

## Digital Collections at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS)

### - Enid Perlin's Research Material -

In the mid-1970s, Enid Perlin conducted 145 interviews with mill workers and former mill workers in Coimbatore. Her research data has been digitalized at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies between 2019 and 2020. The data is divided as follows:

**Questionnaires:** The Enid Perlin collection contains two questionnaires. *Questionnaire 1* contains 52 interviews, and *Questionnaire 2* contains 62 interviews. They contain notes on the mill-worker's biographical details, notes on their mill careers including details on wages, and the jobs they performed in the mills.

Ashwin Subramanian created biographical summaries of the interviews in the two questionnaires. These summaries detail the mill-workers' record of their age, and notes on Enid Perlin's remarks. In addition, the summaries contain an extensive comment section on Enid Perlin's notes (where necessary); and on Tamil terms, and caste names.

Interviews, that were also taped, have been marked with italicized notes, detailing the tape in which the interview appears, along with the side of the cassette tape (whether Side A or Side B).

The summaries of the questionnaires are available online in *Questionnaire 1 Summary* and *Questionnaire 2 Summary*. The interviews have been anonymized in the online documents.

**Cassette Tapes:** The Enid Perlin collection contains 19 cassette tapes with interviews with mill workers. They contain interviews with 39 mill workers, of whom 35 are men, and four are women. Eight of the interviews are also available in the Questionnaires.

The tapes have been digitalized as mp3 audio files, and their content has, subsequently, been described by Ashwin Subramanian. The mp3 files, as well as the detailed description of the interviews, can be accessed at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies.

In addition, a summary of all the interviews in the cassette tapes is available online. The interviews have been anonymized in the online documents.

Full versions of the summaries can be accessed at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies.

