of poor in the village. But, in the same period, the access of poor to common property resources available in the village had gone up, especially for housing requirements and fuel needs. However, the revival of village panchayat in 1996 and conduct of elections to it had only introduced acrimony and non-cooperation between different sections of village community. And, this had halted many developmental programmes of the village in the later half of 1990s. Since the state government had not devolved enough funds and powers to village panchayat it could not do much even to improve physical infrastructure in the village. The village panchayat could not exercise any control over the common property resources in the village and failed to mobilise any resources on its own. Instead, the big and rich farmers of the village had vested control over common property resources in the village. As far as providing primary education to children is concerned, we observed a new phenomenon of a large number of children going to convent schools in the neighbouring town rather than to the village school which imparts education in Tamil. This happened despite the free education and nutrious noon-meal scheme provided to school children by the state government of Tamil Nadu. Hence the village school had become a poor man's school and every economically affordable villager realised the importance of providing convent education to his or her children.

Finally, the calculations of absolute poverty revealed that poverty was concentrated only among the categories of marginal farmers, tenants, agricultural labourers and non-agricultural casual workers. And, there was no absolute poverty prevailing among the other categories of households. However, there had been a marginal decline observed in the level of absolute poverty between our survey years. The poverty level obtained in the year 2000-01 was closer to the state level poverty. Anyhow, it is important to note that the declining ownerships of land and livestock resources by the households belonging to the weaker sections can become a potential threat to village economy, society and polity in the years to come. It is also important to note from the study that the declining land and livestock resources among the poor and their restricted access to common property resources have all threatened their food security in the village. And the food insecurity of poor households is infact increasing over the years.

INTRODUCTION

Location of the village:

Enathimelpakkam is located 50 kilometres north of Chennai city - the capital of Tamil Nadu state in India. It is situated three to four kilometres east of Gummidipundi town, which is its taluk head quarters. This village is in the newly carved out district of Tiruvallur in Tamil Nadu. This district is recently bifurcated from the district of Kancheepuram in the state. The Gummidipundi town has the panchayat union offices functioning in it. This town is also known for industrial activity, especially from the late 1980s because the state government of Tamil Nadu has established many small industries under the scheme of Small Industries Promotion Council of Tamil Nadu (SIPCOT). Hence it also became an Industrial town consequent to the provision of good road and rail networks. Gummidipundi became taluk head quarters town only in the early 1980s consequent to its bifurcation from its neighbouring Penneri taluk which is also now in the same district of Tiruvallur. However, Enathimelpakkam continued to be a predominantly modern agricultural village with only its neighborhoods fast becoming the centres of urban and industrial growth. Hence these developments very much facilitated the adult workers of this village to supplement their agricultural incomes from non-agricultural sources in the recent years.

Methodology of the Study

This village was already surveyed in 1985-86 and 1993-94 and the present resurvey was undertaken in the agricultural year of 2000-01. Like the earlier surveys, we have conducted both census and sample surveys in the village. These are also supplemented by purposive sampling enquiries conducted with the elderly and knowledgeable people in the village. For sampling enquiry we have selected the heads of the households based on stratified random sampling method. For this

purpose, we have first stratified the households based on the size of their land-ownership in the village in the year 2000-01. The data on land ownership have been collected through the census survey of households in the village. The census surveys of households aimed to collect data on a) population and workforce, b) literacy, c) land and livestock ownership and d) non-agricultural activities of adult workers both within the village and outside. On the other hand, the sample surveys collected data on a) employment and incomes, b) costs and returns from an acre of paddy cultivation which is its main crop in the village and c) production and distribution of agricultural produce, etc. Unlike the earlier surveys, this resurvey tried to capture mainly the crucial changes that took place in the village economy and society during the last two or three decades. Special emphasis has also been given this time on the collection and analysis of data relating to a) caste and land ownership, b) caste and tenancy c) gender discrimination in household and village development, d) utilization of common property resources by the poor, e) implementation of government programmes in the village and the f) changes in Jajmani relations over the years, and g) food security, etc. However, the unit of analysis remained to be a household rather than an individual in it. And, the reference year of the survey is July 2000-June 2001.

The present study is divided into five sections with the first one dealing with the demographic aspects of the village. It is followed by the provision of details on changes in land and livestock ownerships in section II. The analysis of agricultural transformation and its implications for different categories of farming community has become the main theme of section III. The IV section undertakes the discussion on non-agricultural activities of different groups of population both within and outside the village. The V and final section summarises the main findings of the study.

SECTION I

Demographic Aspects of the Village

The total population of the village in 2000-01 is 605. They are living in 142 households. The population of the village increased from 571 in the previous survey year of 1993-94 to 605 in the present survey year of 2000-01. According to Table 1, this hardly accounts for 6 per cent increase in population between the previous and present survey years. Table 1 provides details on literacy levels among Scheduled Castes and tribe's population and sex ratios in different years. The table shows significant improvements both in literacy levels and sex ratios. In the year 2000-01, two-thirds of village population is literate while the sex ratio became more than favorable with 1030 females for 1000 males. The percentage of population belonging to Scheduled Castes varied between 40 to 45 during the last two decades. With the exception of six persons belonging scheduled tribes in the year 1993-94, the village never had any scheduled tribe population living in it. However, the village remained a less populated village with the total number of persons living in it hardly varying between 500 and 600 during the last two decades. The households remained more or less smaller with their average family size being 4 to 4.5 even over a period of two decades.

Table 2 provides data on a) average family size b) earner-dependent ratio across the occupational categories in 2000-01. According to the table, while the big farmers maintained the largest average family size; the artisan and services households maintained the smallest average family size in the village. However, it is interesting to note that the demographically dominant agricultural labourers category, which alone accounted for 58 out of 142 households in the village recorded only 3.79 as their average family size. These data again confirm our earlier finding that as against the big and rich farmers maintaining the large families the poor and landless agricultural labourers maintained only small families which are often less than even four persons living under one roof. This also goes against the theory that the poor suffer from large average family sizes. The earner-dependent ratios in the table show that whereas they were the least in the case of big farmer households; they were the

highest in the case of artisanal and service households followed by agricultural labourers households. As far as literacy levels across the categories are concerned; the table shows the largest number of litcrates per household in the case of big farmers while it was the least among agricultural labourers. However, it is

Table 1: **Changes in Demography and Literacy Levels between 1981 and 2000-01 in Enathimelpakkam.**

Category/Years	1981	1985-86	1991	1993-94	2000-01
1.Number of households	115	106	130	134	142
2.Population a) Total b) Males c) Females	492 257 235	486 253 233	569 293 276	571 291 280	605 298 307
3.Number of literates a) Total b) Males c) Females	244 152 92	259 162 97	300 183 117	307 179 128	405 220 185
4.Percentage of literates to total population	49.59	53.29	52.72	53.76	66.94
5.Scheduled Caste population	203	223	244	234	268
6.Percentage of Scheduled Caste population to the total population.	41.26	45.88	42.88	40.98	44.30
7.Scheduled tribe population	—	—	—	6	—
8.Percentage of scheduled tribe population to the total population	—	—	—	1.05	—
9.Sex-ratio	914.39	920.95	941.98	962.20	1030.20
10.Percentage change of total population from the previous year	28.46 between 1971& 1981	1.23 26.89% between 1971&1986	17.08 between 1986 & 1991	17.49 between 1986& 1993	5.95% between 1993-94 and 2000-01

Sources:

1.Census of India, 1981 series 20, Tamilnadu, District Census Handbook, part XIII-B, Village and Townwise Primary Census Abstract, Chenglepattu District.

2.Data for 1991 are from Village Primary Census Abstract, Gummidipundi Taluk, 1991.

3.Data for the years of 1985-86, 1993-94 and 2000-01 are from field surveys (census)

encouraging to note that the average family size recorded for the whole village was only 4.26. The earner-dependent ratio worked out for the whole village being only

0.74 is somewhat discouraging because it reveals the more number of dependents per each earner in the village. Any how, it is interesting to note that the village population is becoming more and more literate with 2.85 literates per household in 2000-01.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics by Occupational categories in Enathimelpakkam in 2000-01

Category of households	No.of house holds	No.of persons	Average family size	No.of earners	No.of dependents	Earner dependent ratio	No.of literates	literates per-house hold
Big farmers	5	31	6.2	5	26	0.19	31	6.20
Medium farmers	4	17	4.25	6	11	0.54	14	3.50
Small farmers	12	62	5.17	22	40	0.55	58	4.83
Marginal farmers	7	34	4.86	12	22	0.55	18	2.57
Pure tenants	18	88	4.89	40	48	0.83	52	2.89
Agricultural labouers	58	220	3.79	111	109	1.02	104	1.79
Non-agricultural workers with regular salaried employment	9	37	4.11	15	22	0.68	28	3.11
Non-agricultural casual workers	25	103	4.12	39	64	0.61	90	3.6
Artisanal and service households	4	13	3.25	8	5	1.60	10	2.5
Total	142	605	4.26	258	347	0.74	405	2.85

Source: Field Survey (Census), 2000

Table 3 shows data on similar aspects but across caste groups in the village in 2000-01. According to the table, out of 142 households, nearly half of them belonged to Scheduled Castes with the other half belonging to the land owning upper castes. The data on average family size show that while it is the highest in the case of Scheduled Caste households; it is the least in the case of Mudaliars with the exception of a Brahmin household in the village. The earner-dependent ratio is highest in the case of Scheduled Castes because they live mainly by selling their labour power to the employer-cultivators belonging to upper caste Mudaliars. The table also shows that out of 166 agricultural labourers in the village, 138 belonged to Scheduled Castes in 2000-01. By contrast, out of 58 non-agricultural workers, 42 belonged to land owning upper castes. Hence the landless, low caste workers mainly depended on agriculture for their livelihoods.

Table 3:Caste and Demography in Enathimelpakkam in 2000-01

Sl No	Caste group	No.of households	No.of persons	Average family size	No.of earners	No.of dependents	Earner dependents ratio	No.of agricultural labourers	No.of non-agricultural workers	No.of literates	No.of literates per H.H
1	Mudaliars	35	178	5.08	52	126	0.41	13	13	151	4.31
2	Naickers/ Vanniars	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	Reddy	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	Pillai karunegar	3	15	5.00	5	10	0.50	—	—	10	3.33
5	Nadars	3	12	4.00	4	8	0.50	1	2	9	3.00
6	Dhobi	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	Barber	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	Scheduled Castes	70	268	3.83	148	120	1.23	138	16	127	1.81
9	Scheduled Tribes	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	Chettiars	23	98	4.26	35	63	0.56	8	17	83	3.61
11	Acharis	5	19	3.80	10	9	1.11	2	8	14	2.80
12	Devars	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
13	Gounders	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14	Brahmins	1	5	5.00	1	4	0.25	—	1	5	5.00
15	Naidus	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16	Yadavs	2	10	4 26	3	7	0.43	4	1	6	3.00

Source: Field Survey (Census), 2000

Workforce

Table 4 has the details on changes in the workforce of the village between 1985-86 and 2000-01. According to the table, between these two survey years, while population grew from 486 to 605; the number of workers rose from 204 to 250. The table also shows that between the survey years of 1993-94 and 2000-01 there were marginal changes in the categories of cultivators and agricultural labourers. There was only a negligible change observed even with respect to the number of non-agricultural workers in the village. In the latest survey year of 2000-01, whereas the workers in the total population worked out to about two-fifths; the non-workers accounted for the remaining three-fifths of the population. These proportions remained more or less the same during the last one-and-a-half decades. However, the predominance of agricultural occupations in this village is revealed by the fact that about three-fourths of its workforce is always engaged in these occupations with only about one-fourth of the workers depending on non-agricultural occupations available outside the village for their livelihoods. Within the total workforce, as against 30 percent working as cultivators; 44 per cent of them worked as agricultural labourers.

The total workforce also remained more or less the same in all our survey years of 1985-86, 1993-94 and 2000-01. It is interesting to note from the table that while cultivation is predominantly a male occupation with only a negligible number of females participating in it; females outnumbered males as agricultural labourers in all our survey years. Again, our field enquiries reveal that only adult male workers rather than female workers took advantage of the employment generated by the urbanization and industrialization of their neighbourhoods. Hence the process of agricultural involution (i.e., modernized agriculture in the village working as pull factor rather than as a push factor for the workers) observed in our earlier surveys continued to work even into the year 2000-01.