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S.No.	Biographical Details
1	<p>Male, age 57, born 1919. Caste: Chettiar (Kannada).</p> <p>Father was a gunny sack merchant. Worker was born in Coimbatore, in the Raja Street area. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1934.</p> <p>Father was not literate. The worker has studied till Class 1 or 2, and he can read and write a little. His father had 2 boys, and 2 girls – all the workers’ siblings are now dead (due to old age). The worker was 22 at the time of his marriage. His spouse was 15 at that point. They have 2 boys – one works in the CSW Mills, and the other is a teacher.</p>
2	<p>Male, age 54, born 1922. Caste – Chettiar.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 70 in 1956. Father was an agricultural coolie. Worker was born in Malabar and came to RS Puram (Coimbatore) as a child. Began working in the mill at the age of 16/17 in 1938/39.</p> <p>Father was not literate. Worker has studied till Class 4 – can read Tamil papers but can’t write easily. His father had 2 boys the worker’s older brother worked in the same mill. Worker was 21 at the time of marriage, and his spouse was 17. They have no children.</p>
3	<p>Male, age 62, born 1914. Retired mill worker. Caste: Telugu Chettiar.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 75. His father was a businessman in agricultural produce. Worker was born in Puttur village in Palladam taluk and lives now in Peelamedu. He began working in the mill at the age of 20 around 1934-36.</p> <p>His father could sign his name. The worker has studied till Class 4, and can read newspapers and story books (religious stories). He cannot read English.</p> <p>His father had 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. The worker was married at the age of 25 and his wife was 16/17 at the time of marriage. They had 6 children of whom 3 died due to smallpox, drowning, and illness since birth. One of his sons is in the SRV Mills, the other has a tobacco business, and the other boy is idle.</p>
4	<p>Male, age 54. Caste: Chettiar (Kongu).</p> <p>Father died at the age of 72. Father was a small merchant in grains/cotton. Worker was born in Nanjaigoundarpudur, 6 miles north of Coimbatore, and now lives in Ganupatti. He began working in the mill at the age of 14 in 1935/36.</p> <p>His father had studied till class 3 and the worker till Class 8. His father had 8 children – 6 boys, and 2 girls. 4 of his brothers worked in the Lakshmi Mills (and one nephew too). Worker was 29 at the age of marriage, and his wife was 22. They have 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls, none of whom are in the mill.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
5	<p>Male, age 65 was born in 1911. Caste: Balija Naidu.</p> <p>He is almost retired from mill work. Father died at the age of 90; he was an agriculturalist and owned about 5 acres of land on which he cultivated ragi/cholam. The worker was born in Channanur, 10 miles west of Coimbatore, and lives now in Gandhipuram. The worker began mill work at the age of 21, in 1932.</p> <p>His father was not educated, and the worker can only sign his name. His father had 5 children – 4 boys, and 1 girl. The worker was married at the age of 21, and his wife was 17. They have 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls</p>
6	<p>Male, age 59 was born in 1917. Caste: Reddi (also: Reddiar).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 60 and was an agricultural businessman but lost the business and then was a mill worker as a coolie carrying bobbins. The worker was born in Aullikulam (22 miles north from Coimbatore). He began mill work in 1939, at the age of 23.</p> <p>His father was not educated, and the worker has studied till Class 3, and can sign his name. His father had 10 children – 9 boys, and 1 girl. Only 3 of the children are still alive, and the worker's younger brother works in CSWM. Another brother worked in the mill too. The worker was married at the age of 21, and his wife was 18 but died within a year. He has 6 children – 4 boys, 2 girls with his second wife. 3 of their children (2 boys, and 1 girl) were born sick, and died soon after.</p>
7	<p>Male, age 55 was born in 1921. Caste: Reddi.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 60 (in around 1946) and was an agriculturalist. He owned 5 acres of land. The land was sold off due to drought, and his father then worked in the RK Mills as a cop carrier. The worker was born in Peelamedu, and took up mill work in 1937 – both his father and he joined the mill in 1937.</p> <p>The worker and his father are not literate. His father had 5 children – 4 girls, and 1 boy. The worker is the eldest. One of his sisters worked in another mill. The worker was married at the age of 23, and his wife was 20. They have 1 daughter who has studied till Class 9, and is now married.</p>
8	<p>Male, age 52 was born in 1924. Caste: Thevar.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 42 in 1936, was an agriculturalist and owned 2 acres of wet land, and cultivated paddy. His father got into debt and had to sell the land. The worker was born in Sowripalayam, and still lives in his ancestral house. He began mill work when he was 13 in 1937 as a half/part-timer.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father studied till Class 6, and the worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. The worker’s younger brother works in the Kaleeswara Mills. The worker was married at the age of 21, and his wife was 19. She was a mill worker too and had started at the age of 12. They have 3 children – 1 boy, and 2 girls, none of whom are in the mill.</p>
9	<p>Male, age 56 (he is probably 52). Caste: Agarmudayar.</p> <p>Father lived beyond 90, was an agriculturalist on leased lands, and later grew betel. Father did not pay the debts on the leased lands and absconded to another town. Worker was born in Nagammanaickenpalaiyam, and now lives in Sowripalaiyam (town his father absconded to). He began mill work at the age of 17/18 in 1936.</p> <p>His father was not educated, and the worker has studied till Class 4. He can write, and also reads story books but not fluently. His father had 7 children – 2 girls, and 5 boys. Only 1 of the worker’s siblings (a sister) is still alive. The other siblings seem to have passed away in childhood. The worker was the 4<sup>th</sup> child, and was married in 1942. His wife’s age at the time of marriage is not mentioned. They have 11 children (5 girls, 6 boys) of whom 7 are still alive. 3 of their children died of typhoid, 1 of Tuberculosis. The oldest child is a tailor, and the others are too young to work.</p>
10	<p>Male, age 51 was born in 1925. Caste – Agarmudayar Rajakulam.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 80 in 1960, and was an agriculturalist – plantain trees, gardening, and also leased 6 acres. Worker was born in Sowripalaiyam, a suburb 1 mile south of Peelamedu, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 15 in 1939/40.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 5, and the worker has studied till Class 3 or 4. He can read newspapers, and storybooks. His father had 5 children – 4 boys, and 1 girl, the worker was the 4<sup>th</sup> child. Two of his brothers worked in the mill. The worker was married at the age of 23, his wife was a mill worker at the time of marriage. His wife’s age at the time of marriage is not mentioned. She still works in the mill. They have 2 children – 1 boy, and 1 girl. The son is a handloom weaver, and the daughter is in school (Class 8).</p>
11	<p>Male, age 60, born 1916. Caste: Thevar.</p> <p>Father died when the worker was a child and was a betel grower. The worker’s mother was a mill worker at the SRV Mills. His father died at the age of 60. Worker was born in Odaiyampalayam, ¼ mile south of Peelamedu. He now lives in Sariagam. He began mill work when he was less than 20 years of age.</p> <p>Questions relating to education were not asked. His father had just one child. The worker was married at the age of 22 but has no children.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
12	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920. Caste: Agarmudiyar.</p> <p>His father died when the worker was 10 years old. His mother grew betel, but she died early too. The worker was born in Oddiampalaiyam, and still lives there.</p> <p>The worker does not know to read or write.</p> <p>His parents had two children – one boy, and one girl. The worker was married twice: he was 21/22 at the time of his first marriage, and his then wife was a mill worker. His second wife is not a mill worker. The worker has 3 children – 2 girls, and 1 boy. His son is in the workshop, one of the girls has finished SSLC, and the other is in Class VII.</p>
13	<p>Male, age 57. Caste: Thevar.</p> <p>His father lived nearly up to 100. His father and his mother were agricultural coolies. The worker was born in the nearby village of Pollachi, and now lives in Sowripalayam. He began mill work at the age of 13 in 1932 as a half/part-timer.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 4 or 5, and the worker has studied till Class 4. His father had 7 children – 4 girls, and 3 boys. The worker was the third child, and his younger brother worked in the SS Mills. The worker was 26 at the time of marriage, and his wife was 23. She was a mill construction coolie. They have 7 children – 5 boys, 2 girls, none of whom are in the mill.</p>
14	<p>Male, age 58, born 1918. Caste: Agarmudiyar.</p> <p>His father died in 1926 when the worker was just 8 years old. The worker was born in Oddiampalaiyam, and now lives in Savuripalaiyam. He began mill-work at the age of 16 in 1934.</p> <p>There is no information about his father's education. The worker has studied till Class 4. His father had 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. His sister is dead, and the worker's brother is a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 22, and his wife is a mill worker too. They have 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls. One son is a handloom weaver (self-employed), another works in the Lakshmi Mills. The other son is in the Salem transport corporation.</p>
15	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921. Caste: Pandaram (traditional flower givers to the gods at the temples).</p> <p>Father died at the age of 82 in 1968. His father performed his traditional caste occupation and was also a palmist. The worker was born in Tharapuram, about 50 miles from Coimbatore. He now lives in Udaiyampalayam. He began mill work at the age of 16 in 1937.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had studied till Class 6 and the worker has studied till Class 7. He reads newspapers/weekly magazines. His father had 4 children – 1 boy, and 3 girls. The worker was married at the age of 23, and his wife was 18. They have 3 children, all girls none of whom work in the mill.</p>
16	<p>Age 56, born 1920. Caste: Pandaram.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 85 in 1962. His father was a mill worker and worked as a spinner for 50 years in the RK Mills. The worker was born in Pappanaickeapalaiyam, and still lives in the same place. He began mill work at the age of 13 in 1933 as a full-timer.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker too has no education. His father had 5 children – 2 girls, and 3 boys. The worker was the 3<sup>rd</sup> child, and 3 of his siblings were also mill workers. The worker was married twice: first, at the age of 23. His wife was 17 at that point. His wife left him to go back and live with her parents. They have one girl. He was 36 at the time of his second marriage and has 3 children – 2 boys. Another child died very young (the child probably died due to a poisoned insect or scorpion bite).</p>
17	<p>Male, age 59 born 1917. Caste: Pandaram.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 50/55 in around 1938. His father was a temple priest, and later a workman in the PSG workshop. The worker was born in Ruliyampatti, 15 miles south from Peelamedu. He now lives in Peelamedu.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker is not educated either. His father was married twice: he had 2 boys with his first wife (worker is the older sibling), and 3 children – 2 girls, and 1 boy with his second wife. None of the worker's siblings and step siblings are mill workers. The worker was married at the age of 25. He has 6 children – 4 girls, and 2 boys. One son is in the spinning department at the SRV Mills and has studied till class 6. The other son has studied till Class 5. The daughters are not educated.</p>
18	<p>Male, age 55, born in 1921. Caste: Konar (traditionally herdsmen). His father died at the age of 60 in around 1956, and was a mill worker at the SRV Mills all his life. The worker was born in Tottipolaiyam. He began mill work at the age of 14/15 in 1935/36.</p> <p>His father had no education, the worker has studied till Class 1 or 2.</p>
19	<p>Male, age 57, born 1919. Caste: Konar.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 105. He was an agricultural coolie, and later a construction coolie. The worker was born in Serkaramakulam, and now lives in Gandhipuram. He began mill work at the age of 19 in 1938.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. His father had 2 children – both boys, and the worker’s elder brother also works in the mill. The worker was married at the age of 17, and his wife was 14 at the time of marriage. She worked in the mill for 2 years after marriage. They have 7 children – 1 girl, and 6 boys, none of whom work in the mill.</p>
20	<p>Male, age 59, born 1917. Caste: Konar.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 85 in around 1967 and was an agriculturalist who owned 6 acres of land, and cultivated sorghum. The worker was born in Thottipalaiyam, 5 miles east of Peelamedu. He still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 19 in 1936.</p> <p>His father had no education, while the worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 2 children – 2 boys, the worker’s older brother is (or was) a teacher. The worker was married at the age of 23, and his wife was 20 at the time of marriage. They have 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls, none of whom are in the mill. One son is possibly employed in a foundry.</p>
21	<p>Male, age 55/56, born 1920 (worker said he was 45, Perlin comments that he “looks much older” and is 55/56 “in fact”).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 67 in around 1966. He was a trucking coolie at the SRV Mills, after which he was a well-digging coolie. The worker began mill work at the age of 19. He was a goatherd before.</p> <p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. His father had 6 children – 4 boys, and 2 girls. The worker is the oldest child, two of his brothers were also mill workers. Presumably one is still at the SRV Mills. The worker was married at the age of 25, and his wife was a mill worker before marriage. They have 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls, none of whom are in the mill. The 2 boys are in a workshop.</p>
22	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 55 in around 1950 and was an agricultural labourer. The worker was born in Venkatapuram (one and a half miles west, and then 3 miles north), and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 19 in 1942.</p> <p>His father had no education. The worker has studied till Class 2, and can sign his name. His father had 4 children, all boys. The worker is the oldest, and 2 of his brothers also work in the CSWM Mills. The worker was married at the age of 20, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. They have 6 children – 4 boys, and 2 girls, none of whom are in the mill.</p>
23	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920. Caste: Konar (Yadavar).</p> <p>Father died at the age of 80 in around 1954. His father was a herdsman, later a mill worker, and after mill work leased 2 acres of land, and cultivated sorghum. The worker was born in Thottipalaiyam, 4 miles east of Peelamedu. He began mill work at the age of 15 in 1935 as a half/part-timer.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had no education, but the worker went to a factory school, and can sign his name. His father had 6 children – 4 boys, and 2 girls. The worker is the second child, and 2 of his brothers are still mill workers, while the other has retired. The worker was married at the age of 20, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. They have 5 children – 4 girls, and 1 boy, none of whom are in the mill.</p>
24	<p>Male, age 54, born 1922. Caste: Uppiliyar (Puliya Naicker).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 40 in 1931, when the worker was 5 years old. He was an agriculturalist and owned 2 acres of land. The worker's mother brought him up, and she worked in the RK Mills as a reeler. The worker was born in Peelamedu, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 15 in 1937 as a half/part-timer.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 4 or 5, while the worker has studied till Class 6. His father had 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls. The worker is the second child, and his older brother is a spinner in RK Mills. The worker was married at the age of 27, and his wife was 23 at the time of marriage. They have 2 children – 1 boy, and 1 girl. 2 other children died young, one during childbirth, and the other because of fever.</p>
25	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921. Caste: Thottiya Naicker (traditionally tailors, and cloth merchants).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 70 in 1944 and was a cart driver for the Kaleeswara Mill owner. The worker was born in the Coimbatore town area in the Theviar Street (now called Ramakozhil street), and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 18 in 1939.</p> <p>The worker has studied till Class 3 and does not know about his father's educational status. His father had 7 children – 4 boys, and 3 girls. The worker is the third child, and 2 of his sisters work(ed) in the mill. The worker was married at the age of 23, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. His wife died at the age of 40. They have 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl, none of whom are in the mill.</p>
25	<p>Male, age 60 or 57, born 1916 or 1919. Caste: Kannada Gounder.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 63 in 1959 and was a gardener at a High School. The worker was born in Pappanaickanpalaiyam, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 15 in 1931.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 3. He can read fluently and write easily. His father had 5 children, and the worker was the 4<sup>th</sup> child. The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 13 at the time of marriage. She continues to work in Lakshmi Mills. She started working after marriage. They have no children.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
26	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920. Caste: Vetuva Gounder (landholding agriculturalists traditionally).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 86 in 1956. He was an agriculturalist who owned 3½ acres; 2 acres of which was dry land, and 1½ acres was wet land. He sold the dry land to pay for his eldest son's, and daughter's marriage. Later, the wetlands were mortgaged to pay for the second marriage of the worker's brother. The worker was born in Panimadai, 6 miles north, near Tudailur. He now lives in Annuparalayam. The worker began mill work at the age of 15 in 1937.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 3 and could read and write. The worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. The worker's brother worked in Somasundaram mill but died of cholera in 1946. The worker was 26 at the time of marriage, his wife was 17 then. They have 8 children – 5 boys, and 3 girls of whom 2 boys, and 1 girl died in their childhood. The oldest son is a railway worker.</p>
27	<p>Male, age 56, but officially 53, born 1920, but officially 1923. Caste: Vetuva Gounder.</p> <p>His father is 95 years old, and still alive. He was an agriculturalist, and owned 3 acres of land, 50% of which were wet lands. The land was confiscated by private moneylenders to improve agriculture. His father then became a building/agricultural coolie in Coimbatore. The worker was born in Puliampatti, 35 miles north. He lives in Gandhipuram now. He began mill work at the age of 17 in 1937 but produced a certificate claiming he was 15 years old.</p> <p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. However, the worker learnt to sign his name. His father had 4 children - 2 girls, and 2 boys, the worker is the oldest child. The worker was married at the age of 20, his wife was 20. She worked in the mill for a while after marriage but died young before she reached 30 years of age during childbirth (the child died too). They have 3 children – 2 girls, and 1 boy.</p>
28	<p>Male, age 54, born 1922. Caste: Shivacheri (traditional diamond workers, involved in lapidary).</p> <p>Father died at the age of 61 in 1961. He was a jeweller and was also involved in lapidary. He owned his own business. He also owned lands but had to sell them to clear debts. The worker was born in Palghat (Malabar), and now lives in Pappanaickapalayam. He began mill work at the age of 16/17 in 1939.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 4, and the worker till Class 5. His father had 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls. One boy, and 1 girl are dead, and the other brother is a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 27, and his wife was 23 at the time of marriage. They have 5 children – 4 girls, and 1 boy. One of the girls is a lab worker in the Public Health department.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
29	<p>Male, age 53, born 1923. Caste: Kurumbar Gounder.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 60 in 1955. He was an English house servant. He was born in Pappanaickapalayam, and began mill work at the age of 16 in 1939.</p> <p>His father was not educated, and neither is the worker. His father had 8 children – 6 boys, and 2 girls. The worker was the second child, and 2 of his brothers worked in the Lakshmi Mill. The worker was married at the age of 21, and his wife was 18 at the time of marriage. She took to mill work after marriage. They have 2 children – both girls who are in school.</p>