Table 4: Changes in the Composition of Workforce in Enathimelpakkam between 1985-1986 and 2000-01

S.No	Category/years	1985-86	1991	1993-94	2000-01
1	Total population	486	569	571	605
2	Total workers	204	211	246	250
3	Total cultivators	86	50	74	75
	a) Males	83	47	67	70
	b) Females	3	3	7	5
4	Total Agricultural labourers	86	112	108	110
	a) Males	42	74	52	52
	b) Females	44	38	56	58
5	Total non-agricultural workers	32	49	64	65
6	%age of total workers to total population	41.97	37.08	43.08	41.32
7	% age of agricultural workers to total workers	84.31	76.78	73.98	74.00
8	% age of non-agricultural workers to total workers	15.69	23.22	26.01	26.00
9	% age of cultivators to total workers	42.16	23.70	30.08	30.00
10	% age of agricultural labourers to total workers	42.16	53.08	43.90	44.00
11	Total number of non-workers	282	358	325	355
12	% age of non-workers to the total population	58.03	62.98	56.92	58.68

Sources: 1) Data for the year 1991 are from official Census; 2) Data for the years of 1985-86, 1993-94 and 2000-01 are from field surveys (census)

SECTION II

Asset Ownerships and Tenancy

Land Utilisation

The total area of the village in all the survey years continued to be 524.77 acres of which while 402.33 acres were cultivated; the remaining 122.44 acres were uncultivated. In percentage terms as against the cultivated area accounting for 76.67; the uncultivated area accounted for the remaining 23.33. Over the years, the percentage of area irrigated increased marginally from 94.38 in 1985-86 to 97 in 2000-01. The village witnessed negligible declines in the extents of areas classified as cultivable waste and not available for cultivation between the survey years of 1993-94 and 2000-01. The village witnessed negligible declines in the extents of areas classified as cultivable waste and not available for cultivation between the survey years of 1993-94 and 2000-01. The village never has any forest area. The poromboke or government land is mainly occupied by a tank and two ponds. And, between the two survey years, 10 households belonging to landless Scheduled Caste agricultural labourers categories have constructed thatched huts in about 50 cents of land belonging to the revenue department. These huts are located a furlong away from the caste settlement and original Scheduled Caste colony.

Land Ownership and Operation

The land owned by residents in 1985-86 was 200.44 acres. This went up marginally to 201.47 acres by 1993-94 and then declined to 176.45 acres. Thus, the last seven years witnessed considerable decline in the land owned by residents compared to the previous survey years. We shall explain the phenomenon of declining land ownership during the recent years later in the text. The number of households owning land in the village had first gone up from 62 in 1985-86 to 71 in 1993-94 and then declined to 51 in 2000-01. But, the land operated by residents continued to decline over the years. It declined from 244.80 acres in 1985-86 to 224.48 acres in 1993-94 and further to 197.30 acres in 2000-01. The number of

households operating land first went up marginally from 77 in 1985-86 to 79 in 1993-94 and then declined considerably to 61 in 2000-01. Thus, out of 142 households residing in the village only 51 owned and 61 operated land. Hence cultivation provided the major source of income only to about 43 percent of households. For the remaining 57 per cent of households, the sale of labour power either in agricultural or in non-agricultural occupations provided the major source of income in 2000-01. Further, while the land owning and operating households belonged to the upper castes; the labourers were drawn mainly from the landless low caste households in the village.

Table 5 reveals the data relating to changes in land ownership and operation across occupational categories between 1993-94 and 2000-01. According to the table, while there were 71 households owning land in 1993-94; there were only 51 households owning land in 2000-01. Thus 20 households have lost their land ownership during the last seven years. Those who lost their land ownerships mainly include 15 marginal farmers, two pure tenants and six agricultural labourers. Three big farmers became medium farmers because of the division of parent's landed property among the sons. Though there were no medium farmers (owning between 5.01 to 9.99 acres) in 1993-94, some four households joined this category by 2000-01 -mainly because of inheritance and acquisition of land. The table also shows a net loss of land by resident households to the extent of 25.02 acres between the two survey years. Our field enquiries have revealed that all these small plots of land were bought by a non-resident from Chennai who now owns a large estate of 60 acres in the outskirts of this village. This 60 acre land was acquired by purchasing lands from small land owners belonging to both Enathimelpakkam and neighbouring villages of Ayanallur, etc. He also constructed Bungalow and raised coconuts and paddy in that land. He occasionally visits his large estate and coconut garden and mainly resides in Chennai. Hence this decline in land ownership among residents was brought about mainly by a non-resident purchases of land in this village. There were not many land transfers between the resident land holders between the survey years. Marginal farmers and agricultural labourers, who mostly sold out their lands did so because of

increased costs of cultivation incurred per unit of land during the recent years. Cultivation for them became unprofitable because they did not own pumpsets and tractors which are necessary in modern agriculture to earn profits. The table shows that marginal farmers had totally lost about 24 acres of land during the two survey years. Hence the process of depesantisation has already set in in modern agriculture because it became economically unviable to operate small land holdings, especially in the absence of ownership of agriculturally related assets like pumpsets, tractors, livestock and capital which are all crucial for the earning of profits in modern agriculture.

Table 5: Changes in Land Ownership and Operation Across Occupational Categories between 1993-94 and 2000-01 in Enathimelpakkam

(Extent in Acres)

S.No	Occupational category	No.of HHs owning land		Extent of land owned (in acres)		No.of HHs operating land		Extent operated	
		1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01
1	Big farmers	8	5	117.93	84.65	8	5	120.18	90.55
2	Medium Farmers	--	4	--	25.63	--	4	--	13.63
3	Small farmers	9	12	33.90	37.83	7	11	26.90	44.11
4	Marginal farmers	22	7	30.84	7.06	20	6	31.00	7.46
5	Pure tenants	9	7	6.39	2.95	20	18	32.31	25.50
6	Agricultural labourers	11	5	4.49	3.40	14	9	6.79	3.90
7	Non-agricultural workers with regular salaried employment	4	3	2.97	3.50	1	3	0.80	3.20
8	Non-agricultural casual workers	7	8	4.65	11.43	8	5	5.20	8.95
9	Artisanal and service households	1	--	0.30	-	1	-	1.30	--
	Total	71	51	201.47	176.45	79	61	224.48	197.30

Source: Field Survey (census)

As far as the extents of area operated by the resident cultivators are concerned; both the number of households operating land and the area operated by

them declined between the two survey years. While the number of households operating land declined from 79 to 61; the area operated by them declined by 27.18 acres, ie., from 224.48 acres in 1993-94 to 197.30 acres in 2000-01. Across the categories, the table shows that whereas the area operated by big farmers declined considerably; the area operated by small farmers increased to the same extent. A significant decline in the extent of area operated by marginal farmers in the village is worth noting. But as has already been said that this is because of their sale of land between the two survey years. And, they had also not leased-in land for cultivation. They were operating mainly whatever land that they owned in the village. The declining land ownership observed in the case of big farmers can be explained by the fact that they no longer leased-in non-resident owners' land for cultivation. It is mainly the small farmers of the village who leased-in non-resident owners' land for cultivation in our resurvey year of 2000-01. However, the data on operated area across the categories further confirm the fact that the depesantisation process is already at work in the village, especially during the recent years. And, this process was brought about not only by resident big farmers but also by the entry of capitalist farmers into the modern agricultural scene. But most of the marginal farmers who sold out their lands to a non-resident belonged to the upper castes. Contrary to expectation and theory after the sale of land the adult workers of these households joined the non-agricultural workers group rather than the agricultural labourers group in the village. Agricultural labourers are mostly supplied by the landless, Scheduled Caste households in the village. The workers of the upper caste households go for work available in urban informal sector while residing in the village. Within the village, while the Scheduled Caste labourers work for the upper caste cultivators; the upper caste labourers never work for Scheduled Caste cultivators: Hence there are caste barriers both for the sale and purchase of labour in agricultural occupations available within the village.

Table 6 provides data on land ownership and operation by caste groups in the village both in 1993-94 and 2000-01. According to the table, in both the survey years, Mudaliars dominated land ownership and operated areas in the village. Their land ownership also remained in tact over the years. In the year 2000-01, they owned

and operated respectively 72.88 per cent and 70.16 per cent of total area in the village. Thus, little less than three-fourths of the total land (owned by residents) were owned and operated by a particular caste group of Mudaliars in the village. They are also the major traditional land owners of the village. Further, little less than half the number of households owning and operating land in the village belonged to the caste group of Mudaliars. The table shows that the households belonging to Scheduled Castes and upper caste Chettiars have mainly experienced declines both in land ownership and operation. This is more so in the case of upper caste Chettiars. It should be recalled here that most of the marginal farmers who sold out their lands during the recent years belonged to Chettiar caste. And, most of the Scheduled Caste households who sold out their lands during the recent years belonged to the category of agricultural labourers in the village. Thus, social and economic categories overlap each other with respect to their loss of land ownerships which are crucial for eking out their livelihoods in the village. Over the years, a Pillai and a Achari household have largely retained their land ownerships. And the demographically dominant Scheduled Caste households, who accounted for more than two-fifths of the village population owned hardly 3.51 per cent of total land owned by residents and operated 13.31 per cent of total area operated by residents in the year 2000-01.

Table 7 provides detailed information on land ownership and operation across categories in 2000-01. As the table shows, the land owned by big farmers alone accounted for little less than half in the village in the latest survey year. They were followed by small farmers whose land ownership accounted for about one-fifth of the total. The proportion of land owned by pure tenants being only 1.67 is the least in the village. Agricultural labourers and regular salaried employees categories owned about 2 per cent each in the village. It should be noted here that while many regular salaried employees belonged to the well-to-do upper castes; many agricultural labourers belonged to the low castes in the village. Non-agricultural casual workers who owned considerable proportion of land (6.48 per cent) also belonged to the upper castes in the village.

Table 6: Changes in Land Ownership and Operation by Caste Groups between 1993-94 and 2000-01 in Enathimelpakkam

Sl. No	Caste Group	No.of HHs owning land		Extent of land owned (in acres)		No.of HHs operating land		Extent operated (in acres)	
		1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01
1	Mudaliars	24	26	128.95	128.59	23	27	125.20	138.42
2	Naickers/ Vanniars	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3	Reddy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
4	Pillai	1	2	12.00	11.00	1	2	8.50	13.80
5	Nadars	--	--	--	--	1	--	0.40	--
6	Dhobi	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
7	Barber	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
8	Scheduled Castes	20	11	14.33	6.20	31	25	39.57	26.25
9	Schduled Tribes	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
10	Chettiars	21	10	35.68	22.20	19	6	37.13	18.00
11	Acharis	2	1	6.93	7.63	2	1	10.93	0.63
12	Devars	1	--	1.75	--	1	--	1.75	--
13	Gounders	1	--	1.00	--	1	--	1.00	--
14	Brahmins	1	1	0.83	0.83	--	1	--	0.20
15	Naidus	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total		71	51	201.47	176.45	79	61	224.48	197.30

Source: Field surveys (census)

Table 7: Distribution of Land Ownership, Operation, Leasing – in and Leasing – out by Category in Enathimelpakkam in 2000-01

S.No	Category of households	No.of HHs owning land	Extent of area owned (in acres)	As percentage to the total area owned	No of HHs leasing in	Extent of area leased in (in acres)	No.of HHs leasing-out	Extent of area leased out (in acres)	No of HHs operatin land	Extemd of area operated (in acres)	As percentage to the area operated
1	Big farmers	5	84.65	47.97	3	5.90	--	--	5	90.55	45.89
2	Medium farmers	4	25.63	14.53	1	1.00	2	13.00	4	13.63	6.91
3	Small farmers	12	37.83	21.44	7	8.78	1	2.50	11	44.11	22.36
4	Marginal farmers	7	7.06	4.00	1	1.00	1	0.60	6	7.46	3.78
5	Pure tenants	7	2.95	1.67	18	22.55	--	--	18	25.50	12.92
6	Agricultural labourers	5	3.40	1.93	3	1.30	1	0.80	9	3.90	1.98
7	Non-Agricultural workers with regular salaried employment	3	3.50	1.98	1	0.30	1	0.60	3	3.20	1.62
8	Non-agricultural casual workers	8	11.43	6.48	2	2.25	5	4.73	5	8.95	4.54
9	Artisanal and service households	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	51	176.45	100.00	36	43.08	11	22.23	61	197.30	100.00

Source: Field Survey (census)

As far as area operated (land owned + land leased in — land leased out) by different categories of households in 2000-01 is concerned, the table shows that whereas big farmers operated 45.89 per cent; the small farmers operated 22.36 per cent of total area. Thus, both owned and operated areas were largely in the hands of a

few big farmers in the village. Medium farmers who owned 14.53percent of total area, operated only 6.91 per cent. This is because some of the widows belonging to this category leased out their lands after their husband's death. Pure tenants as has already been expected operated considerable proportion of area because they earned their livelihoods by working mainly on others' land. In the case of non-agricultural casual workers, the proportion of operated area is less than the proportion of owned area because of a few adult male workers going for work outside the village while leasing out- their lands to others.