30	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920. Caste: Kurumbar Gounder.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 55 in around 1945. His father was an agriculturalist, and the family owned 6 acres of irrigated land. The lands were sold since the worker's grandfather was in debt. His father then became a building construction coolie. The worker was born in Pappanaickapalayam, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 16/17 in 1936/37.</p> <p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker although he can sign his name. His father had 4 children – 1 girl, and 3 boys. The worker is the oldest; one of his brothers died due to a stomach infection, and the other brother is in the weaving department at Lakshmi Mills. The worker was married at the age of 29, and his wife was 18. His wife took to mill work after marriage but had to give it up because of mill heat. They have 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl, none of whom are in the mill.</p>
31	<p>Male, age 55, born in 1921. Caste: Kurumbar Gounder.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 65 in 1961 and was a town coolie all his life. The worker was born in Coimbatore town, and began mill work at the age of 15 in 1936 by procuring a medical certificate.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 6. He can read, and write fluently. His father had 7 children – 5 boys, and 2 girls. The worker was the 6<sup>th</sup> child, and 2 of his siblings worked in the CSWM Mill. One of his sisters died in her 30s during childbirth. He was married at the age of 22, and his wife was 12 at the time of marriage. They have 7 children – 3 boys, and 4 girls. One son works in the CSWM Mill.</p>
32	<p>Male, age 51 (he is probably 53, born 1925 or 1923). Caste: Kurumbar Gounder.</p> <p>His father died before the worker's birth, and the worker's mother died at the age of 45. His mother was an agricultural coolie. The worker was born in Pappanaickapalayam, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 13 in 1938 as a full-timer. The doctor thought the worker was 15. He looked a "big strong boy for his age".</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>The worker is not educated and does not know about his father's educational status. His father had 2 children – 1 boy, and 1 girl. The worker was married at the age of 27, and his wife was 22 or 23. His wife is a worker in a button factory. They have 4 children – 3 girls, and 1 boy, none of whom work in the mill.</p>
33	<p>Male, age 56, born in 1920. Caste: Kurumbar Gounder.</p> <p>His father died in the worker's infancy and was a herder. After the father's death, the family lived by grazing lands, and selling sheep, which was mostly done by the worker's brothers. The worker was born in Sittapur in Pappanaickapalayam, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 15/16 in 1935/36.</p> <p>The worker was not educated and does not know about his father's educational status. His father had 4 children – 3 boys, and 1 girl. The worker was the 3<sup>rd</sup> child, one of his brothers retired from mill work, while the other is still employed. The worker was 21 at the time of marriage, and his wife was 15 at the time of marriage. She was a mill worker till their children were born, but unfortunately died of tuberculosis at the age of 35. They have 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls. Both the boys are in the mill.</p>
34	<p>Male, age 57, born in 1921. Caste: Kurumbar Gounder.</p> <p>Father died just over 60 in around 1940. His father sold flocks, and then was a bandiman or a bullock-cart rider. He sold the bullocks and the cart to pay off debts, and later worked in a ginning factory. The worker was born in Pappanaickapalayam, and still lives there.</p> <p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker although he can sign his name. His father just had one boy. The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. She was a mill worker even before marriage and is still a mill worker. They have 3 children, all boys. 2 of them are in the mill.</p>
35	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921. Caste: Kurumbar Gounder.</p> <p>Both his parents died in his infancy, and he was brought up by his grandmother and uncle. His uncle was a mill worker, and his grandmother was an agricultural coolie. He was born in Peranaickapalayam (15-20 miles west). He began mill work at the age of 17 in 1937/38 but may have possibly been younger.</p> <p>His uncle (mother's brother) had studied till Class 3, but the worker has no education. His parents had 2 children – 1 boy, and 1 girl. The worker is the oldest child, and his sister died at the age of 35 during childbirth (the child died too). The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 16 or 17 at the time of marriage. She took up mill work after marriage and is still a mill worker. They have 6 children – 4 boys, and 2 girls.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
36	<p>Male, age 53, born 1923 (worker said he was 50, Perlin assumes that is much older). Caste: Kurumbar Gounder.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 58 in 1939 and was a goat herder. He owned about 200 goats. The worker was born in Pappanaickapalayam, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1938 by producing a medical certificate.</p> <p>His father was not educated, and neither is the worker. His father had 4 children – 1 girl, 3 boys. The worker is the 3<sup>rd</sup> child; one of his brothers is in the Lakshmi Mills, and the other worked at the Kaleeswara Mills but is now dead. The worker was married at the age of 23, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. She was an agricultural labourer for some time. They have 10 children – 7 boys, and 3 girls. One of his sons is a mill worker.</p>
37	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921 (he looks much older).</p> <p>Father died at the age of 80 in 1976. He was a general coolie in the gunning factory, and also worked in the mixing department of the SRV Mills. The worker was born in Pappanaickapalayam. He took up mill work at the age of 16 in 1937 (but may have been younger).</p> <p>His father was not educated, and the worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 4 children – 1 boy, and 3 girls. The worker is the oldest child. He was married at the age of 20, and his wife was 18 at the time of marriage. His wife was a mill worker in the Lakshmi Mills, but is now dead. They have 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl.</p>
38	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920. Caste: Sengunda Mudaliar (traditional weavers).</p> <p>Father died at the age of 60 in 1942. He sold cotton seeds for cattle feed but was not self-employed. The worker was born in Ganupatti, 3 miles north. He still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 17 in 1937. He also worked as a handloom weaver before taking up mill work.</p> <p>His father was educated “a little”, and the worker has had no education. His father had 4 children – 1 girl, and 3 boys. The worker is the second child, and one of his brothers was a mill worker for a while. The worker was married at the age of 22, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They have 3 children, all girls. One of the girls is engaged in handloom weaving.</p>
39	<p>Male, age 57, born 1919 (worker said he was 50, Perlin noted that he is “probably older”). Caste: Sengunda Mudaliar.</p> <p>His father is still alive and is about 80-85. He was an agriculturalist, and grew “other grains and peanuts”, and leased 6 acres. He later took to mill work in the SRV Mills in the reeling department. Worker was born in Nalatti Palaiyam, 25 miles from Coimbatore. He lives now in Velankurichi, 1 mile from Peelamedu east. He took up mill work at the age of 17 in 1936.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father was educated till the 3<sup>rd</sup> standard, but the worker has had no education. His father had 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls. The worker is the youngest, and all his siblings are alive. His brother is employed in the Lakshmi Mill. The worker was married twice: he was 19 at the time of his first marriage to a mill worker and has 1 daughter through this marriage. His first wife died at the age of 20 in childbirth. He was 40 at the time of his second marriage, his second wife is dead too.</p>
40	<p>Male, age 52, born 1924. Caste: Kaikkolar Mudaliar (traditionally weavers).</p> <p>Father died at the age of 55 in 1948. He had his own loom and was a hand weaver. The worker was born in the Palghat area, and now lives in Ganesha puram, 3 miles east from the Pangajar Mills. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1939.</p> <p>His father was not educated, and neither is the worker. His father had 6 children – 4 boys, and 2 girls. The worker is the second child. The worker was 25 at the time of his marriage, and his wife was 17. They have 5 children – 2 boys, and 3 girls, none of whom are in the mill.</p>
41	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920. Caste: Sengunda Mudaliar. His father died at the age of 83 in 1970. His father was a mill worker but was also a handloom weaver working from his house. His mother was a cotton-picking worker in the Kaleeswara Mills. The worker was born in Kattoor, and now lives in Ratnapuri. He began mill work at the age of 13 in 1933.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 8, and the worker has studied till Class 5. He cites the Puranas as his favourite books to read. His father had 9 children – 6 girls, and 3 boys. The worker is the eldest, and one of his brothers a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 12 at the time of marriage. His wife took up mill work at the age of 14, just before their first child was born, but he stopped her from working. His wife had to return to working in a waste cotton mill later in order to make ends meet. They have 6 children – 3 boys, and 3 girls, none of whom are in the mill.</p>
42	<p>Male, age 52, born 1924. Caste: Devanga Chettiar (traditional weavers), but the worker is a Roman Catholic.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 44 in 1934/36. He was a cloth merchant and had his own shop in Coimbatore. The worker was born in Sowkaripalaiyam, and currently lives there, after living briefly in Coimbatore from 1930-39. He began mill work at the age of 15/16 in 1939/40.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 4, and the worker has studied till Class 9. His father had 7 children – 5 boys, and 2 girls; the worker was the 3<sup>rd</sup> child. 2 of his older brothers died at the age of 20, and the other 2 brothers are mill workers too (in Delhi, and Bombay). The worker was married at the age of 23 in 1945, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They have 6 children – 4 boys, and 2 girls. One of their sons is in the mill, and the other is a revenue inspector.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
43	<p>Male, age 53, born 1923/22 but officially stated as 57 (according to mill records). Caste: Devanga Chettiar (traditional agriculturalists).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 85 in 1964. His father was a mill worker too. The worker was born in Puliyakulam, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 15 in 1937.</p> <p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. His father had 8 children – 1 girl, and 7 boys. The worker was the 3<sup>rd</sup> child. 2 of his brothers are in the mill, while the others are in the workshop. He was married at the age of 21, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They have 3 children – all boys.</p>
44	<p>Male, age 56 (Perlin assumes that he is 58, and born in 1918). Caste: Devanga Chettiar, but the worker is Christian.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 65 in 1966 and was a hand-weaver. The worker was born in Sowripalaiyam, and now lives in Kottaimedu. He began mill work at the age of 16 in 1936.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 3, but the worker has no education. His father had 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. The worker is the oldest child, his younger brother is a mill worker, but his sister is now dead. The worker was married at the age of 20, and his wife was 15 at the time of marriage. She was a mill worker but quit working because of asthma. She died in 1975. They have 3 children – all boys.</p>
45	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921. Caste: Devangar Chettiar.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 67 in 1966. He used to sell agricultural produce but gave this up (either due to drought or insufficient income), and later became a mill worker. The worker was born in Kianakadukanal and lives now in the factory quarters (presumably of the SRV Mills) at Peelamedu. He began mill work at the age of 15 or 16 in 1934 – actually, at 13 years of age.</p> <p>His father could sign only sign his name, and the worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls, all of whom are (were) mill-workers. The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. They have 8 children – 5 girls, and 3 boys. One of their sons is in the roving department at the SRV Mills, none of the others are mill workers. All his daughters are married to farmers.</p>
46	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921. Caste: Devangar Chettiar.</p> <p>His father died in the worker's infancy. His mother was an agricultural labourer, and also a gin-hand (ginning mill work). Along with other families migrated to Peelamedu for ginning mill work. The worker was born in Sangudipalaiyam, 12 miles east of Peelamedu. He began mill work at the age of 15 in 1936.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His mother had no education, and neither does the worker. The worker was the only child of his parents. He was married at the age of 23-24. His wife was (is) a mill worker. They have 4 children – 1 girl, and 3 boys, and they could not find employment in the mill.</p>
47	<p>Male, age 57, born 1919 (Perlin assumes 1917). Caste: Pillai (traditionally agriculturalists).</p> <p>Father died at the age of 70. He was an agriculturalist, and owned 15 acres of dry lands (in a joint family system). The lands were lost in a court case. The worker was born in Pappanaickapalayam, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 14 in 1933 or 1935.</p> <p>His father could sign his name, and the worker has studied till Class 3. He can read and write. His father was married twice, and had 1 boy with his first wife, and 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls with his second wife. Two of his siblings (1 brother, and 1 sister) are (were) mill-workers. The worker was married at the age of 22, and his wife was 12 at the time of marriage. They have 6 children – 1 girl, and 5 boys. All of them are too young to work in the mill.</p>
48	<p>Male, age 59, born 1917. Caste: Pillai.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 70 in 1947. His father was an agriculturalist but lost his lands (possibly in drought), and then worked as a coolie in the CSW Mills. The worker was born in Palghat, and now lives in Kamoor. He began mill work at the age of 23 in 1940.</p> <p>His father seems to have had “some education”, but the worker has no education. He can sign his name. His father had 4 children – 3 boys, and 1 girl. The worker is the youngest child, and none of his siblings were mill workers. The worker was married at the age of 25, and his wife was 15 at the time of marriage. They had 2 children – 1 boy, and 1 girl both of whom died very young. The boy died 1 month after being born, and the girl at 10 months.</p>
49	<p>Male, age 53, born 1923. Caste: Pillai.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 77 in 1934, and he was an agriculturalist who owned 8 acres of dry lands. These lands were sold before the father’s death. His mother was a coolie in the cotton press, and his sister worked in the Lakshmi Mills. The worker was born in Pappanaickapalayam, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 11 in 1934 as a half/part-timer.</p> <p>His father had studied till “school finals”, and the worker has studied till Class 3. His father had 6 children – 3 boys, and 3 girls. The worker was the 5<sup>th</sup> child, and just one of his siblings (one sister) worked in the mill. The worker was married at the age of 27, and his wife was 21 at the time of marriage. They have 6 children – 4 girls, and 2 boys. One of their sons is a mill worker.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
50	<p>Male, age 52, born 1924.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 60 in 1944. He was an agricultural coolie, and a woodcutter. The worker was born in Kudimangalam (Udamalpet Taluk), and lives in Pappanaickapalayam. He began mill work at the age of 16 in 1939-40.</p> <p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. His father had 5 children – 4 boys, and 1 girl. The worker is the youngest child, and one of his brothers is in the Lakshmi Mills. The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They have 5 boys, none of them are old enough to work in the mill.</p>
51	<p>Male, age 49, born 1927. Caste: Pillai Gounders.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 65 in 1945 and was an agriculturalist on 4 acres of leased wet land (well included). After a drought for 2 years, his father gave up agriculture, moved to Coimbatore, and died soon after. The worker was born in Perundulurur (Palladam Taluk), and now lives in Pappanaickapalayam. He began mill work at the age of 13 in 1939/40 by producing a medical certificate.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 1. He can read albeit not fluently, and can sign his name. His father was married twice: had 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls with his first wife, and the worker was the youngest child from this marriage. One of his brothers is in Lakshmi Mills. His father had one girl from his second marriage. The worker was married at the age of 23, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. They have 6 children – all girls, and none of them have worked in the mill.</p>
52	<p>Age 50, born 1926. Caste: Pillai Vellala.</p> <p>His father is 85 and is still alive. He was a businessman in livestock. The worker was born in Pappanaickapalayam. He began mill work at the age of 13 in 1939.</p> <p>His father has no education, and neither does the worker. But the worker has taught himself to read newspapers, and sign his name. His father is married twice: had 6 children – 3 boys, 3 girls with his first wife; the worker is the 3<sup>rd</sup> child. One of his siblings died in infancy, and none of his sisters were (are) mill workers. His father had 2 children from his second marriage – 1 boy, and 1 girl both of whom are dead now. One of his brothers was a mill worker but died at the age of 19 due to malaria in 1942. The worker was married at the age of 29, his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. They have 5 children – 2 boys, and 3 girls. One of the girls died soon after birth, none of the children are in the mill.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
53	<p>Male, age over 50 (exact age unclear in original document). Caste: Choli Vellala Pillai.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 70 in 1961. He was an agriculturalist who grew tobacco and grain (sorghum, ragi etc.) on 3 acres of leased land, and was later an agricultural labourer. He seems to have accumulated debts of over Rs. 7000. The worker was born in Chowripalayam, 2 miles south from Peelamedu. He now lives in Sundapalayam. The worker began mill work at the age of 18/19 in around 1939/40 but worked as an agricultural labourer from the age of 15.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 4 – he can't read or write fluently. His father had 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. The worker is the oldest child, and his brother is a mill worker in the SRV Mills. The worker was married at the age of 20 (possibly 19), and his wife was 20 at the time of marriage. They have 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl, none of whom are in the mill.</p>
54	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920 – possibly 58, born 1918. Caste: Pillai.</p> <p>Father died in his 50s in 1940. He was an agriculturalist, and worked on 4 acres of leased dry lands (lands had wells). His mother was a servant in the bungalow of the managing director of the Lakshmi Mills. The worker was born in Peruntullurur, near Tiruppur. He now lives in Pappanaickapalayam. He took up mill work at the age of 18 in 1938.</p> <p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker; although he can sign his name. His father had 5 children – 2 boys, and 3 girls. One of his brothers is in the Lakshmi Mills, while the other siblings died at a young age. One of the worker's uncles is also a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. She has been a mill worker in the Lakshmi Mills since their marriage. They have 5 children – 2 boys, and 3 girls, none of whom are in the mill for now.</p>
55	<p>Male, age 57, born 1921. Caste: Nair.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 55 in 1933 and was an agriculturalist who worked on 1½ acres of leased lands (dry). He had an uncle who was a watchman at the Kaleeswara Mills. The worker was born in Palghat (in Kerala), and now lives in Puliypalayam. He began mill work at the age of 18 in 1939.</p> <p>His father (and uncle) had no education, and the worker studied till Class 6. He is fluent in reading, and writing. His father had 4 children – 3 boys, and 1 girl. The worker was the 3<sup>rd</sup> child. None of his siblings were mill workers, and his elder brother died in 1973. The worker was married at the age of 26, and his wife was 18. They have 2 children – 1 boy, and 1 girl, neither in the mill.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
56	<p>Male, age 56 (almost 57), born 21 May 1921. Caste: Nair.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 58 in 1926. His father was a village accountant, and the worker lived with his uncle. He was 5 when his father passed away. His uncle was an engine driver in the Kaleeswara Mills. The worker was born in Cranjanore in Kerala, and lives in Sukaravarpet now. He began mill work at the age of 16 in 1937.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 8, and the worker till Class 10. His father had 5 children – 4 boys, and 1 girl. The worker was the youngest child, and his siblings did not take up mill work. The worker was married at the age of 29, and his wife was 18 at the time of marriage. They have 5 children – 4 boys, and 1 girl, none of them are in the mill.</p>
57	<p>Male, age 54, born 1922. Caste: Nair.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 55 in 1937, and was a traditional eye doctor. The worker was born in Kerala, and now lives in Kattoor. He took up mill work at the age of 18/19 in 1939/40 (or possibly he was 17/18 if he was born in 1922).</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker studied till Class 9. His father had 9 children – 4 boys, and 5 girls. The worker was the second child, and none of his siblings are mill workers. The worker was married at the age of 29, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They had 2 children – both boys. One of the boys works in the army postal service, but the other died of fits when he was 3 years old.</p>
58	<p>Male, age 53, born 1923. Caste: Nair.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 55 in 1950. He was an agriculturalist who owned 2 acres of land. The worker was born in Palghat, and now lives in Kattoor. He began mill work as a full-timer at the age of 16 in 1939.</p> <p>He does not know much about his father's educational status. The worker has studied till Class 4, and is fluent "to a certain extent". His father had 4 children – 1 girl, and 3 boys, none of the worker's siblings are mill-workers. The worker is unmarried.</p>
59	<p>Male, age 56, born in 1920. Caste: Nair.</p> <p>His father died in the worker's infancy, and his uncle brought him up. His father was an agricultural coolie, and his uncle was in the police recruitment school. The worker was born in Allatur in Kerala, and lives in Pappanaickapalayam. He began mill work at the age of 15/16 in 1935/36.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 2. He can easily write and read in Malayalam, and Tamil. His father had 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. The worker was the youngest child, and his siblings were not mill workers. The worker was married at the age of 22, and his wife was 18 at the time of marriage. They have 8 children – 3 boys, and 5 girls. One of their sons is a mill worker.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
60	<p>Male, age 55, born in 1921. Caste: Nair.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 60 in 1961. He was an agriculturalist on 3 acres of leased land in Kerala. The worker was born in Perogoonam in Kerala, and now lives in Sukaravarpet. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1936.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 5. He can read the newspapers. His father had 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. The worker was the youngest child, and his siblings are in Kerala. The worker was married at the age of 20, and his wife was 14 at the time of marriage. They have 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls. One son works in a shop, the other in a workshop, and another is unemployed.</p>
61	<p>Male, age 57, born 1919. Caste: Nair.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 75 in 1947. He was an agriculturalist and owned about ½ acres of land on which he grew coconuts, areca nuts, and cashew nuts. The land was lost to debt – his father found it difficult to live on the produce, and had to borrow money to live. The worker was born in Ponani in Kerala, and now lives in Kattoor. He began mill work at the age of 18 in 1937.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 4. He can read newspapers in Malayalam, but not in Tamil. He can also write in Malayalam easily. His father had 7 children – 4 boys, and 3 girls. The worker was the 5<sup>th</sup> child, and none of his siblings were in the mill. The worker is not married – apparently the family never permitted him to marry, and by the time he could afford it he was too old (i.e. he was 40).</p>
62	<p>Male, age 54 (possibly 56), born in 1922. Caste: Nair.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 62 in 1938 and was a town coolie all his life. The worker was born in Calicut in Kerala, and now lives in Kattoor. The worker took up mill work at the age of 13 (or possibly 15) in Calicut in 1935, and later joined the Kaleeswara Mills (Coimbatore) in 1936.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 4. His father had 5 children – 2 boys, and 3 girls. The worker was the youngest child, and none of his siblings took to mill work. The worker was married at the age of 20 (or 22), and his wife was 12 at the time of marriage. They have 8 children – 2 boys, and 6 girls, none of whom are in the mill.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
1	<p>Male, age 52, born 1924. Caste: Devandran Panadi (also: Pannadi).</p> <p>Father was a betel grower. He died in 1934 (probably at 30). Worker was born in Ramnathapuram, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 12 in 1936. He did not get a medical certificate and was turned down by the medical officer. However, he was still allowed to work in the mill by the management.</p> <p>Father could read the Puranas (on palm leaves). The worker has studied till Class 3. He can read a little and write very slowly. His father had 4 boys, and 1 girl. One boy died when he was 1½ years old. The worker's older brother, and younger brother were (are) both mill workers. The worker was married at the age of 17, his spouse was 15 at the time of marriage. They have 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. None of them are in the mill, although the second son has achieved a BSc degree.</p>
2	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921. Caste: Panadi (traditionally agricultural labourers).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 72 in 1971. Father was an agriculturalist who worked on 5 acres of leased wet lands. However, the landlord seems to have given over the land for building purposes. It appears like his father also worked as an agricultural coolie. The worker was born in Sowkampudur, 3 miles west, and still resides there. He began mill work at the age of 17 in 1938.</p> <p>His father had no education, while the worker has studied till Class 7. He can still read to a certain extent and can sign his name. His father had 6 children, and the worker was the 5<sup>th</sup> child. One of the worker's brothers is a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 25, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They had 8 children – 4 boys, and 4 girls. 2 girls died in infancy due to smallpox, and stomach trouble when they were 2/3 years old. None of his children are mill workers.</p>
3	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920/22. Caste: Panadi.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 60 in 1927. His father was an agricultural labourer who worked for just one farmer from the time he was 8/10 years old. Worker was born in Pesaripalayam, 2 miles west of Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mills, and still resides there. He began working in the mills at the age of 15 in around 1935 or 1938.</p> <p>His father had no education. The worker says he has studied till Class 6 but can't write letters. His father had 4 children – 3 boys, and 1 girl. The worker is the 3<sup>rd</sup> child, and one of his brothers was (is) a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 21, and his wife was 19 at the time of marriage. They have 2 children – 1 boy, and 1 girl. Both are married, and the son is a postman.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
4	<p>Male, age 52. Caste: Devandran (unclear whether they are a sub-caste of Pallars).</p> <p>Father died at the age of 90 in 1942. Father was an agriculturalist who worked on 4 acres of wet/dry land (possibly in a share cropping system). Worker was born in Sowkampudur, and still lives there. He began working in the mills at the age of 16 in 1939/40.</p> <p>His father had no education, while the worker has studied till Class 6. He can still read and write to “some extent”. His father was married twice: he had 7 children – 5 boys, and 2 girls with his first wife; and 3 children with his second wife – 2 girls, and 1 boy. None of the workers’ siblings are mill workers. The worker was married at the age of 20, and his wife was 12/13 at the time of marriage. They have 7 children – 5 girls, and 2 boys. None of them are in the mills.</p>
5	<p>Male, age 57, born in 1921. Caste: Panadi.</p> <p>Father died in the worker’s infancy. His mother was an agricultural labourer (just like his father). The worker was born in Ganupatti, 4 miles east from the Town Hall, and still lives in the same place. The worker began mill work at the age of 13, in 1933.</p> <p>The worker is not educated and does not know about his father’s educational status. However, he attended the factory school for an hour a day. He is the only child of his parents. The worker was married at the age of 24 and has 3 children – all boys. All of them are too young to work in the mills.</p>
6	<p>Male, age 55 or 56, born 1920/21. Caste: Panadi.</p> <p>Parents died in the worker’s infancy, and the worker was brought up by his brother who was a mill worker. The worker was born in Chogampudur, 2 miles west from CSWM, and still lives there. He took up mill work at some point when he was between the age of 12-15 as a part/half timer.</p> <p>The worker has no education and does not know about his father’s educational status. His father had 3 children – all boys. The worker was the 2<sup>nd</sup> child; both his brothers are mill workers. The worker was married twice. He had 2 girls with his first wife. He was possibly 30, and his wife was 17 at the time of the worker’s second marriage. They have 4 children – 3 boys, and 1 girl. Appears that some of his children are agricultural coolies, but it is not clear which ones.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
7	<p>Male, aged 53 was born in 1923. Caste: Devandran.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 70 in 1951. The worker says that his father was a mill worker all his life. His father was an agricultural coolie possibly before 1922 (grandfather was one for as long as the worker can remember). The worker was born in Ganupatti, and still lives there. The worker took up mill work at the age of 16 in 1939.</p> <p>The worker and his father are not literate. His father had 2 children, both boys. The worker is the oldest child, his brother is (was) a construction coolie. The worker was married at the age of 23, and his wife was 20 at the time of marriage. They have 4 children – 3 boys, and 1 girl. None of them are in the mills.</p>
8	<p>Male, aged 54 was born in 1922 but he is probably older – possibly 57/58, born 1918/19. Caste: Panadi.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 55 in 1955. Father was a caretaker for a farm, and possibly also a soldier in the armed services. His mother collected grass from paddy terraces and sold it as cattle fodder. The worker was born in Selvapram, and still lives there. He began mill work when he was 16/17 in 1935.</p> <p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. His father had 2 children, both boys. The worker is the youngest child, and his sibling died very young. The worker was married at the age of 16/17 in 1935, and his wife was probably 12/13 at the time of marriage. They had 4 children – 1 girl, and 4 boys. 2 boys, and the girl died in their infancy due to malnutrition. The surviving son is a mill worker.</p>
9	<p>Male, age 54, born 1922. Caste: Panadi.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 35 in 1927. His mother was an agricultural coolie too (but in an agricultural college). The worker was born in Pesaripalayam, and still lives there. The worker took up mill work at the age of 16 in 1938.</p> <p>His father has studied till Class 2, while the worker has studied till Class 3. He can read and write but not fluently. His father had 2 children, and the worker is the oldest child. His brother died at the age of 4. The worker was married at the age of 20, and his wife was 15 at the time of marriage. They have 9 children – 5 girls, and 4 boys, none of whom are in the mills.</p>
10	<p>Male, age 46 (Perlin notes that he is probably 53). Caste: Panadi.</p> <p>Father died at 60 in 1974. He was a mill worker and an agricultural coolie after retiring from mill work. The worker was born in Pesaripalaiyam, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 15 in 1938 (possibly).</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. The worker is the only child of his parents. The worker doesn't remember when he was married but reckons his wife was about 17 or 18. They had 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. One of the boys died when he was 5 years old due to smallpox.</p>
11	<p>Male, age 50, born 1926 (possibly 53, and 1923). Caste: Panadi.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 70 in 1964 (had lung disease). Father was a mill worker all his life. The worker was born in Selvapuram, 3 miles west, and still lives there. His grandfather and mother were agricultural coolies. The worker took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1938/39 (or may have been possibly younger).</p> <p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. His father had 4 children – 3 boys, and 1 girl. The worker was the 3<sup>rd</sup> child. The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. She is (was?) an agricultural coolie. They have 4 children – 3 boys, and 1 girl, all of whom are still in school.</p>
12	<p>Male, resigned from mill work. Age 54, born 1922. Caste: Pallar (betel growers, backward caste).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 45 (of paralysis) in 1949. His father was a betel grower. The worker was born in Namballiallakampalayam, 4 miles west, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1937.</p> <p>Neither the worker nor his father had an education.</p> <p>His father had 3 children – all boys. The worker's younger brother was a mill worker till his death. The worker was married at the age of 21, and his wife was 13 at the time of marriage. They have 4 children – all boys, none of whom are in the mills.</p>
13	<p>Male, age 50, born 1926. Caste: Therendran Kulam.</p> <p>His was an agriculturalist who worked on 4 acres of leased irrigated lands and grew paddy, cotton, ragi, and sorghum (unclear if his father is still alive). The worker was born in Palappalaiyam, 2 miles west, and now lives in Ramnathapuram. He has been here for the past 16 years. He began mill work at the age of 13 in 1939 as a full-timer by procuring a fake medical certificate from a Doctor which showed his age to be 16.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had no education, but the worker has studied till Class 5. He can read newspapers, and weekly magazines. His father had 13 children – 4 boys, and 9 girls. 8 of them are now dead; 4 of his brothers were mill workers, and girls were agricultural coolies. He was married twice. First, at the age of 21/22, and his wife was under 20 at the time of marriage. They had 1 child, a girl. The worker had 6 children with his second wife – 3 boys, and 3 girls. One of the girls died due to fever. None of his children are mill workers.</p> <p>The worker is also a harmonium player.</p>
14	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920. Caste: Devendran.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 60 in 1973. Father was an agricultural coolie. The worker was born in Pusaripalayam, 2 miles from CSWM west, and now lives in Selvapuram. He began mill work at the age of 15 in 1935.</p> <p>The worker's father was not educated, and neither was the worker. His father had 9 children – 2 boys, and 7 girls. The worker's siblings work(ed) as agricultural coolies. The worker was married at the age of 30, and his wife was 25 at the time of marriage. She was (is) an agricultural coolie too. They have 5 children – 3 girls, and 2 boys, none of whom are in the mills.</p>
15	<p>Male, age 50, born 1926. Caste: Panadi.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 75 in 1972. His father worked on a plantation of betel leaves (1/5 acres of leased land probably). The worker was born in Ramnathapuram, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 15 in 1939.</p> <p>His father had no education. The worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 6 children – 3 boys, and 3 girls. The worker was the second child, and one of his brothers was (is) a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 32, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. They have 2 children – 1 boy, and 1 girl, neither of whom are in the mills.</p>
16	<p>Male, age 51, born 1925. Caste: Devendran Panadi.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 70 in 1952. Both his parents were agricultural coolies. The worker was born in Sowkampudur, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 14 in 1939 (but is not sure).</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 4. He can read and write (“can manage”). His father had 7 children – 2 girls, and 5 boys. The worker was the 6<sup>th</sup> child. 2 of his brothers were mill workers. They are now dead, and so is one of the girls. The worker was married at the age of 25. His wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They have one child, a boy who is still in school.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
17	<p>Male, age 56 born 1920. Caste: Devendran.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 70 in 1950. Father was a mill worker at CSWM, at least till 1938. The worker was born in Ramanathapuram, 4 miles from Coimbatore, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1935.</p> <p>Neither the worker, nor his father had an education. His father had 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls. The worker is the middle son, and both of his brothers were (are) mill workers. The worker has 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls. One of his sons is in the agricultural college as a peon, the other is an electrical contract worker, and the other son is just leaving school.</p>
18	<p>Male, age 57, born in 1919. Caste: Devendran Panadi.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 63. Father was an agriculturalist who worked on 2/3 acres of dry leased land (he also seems to have lent or sold lands). And he was later a mill coolie. The worker was born in Pusaripalaiyam, 2 miles from RS Puram, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 14 in 1933 as a full-timer. He did not need a medical certificate, because he passed for 15.</p> <p>Both the worker, and his father have studied till Class 2. His father had 8 children – 4 boys, and 4 girls. The worker is the oldest child, and 3 of his brothers are in the mill. The worker was married thrice: first, at the age of 19, and they have one boy. His second wife (possibly his first wife's sister) died after 8 years of their marriage. He was 25 at the time of marriage, and they have one child, a girl. He married his 3<sup>rd</sup> wife around 1950 (must have been in his 30s then), and they have 7 children – 6 boys, and 1 girl. None of his children are mill workers.</p>
19	<p>Male, age 58, born 1918. Caste: Tiruvaluvar (traditional astrologers).</p> <p>His father was an astrologer (not sure if he is still alive). The worker was born in Kodangipalaiyam, and now lives in Odaiyampalaiyam. He took up mill work at the age of 19 in 1937.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 5, and the worker has studied till Class 4. His father had 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls. The worker is the only child alive, his siblings died in their infancy: 2 in infancy, 1 drowned in the river, and the other died due to diphtheria. The worker was married at the age of 25, and his wife was 19 at the time of marriage. They have 4 children – 1 boy, and 3 girls. One of the girls died due to cholera in 1945.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
20	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921 (but is probably older). Caste: Arundadhi (traditional leather workers, cobblers, sweepers).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 60 in 1961. Father was a coolie in town and worked under a coolie contractor, and occasionally performed his ancestral occupation. The worker was born in Pappanaickenpalaiyam, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 17 in 1939 (Perlin doubts if he could've taken up work in 1939 when the war started).</p> <p>His father had no education, while the worker has studied till Class 2. The worker can only sign his name. His father had 7 children – 4 boys, and 3 girls. One of the worker's brothers is a mill worker in the weaving department of the Lakshmi mills. 2 of his brothers are dead. The worker was married at the age of 22, and his wife was 19 at the time of marriage. They had 9 children, but 8 died in infancy and 3 at birth. The surviving son is in school in Class 9.</p>
21	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920. Caste: Arundhadi.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 60 in 1950. Father was a shoemaker. The worker was born in Kamarajpuram (Arundadhi Street), and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 16 in 1936.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 4. He can read newspapers and write letters. His father had 3 children, all boys. The worker is the middle child, and both of his brothers are mill workers (although the oldest brother took to mill work after being a farmer). The worker was married at the age of 17, and his wife was 13 at the time of marriage. They have 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls, none of whom are in the mills.</p>
22	<p>Male, age 53, born 1923. Muslim.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 60 in 1933. He was a businessman and made leather washers/belts. The worker was born in Naran Hakim Road, near Town Hall, and now lives in Uppilipalaiyam. He took up mill work at the age of 14 in 1937.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 4. The worker has studied till Class 9 and spoke "quite good English". His father had 8 children – 6 boys, and 2 girls. The worker was the 7<sup>th</sup> child. 3 of his siblings died quite young: one girl and a boy due to plague, and one other child due to smallpox. The worker was married at the age of 28, and his wife was 18 at the time of marriage. His wife is his uncle's daughter/maternal cousin. They have 3 children – 2 girls, and 1 boy. Additionally, one child died due to miscarriage. None of his children are in the mills.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