Table 8 shows the data and information on land ownership and operation across the caste groups in the village in 2000-01. The table reveals that among the caste groups, it is the Mudaliars who owned little less than three-fourths of the land. They also operated about 70 per cent of the total area. All other five caste groups owned and operated less than 30 per cent of the total area. Next to Mudaliars, Chittiars owned 12.58 per cent of land and operated 9.12 per cent of area. The Scheduled Castes which accounted for about two-fifths of total population owned hardly 3.51 per cent of land. But they operated 13.31 percent of the total area. The operated area in their case is considerably higher because they leased - in land both from residents and non-residents. They cultivated others' land mainly to make use of the human labour power available in their households. The proportion of area operated by Chettiars is less than their land ownership because as has already been said that some of the adult male workers secured casual employment in urban informal sector by leasing - out their small holdings to others. It should be noted here that in Tamil Nadu as in some other parts of the country, Chettiars are not only a cultivating caste but also a trading caste. Hence they often switched their main occupation between these two.

Table 8: Distribution of Land ownership, operation, Leasing-in and Leasing – out by Caste in Enathimelpakkam in 2000-01

Sl.No	Category of house-holds	No.of H.Hs owning land	Extent of area owned (in acres)	As Percen-tage to the total area owned	No.of H.Hs leasing in	Extent of area leased in (in acres)	No.of H.Hs leasing out	Extent of area leased out (in acres)	No.of H.Hs. opera-ting land	Extend of area operated (in acres)	As per-centage to the totall area operated
1	Mudaliars	26	128.59	72.88	15	18.43	4	8.60	27	138.42	70.16
2	Naickers/ Vanniars	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-
3	Reddy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-
4	Pillai	2	11.00	6.23	2	2.80	--	--	2	13.80	6.99
5	Nadars	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
6	Dhobi	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
7	Barber	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
8	Scheduled Castes	11	6.20	3.51	18	20.85	1	0.80	25	26.25	13.31
9	Scheduled Tribes	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
10	Chettiars	10	22.20	12.58	1	1.00	4	5.20	6	18.00	9.12
11	Acharis	1	7.63	4.33	--	--	1	7.00	1	0.63	0.32
--	Devars	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
13	Gounders	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
14	Brahmins	1	0.83	0.47	-	--	1	0.63	1	0.20	0.10
15	Naidus	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	51	176.45	100.00	36	43.08	11	22.23	61	197.30	100.00

Source: Field Survey (census), 2000

With the field data collected on land ownership and operated areas in the years of 1993-94 and 2000-01; we have also worked out the Gini Coefficients of concentration. It is interesting to note that though the distribution of land ownership among the households is highly concentrated, it has shown a marginal decline between the two surveys with Gini Coefficients showing 0.6930 for the year 1993-94 and 0.5779 for the year 2000-01. But, as against the concentration of owned area declining marginally; the concentration of operated area remained the same in both the years with the Gini coefficients showing 0.5265. Thus, both land ownership and operated areas continued to concentrate in a few big farmers' hands who mainly belonged to Mudaliar caste in the village. Incidentally, these Mudaliars belonged to a sub-caste of Agam Mudaliars which is declared as a forward caste by the government of Tamil Nadu.

Tenancy

Between the first survey year of 1985-86 and the last survey year of 2000-01; the village witnessed declines in the number of tenants and the total extents of land leased in and leased out by them. Between these two years, while the number of households leasing in land declined from 43 to 36; the total extent of land leased in by them declined from 69.79 acres to 43.08 acres. The total extent of land leased out by the residents declined marginally from 25.43 acres to 22.23 acres. The picture is somewhat different if we compare the data of 2000-01 with the data of 1993-94 on tenancy. Between these two years, whereas the number of households leasing - in declined from 44 to 36; the total extent of area leased - in by them declined considerably from 57.59 acres to 43.08 acres. As against the number of households leasing - out declining marginally from 13 to 11; the total area leased out both by resident and non-resident land owners declined considerably from 34.58 acres in 1993-94 to 22.23 acres in 2000-01. On the whole, the available data on tenancy relating to all the three survey years suggest that during the last one-and-a-half decades there have been consistent declines observed both in the number of households engaged in tenancy and the area involved in it in the village.

Now let us examine the data on tenancy relating to the year 2000-01 across the categories in the village. These data are provided in Table 7. According to the table, half the number of households leasing in land belonged to the category of pure tenants ie., those who depended mainly on tenant cultivation for their livelihoods. The other half or 18 out of 36 households combined the cultivation of both owned and leased-in lands. But the average extent of land leased-in by them being 1.20 acres is very small. Even with respect to pure tenants who depended mainly on tenant cultivation, the average extent of area leased - in by them was only 1.25 acres. However, our field enquiries have revealed that no individual tenant had leased-in more than two acres for cultivation. This is because of the fact that any leasing-in large extent of land requires their own pumpset for irrigation which is lacking in many tenants' case. Hence tenant farms could not be cultivated economically. Very often the land owning cultivators leased-out a small piece of land (50 cents to 1 acre)

to these tenants who can assure their labour power to the former in cultivating their lands. The tenants on their part had also leased-in others land only on the guarantee of latter providing pumpset irrigation to the summer crop, of course on payment basis. It is interesting to note from the same table that three big farmers and seven small farmers had also leased-in land mainly from resource poor farmers. They leased-in mainly to take advantage of their pumpset and tractor ownerships in the village. In the case of big farmers, it is mainly the reverse tenancy which is taking place. But two big farmers had also leased - in two acres of temple land for cultivation. In some other tenants case it is clearly the labour mobilisation process of land owners which compelled them to be in the lease market.

As far as land leased - out is concerned, the same table shows that out of 43.08 acres leased-out, 22.23 acres were leased out by resident land owners. The remaining 20.85 acres were leased out by non-resident land owners. This accounted for 48.40 percent of total land leased-in by resident tenants and cultivators. And out of 51 land owning households only 11 had leased-out their lands mainly for want of male labourers, pumpsets and capital.

Table 8 provides the data on land leased-in and leased-out in 2000-01 across caste groups in the village. Out of 36 households who leased-in land, 18 belonged to the Scheduled Castes and 15 belonged to the upper caste Mudaliars. As against the Scheduled Caste households leasing - in land as agricultural labourer-cum-tenants; the Mudaliar households leased - in land either as pure tenants or as owner-cum-tenants. And, as has already been said that whereas Scheduled Caste households leased-in land by assuring their labour supply to their landlords; the Mudaliar households leased-in lands mainly to take advantage of their pumpsets and tractors. Moreover, in Mudaliar tenants' case, the leased - in lands are situated adjacent to their main holdings which makes cultivation of those lands much easier. Hence it is mainly the upper caste Mudaliars who owned the agriculturally related assets and the Scheduled Castes who owned the labour power were very much involved in tenancy. With regard to the extents of land leased-out by different caste groups are concerted,

the table provides a different picture. Most of the land leased-out by residents came from Mudaliars, Acharies and Chettiars. Mudaliars and Chettiars leased-out their land mainly for want of adult male workers and pumpsets which are crucial for cultivation. One Achari household had leased-out seven acres of land because his household members were busy with their traditional occupation of carpentry and blacksmithy.

As far as the terms and conditions of tenancy are concerned, for a long time, the land continued to be leased-in on Kuttagai (payment of fixed rent in kind per unit of land) basis. After the modernisation of agriculture in the late 70s, the rent paid per acre, per annum increased from three bags of paddy to six bags of paddy. When the tank was the sole source of irrigation and only one paddy crop was raised, tenants used to pay only three bags of paddy, per acre, per year. With the installation of pumpsets to borewells in the 1980s and 1990s, the monocropped cultivation of paddy changed to double cropping in a year. Hence the increase in rent from three bags to six bags. However, the tenant has to pay five bags of paddy per acre, per crop if he chooses to cultivate his land based on the pumpset irrigation provided by others. The farmer or tenant can also supplement his tank irrigation by pumpset irrigation by purchasing water at the rate of Rs.15 per hour in 2000-01. However, the land owners gave some concession in the rental charges if they have leased - out their lands to their own casual labourers or the crop yield has declined because of pests etc. Two big farmers had leased-out 30 cents of land each to their semi permanent farm servants free as part of latters' annul wage payment. Two big farmers who leased-in one acre each owned by temples were supposed to meet the expenses of temples out of the rents payable to them. But there was no account maintained of these rental payments to temples by these two big farmers in the village at anytime in the past. However, none of the tenancies are registered. They continue to be on informal basis or as oral agreements between the landlords and tenants. Field enquiries have also revealed that the non-resident landlords have often changed their tenants due to part evasion of rents payable to them. But the landlords did not exploit their tenants either in the labour or in the product markets. And, what all the former expected of

the latter was to provide labour during peak agricultural seasons at the going wage rates in the village. If the tenants failed to do so, the landlords were free to evict them from land. Of course, landlords also provided tenants with their pumpset water for irrigation at less cost. Nevertheless, it became clear from our field inquiries that tenancy continued on the same old pattern mainly because of certain households ownership or lack of ownership of certain agriculturally related assets like pumpsets, tractors and adult male labour power.

Changes in Livestock ownership

Changes in the ownership of different types of animals by households in the village reveal the diversification of occupations and employment. They can also help us to understand the effects of new technologies in agriculture. Table 9 provides the details on the changes in the different of types of animals owned by the households between 1976-77 and 2000-01. According to the table during the last two-and-a-half decades the total number of animals owned in the village declined very much by 50 per cent. Among the different types of animals owned there has been a drastic decline observed with respect to bullocks from 221 in 1976-77 to a mere eight in 2000-01. At the same time the number of milch animals first increased or more than doubled between 1976-77 and 1993-94 and then declined by about one-fourth between 1993-94 and 2000-01. The number of buffaloes increased considerably from 23 in 1976-77 to 38 in 2000-01. The numbers of sheep and goats first increased by more than three times between 1985-86 and 1993-94 and then declined by more than half between 1993-94 and 2000-01. The number of young animals too declined by more than half between 1976-77 and 2000-01.

Table 9: Changes in the Ownership of Different Types of Animals in Enathimelpakkam between 1976-77 and 2000-01

S.No.	Type of animals/year	1976-77	1985-86	1993-94	2000-01
1	No.of bullocks	221	89	45	8
2.	No.of milch animals	35	86	88	63
3.	No.of he-buffaloes	23	5	25	38
4.	No.of sheep and goats	-	27	92	39
5.	No.of calves or young animals	86	53	44	34
	Total	365	260	294	182

Source: 1) Data for the year 1976-77 are from Livestock Census Register provided by taluk office – Gummidipundi;
2) Data for the years of 1985-86, 1993-94 and 2000-01 are from field surveys (census)

Between 1993-94 and 2000-01 there have been declines observed in of the number of income earning animals like milch cows, she-buffaloes, sheep and goats, etc. This is because of the increasing prices of these animals in the later period which discouraged some of the poor households from purchasing and maintaining them. Instead, some of the poor households had acquired sheep on lease basis from others whereby they shared the kids on 50:50 basis. Two women agricultural labourers had also acquired sheep with the financial help provided by the government under the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA) scheme. Further, the intensification of agriculture led to the reduction in the grazing land and hence the poor households could not stallfed their animals. The reduction in livestock population over the years had also its implications for employment. Till late 1970's, six cowherds were employed for collective grazing of all animals owned by the households. In our latest survey year there were no cowherds employed in the village. This requires an explanation. Our field enquiries revealed that the transformation of traditional agriculture into a modern one in the 1980s and its further intensification in the 1990s have caused sharp declines in the ownership of bullocks and young animals. With the increased tractorisation of agriculture, the bullocks have lost their employment both in ploughing and transportation. Over the years, the agricultural labourers and small cultivators and tenants found it very difficult to buy bullocks at very high prices and to maintain them at higher cost without any employment. At 1985-86, there were 89 bullocks provided by the government under its Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) on loan cum subsidy basis to agricultural labourers. Even these bullocks were sold out subsequently for want of maintenance and employment. By 2000-01, a pair of bullocks were priced more than Rs.10,000/- which any poor household found it uneconomical to purchase and maintain them that too in the absence of employment for them. In the year 2000-01, almost all plots including smaller ones were ploughed only by tractors, especially on hire basis. These factors precisely explain why there were only eight bullocks in the village in our latest survey year. The numbers of milch animals and sheep and goats had more than doubled between 1976-77 and

1993-94 indicating the diversification of occupations into non- agricultural sector, especially by the adult male workers of the village. The rearing of these types animals earlier enhanced the incomes of poor households, particularly in the lean agricultural seasons of a year. It should be noted here that the ownership of these two types of animals increased during a phase of agricultural modernisation. In 1985-86, there were two cowherds employed by all households in the village. And by 1993-94, there were no cowherds employed in the village. Hence in 1990s, maintaining and grazing of animals became an individual and household occupation. As a consequence not only the livestock owning people but also the cowherds have last their employment and incomes in the village.