23	<p>Male, retired mill worker. Age 59, born 1917. Muslim.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 80 in around 1954. His father was a blacksmith in a Railway workshop at Podanur, and then later became a bullock cart man. The worker was born in Kuniyamuttur, on the way to Pollachi, 3 miles from CSWM. He began mill work at the age of 20 in 1937.</p> <p>His father had no education, but the worker has studied till Class 4. He can write letters, and can read (but doesn't). His father had 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls. The worker is the 3<sup>rd</sup> child, and 2 of his brothers are retired mill workers. The worker was married at the age of 32. He has 3 children – 2 girls, and 1 boy, none of whom are in the mills.</p>
24	<p>Male, age 54, born 1921. Muslim.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 60 in 1934. Father was a cloth merchant (street seller, and also travelled to villages to sell cloth). The worker was born in Coimbatore, and still lives here. He began mill work at the age of 16 in 1937 by producing a medical certificate.</p> <p>Both the worker and his father have studied till Class 4. The worker can read and write fluently. His father had 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls. The worker was the oldest child, and his younger brother was a mill worker, but quit due to ill health. He is now a cloth-merchant. The worker was married at the 21, and his wife was 15 at the time of marriage. They have 11 children – 7 girls, and 4 boys, none of whom are in the mills. The older son makes suitcases.</p>
25	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920 officially, but is actually 60, born 1916. Muslim.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 52 in 1925. Father was a fish merchant. His mother was a servant/valet for a European. The worker was born in the Tanjore district, and now lives in Devaraja New Street near CSWM. He took up mill work at the age of 12 in 1928 as a full-timer. He insisted that factory inspectors visited only the offices and did not check mill departments.</p> <p>Neither the worker nor his father had an education. His father had 10 children – 9 boys, and 1 girl. The worker was the youngest of the lot, and all his brothers were (are) cloth merchants. The worker is unmarried but has an outcaste mistress for the past 20 years.</p>
25	<p>Male, age 52, born 1924. Muslim (Sheikh sub-group).</p> <p>Father died after 1936 (age unclear). Father was a personal peon to the munsif. The worker was born in Kalipalaiyam, 15 miles North, but now lives in Rajaji Gounder Street. He began mill work at the age of 12/13 in 1936 and did not need a medical certificate because the factory inspector never visited his department. He worked as a bellows boy.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. His father had 2 wives: he had 7 children with his first wife – 5 boys, and 2 girls. The worker is the 6<sup>th</sup> child, and all his brothers were (are) mill workers. His father had 2 children, both girls, with his second wife. The worker was married at the age of 19/20, and his wife was 17/18 at the time of marriage. They have 4 children, all boys, none of whom are in the mills.</p>
26	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920. Caste: Adi-Dravida (Paraiyar).</p> <p>The worker's father died at the age of 80 in 1936. He was an agricultural coolie, and also a jutka driver. His mother was a roads coolie. The worker was born in Kangayam (Dharmapura Taluk), and now lives in Valankulam. The worker began mill work at the age of 14 in 1934 as a half/part timer, or possibly in 1936.</p> <p>His father had no education, but the worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 5 children – 2 girls, and 3 boys. The worker was the second child, his older brother died before he turned 20 due to Tuberculosis, and his younger brother is a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 35, and his wife was 13 at the time of marriage. They have 9 children – 4 boys, and 5 girls. One of the boys is a mill worker.</p>
27	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920. Protestant Christian (converted in 1940, father was a Paraiyar).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 62 in 1962/63. His father was a peon in the munsiff's office. The worker was born in Ramanathapuram, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 14 in 1934. He did not need a certificate because he says that he was tall for his age.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 3, and the worker till Class 5. His father had 2 children, both boys. The worker is the oldest child, and his brother is a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 22, and his wife was 18 at the time of marriage. She converted after marriage. They had 6 children – 3 boys, and 3 girls. One girl, and 1 boy died in their infancy, none of the others are in the mills.</p>
28	<p>Male, age 77, born 1899. Caste: Nasuvan (also: Navitha) (traditional barbers).</p> <p>Father died in the worker's infancy. The worker was brought up by his mother and uncle. His father and uncle were barbers. The worker was born in Tottipalayam, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 20 in 1919. Perlin reckons it was probably in 1923.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. His father had 9 children – 3 girls, and 6 boys. His father had 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls. One boy, and 1 girl are dead, and the other brother is a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 12 at the time of marriage. They have 9 children – 4 girls, and 5 boys. One of his boys was a mill worker, 2 sons worked in the workshop, and 2 other boys were (are) barbers. The worker has 39 grandchildren – 17 grandsons, and 22 granddaughters.</p>
29	<p>Male, age 52, born 1924. Caste: Nasuvan.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 72 in 1971. Father was a barber. The worker was born in Palladam, and now lives in Puliyakulam, 2 km from Somasundaram mills. He took up mill work at the age of 14 in 1937 as a full-timer by producing a false medical certificate.</p> <p>The worker has studied till Class 2 in a Brahmin private school. He can read and write fairly well. His father was married twice: had 4 children with his first wife, and 3 children with his second wife. The worker is the oldest child from the second marriage. One of his brothers is (was) a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 22/23 in 1946, and his wife was 19 at the time of marriage. She was a mill worker. They have 7 children – 6 boys, and 1 girl, none of whom are in the mills. One of his sons is in his BA (or possibly a graduate), and the others are “well educated, still in schools”.</p>
30	<p>Male, age 53, born 1923. Caste: Nasuvan.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 60 in around 1953. His father was a barber. The worker was born in Virumandampalaiyam, and now lives in Pappanaickenpalaiyam. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1938.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 5 children – 4 girls, and 1 boy. The worker is the 3<sup>rd</sup> child, and none of his sisters took up mill work. The worker was married at the age of 23, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They had 4 children, all of whom died in their infancy.</p>
31	<p>Male, age 52, born in 1924. Caste: Nasuvan.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 80 in 1970. Father was a barber in the village, but the worker’s cousins were mill workers. The worker was born in Palladam, and now lives in Palladam. He lived here since 1941. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1939.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>The worker has studied till Class 2 but does not know about his father's educational status. The worker can read newspapers. His father had 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls. The worker is the oldest child, and none of his siblings took up mill work. The worker was married at the age of 26, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They have 4 children, all boys. One of them is a mill worker, and the other 3 are in the workshops.</p>
32	<p>Male, retired mill worker. Age 58, born 1918. Caste: Vannan (washerman caste).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 65 in 1960. His father was a washerman. The worker was born in Kasturinaickenpalayam, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 13 in 1931 as a full-timer. When the factory inspector came, he and the other kids were hidden under baskets.</p> <p>His father was not educated, and the worker has studied till Class 2. He can read but can't write. His father had 5 children – 2 boys, and 3 girls. The worker is the second child, and his younger brother is also a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 22, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They have 3 children, all girls.</p>
33	<p>Male, age 55, born in 1921. Caste: Vannan.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 65 in 1956 and was a washerman. The worker was born in Arasur (Aranashi Taluk), and lives now in Pappanaickenpalayam. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1936.</p> <p>The worker has studied till Class 1 and can sign his name but can't read. His father had no education. The worker's father had 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. The worker was the youngest child, and his older brother died at the age of 50 (was not a mill worker). The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 15 at the time of marriage. She was a mill worker. They have 4 children – 3 girls, and 1 boy. The son is in the workshop.</p>
34	<p>Male, age 52, born in 1924. Caste: Nadar.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 80 in 1968. His father was a coconut climber in Ganupatti. The worker was born in Ganupatti, and still lives there. The worker took up mill work at the age of 16 in 1939/40.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had no education. The worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 4 children – 3 girls, and 1 boy. None of the worker’s siblings took up mill work. The worker was married twice: first, at the age of 21, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. But they had no children. The worker has 3 children, all boys with his second wife. One of their sons is a mill worker in CSWM. His father just had one boy. The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. She was a mill worker even before marriage and is still a mill worker. They have 3 children, all boys. 2 of them are in the mills.</p>
35	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921. Caste – Thiya (Scheduled Caste from Kerala, traditional agriculturalists).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 65 in 1956. He was an agriculturalist, and owned 3½ acres of land, and also worked on some leased lands. The worker took up mill work at the age of 15/16 in 1936.</p> <p>His father could read and write. The worker has studied till Class 7. His father had 4 children – all boys. The worker was the oldest child, and his second brother was a mill worker too (weaver). The 3<sup>rd</sup> brother was a mechanical foreman, and the fourth was in the bus service. The worker was married at the age of 26, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. They have 5 children, all boys. One of them is a Postgraduate (MA or is currently studying for his MA).</p>
36	<p>Male, retired mill worker. Age 59, born 1917. Caste: Kusuva (traditional potters or basket makers).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 85 in 1966. His father was a potter. The worker was born in Kastoorinaickenpalaiyam. The worker took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1932.</p> <p>His father studied till Class 5, and the worker has studied till Class 1. His father had 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls. The worker was the 3<sup>rd</sup> child, and his younger brother was also a mill worker in CSWM, spinning department. The worker was married twice: he was 22, and his wife was 17 at the time of his first marriage. She was a mill worker and died in childbirth. They have 1 child, a boy who is a teacher now. The worker was 30 at the time of his second marriage, and his wife was 25 at that point. They have 3 children – 2 boys, and 1 girl. One of the boys runs a grocery shop.</p>
37	<p>Male, age 52, born 1924. Caste: Kullalla (traditional potters).</p> <p>His father died at the age of 50 in 1935. Father was a potter, and later stopped work. The worker was born in Tayampalaiyam, and lives in Pappanaickenpalaiyam. He has lived here since 1939. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1939.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. His father had 6 children – 5 boys, and 1 girl. All the brothers took up mill work. The worker was the 3<sup>rd</sup> child. One of the worker’s brothers and his sister are now dead. The worker was married at the age of 26, and his wife was 14 at the time of marriage. They have 2 children, both boys. One of them is a mill worker, and the other is post-graduate (MA).</p>
38	<p>Male, age 52, born 1924. Caste: Kullalan.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 65. His father was an agriculturalist, and worked on 5 acres of leased land. However, the lands were lost due to drought, and his father then set up a business in grains in Peelamedu. The worker was born in Puliampatti, and lives now in Peelamedu (since the time his parents migrated). He took up mill work at the age of 13 in 1937 as a full-timer by acquiring a medical certificate.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 3. He can read with difficulty, but can’t write letters. His father had 4 children – 1 boy, and 3 girls (possibly another girl died). The worker was the second child, and one of his sisters was a mill worker. The worker was married twice: first at the age of 25. His wife was 20 at the time of marriage. He has 5 children – 3 boys, and 2 girls with his second wife, none of his children are in the mill as they are too young.</p>
39	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921. Caste: Kusuvan.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 60 in 1966. Father was a potter. The worker was born in Ganupatti, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 16 in 1937.</p> <p>His father was not educated, and the worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls. The worker is the oldest child, and none of his siblings took up mill work. The worker was married at the age of 20, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. She was a mill worker. They have 7 children – 4 boys, and 3 girls. One of the boys is in the workshop.</p>
40	<p>Male, age 50, born 1926. Caste: Udaiyar (traditionally potters).</p> <p>Father died at the age of 89 in 1972. Father was a potter, but later worked in a workshop. The worker was born in Sular, 15 miles east, and lives in Ganupatti now. He lived here since 1936. He took up mill work at the age of 16 in 1942 or possibly at 13 in 1939.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 4. However, the worker attended a CSWM technical course for 3 months, where he was taught “how to behave well”, and he also had labour union history. He can read and write fluently in Tamil. His father had 7 children – 4 boys, and 3 girls. The worker is the fourth child. 2 of his brothers were mill workers in CSWM. The worker was married at the age of 25, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They have only 1 child, a daughter who works in an Audit office.</p>
41	<p>Male, age 54, born 1922. Caste: Udaiyar.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 70 in 1968. His father was a potter. The worker was born in Ganupatti, and still lives there. He began mill work at the age of 15 in 1937 or possibly in 1939/40.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 4, and the worker has studied till Class 8. He reads newspapers. Details regarding his siblings are not filled. The worker has 2 sons. His older son is in the workshop, and the second son is still studying.</p>
42	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921. Caste: Chettiar (also: Chetty) (potters).</p> <p>His father is still alive and is about 80-85. He continues to work as a potter, albeit occasionally now. The worker was born in Ramanathapuram, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1936 by procuring a medical certificate from the Doctor.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 7. He can read newspapers. His father had 3 children, all boys. The worker is the oldest son, one of his brothers is an elementary school headmaster, and the other is a compositor. The worker was married at the age of 20, and his wife was 15 at the time of marriage. She was a mill worker till their first child was born. They have 2 children – 1 boy, and 1 girl. The girl is a BSc graduate (or is still studying), and the son is a BE (or still studying).</p>
43	<p>Male, age 52, born 1924. Caste: Menudaiyar Chettiar.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 75 in 1935. Father was a potter. The worker was born in Irugur, 9 miles East, and now lives in Sowripalaiyam, 1 mile from Lakshmi mills. He has been here since 1931. He began mill work at the age of 9 in 1933 as a part-timer.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had studied till Class 2, and the worker has studied till Class 3. The worker attended the factory school after joining the mill. His father had 4 children – 3 boys, and 1 girl. The worker is the oldest child, and one of his younger brothers was (is) a mill worker. The worker was married at the age of 19, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. They have 6 children – 2 boys, and 4 girls. Both the boys died in their infancy, at 3 months and 1 month. One of the girls has studied till her SSLC, another till Class 7, and the other is in Class 3.</p>
44	<p>Male, age 56, born 1920. Caste: Menudaiyar Chettiar.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 90 in 1956. His father was a potter all his life. The worker was born in Karadimadai, 20 miles west, and now lives in Kalampalaiyam. He has lived here for 40 years now. He took up mill work in 1938 when he was younger than (or about) 18 years of age.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 1, and the worker has studied till Class 2. His father had 8 children – 5 boys, and 3 girls. 3 boys, and 2 girls are still alive. 1 of the worker's brothers was also a mill worker. He is dead now. The 2 brothers who are still alive are potters. The worker was married at the age of 25, and his wife was 18 at the time of marriage. They have 6 children – 4 boys, and 2 girls, none of whom are in the mills. 1 of the boys is in the workshop, the other boys are studying. The girl is married.</p>
45	<p>Male, age 54, born 1922. Caste: Menudaiyar Chettiar.</p> <p>Father was a potter, and a bandiman. The worker was born in Nanjudapuram, 4 miles south, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 14 in 1936 or possibly at 16 in 1934. Most likely, he was 14 since he had to produce a medical certificate.</p> <p>His father had studied till Class 5, and so has the worker. He can read, and write fluently. His father had 4 children – 2 boys, and 2 girls. The worker was the youngest child. His brother was a retired ticket boy in the mills. The worker was married at the age of 21, and his wife was 18 at the time of marriage. They have 5 children – 3 girls, and 2 boys. None of them are mill workers. The second girl is a government typist (has finished her SSLC), and one of the boys is a secondary school teacher. One other girl is in her SSLC and is also doing a typing course, while another boy is in his SSLC too.</p>
46	<p>Male, age 52, born 1924. Caste – Udaiyar.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 74 in 1971. Father was a potter. The worker was born in Ganupatti, 3 miles north of Coimbatore, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 14 in 1938.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
	<p>His father had studied till Class 5, and so has the worker. The worker can read newspapers and books. His father had 3 children – 2 girls, and 1 boy. His sisters did not take up mill work. The worker was married at the age of 23, and his wife was 16/17 at the time of marriage. They have no children.</p>
47	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921. Caste: Udaiyar.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 60 in 1961. Father was a potter. The worker was born in Pusaripalaiyam near Ganupatti and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 17 in 1938 by producing a medical certificate.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 4. He can read and write to some extent. His father had 6 children – 2 boys, and 4 girls. The worker was the 4<sup>th</sup> child. His brother was a mill worker in the Lakshmi mills. The worker was married at the age of 21, and his wife was 18/19 at the time of marriage. They have 6 children – 3 boys, and 3 girls. One of their sons is a mill worker in the Lakshmi mills.</p>
48	<p>Male, age 52, born 1926 (that actually makes him 50). Caste: Menudaiyar Chettiar.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 75 in 1965. Father was a potter. The worker was born in RS Puram, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 13/14 in 1939/40 as a full-timer. He did not need a medical certificate at the time, he claims.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 2. He can read and can sign his name. His father had 7 children – 2 girls, and 5 boys. 2 of his brothers, and both sisters are now dead due to old age and sickness. The worker was the youngest child, and none of his siblings took up mill work. The worker was married at the age of 25, and his wife was 19 at the time of marriage. They have 3 children – 1 boy, and 2 girls, none of whom are in the mills.</p>
49	<p>Male, age 53, born 1923. Catholic Christian.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 40 in 1937. His father was a chauffeur/driver for Europeans and his mother was a household servant. The worker was born in Kattoor, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 13 in 1937 as a full-timer by producing a medical certificate.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 2. He speaks English, and also reads and writes Tamil fluently. His father had 2 children – 1 girl, and 1 boy. The worker was the younger child. The worker was married at the age of 36, and his wife was 30 at the time of marriage. They have 2 children – 1 boy, and 1 girl both of whom are still in school.</p>

S.No.	Biographical Details
50	<p>Male, age 55, born 1921. Roman Catholic.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 97 in 1942. Father was an agriculturalist who cultivated coarse grains on 3 acres of leased land (irrigated by wells). He seems to have sold his own land too. Worker was born in Puliyakuman, and still lives there. He took up mill work at the age of 15 in 1936.</p> <p>His father had no education, and the worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 5 children – 4 boys, and 1 girl. The worker was the youngest child, and 2 of his brothers were mill workers. The worker was married twice: first, at the age of 21, and his wife was 16 then. She was a mill worker. She died at the age of 26 due to stomach trouble and “blood in faeces”. He had 2 children with his first wife – 1 boy, and 1 girl. He has 8 children with his second wife – 4 boys, and 4 girls, none of his children are in the mills.</p>
51	<p>Male, age 60, born 1916. Roman Catholic.</p> <p>His father died at the age of 48 in 1920. He was an engine driver in Podanur. The worker was born in Podanur, 8 kms away from Kaleeswarar mills, and now lives in Puliyakulam. He has lived here since the 1930s. He began mill work at the age of 13 in 1929 as a full-timer – apparently, when the factory inspector visited the mill he’d “run like mad for the latrines, to hide”.</p> <p>His father had no education, could not even sign his name. He had to bribe clerks to sign his name for him in the payments register. The worker has studied till Class 5. His father had 5 children – 2 girls, and 3 boys. Only 2 of them are alive now. The worker was the 3<sup>rd</sup> child, and none of his siblings took up mill work. The worker was married at the age of 24, and his wife was 17 at the time of marriage. They have 6 children – 2 girls, and 4 boys, none of whom are in the mills.</p>
52	<p>Male, age 54, born 1922 or 60, born 1916. Catholic.</p> <p>Father died at the age of 65 in 1964, and he was an agricultural coolie. The worker was born in Puliyakulam, 2 km east from Pappanaickenpalaiyam, and now lives in the Raja street area. He took up mill work in 1937 at the age of 16/17.</p> <p>His father had no education, and neither does the worker. His father had 10 children - 5 boys, and 5 girls. Only 3 boys, and 3 girls are alive now. The others died in infancy. The worker was the oldest child, and his brother is (was) a mill worker too. The worker was married at the age of 25, and his wife was 16 at the time of marriage. She worked for a while in Lakshmi mills. They have 6 children – 5 girls, and 1 boy, none of whom are in the mills.</p>