Table 10 provides data on the distribution of animals across the categories in the village in 2000-01. Out of 182 animals owned by all households, small farmers themselves owned more than one-fourth (27.47%) followed by pure tenants who owned about one-fifth (19.78%). Big farmers owned 17.58 per cent of animals. Thus close to half of all animals were owned by small farmers and pure tenants in the village. And all the remaining categories owned only little more than half of the animals. However, the number of animals owned per household being 6.40 was still the highest in the case of big farmers. On an average, while small farmers owned four animals per household; pure tenants owned two animals per household. Of the different types of animals, as against the pure tenants owning the largest number of bullocks; small farmers owned the largest number of milch animals in the village. Sheep and goats were largely owned by pure tenants and agricultural labourers. Of course, some of them were acquired from other households on lease basis. Again, of the different types of animals owned in the village, milch animals themselves accounted for more than one-third with the buffaloes, sheep and goats and young animals accounting for one-fifth each. This shows that the livestock ownerships in the village was dominated by the possession of income earning milch animals rather than by plough bullocks whose work can in any way be substituted by tractors in modern agriculture.

Table 10: Category wise Distribution of Animals in Enathimelpakkam in 2000-2001

S. No.	Category of house holds	No.of HHs	No.of different types of animals owned					Total No.of animals owned by the category	As % age to the village total	No.of animals owned per H.H.
			Bullocks	Milch animals	He-buffaloes	Sheep & goats	Young animals			
1	Big farmers	5	----	12	8	6	8	32	17.58	6.40
2	Medium farmers	4	----	2	3	-	3	8	4.40	2.0
3	Small farmers	12	----	23	9	9	9	50	27.47	4.17
4	Marginal farmers	7	----	3	3	-	1	7	3.85	1.00
5	Pure tenants	18	6	12	3	11	4	36	19.78	2.00
6	Agricultural labourers	58	2	5	--	8	5	20	10.99	0.40
7	Non-Agricultural workers with regular salaried employment	9	—	—	3	1	1	5	2.75	0.56
8	Non-agricultural Casual workers	25	----	5	8	4	5	22	12.08	.88
9	Artisanal and service households	4	----	1	1	—	—	2	1.10	0.50
10	Total	142	8	63	38	39	34	182	100.00	1.28
11	Percentage to the total	—	4.40	34.62	20.88	21.42	18.68	100.0	----	----

Source: Field survey (census), 2000

Agricultural Implements

The use of different types of agricultural implem~nts reflect the use of human and draught animal labour power vis-à-vis mechanical power applied in modern agriculture. Whereas the former was supposed to be used by small cultivators; the latter was mainly acquired and used by big and well-to-do farmers. But, of late what was happening in this village was to substitute the human and draught animal labour power by pumpset irrigation and tractors. While the pumped irrigation has complemented the traditional tank irrigation system; the use of tractors have substituted the human and bullock labour used in ploughing, transportation and threshing. This is because even the small cultivators hired – in the tractor services and purchased the pumpset waters. This kind of hiring - in and hiring - out of tractors and the purchase and sale of pumpset waters had implications for the net incomes earned from an acre of paddy cultivation by different categories of farmers.

Table 11 gives the details on changes in the ownership of different types of agricultural implements at different points in time. According to the table, the ownership of traditional agricultural implements which are used in ploughing, transportation and harvesting, etc. have declined rather sharply over the years. During the last 20 years there have also been simultaneous increases in the ownership of pumpsets and tractors by big and well-to-do farmers in the village. The table shows that farmers and agricultural labourers did not even own ploughs. This is because ploughing is done by tractors. Further, the table shows the ownership of 18 bullock carts in 1985-86 as against only two bullock carts in 2000-01. Our field enquiries revealed that most of these bullock carts at that time were owned by agricultural labourers because government provided them under its loan-cum-subsidy scheme. But, by the year 1993-94, most of them had sold out those bullock carts for want of maintenance and employment. Further, the number of knives and sickles which are used in harvesting have also declined very much. This is mainly due to the fact that while in the early 1980s, cultivator – employers were supplying the implements to agricultural labourers; in the 1990s, the in-migrant agricultural labourers themselves were bringing these implements for harvesting paddy in the village. However, the consequence of declining ownership of traditional agricultural implements was felt by the artisans in terms of the discontinuation of Jajmani relations which provided them a lot of economic security earlier.

Table 11:Changes in the Ownership of Agricultural Implements and Machinery in Enathimelpakkam Village Between 1976-77 and 2000-01

Type of Agricultural Implements/ Machinery	Years			
Traditional	1976-77	1985-86	1993-94	2000-01
No.of wooden ploughs	84	47	16	5
No.of iron ploughs	--	--	10	1
No.of bullock carts	19	18	5	2
Levelling Boards	--	22	15	3
Knives / sickles	--	289	59	3
Other implements	--	140	--	8
Total	103	516	105	22
Modern Machinery	--	26	35	35
Tractors	---	5	8	8
Pumpsets	---	21	27	27

Sources: 1. For the year 1976-77 data are from Livestock Census Register provided by taluk office, Gummidipundi; 2. Data for the years of 1985-86, 1993-94 and 2000-01 are from field surveys (census).

The mechanisation of agriculture had proceeded faster with the low interest loans provided by the commercial banks, especially to the big farmers for the acquisitions of tractors and pumpsets in the village. By the year 2000-01, there was one pumpset for every seven acres of land irrigated and cultivated. In the same manner, there was one tractor available for every 25 acres of ploughing and cultivation. Hence mechanisation of agriculture is almost complete. The only exception is harvesting. None of the farmers has yet to acquire or hire-in any harvest combine for paddy harvesting in the village. This particular operation has been carried on still by both local and in-migrant labourers on contract basis. Pumpset owning farmers charge 5 bags of paddy, per acre, per crop whenever they sell water for irrigating the land of non-pumpset owners. The hire charges for one acre of ploughing by tractor in the year 2000-01 was Rs.350/-. The hiring – out of tractors fetched enormous incomes to their owners while the non-owners of these assets had to forgo a part of profits earned by them in modern agriculture earlier.

SECTION III

Agrarian Economy of the Village

Cropping Pattern

For a long time the village continued to have its monocropped cultivation of paddy. But in the year 2000-01, we observed the cultivation of less than 10 acres with groundnuts, chillies and coconuts in the village. However, this cannot be termed as the farmers switching over to the multiple cropping pattern. Some of the high yielding varieties of paddy raised by farmers in our latest survey year were IR.50, I.R. 43, and Baptla Ponni etc. Paddy was raised in all the three seasons of 1) Samba (October to January), 2) Navarai (February to May) and Sornavari (June to September). While the Samba is the main rainy season crop; sornavari is the main summer season crop. Navarai is less important season for paddy. This is because only a few non-pumpset owners prefer to raise paddy in this season depending on the availability of tank water for irrigation. In addition to the main rainy season crop, almost all pumpset owners prefer to raise summer crop because of less pests and higher per acre yields of HYV paddy in this season. In the year 2000-01, like in 1993-94, there were 27 pumpsets owned by residents and seven pumpsets owned by non-residents in the village agricultural ayacut. Each of these pumpsets can irrigate six to seven acres during summer season.

The net sown area of the village even in 2000-01 remained the same at 402.33 acres. The gross cropped area in the agricultural year of 2000-01 added upto (200 acres in Sornavari + 380 acres in Samba + 30 acres in Navarai) 610 acres. This is lower than the gross cropped area of 750 acres observed in our earlier survey of 1993-94. This decline in gross cropped area is mainly attributed to lack of sufficient rainfall during the recent period and to the depletion of ground water tables which reduced the yields of borewells in the ayacut over the years. Moreover, farmers were not willing to take risk by increasing their average area under HYV paddy if sufficient water is not available both in the tank and in borewells. The intensity of cropping (gross cropped area / Net sown area) in 2000-01 worked out to 1.52 per

cent. And this was still higher compared to the district and state level figures on the same which varied between 1.20 per cent and 1.30 per cent.

Production and Productivity of Paddy

The yield rates of HYV paddy across different size groups of farms varied between 18 (of 75 kgs each) and 30 bags per acre. Per acre yield rates of paddy were higher in the big farmer's fields who had raised crops in time by making use of their own tractors and pumpsets. They had also applied enough of chemical fertilisers and pesticides required in raising HYV paddy crop. The per acre yield rates of paddy were lower in the case of marginal farmers, pure tenants and a few small farmers who did not own any livestock, pumpsets and tractors and depended entirely on asset owning farmers who only hired - out their tractors and sold their pumpset waters after they had completed their agricultural operations in time. This timely completion of agricultural operations is crucial for achieving higher per acre yield rates in modern agriculture. The per acre yield rate of paddy varied not only across categories but also across seasons. The average per acre yield rate of paddy was the lowest in the rainy season when all the farmers raised their Samba crop. And the same was highest in the summer season when all pumpset owning farmers raised their Sornavari crop. This is also because of the fact that while the rainy season crop is very much affected by pests; the summer season crop is not affected so much by pests. Whereas the maximum per acre yield rate of paddy in the rainy season was 22 bags; the maximum per acre yield rate of paddy in summer was 30 bags. However, our field enquiries revealed the average per acre yield rate of paddy for all categories of farmers in 2000-01 as 24 bags of paddy. This is an improvement of two bags of paddy per acre compared to the average per acre yield rate of 22 bags achieved in 1993-94. The improvement in the per acre yield rate of paddy observed in the village during the recent years is attributed mainly to the increase in the numbers of pumpsets and tractors and the better varieties of paddy.

The total production of paddy in all the three seasons of 2000-01 worked out to approximately 16,640 bags in the whole of agricultural ayacut cultivated by both residents and non-residents. In the same year, the total paddy production by resident cultivators who cultivated 299.90 acres (197.30 x 1.52 intensity of cultivation) in all the three seasons in 2000-01 worked out to 7197 bags (i.e., 299.90 acres multiplied by 24 bags). Nevertheless, the total production of paddy by resident cultivators had declined from about 9900 bags in 1993-94 to about 7200 bags in 2000-01. This decline in production can be attributed to the declining ownership of land and hence operated area and gross cropped area and the declining intensity of cultivation in the village during the late 1990s.

Costs and Returns from Agriculture

A) Costs: Changes in the costs of cultivation over the years reflect the profitability of agriculture to different categories of farmers in the village. They also to some extent determine the economic viability of small farms. With the help of field data we have worked out the per acre costs of cultivation of paddy among the major categories of farmers in 2000-01. These major categories of farmers include big, medium, small and marginal farmers and pure tenants. They together operated 181.25 acres. This worked out to 91.86 per cent of area operated by all residents in 2000-01. The details on per acre costs of cultivation are presented in Table 12. The table shows different costs (A1, A2, B and C) of cultivation incurred by major categories of cultivators. The average per acre total cost of cultivation i.e., cost C incurred by different categories of farmers varied from a minimum of Rs.6345 in the case of marginal farmers to a maximum of Rs.7445 in the case of big farmers. Cost A, which shows the actual cash expenses incurred by farmers on an acre of paddy cultivation varied from a minimum of Rs.4875 again in the case of marginal farmers to a maximum of Rs.5745 in the case of big farmers.

Table 12: Average per Acre Cost of Cultivation of Paddy Incurred by Different Categories of farmers in Enathimelpakkam, 2000-01

(All in Rs.)

Item	Big farmers	Medium farmers	Small farmers	Marginal Farmers	Pure Tenants
1.Hired human labour	2720	2720	2720	2400	2400
2.Owned bullock labour	----	---	---	---	150
3.Hired-bullock labour	---	---	---	---	---
4.Tractor (owned)	1050	1050	---	---	---
5.Tractor (hired)	---	---	1050	900	900
6.Seeds (owned)	300	300	---	---	---
7.Seeds (purchased)	---	---	300	300	300
8.Domestic manures					
a)owned	---	---	---	100	100
b)purchased	---	---	---	---	---
9.Chemical fertilisers & pesticides	1100	1100	1000	800	800
10.Depreciation	300	300	----	---	---
11.Land Tax	25	25	25	25	---
12.Irrigation charges	---	---	----	---	---
13.Interest on Working capital					
a) Owned	150	150	---	---	---
b) Borrowed	---	---	250	250	250
14.Miscellaneous expenditures	100	100	100	100	100
15. Cost A1	5745	5745	5445	4875	5000
16.Rent on leased–in land	---	---	---	---	1080
17. Cost A2	---	---	---	---	6080
18.Rental value of owned land	1080	1080	1080	1080	---
19. Interest on-fixed capital	470	170	---	--	---
20.Cost B	7295	6995	6525	5955	6080
21. Value of family labour	150	150	150	390	390
22. Cost C	7445	7145	6675	6345	6470

Source: Field Survey (sample)

Table 13 shows the changes in the per acre cost of cultivation of paddy between 1993-94 and 2000-01. According to the table, while average cost A1 changed from Rs.3631 to Rs.5362 which worked out to 47.67 per cent; the cost C changed from Rs.5040 to Rs.6816 which worked out to 35.24 per cent. Thus, over a period of seven years as against the cash requirements of an acre of paddy cultivation increasing by close to half; the total cost of cultivation increased by about one-third. Across the categories, it is evident from the table that both the cash requirements of

cultivation and total per unit cost of cultivation had increased most in the case of pure tenants followed by small farmers. This is mainly because of their payments towards tractor hiring for ploughing and threshing. As has already been said that most of them did not own even a pair of plough bullocks to save some costs of cultivation. However, it is worth noting from the table that increases in the per acre cost of cultivation both on cost A, and cost C bases were found to be lowest in the case of big farmers.