**Tape 1/Interview:** Male, age 60 (approximate). Native: Ganupatti. Father was an agricultural coolie, and also performed coolie work in general (earned about 15 Rs. a month, his father). Mother worked in Kaleeswara Mills (same mill that he joined) for about 3-4 years and earned about 9 Rs. a month. 5 siblings including him, 4 boys and 1 girl; interviewee is the oldest sibling. 2 other brothers also mill workers. At the point he joined the mill, there were 7 mouths to feed. The household income proved just about sufficient to cover festive expenses but tried to ensure they did not borrow since repaying the interest in those times was extremely difficult. Not educated but can sign his name. Does not regret, not having been educated - but poses it in terms of "what's the point of regretting now, and why imagine alternative possibilities". However, he does express that he might have had better opportunities had he been educated as a "mill worker". Was married at the age of 25, spouse was 19. Spouse never worked in a mill, just did "household work". Interviewee has 5 children, 3 boys, and 2 girls. 2 boys work in the mill: Sivananda and Laxmi Mills. Family still does not own any land, except for the house.

Joined mill work in 1928 at the age of 12-13, without Health certificate, at Kaleeswara Mills. Factory inspectors did not really inspect the fact that he was underage, also helped by the fact that he apparently looked older. Other child mill-labourers were hidden from the Factory Inspectors during Inspection (in a gully for instance). Many individuals from Ganupatti took up mill work in 1928; and people from the mill or *mestris* would come to towns/villages to employ people, by promising 'work', saying "there is work, come and work at the mill". It was the promise of earning 7-8 Rs. by doing mill work, as opposed to the mere 4 annas you would earn by working in the town. The workday was 12 hours long, with 10 hours in the mill, and 2 hours spent in commute.