Table 13:Changes in Different Costs of Cultivation Incurred on an Acre of Paddy Across Major Categories of Cultivators in Enathimelpakkam between 1993-94 and 2000-01.

(All in Rs.)

Category of farmers	Cost A1			Cost C		
	1993-94	2000-01	Percentage change	1993-94	2000-01	Percentage change
1.Big farmers	4226	5745	35.94	5821	7445	27.90
2.Medium farmers	---	5745	----	----	7145	---
3.Small farmers	3700	5445	47.16	5040	6675	32.44
4.Marginal farmers	3500	4875	39.28	4800	6345	32.19
5.Pure tenants	3100	5000	61.29	4500	6470	43.78
Average	3631	5362	47.67	5040	6816	35.24

Source: Field Survey (sample)

Returns from Agriculture

On the basis of field data we have also worked out the per acre net incomes earned from paddy cultivation by major categories of cultivators in 2000-01. These are presented in Table 14. As per the table, the average yield rate of paddy in the village worked out to 24 bags (of 75 kgs). The average price secured per bag was Rs.370 in 2000-01. The calculations made with average yield rates and prices of paddy revealed that while the gross income earned from an acre of paddy cultivation was Rs.9146; the net income earned was Rs.2330. The input-output ratio (ie., cost C / gross value of output) which is a measure of efficiency of cultivation revealed it to be 0.75. Across the categories, as has been expected, the net income earned from an acre of paddy cultivation was the highest in the case of big farmers and the lowest in the case of pure tenants. As against big farmers earning a net income of Rs.3255,

pure tenants and marginal farmers earned net incomes of Rs.1700 and Rs.1825 respectively. Such large differences observed in the per acre net incomes earned between the big farmers and pure tenants or marginal farmers arose because of the crucial ownerships of pumpsets, tractors, land and capital by the former in the village. However, the efficiency of cultivation as has been indicated by input-output ratios have not differed very much across the categories.

Table 14:Gross and Net Incomes earned from an Acre of Paddy Cultivation among Different Categories in Enathimelpaakam in 2000-01.

Categories of farmers	No.of HHS operating land	Average yield per acre (in bag)	Average price obtained per bag (in Rs.)	Value of paddy obtained per acre (in Rs.)	Value of hay obtained per acre (in Rs.)	Gross value of output obtained per acre (in Rs.)	Average per acre total cost-of cultivation i.e, cost C (in Rs.)	Net income earned per acre (in Rs.)	Input – output ratio (ie.cast C/gross value of output
1.Big farmers	3	26	400	10400	300	10700	7445	3255	0.69
2.Medium farmers	4	25	380	9500	300	9800	7145	2655	0.73
3.Small farmers	11	24	360	8640	250	8890	6675	2215	0.75
4.Marginal farmers	6	22	360	7920	250	8170	6345	1825	0.78
5.Pure tenants	18	22	360	7920	250	8170	6470	1700	0.79
Average	61	24	372	8876	270	9146	6816	2330	0.75

Source: Field survey (sample)

Changes in the gross and net incomes earned from an acre of paddy cultivation by major categories of cultivators between 1993-94 and 2000-01 are presented in Table 15. According to the table, while the average per acre yield rate of paddy increased from 22 bags to 23.80 bags; the average price obtained per bag had gone up from Rs.310 to Rs.372 between the two survey years. But in both the survey years, big farmers not only achieved the highest per acre yield rates but also secured highest prices for their outputs in the village. On the contrary, marginal farmers and pure tenants achieved the lowest per acre yield rates of paddy and secured also the lowest prices for their outputs in both the survey years. Again, whereas at the village level, the gross income earned from an acre of paddy cultivation, in money terms, had increased considerably from Rs.7565 to Rs.9146; the net income earned from the

same had increased only marginally from Rs.2022 to Rs.2330. This only indicates the increased cost of cultivation associated with the declining profits earned from paddy cultivation in the village, especially in the 1990s. But the declining profits were unevenly shared by different categories with the big farmers benefiting the most from agri-business. However, the efficiency of cultivation as has been reflected by input-output ratio's remained more or less the same even over a period of seven years. Nevertheless, across the categories, pure tenants were found to be most efficient with their input-output ratios showing 0.83 and 0.79 in 1993-94 and 2000-01 respectively. This can be attributed to their close personal supervision and urge to make a living from the cultivation of tenant land in the village.

Table 15:Changes in Gross and Net Incomes earned from an Acre of Paddy Cultivation among Major Categories in Enathimelpakkam between 1993-94 and 2000-01

Category Of farmers	Average Yield		Average price		Gross income (in Rs.)		Net income (in Rs.)		Input-output ratio	
	1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01
1.Big farmers	25	26	330	400	8550	10700	2729	3255	0.68	0.69
2.Medium farmers	--	25	---	380	---	9800	---	2655	---	0.73
3.Small farmers	23	24	310	360	7710	8890	2470	2215	0.68	0.75
4.Marginal farmers	18	22	300	360	7150	8170	1465	1825	0.79	0.78
5.Pure tenants	22	22	300	360	6850	8170	1425	1700	0.83	0.79
Averages	22	23.80	310	372	7565	9146	2022	2330	0.74	0.75

Source: Field Survey (sample)

Employment in Agriculture

The data collected by us on the generation of number of days of employment in the per acre cultivation of paddy in the year 2000-01 remained more or less the same at around 70. Our previous surveys showed that while it was 71.87 days in 1985-86; the same was 69.40 in 1993-94. The break-up of the per acre employment created reveals that as against the resident casual agricultural labourers availing 36.62 days; the in-migrant casual agricultural labourers availed 22.55 days. However, the data available with us on the same for the previous year show an increase in the employment of in-migrant agricultural labourers with a simultaneous decline in the employment of resident casual agricultural labourers.The figures show that between 1993-94 and 2000-01, whereas for the former it increased from 16.66 to 22.55, for the latter it declined from 46.79 to 36.62. So, over the years, there has been an increased employment of in-migrant agricultural labourers in the cultivation of paddy in the village. They are mainly employed in the harvesting of paddy.

Though the number of days of employment generated in the per acre cultivation of paddy remained the same over the years; the number of days of employment offered to female casual agricultural labourers had gone up with a simultaneous decline in the number of days of employment offered to male casual agricultural labourers. The employment of male casual agricultural labourers declined due to the increased mechanisation of ploughing and transport which were earlier exclusively performed by them.

However, our field enquiries relating to the numbers of days of employment availed by resident male and female casual agricultural labourers in a year showed a declining trend over the years thanks to the influx of in-migrant agricultural labourers and increased mechanisation. Between 1993-94 and 2000-01, whereas the number of days of employment secured by males in a year declined from 142 to 118; the same in the case of females declined from 158 to 140. However, in both the survey years, the female casual agricultural labourers secured more employment compared to males.

The calculations of incomes earned by an agricultural labourer household consisting of one adult male and one adult female from agricultural occupations reveal it to be around Rs.14,000/- in the year 2000-01. While a male casual agricultural labourer can earn Rs.7670/- in a year; the female casual agricultural labourer can earn Rs.6330/- in a year. Our rough estimates of non-agricultural incomes earned by an agricultural labourer household revealed it to be Rs.1000 per year. Thus, total income earned by an agricultural labourer household consisting of one male and one female labourer can hope to earn about Rs.15000 per year or about Rs.1250/- per month from all sources. However, in money terms, the total income of an agricultural labourer household in the village had gone up from Rs.11325 in 1993-94 to Rs.15000 in 2000-01. In per capita terms, for a family of four it works out to an increase from Rs.3060 per annum to Rs.3750 per annum between the two survey years. However, in real terms, there has not been much of an increase in the income of an agricultural labourer household over the years.

Changes in Money and Real Wage Rates

Changes in the money and real wage rates paid to casual agricultural labourers between 1993-94 and 2000-01 are shown in Table 16. Like the earlier years almost all wages in 2000-01 were paid in money or in cash terms only. No payments were made even for harvesting in kind. During our first survey in 1985-86, we observed the provision of meals on the farm to some male labourers engaged in a few agricultural operations like land levelling, bund trimming, fertilising, pesticiding and transport. But cultivator – employers had stopped providing meals to any labourers on farm even from late 1980s. Hence most of the agricultural operations, especially in the 1990s were carried on either by contract labourers or by casual labourers for a half-day of four hours each mainly from 9.a.m. to 1. p.m. In Table 16, we have converted half day money and real wages into a full day (8 hours) wage payments. We have deflated the money wages into real wages by using the prices of rice II sort prevailing in the village in 1993-94 and 2000-01. They were Rs.7.50 per kg in 1993-94 and Rs.12 per kg in 2000-01. The money wage rates shown in Table 16 were

obtained from our respondents who employed casual agricultural labourers even in predominantly contractualised operations like transplanting, plucking of seedlings and harvesting. We shall discuss the contract wages later in the section.

Table 16:Changes in Money and Real Wage Rates of Casual Agricultural Labourers between 1993-94 and 2000-01 in Enathimelpakkam.

(All per day of 8 hrs)

Type of operation	Money Wage Rates (in Rs.)				Real Wage Rates (in kgs of rice)			
	Males in		Females in		Males in		Females in	
	1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01	1993-94	2000-01
1.Ploughing	25	60	---	---	3.33	5.00	--	--
2.Land levelling & bund trimming	25	60	---	---	3.33	5.00	---	---
3.Fertilizing	25	60	---	---	3.33	5.00	---	---
4.Plucking of seedlings	40	100	---	---	5.33	8.33	---	---
5.Transplanting	---	---	25	45	---	---	3.33	3.75
6.Weeding	24	60	22	45	3.20	5.00	2.93	3.75
7.Pesticiding	25	60	--	--	3.33	5.00	---	---
8.Transporting	25	60	---	---	3.33	5.00	---	---
9.Harvesting	30	70	25	60	4.00	5.83	3.33	5.00

Note: Real wage rates are calculated based on the prices of rice II sort per kg. Prevailing in the village. They were Rs.7.50 in 1993-94 and Rs.12.00 in 2000-01.

Source: Field Survey (sample)

According to Table 16, between 1993-94 and 2000-01, while the money wage rates had more than doubled; the real wage rates had gone up considerably both for males and females in the village. On an average, whereas the money wage rate paid to a male casual agricultural labourer increased from Rs.25 per day to Rs.60 per day; the same in the case of female casual agricultural labourers had gone up from Rs.25 to Rs.45. These were the normal wage rates paid to casual agricultural labourers with some exceptions like harvest wages.

However, the table makes it clear that between these survey years, the increases observed both in money and real wage rates paid to male casual agricultural

labourers were higher in comparison to the wage rates paid to female casual agricultural labourers. Anyhow, in some of the crucial agricultural operations like transplanting, plucking of seedlings and harvesting; cultivator - employers employ mainly contract labourers because of the urgency of completing these operations in time. The contract wages are paid normally per an acre of transplanting or harvesting or plucking of seedlings. In the year 2000-01, the contract labourers were paid between Rs.1500 and Rs.1800 for harvesting an acre of paddy depending on the distances of fields from threshing floors. The cultivator-employers could not hire the harvest combines for this operation because it was highly expensive. For transplanting and plucking of seedlings the contract wages were fixed at Rs.450 and Rs.200 per acre respectively. While transplanting is done mainly by female labourers plucking of seedlings is done mainly by male labourers. By contrast, harvesting is done by both males and females. But they share the contract wages rather unequally. Thus, discrimination of female labourers in wage payments even when they engaged in similar operations like harvesting and weeding continued all through. As far as employment of labourers in these operations was concerned, we observed that while transplanting was done mainly by resident female labourers, harvesting was done both by resident and in-migrant male and female labourers who formed separate gangs for the completion of this particular operation.

SECTION IV

Non-agricultural Activities

Under the broad spectrum of non-agricultural activities in the village, we include the employment in non-agricultural occupations and changes in it over the years, the governmental programmes implemented in the village during the last decade, voluntary programmes implemented for the benefit of poor, primary education, access to common property resources, functioning of village panchayat during the later half of 1990s, poverty assessment and food security.

I. Employment

a) Participation in Non-agricultural Occupations

Employment in non-agricultural occupations include casual work and regular salaried jobs performed mainly outside the village by the adult males and females while residing in the village. And this kind of employment mainly refers to hired employment. Of course, those few who were engaged as self-employed in trade and commerce were also included in the total employment generated in the non-agricultural sector. However, we have not included the five workers engaged in carpentry in the village. They largely came under self-employment category and were working for piece wage rates in our latest survey year. And these carpenters are no longer working under the jajmani (payment of fixed annual kind wages to the artisans by the cultivator-employers) system which provided them the economic security till a few years ago. Another self-employed category includes a few adult men and women who were running petty shops in the village.

A comparison of the data relating to non-agricultural employment in 2000-01 with that of the same available for the year 1993-94 reveals only a marginal increase in the employment and incomes generated by this sector. While there were totally 31 households depending on non-agricultural occupations for their livelihoods in 1993-94; there were 35 households depending on the same in 2000-01. However, the high wage paid regular salaried employment provided the major source of income only to six households in 1993-94 and nine households in 2000-01. Hence majority of the

households numbering 25 depended mainly on low wage paid urban informal sector. The workers of these houscholds depended mainly on casual employment generated in Gummidipundi town and in the industrial estate established by the Small Industries Promotion Council of Tamil Nadu (SIPCOT) in the same town. However, the participation in non-agricultural occupations by adult workers once again reveals that the village continued to be an agricultural one rather than a non-agricultural one even at the turn of a century.

Not only the number of households earning their major source of income from non-agricultural occupations had gone up marginally but also the total number of workers engaged in non-agricultural employment had gone up negligibly from 64 to 65 between 1993-94 and 2000-01. In this connection it is important to note that there developed no worthwhile non-agricultural occupations within the village over the years. Even at the turn of a century there were no dairying and poultry farming, and service and repair centres for tractors, and pumpsets in the village. And the village never has any rice milling or oil crushing facility. The village had no dhobis and barbers residing in it. And their services were bought from neigbouring towns and villages. Hence the village is found to be integrating more and more with the wider economy over the years. But there is no sign of its poor improving their real income earnings from this integration of the village with the wider economy.

The data on changes in the numbers of persons engaged in different non-agricultural occupations between 1993-94 and 2000-01 are presented in Table 17. The table has reclassified the field data according to the 1991 Census classification of non-agricultural industrial categories numbering seven. This is done mainly because the casual employment was provided by the urban informal and industrial sectors. And, this reclassification of the data does not include the number of persons engaged in regular salaried employment in the neighbouring towns and city while residing in the village. According to the table, the total number of casual workers had increased from 49 in 1991 to 56 in 2000-01. As against the male participation in non-agricultural casual works going up, the female participation in the same was

declining. The female participation had gone up to some extent mainly because they were engaged in running petty shops within the village and as sweepers in industrial units. The table also shows that a majority of them were engaged in other than household industry occupation both in 1991 and 2000-01. There was no one engaged in livestock rearing, mining and quarrying and household industry with the exception of two workers in each of the two years. While the number of persons engaged in other than household industry had gone up substantially from 14 to 30; the number of persons engaged in construction activities had declined to a noticeable extent. These changes in employment of workers can be attributed to the construction phase of industry by SIPCOT at Gummidipundi in the late 1980s and the actual manufacturing of products in the 1990s. However, the number of persons engaged in trade and commerce includes those who were running petty shops and trading in paddy. Nevertheless, the caste composition of the workers engaged in different non-agricultural occupations reveals that as against the high wage paid employment secured by high caste, land owning educated persons; the low wage paid employment was largely secured by low caste, landless, uneducated and unskilled persons residing in the village. And most of the women workers who hired themselves out into non-agricultural occupations not only earned less than Rs.1000/- per month; but also they belonged to the landless Scheduled Caste households. Though there was no one engaged in livestock rearing as a full time employee, of late we had observed that a few adult women belonging to SC households had leased-in sheep and goats on varam basis. Under this arrangement, the SC women who leased-in sheep had to share the young ones with the owners on a 50:50 basis. This provided a sort of part-time non-agricultural employment to a few SC women in the village. However, over the years, as has already been observed, the village had witnessed sharp declines in the ownerships of buffaloes and milch animals. Such declines in livestock ownerships over the years mainly explain why there was none engaging in this important occupation at the end of the century. Moreover, the shrinking of grazing land consequent to the increased cultivation of crops based on the mechanisation also explain the declining importance of livestock rearing in the village.

Table 17: Changes in the Numbers of Persons Engaged in Non-agricultural Occupations in Enathimelpakkam Between 1991-2000-01

S. No.	Occupation/year	1991		2000-01	
		Males	Females	Males	Females
1	Livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantations, orchards and allied activities	2	-	-	-
2	Mining and quarrying	-	-	-	-
3	Manufacturing, Processing, servicing and repairs in a)household industry and (b)other than household industry	14	--	30	---
4	Trade and commerce	7	1	6	3
5	Transport, storage and communications	2	---	1	---
6	Construction	11	--	2	---
7	Other services	8	4	6	8
	Total	44	5	45	11

Sources: 1) Data for the year 1991 are from the Census of India-1991- series 23, Tamil Nadu Part XII-B, District Census Handbook

2) Data for the year 2000-01 are from field survey (census)

B) Housing for the Poor

Out of 142 HHs in Enathimelpakkam in 2000-01; 75 were having pucca concrete roof houses (both in S.C. colony and in upper case quarters). Out of 75 pucca houses, 45 were constructed for S.C. households by the government. These 45 pucca houses provided to S.C. households by the government were small (less than 250 square feet) two roomed houses. Again, out of 45 houses, 35 were built in the early 1980s, with the remaining 10 were built in the early 1990s. These houses were built on the purchased land for house sites which is adjacent to the old colony. This scheme was undertaken as part of the housing assistance provided to the landless poor in the village. But all these houses were built only for S.C. landless agricultural labourers ignoring the needs of upper caste landless agricultural labourers who are still living in their huts in caste quarters. Out of 70 S.C. landless agricultural labourer households only 45 had pucca houses with the remaining 25 still living in their small huts. Out of this 25 S.C. households, 10 households have moved out of the old colony and put up their huts in an half acre Poromboke land available on the road

side in another part of the village. Some of these households include those who separated from their parental households. However, the pucca houses constructed by the government for the benefit of S.C. agricultural labourers had developed crakes within a short period of five years because of the low quality of these constructions by the government. And, there were leaks in the roofs during the rainy seasons. Hence many of these households had to spend a considerable part of their incomes in repairing and renovating these houses over the years.

Out of 25 pucca bigger houses owned by upper caste households, some 15 were newly constructed in the 1990s, especially by Chettiars in the village. And the quality of these constructions are also better compared to government constructions for obvious reasons. While there is a metal road linking this village with the neighbouring town of Gummidipundi and other villages; the roads and streets within the village are not metalled and they are not walkable, especially in the colony during the rainy seasons. And, the elected village panchayat had not developed the roads within the village during its term of office between 1996 and 2001. But, it has provided street lights with sodium vapor lamps and constructed two water head tanks for the supply of both drinking and use water for the households through pipes and taps. Individual water connections have also been provided on request by the households. But, these connections were availed mostly by the upper caste households rather than by the S.C. households. They collect water from street taps. By 2000-01, more than 20 upper caste households came to own motor bikes as against none from S.C. colony.

II. Other Governmental Programmes Implemented in the Village

These include mainly the a) running of a fair price shop by the Public Distribution system (PDS), provision of primary education, implementation of noon meal scheme by the state government for the benefit of school children, Intensive Women and Child care Development Scheme (ICDS) run by the Central Government. There are no more housing and livestock distribution programmes implemented by the state government for the benefit of poor in the village.

A) Public Distribution System (PDS)

For over two decades, PDS is running its fair price shops through bidders in the auctions and it was located in one of the rooms provided by a bigger farmer in the village. This fair price shop has always been run by upper caste individuals rather than by any S.C. individual. Very often the fair price shop owners came from neighbouring villages rather than residing in Enathimelpakkam. He/she opens the shop only for a few days in a month. And, he brings all his fair price shop items from the taluk office located in Gummidipundi. Recently, the government vehicle itself brought the consumer items to all the fair price shops in the taluk. However, all these factors had implications for the sale of PDS items among different categories of consumers. This fair price shop supplied mainly 20 kgs of rice, 2 kgs of sugar, 3 litres of kerosene, 5 kgs of wheat and 1 k.g. of Maida per poor family. The supply of wheat and maida were subject to the availability. In Tamil Nadu, Kerosene is not supplied to those who are having gas connections. There were 32 households mainly belonging to upper castes using Indian gas for cooking. Rice is supposed to be supplied mainly to the below poverty line group (BPL). But, we found in the village that all these PDS norms being violated very often by the fair price shop owner. Not all the rice supplied by PDS is distributed among card holders. Sometimes rice is sold in the open market because poor households are not interested in buying that rice because it is inferior in quality. Sugar is distributed mainly among the upper caste households because not many S.C. households are interested in buying the same. The only item which the poor households often buy from the fair price shop is Kerosene. However, a considerable number of poor S.C. households were found to have pledged their PDS cards with the upper caste households for borrowing money from them, especially in the lean agricultural seasons of a year. Nevertheless, the fair price shop owner was only too willing to help the big and rich farmers of the village with any quantities of any item they wanted from fair price shop. Moreover, poor complained that if the fair price shop was opened only for one or two days in a month they could not have enough cash on hand to buy all the allotted quantities of consumer items per card on those two days. Hence they did not find much economic help derived by the poor in availing the essential consumer items at fair prices

provided by PDS in the village. On the contrary, the major beneficiaries of PDS appeared to be the land owning upper caste households in the village.

B. Primary Education and Noon-Meal Scheme

The primary school which teaches children upto V standard has not yet been upgraded as an upper primary or middle school which would enable children to study in their own village upto VIIth standard. On the contrary, some of the neighbouring village schools were upgraded as upper primary schools long back. This has happened mainly because of lack of initiative by panchayat president and Municif (VAO), who all belonged to the resident big farmers' households in the village. As a consequence the children are forced to walk to neighbouring village or town schools once they completed their V standard in the village school. Hence many students, especially girls and those belonging to Scheduled Castes had to stop their education with V standard. In the year 2000-01, there were totally 71 students studying in different standards. There were two teachers working in the school. However, it is interesting to note that an equal number of boys (31) and girls (30) were studying in the school in our resurvey year. Again, there were more number of S.C. students (45) studying in comparison to upper caste students (26). It is also worth noting that among 35 girls studying in the school, 20 belonged to S.C. with the remaining 15 belonging to the upper castes. Hence little less than two-thirds of the school children belonged to landless, Scheduled Caste, agricultural labourer households in the village. Even the remaining one-third of the students came largely from the poor backward caste households in the village. Nevertheless, these facts reveal a different story. Our field enquiries in the village revealed that most of the well-to-do families belonging to upper castes have long back started admitting their children in convent schools run by private organisations in Gummidipundi town. And, it is amazing to note that there were 56 children from the village studying in three different convent schools. Only a very few of them belonged to Scheduled Castes. These children were picked and dropped at their residences in the village by their school vans. It is important to note that the craze of village families to provide education in English to

their wards rather than providing the same in their vernacular language of Tamil. Hence the village primary school is being run mainly for the poor, low caste children rather than for the non-poor children. And, whoever can afford to spend some money on school fees and transportation is preferring to send his/her child to convent school. This happened even while the government is providing free education and free nutritious noon-meals to the students in the village school. Definitely, the preferences of non poor towards imparting education to their children in English rather than in Tamil are crystal clear. This tendency which was very much restricted to the urban households earlier, especially in the 1980s has gradually spread to rural households also during the recent years. This change in attitudes of villagers towards a particular type of education has implications for the state government's policy on school education. This is more so in the context of Tamil Nadu government's attempt at introducing Tamil as a compulsory medium of instruction in both rural and urban primary schools.

The noon-meal scheme in the village is run mainly for the benefit of school children. Its aim is not only to provide nutritious food to the children but also to encourage enrolment of students and to reduce drop-out rates. But, how far these purposes are being served in this village is in doubt. The noon-meal scheme is implemented by a separate staff allotted for the purpose. They were paid very low salaries. The food is cooked in a room adjacent to the school. But, our gathering of information revealed that out of 71 students, only 50 students used to eat the food provided in the school. And, they largely belonged to the landless Scheduled Caste households. The upper caste children prefer to take their lunch in their own homes. Some of the reasons cited for the apathy of upper caste children to take meals in the school were the food is not hygienic and it is often cooked by low caste women and more over they did not want to stand in the queue with plates in their hands along with the Scheduled Caste children.

c) Intensive Women and Child care Development Scheme (ICDS)

This scheme is run by the Central Government mainly to provide nutritious food to the children in the age-group of 0 to 6 and pregnant women for 6 months periods before and after delivery. Pregnant women and children were also provided medical help with weekly health check ups and treatment by doctors and nurses. Most of the nurses or health assistants attend the ICDS centre and residences in the village. Doctors attend only in case of emergency. However, since the ICDS centre is located in the Scheduled Caste colony, it is providing help only to the poor belonging to low castes in the village. Hence the poor belonging to upper castes in the village are not served by ICDS. Moreover, one aya and a cook are appointed to this centre with low salaries as part-time employees. They also reside in SC colony and hence also the poor belonging to upper castes did not approach the centre for help. Here also like the noon-meal centre functioning in the village, the caste stigma factor works very much. As part of the nutrious food served to pregnant women and children, they were provided each with a 100 grams laddoos made of blackgram powder and a egg each once a weak. Other than these they are not provided with any regular lunch or milk or milk powder which are necessary for feeding the babies. But as part of the medical treatment, they were provided with all the required injections and tablets. However, if only the ICDS centre was located either in upper caste localities and was manned by non - SC employees, then, more people could have benefited from this facility. Hence the officials in-charge of implementing this scheme should think of reorienting it taking into account the caste and other factors working in the village.

d) Voluntary Women's Association and Small Savings Schemes

There started one Mahalir Mandram (Women's Association) by S.C women very recently. It had allowed only 20 women as its members. They used to meet every Saturday and each member has to save Rs.11 which would be recorded in Mandram passbooks given to each member. Based on such savings, each member can take a loan if there arises any emergency situation. Once this Women Association registers with the government; the government can extend loans for

livestock purchases and provide gas connections to its members based on association's guarantee for such subsidised credit. This association wants to take advantage of the governmental benefits available especially to SC Women's Association. But, for the last two to three years, neither this association has extended its membership beyond 20 nor enabled formation of some other SC Women's Association. It is also a pity to note that there started no mahilar mandrams by the non - S.C. women in the village. However, the present SC Women's association is also collecting donations from other sources wherever it is possible.

III. Utilisation of Common Property Resources (CPRs)

The village has no common lands except its tank and two ponds. The village has no forest land and separate grazing land for its animals. Hence animals are taken out for grazing into the neighbouring village tank foreshore and roadside porombokes which are closer to the village Even the fuel needs of the poor households were met by the collection of twigs and branches from the thorny trees grown in the neighbouring village porombokes. In our survey year of 2000-01, there were 32 households having gas connections to cook food. And, all these households belonged to upper castes. None of the S.C. households had gas connection in our resurvey year. With the exception of these 32 households, all others depended only on neighbouring village porombokes for their fuel needs. One another source of fuel for the poor S.C. households is the cowdung cakes. They normally collect cow dung from road sides and make it as cakes and dry them up before being used as a fuel. None of these households in the village use bio-mass as a fuel. This is because they do not cultivate any crops other than dwarf varieties of paddy which have long stems whose crop residues can be used as a fuel. And some households use kerosene for their stoves, because it is provided at a cheaper price by the fair price shop.

Recently, 10 S.C. households had moved out of their parents' houses in the colony and occupied 50 cents of poromboke land available on the road side in the

village. They were given pattas later on by the revenue department. This was the first time that low caste people occupied poromboke lands for residential purposes in the village. Other than this, a few land owning cultivators had encroached whatever poromboke lands that were available adjacent to their holdings in the agricultural ayacut. Most of them were served with B notices which require them to pay a nominal amount for the occupation of government's land. Many of them have not yet been provided with pattas. However, the total extent of such encroached land may not exceed 10 acres.

The only source of money incomes for the whole village used to be the auctions of fish available in tank and ponds and tamarind fruits from the trees grown on tank bund. Till a few years ago these incomes were shared between the Scheduled Caste and upper caste representatives. Then, these incomes used to be spent on the renovation of temples constructed in their respective areas. They also conducted ceremonies to the deities of these temples with these incomes. However, the defeat of a big farmer's son in the panchayat elections conducted in 1996 introduced acrimony and hate between lower and upper caste people in the village. The resident big farmer's son was defeated because most of S.C. voters had voted for a neighbouring village backward caste person. Because of these political developments the incomes earned from auctions of fish and fruits till the year 1999-2000 totalling about Rs.16,000/- were appropriated by the former panchayat president and the ex-village municiff's families. And the renovation of two village temples were carried on based on the monies raised through donations. If the two big farmers had not appropriated the CPRs incomes; the village panchayat could have spent those incomes on various developmental works of the village. This also led to no cultivator taking interest in maintaining and repairing of common irrigation sources in the village. Again, while big farmers claimed usufructuous rights over tamarind trees grown on tank bunds; the fish available in tank and ponds were allowed to be collected freely by anybody including neighbouring villagers without any question. However, the poor of the village have not benefited much from this source of common property.

IV. Village Panchayat

Enathimelpakkam was included in Peria Sholiambakkam village panchayat along with Chinna Sholiambakkam in 1996. In the panchayat elections that took place in 1996 for the first time after a gap of 10 years resulted in the winning of a yadava (backward) caste big farmer belonging to Sholiambakkam. Previously, the panchayat presidentship was held by a big farmer of Enathimelpakkam. In the 1996 elections to village panchayat his son contested the elections and lost. Of course, the previous president belonged to a forward Mudaliar caste. The shift in panchayat presidentship from forward caste family residing in Enathimelpakkam to a backward caste family residing in Peria Sholiambakkam took place mainly because of the demographically dominant Scheduled Caste voters from the former village voted overwhelmingly to the person contested from the latter village. This is also because the poor voters of this panchayat village preferred a backward caste person rather than a forward caste person for the panchayat presidentship. Moreover, the poor of this panchayat village wanted to alter the power relations by electing the backward caste person who was said to be more accessible, docile and kind towards solving their problems.

This village panchayat regularly conducted the Grama Sabha meetings once in three months under the supervision of a Panchayat Union officer. However, attendance at such meetings was found to be thin. There were not many women participants in such meetings. Adult men out numbered such meetings. Nevertheless, the panchayat president had to encounter many allegations of not carrying on different developmental works in the village for the past few years. This had happened mainly because there were not enough funds at the disposal of village panchayat. Hence the Grama Sabha provided a platform for all quarrels and allegations against each other. Moreover, the defeat of upper caste person belonging to Enathimelpakkam had only angered the many non - S.C. persons and the newly elected village panchayat could not enlist the support of all sections of population in the village. Hence many panchayat programmes which could have otherwise been

carried on based on free labour (Namakku Name Thittam) provided by villagers were very much affected. Hence link roads were not converted into semi-pucca roads, no drainage and sanitation works were undertaken, the uncompleted school and panchayat buildings remained as they were for want of funds and co-operation from the people. A few programmes which the panchayat is carrying on with great difficulty were the provision of street lights and drinking water supply. Other than these two maintenance works there were no other developmental works undertaken by the panchayat in the village during its term of office for the last five years.

The village panchayat finances were found to be far inadequate to meet its needs of development. Its revenue from house tax base is very meagre. It is not enough even to pay for electricity bills on street lighting and on drinking water pumpsets. Its major revenue came from the share of stamp duties collected on the registration of lands within its jurisdiction. This income was between Rs.30,000 and Rs.40,000 per year. This income was hardly sufficient to provide street lighting and drinking water to the households. Last year, there was no money even to repair pumpsets and pipe lines in the panchayat. There were also no grants given to village panchayat by the state government of Tamil Nadu. Since the village panchayat could not generate enough incomes it could not secure a matching grant from the state government. It is also declared as one of the weak village panchayat in the Gummidipundi panchayat union block. Its financial owes were further accentuated by lack of co-operation among different sections of population in the village. For example, the ex-panchayat president and Municiff belonged to Enathimelpakkam were said to have appropriated incomes earned from the auctions of fish and tamarind fruits available respectively in tank and two ponds and in the trees grown on their bunds. These incomes add to a total of Rs.16000/- in the year 1999-2000. Thus the panchayat could not exercise any control over the available common property resources in the village against the wishes of big farmers. Hence the village panchayats should be provided with enough powers to deal with common property resources in the villages.

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) had sanctioned Rs.10 lakhs to convert its link roads into pucca roads soon after the panchayat came to power. But the panchayat union was said to be delaying implementation of this important programme for a long time for its own reasons. However, village panchayat had no power to press for its implementation. Infact, the panchayat union chairman had never conducted any meetings of village panchayat presidents either to listen to their grievances or to redress them. Thus the road facilities within the village panchayat limits could not be improved due to official apathy on the part of middle tier panchayat union and other government departments. And this happened despite the availability of funds from NABARD. It is also important to note that for over two decades the village panchayat could not complete the construction of a school building for want of funds. However, these incompleted buildings were being used by in-migrant agricultural labourers for cooking food and staying..

The village panchayat president complained that the election of councillors to the Panchayat Union and Zilla parishath was of no use to the village developmental works. Instead, they were always trying to benefit by securing various contracts given by Panchayat Unions and Zilla parishats. And the M.P. and M.L.A. constituency development funds are spent mainly through their own political party contractors. Since the panchayat president of Peria Sholiambakkam belonged to AIADMK which was in opposition then, he could not secure any M.P. or M.L.A. fund to his village developmental works. Moreover, the village Panchayat President had no office of his own and a full time clerk to maintain records and to supervise panchayat works. He was at best permitted to employ somebody on a part time basis to assist him with a meagre salary of Rs.400 per month.

V. Poverty Assessment

Like the earlier surveys we could not collect the source wise income data from our sample households both for want of time and resources in the year 2000-01. However, we have made some rough estimates of poverty based on our close observations of sample households economic status during our latest survey year. We

have taken a per capita annual income of Rs.3000/- or per capita monthly income of Rs.250/- as the poverty line in the year 2000-01. In 1993-94, we took Rs.1920 per capita, per annum or Rs.160 per capita, per month as the poverty line income for the calculations of absolute poverty in the village. Like the 1993-94 situation even in 2000-01 there was no absolute poverty prevailing among the categories of big, medium and small farmers, non-agricultural regular salaried employees and artisanal and service households in the village.

The calculations of absolute poverty prevailing among the households of the village revealed that between 1993-94, and 2000-01, while the percentage of households in absolute poverty increased from 37.50 to 40.14; the percentage of population living in the same declined from 41.43 to 38.01. Since the proportion of population living in absolute poverty is important, we can conclude that there had been a definite decline in the level of absolute poverty in the late 1990s. This trend in absolute poverty level also confirms the state level data on rural poverty which showed a decline from 42 per cent in 1990 to 37 per cent in 1993. Hence the absolute poverty level of the village was not much different from the state level absolute poverty. However, the small decline observed in the village level absolute poverty figure was brought about mainly by the diversification of occupations and employment, especially by the landless poor, who took advantage of urban and industrial growth centres which came up in their neighbourhoods. Further, our calculations also revealed that 44 per cent of marginal farmers, 51 per cent of pure tenants, 50 per cent of agricultural labourers and 58 per cent of non-agricultural casual workers were all in absolute poverty in 2000-01. The absolute poverty was concentrated in the category of non-agricultural casual workers because of their low wage incomes.

VI. Food Security

Between our survey and resurvey years we found the number of landless households increasing in the village. A considerable number of low caste landless households had not only sold out their meagre land holdings totaling about 11 acres

they had also sold out the lands encroached by them (about 60 acres) between mid-1980s and mid-1990s. Thus the Scheduled Castes who accounted for little less than half (44%) of the total population merely owned 6.20 acres in our latest resurvey year. Out of 142 households only 51 owned some land in 2000-01. Between 1993-94 and 2000-01, the number of landless households declined by 20. And most of them belonged to Scheduled Castes. In the same manner, the number of land operating households had also declined from 79 in 1993-94 to 61 by 2000-01. Between the same years, the extent of land operated by households declined from 224.48 acres to 197.30 acres. This decline in operated area was brought mainly by the declining number of tenants and the area leased – in by them over the years. Thus, a considerable number of households no longer produce food even for their own domestic consumption in the village. Previously, they used to retain a part of their paddy production for home consumption.

Not only land ownership by poor had declined but also their livestock ownerships too. Between 1993-094 and 2000-01, there were drastic reductions observed with respect to bullocks from 45 to a mere 8, milch animals from 88 to 63 and sheep and goats from 92 to 39. And most of these declines occurred because of sale of livestock by landless, low caste households in the village; some of the reasons offered for such declines were (a) the high prices of these animals which the poor find it difficult to purchase, (b) declining land ownership and operation which earlier provided agricultural by-products to feed the animals (c) increase in maintenance costs and (d) the shrinkage of grazing lands for animals, etc. However, the declining ownership of livestock, especially by landless households not only led to the declining employment and incomes but also led to the declining consumption of milk and meat products by the poor with negative implications for their food security.

Over the years there has been a complete monetisation of wage payments in agriculture. Agricultural labourers were neither paid in kind nor served with food on the farm. There were also no permanent farm servants employed by cultivator households on fixed annual or monthly kind wage payment basis. Previously when

they were employed they used to be paid at the rate of two bags of paddy per month plus a set of clothes every year. Besides, they were also served with food thrice a day. The households also no longer employed cowherds who used to be paid in money and served with food twice a day. Further, in the 1990s even harvest wages were paid in money. Previously they were paid in paddy. Though the real wage rates paid to agricultural labourers had increased over the years, the payment of even harvest wages in money crippled the landless households capacity to build food stocks in the peak seasons and consume the same in the lean seasons. On the contrary, the receipt of money wages could not enable them to save for the lean season's spending. This is also because of the fact that a significant number of male agricultural labourers used to spend a part of their wage earnings on drinking liquor while their women folk are expected to spend their earnings on food. Thus the change from kind wage payment system to money wage system has very much reduced the food security of landless poor households in the village.

The attenuation of jajmani system (payment of fixed annual kind wages to the artisanal and services persons by the cultivator- employers) and the payment of cash wages on piece wage rate basis to the services provided by the artisanal and service persons had also threatened their food security. The mechanisation of agriculture and the purchase of their services from the neighbouring towns had affected the employment and incomes of resident artisans and services persons. Previously, each of such households used to collect 10 to 20 bags of paddy from cultivators at the time of harvesting and keep the same for a year round consumption. Those households never found any food deficits when jajmani system was prevailing in the village. Now none of them stored foodgrains in their households. Instead, they buy food from the open market and fair price shops whenever they had money. Hence this situation has increased the risk of households to the provision of food to their members at all times of a year.

As has already been said that the distribution of foodgrains through fair price shops to the poor had not helped much to increase their food security in the village. This is because (a) the fair price shop is opened only for one or two days in a month

in which the poor households could not buy all the rations for want of money, (b) rice meant for Public Distribution system (PDS) is diverted into the open market by the fair price shop seller and (c) a considerable number of PDS card holders had mortgaged their cards with creditors for loans. Hence PDS had not helped the poor very much to reduce their dependence on open market for food.

As far as collection of some of the food items from CPR's are concerned, we have already noted that the available fish in ponds and tank and tamarind fruits from the trees grown on their bunds either used to be auctioned or a few big farmers claimed usufructuous rights over them. However, in the last few years, we had observed a few big farmers appropriating the income of CPRs to themselves thereby preventing the poor from the free collections and consumption of these food items in their households. Thus, over the years, the food security of poor households is threatened in ever so many ways in a village which has more than doubled its food production by modernising its agriculture within a period of two decades.

SECTION V

Concluding Observations

Between the two survey years of 1993-94 and 2000-01, we found a remarkable improvement in the material welfare of upper caste households in the village. By material welfare we mean the construction of new houses, possession of T.V.sets, two wheelers, gas connections and ownership of agriculturally related assets such as tractors and pumpsets, etc. The village is also well connected with the neighbouring towns by road transport. However, it is a pity to note that the material welfare of Scheduled Caste HHs who accounted for little less than half the population in the village remained more or less the same for over two decades. There is not much change observed in their economic conditions over the years.

Demographically, the village remained a small one all through the decades of 1980s and 1990s with the total number of households and population varying hardly in between 115 and 142 and 492 and 605 respectively. Between 1993-94 and 2000-01, the population of the village grew merely by six per cent. The percentage of Scheduled Caste population varied in between 40 to 45 for over a long period of time. These trends only show that the demographic structure of the village is dominated by landless Scheduled Caste HHs and it has not experienced any demographic explosions over the years. Instead, the village experienced very slow growth of population over a period of three decades. However, this slow growth of population cannot be explained by any significant out-migration of households and population or by any significant infant mortality rates. At best, the out-migration of few people from upper castes in search of white scholared employment had only been matched by the in-migration of a few low caste agricultural labourers.

Some of the demographic characteristics of the households are also worth recalling. The average family size of the village remained at around four for a long time. But, in all the survey years we found the inverse relationship prevailing between land holding size and average family size with big farmers on the top and

landless at the bottom. Again, the earner-dependent ratio for all the households was found to be less than one. It was only 0.74 in 2000-01. But the earner-dependent ratios were found to be smaller only among the landed and well-to-do HHs and not among the landless and poor HHs. As far as literacy rates are concerned, they are found to be satisfactory. On an average, there were 2.85 literates per H.H. in the village in our latest survey year. In this connection, it is worth recalling the fact that of late many upper caste HHs were found to be sending their children to convent schools in the neighbouring town. By the year 2000, it became clear that while poor sent their children to village school where education is imparted in Tamil; the economically better off HHs sent their children to convent schools where medium of instruction is English.

As far as the workforce of the village is concerned, it is interesting to note that all through the two previous decades about three - fifths of its population remained as dependents or as non-workers. Hence the village always had only about two-fifths of its population working. Out of total workers, where as about three-fourths of them were engaged in agricultural occupations available mainly within the village; the remaining one-fourth of them were engaged in different non-agricultural occupations available mainly outside the village. The data available on occupational structure and employment for a longer period reveals that between 1985-86 and 2000-01; there had been a gradual decline in the percentage of agricultural workers from 84 to 74 with a simultaneous increase in the percentage of non-agricultural workers from 16 to 26. However, it is interesting to note that while most of the agricultural labourers were supplied by landless Scheduled Caste HHs; most of the non-agricultural workers, especially the high wage paid employees came from the land owning upper caste HHs. The non-agricultural workers commute to their work places while residing in the village. Nevertheless, our analysis excluded those salaried employed persons belonging to upper castes who had already out-migrated and set up their HHs in neighbouring city and towns. Anyhow, by 2000-01, there emerged a clear pattern of caste and occupational structure and the gradual diversification of employment among the workers of the village.

For over two decades the total area, percentages of area cultivated and uncultivated have all remained more or less the same. As against the cultivated area remaining at about four-fifths; the uncultivated area remained at about one-fifth. Over the years, the percentage of area irrigated had marginally increased from 94.38 in mid-80's to 97 in 2000-01. While there had not been much of an increase in the net irrigated area; the gross irrigated area had considerably increased thanks to the conjunctive use of tank and borewells located in the agricultural ayacut. The village neither had any forest nor grazing lands available within its area. Hence the poor HHs of the village depended mainly on the neighbouring village tank foreshores both to collect their firewood and to graze their animals.

Out of total cultivated area of about 402.30 acres, whereas non- residents owned 56.14 per cent; the residents owned 43.86 per cent. Between 1993-94 and 2000-01, as against the non-resident land ownership increasing from about 50 per cent to 56..14 per cent; the resident land ownership declined from 50 per cent to 43.86 per cent. This showed that non-residents were purchasing lands from the residents over the years. In fact, there came up a large estate of 60 acres on the outskirts of the village based on the purchases of cultivated land in the village by a non-resident who is living in Chennai city. Consequently, the landlessness in the village had also gone up. The number of land owning HHs in the village declined from 71 in 1993-94 to 51 in 2000-01. And, all those who sold their small extents of land belonged to marginal farmers (15) tenants (2) and agricultural labourers (6) categories. However, such land transfers from residents to non-residents accounted to only for about 25 acres. The big farmers themselves owned little less than 50 per cent of the area in 2000-01. Among the different caste groups of HHs, Mudaliars themselves owned and operated about 70 per cent of respective areas. Thus, the cultivated land continued to be highly concentrated in the big farmer Mudaliar HHs even in the 1990's. The Gini coefficients worked out for this purpose revealed them to be not much different between the survey years. Between 1993-94 and 2000-01, while the gini coefficient of land ownership declined marginally from 0.5930 to

0.5779; the gini coefficient of operated area remained the same at 0.5265. Thus, both owned and operated areas are still highly concentrated in a few bigger farmer, upper caste, Mudaliar hands.

As far as changes in livestock ownerships are concerned, we found drastic reductions in the ownership of plough bullocks and sheep and goats. Between 1993-94 and 2000-01, whereas plough bullocks declined from 45 to a mere eight; the number of sheep and goat declined from 92 to 39. Milch animal ownership has also declined considerably over the years. However, the declining ownership of bullocks and sheep and goats were brought about mainly by landless, Scheduled Caste agricultural labourers who sold them out. Some of the main reasons provided for the declining ownership of livestock were the a) increased tractorisation of agriculture b) prohibitive prices of animals and the c) hike in their maintenance costs - all of which reduced their ownerships by landless poor HHs in the village.

Over the years, both the number of households leasing-in land and the total extent of area leased-in by them declined considerably. But, tenancy continued on Kuttagai (fixed kind rent) basis. And there had been no change in the land rent of six bags of paddy, per acre, per year, over the years. Again, as in the case of land ownership most of the pure tenants belonged to the upper caste Mudaliars only. None of the Scheduled Caste agricultural labourer HH had leased-in any land for cultivation. Again, the phenomenon of reverse tenancy (small land owner leasing-out land to big farmers) which we observed in earlier surveys had almost gone. In our latest survey year we found the leased-in land mainly coming from non-resident owners and resident female land owners. Nevertheless, tenancy was found to be unprofitable to the farmers who neither owned pumpsets nor plough bullocks and family labour.

Even over decades, the village continued to have a monocropped cultivation of HYV paddy. Howevet, both the intensity of paddy cultivation and its yield rates had only increased negligibly over the years. But the cultivation of paddy became

more and more profitable only to those who owned pumpsets and tractors. And, the non-owners of these assets found it very difficult to make some profits from cultivation . Again, for the same reasons, we also found the per acre yield rates of paddy higher in the bigger farms rather than in small farms. Hence, the earlier observation of positive relationship prevailing between land holding size and productivity remained to hold good even in 2000-01. Nevertheless, the over all efficiency of cultivation as has been captured by input-output ratios remained more or less the same in all the survey years.

As far as employment and wage rates paid to agricultural labourers are concerned, we found opposite trends prevailing in the village. While the number of days of employment generated per unit of land remained the same, the number of days of employment secured by a male or female casual agricultural labourer had declined to some extent over the years. These declines in employment were brought about mainly by the increased mechanisation of agriculture and the influx of in-migrant agricultural labourers over the years. The peak season agricutlural operations of transplanting and harvesting of paddy were carried on both by reisdent and in-migrant agricultural labourers. And, there were no permanent farm servants employed by cultivator households in the village in 2000-01.

There has been a complete monetisation of wage payments in agriculture over the years. However, it is encouraging to note that between 1993-94 and 2000-01, as against the money wage rates more than doubling; the real wage rates had gone up by more than one-third . And, these increases in money and real wage rates were brought about despite the influx of in-migrant agricultural labourers. The improvement in wage rates had also happened because of the peak season demand over taking the supply of agricultural labour. However, the decline in the number of days of employment secured by a male or female casual agricultural labourer had kept their total household's income more or less at the same level even in 2000-01.

We observed gradual diversification of occupations into non-agricultural sector over the years. These non-agricultural employment opportunities were provided mainly by the urban and industrial growth centres which came up in the neighbourhood of the village. Here it is also important to note that even after modernisation of agriculture for over two decades there developed no worthwhile non-agricultural occupations within the village, even by the year 2000. However, we can notice greater integration of the village economy with the outer world. Nevertheless, the benefits of such integration mainly went to the upper caste, land owning, educated and adult male workers of the village rather than to the landless, low caste, less educated, adult male workers. Further, non-agricultural employment opportunities were mainly availed by adult male workers rather than by adult female workers. This is because female workers were found to be immobile, homesick and less skilled. Again, the high wage paid employment was secured only by high caste, educated persons rather than by low caste, less educated persons. Hence most of the low caste, landless workers ended up working in low wage paid occupations available outside the village.

Between 1993-94 and 2000-01, we found the declining governmental programmes implemented for the benefit of poor in the village. This is because some of the governmental programmes for the poor had already been implemented in the village in the early 1980s itself. However, the access to common property resources for the poor had not been affected much. The revival of village panchayat after a gap of 10 years in 1996 had introduced conflicts between different caste groups and resulted in the appropriation of incomes earned from common property resources by a few big farmers which otherwise could have gone to village panchayat and ultimately benefited the poor. However, the village panchayat could not do much to the development of the village and especially to its poor both for want of resources and co-operation from different sections of village community.

It is interesting to note that between the two survey years, there emerged a self-help group (SHG) mainly among the S.C. women. They started saving their

meagre incomes and availed loans through the SHG. The S.H.G was also trying to seek governmental help for their economic improvement. Another important aspect relates to the school education in the village. From the mid-1990s, most of the upper caste HHs were attracted to the provision of convent education to their children rather than sending them to the village school which imparts education in vernacular language of Tamil. This happened despite the provision of free education and the implementation of nutritious noon meal scheme for school children by the state government of Tamil Nadu. Hence the only students studying in the village school were the children of Scheduled Castes and other poor parents in the village. And, who ever had some incomes, they preferred to educate their children in convent schools. So, it is important to note that the tendency of educating children in convent schools is no longer restricted to urban households themselves but it has also spread to rural households. Hence it is for the state government and educational planners to ponder over the future of imparting education in Tamil for it may well end up only as a poor man's educational system in the state.

The analysis of available data and information reveals that between the two survey years there had been a gradual decline in the level of absolute poverty in the village. This can be attributed mainly to the diversification of occupations, especially by the adult male workers and the increases observed both in money and real wage rates paid to agricultural labourers over the years. Nevertheless, it is also important to note that while the income poverty may be on the decline, the threshold level of land ownership which is necessary to keep the poor above the poverty line on a permanent basis is fast eroding. The increased number of landless households, the declining area under tenancy, the depletion of livestock resources, especially among the poorer groups and the restricted access of poor to CPRs have all threatened the food security of those belonging to the weaker sections in the village.