There was labour shortage, and the interviewee himself claims to have taken people to the mill promising them jobs. Started as a sweeper (2-3 years, 8 Rs.), then a docking boy (3 years, 8 Rs.), half sider (1 year, 11 Rs.), 3/4<sup>th</sup> sider (12 and a half Rs.), and then full sider (1 and a half years, 13 and a half Rs.). Reserve piecer (3 years, 13 and a half Rs.), oiler (3 years, 15 Rs.), docking jobber, and then line jobber until he retired (17 years). Line Jobber extracts jobs from the sides. Claims that there is no "good" or "bad" in mill work, except for the fact that it provided him with employment. But, the *mestris* did beat the labourers, if they were sluggish. Interviewee claims to have been beaten when he started working. Mostly, it was the threat of violence/beating over the actual beating that kept the labourers on the toes.

1936 strikes – claims there was a strike for 15 days. Interestingly, he says he cannot say there was a specific cause for the strike and does not remember.

Due to health issues he did not work for a year, and then joined Murugan Mills for 6 months, and in 1937 he joined Somasundara Mills until retirement. Says there was not a great difference in the labour conditions in the mill he worked at. Left Murugan Mills because he faced problems commuting to the mill. Was not aware of the fact that a Chettiar businessman had bought the Somasundara Mills from the English. Same Chettiar was also the owner of Kaleeswara Mills in 1928.

Around 20 years ago, the water levels in the wells started reducing dramatically; it seems like Ganupatti town has transformed in the lifetime of this worker from a predominantly agricultural area, to one dominated by houses (from 700 odd houses to the present time where he says there are innumerable houses; the population of the town is 25,000). The presence of the Panchayat has helped with basic amenities – streetlights, clearing rubbish etc. Panchayat members in Ganupatti are representative of the 15 wards in the area, selected on the basis of adult franchise (21 being the age to vote).

In his childhood rice was eaten once a week, pulses twice a week, but curd on a daily basis. Meat was eaten only once in a fortnight; meat was purchased jointly (4 families would come together and buy a goat for 3 and a half Rs.); this has changed now since the meat is sold in standard measurement (kg or half kg). Refers to something called 'veesai', which seems to be a measure predating standard measures (Which in themselves shifted from pound to kilograms). Vegetables were often grown in the backyard, or even purchased from the nearby landlords directly, in the measure of a basket. General meal in the morning included the previous day's rice with curd (or buttermilk), sorgam for lunch eaten in the mill; at times they would sleep on an empty stomach after mill work (not very often, perhaps 1-2 days a week), and on the other they'd eat whatever was left over.

Does not regret working at the mill and says that he does not imagine other possibilities; but would like to get his sons into mill work since that is the most stable source of employment in that region. Is slightly philosophical when it comes to the question of whether he is enjoying retirement; veers between saying he wants to get back to mill work but can't due to a law imposing retirement, but also says he is happy so long as he has enough money to eat comfortably. The money he has earned from mill work is simply not enough to purchase land.

**Tape 2/Interview 1:** Male, age 52, hereditary weavers. Native: 6 miles from Palagat. Gave up hand-weaving and took up mill work. Had their own loom, when he worked as a handloom weaver.

Worked for 10 hours a day as a handloom worker, yarn was cheap but the coolie (or payment) was lower. 6 people for one loom. Finished cloth sold to the middle-agents who then sold it to the market. But these middle-agents were not paid a commission; and the weavers were able to make a profit of 8 annas per loom.

**Tape 2/Interview 2:** Female, age 58, Caste: Naidu. Native: Kalapatti (8 miles from Papanaykapalayam). Now in Papanaykapalayam, resident here for 45 years. Father seems to have passed away when she was very young, and she does not remember him. Was married at the age of 11, spouse was 25 and worked at Lakshmi Mills as a watchman, is retired now. Is not literate, and does regret not studying now, because she is unable to read and write today. Claims that she may have been in a position to earn more in the mill or could have taken up office work if she had studied. Youngest of 4 siblings, other brothers. Brothers have passed away, and their children live elsewhere. No children of her own.

Mother was a farmer, had about 15 acres, irrigated through well-water. Employed agricultural labourers on the farm. Started working in the mill at the age of 18-19 in 1939, at Lakshmi Mills, the only place where she has been employed all her life. Her savings allowed her to construct a house. Joined mill work in order to earn money and was brought to the mill by her cousin-brother, a spinning-weaver, who recommended her for the employment in the mill. At the time she joined mill work, there were only 2 wage-earners in the family (her husband, and herself). Her husband earned about 10 Rs. as a watchman in the mill. They seem to have earned enough to eat, and also save money for the house; occasionally celebrate festivals too. The lady says that one person's wage could be saved after the monthly expenses at the time she started working (and after marriage).

She too gives examples of the prices of food grains, but measures rice in litres.

She joined the reeling department when she started and retired as a *mestri* (was a *mestri* for 11 years). Claims to have been very strict when it came to extracting work from her labourers but was friendly during mealtimes. When she started earning, she earned 8-12 Rs. in the mill.

Electricity was available at the time she moved into the town (and has been for about 50 years). The roads were mud roads, and there was one municipal, and one missionary school. Initially, there were only pipes in the street but within 2-3 years, her house had direct water supply. Does not exactly remember any epidemic affecting members of her family but does remember that there was an epidemic – does not really remember those times. Garbage was just disposed in the road, and the municipality cleaned it.

**Tape 2/Interview 3:** Male, Caste: Tiruvalluvar, hereditary occupation – astrology, age 58, recently retired. Native: Kodangipalayam (about 32 miles from here, in Pollachi taluk). Interview conducted at Kodayanpalayam. Does not own land in his native. Has studied until class 4. Agrees that education is important for a mill worker because it would have made things “easy”; particularly when it comes to reading. Says that he would have desired to be a Collector if he had studied. Lost all his siblings (3 boys, and 2 girls who passed away when they were kids). Two died during childbirth, one in an accident by drowning, and one due to a disease. Was married at the age of 25, spouse was 19. Has 4 children of his own (3 girls, 1 boy). The eldest girl is a homeopathy doctor (educated till class 8), 2 girls have studied till class 6, the boy has passed SSLC but is unemployed. Wants his boy to join the mill, but the mill has refused to employ him.

Came to Coimbatore with his father, who was an astrologer. Father practiced astrology in Coimbatore. Stayed at a rented house for the first 2 years, and later built a hut at a Peramboke land (common land). Built a new house in the same land through savings from mill land (cost about 500 Rs.). Tiled roof, mud and stone floor; resides in the same house today. Electricity since 1943, major changes include changes in the style of houses, cleanliness of the area, streetlights in 1961. One government high school when he arrived first in the town, now there is a high school, and an elementary school.

Joined the mill at the age of 19, did not want to follow his father because his father did not earn enough. His father may have earned about 25-30 Rs. /month. Prospective clients would visit his father, and then take him to their house to have their horoscopes read. Interestingly, he claims to have just come to the mill-gates and joined the mill. Started off working for 12 hours when he joined, took half hours to commute – which meant around 13-14 hours in a working day, which left him no time to do anything else. When he started working, there were only 2 wage-earners (his father, and himself); and they had to feed 4 people including his mother, and grandmother. Has worked in the same mill his entire life.

Does not have any debts to pay (nor was his father indebted).

Started off as a sweeper (1 year, 7 Rs.), then a docking boy (6 months, 8 Rs.), half sider (6 months, 12 Rs.), 3/4<sup>th</sup> sider (6 months, 13 Rs.), full sider (till 1951, 14 Rs.). Then he joined the bail-room due to illness, caused due to heat which led to stomach trouble. The stomach trouble ceased after he left the spinning room.

A transformation from well-water initially, to pipe-water in 1945. Remembers the cholera epidemic in 1945, and he lost one of his daughters to the epidemic, close to 30-40 persons passed away in that epidemic. Garbage disposal in a pit/ditch.

**Tape 3/Interview 1:** Male, age 57, Caste: Pannadi, hereditary occupation – agriculture. Does not remember his father, mother was an agricultural labourer. Mother may have earned 2 and a half annas per day as an agricultural labourer. Born in Ganupatti (4 miles east from townhall), still lives there. Married at the age of 24. Is illiterate, claims that education may have helped him to reach the position at least of a Supervisor. Only son to his parents. Has 3 boys of his own (still young, and they are at school). He desires to have them educated as much as possible. Does not really want them to work in the mill and wants mill work in the family to end with him. Soon to retire, in about 4-5 months.

After marriage, moved to a house in a Permaboke land in the outskirts of Ganupatti, on Satyamangalam road. The house has tiled roofs, and mud walls (and floor). But the house has no electricity yet; none of the houses in the outskirts have electricity. Claims that the town has become more ‘modern’, changes in the clothes that people wear, dress in a “neat and tidy” manner. However, he claims these developments have led to “shortage in food”. Electricity available 30 years back and provided by the Panchayat (presumably in the 1940s). Roads have transitioned from mud roads to tar roads after the second World War.

There was a well in the village in Ganupatti when he was a kid, for the past 20-22 years, there is pipe water supply. Remembers the plague epidemic in 1945-46, and his wife died in the epidemic. In his neighbourhood, around 350 people may have died.

Joined the mill to ‘earn a living’ at the age of 13. People from the mill would come to local towns, and villages, and try to employ people for mill-labour. Says that education is essential for all mill workers, for instance if he wants to complain about machines etc.

Joined as a part-times, and worked for 5 hours a day, and for one hour he attended the factory school. At the point when his mother and he were working, the combined aggregate income was around 6 Rs. a month.

Claims mill work is not very good work, except for the salary. Primarily because it is difficult, and one has to work continuously without rest; in fact, says one cannot even eat in peace if employed as a mill worker.

Also says, that mill work today is far more difficult than it used to be, because the speed of the machines has increased dramatically, and he has to keep up with it. He claims that mill work is monotonous, since one has to perform the same action throughout the day.

When he joined, he joined as a sweeper (6 months, 3 Rs. 4 annas), then a doffer (3 years, 3 Rs. 4 annas), spinner (12 years, 9 hours a day, 12 Rs.), an oiler (in 1948, started off with 14 Rs.), and now a *mestri* (122 Rs. basic) after the nationalization of the mill around 1972.

Garbage was dumped in the backyard of the house (accumulated for 1 year, allowing it to decompose), and paid 1 Rs. /cartload for its disposal – this was later used by the farmers as manure. Today the Panchayat disposes it.

Rice was eaten only on festive occasions (in his childhood), pulses were consumed (Tuvar Dal, Green Gram which cost 4 annas). Meat was consumed once a month (and eaten over 2 days). Firewood for cooking got from the nearby trees. Used largely home medicine as a kid.

He claims that the rent for a similar house to the one he grew up (rent 2 and a half Rs. in the 1930s) would cost 20 Rs. today. Had very little in terms of saving as a kid, just minimum.

Mill never gave away presents in the form of cloth when he started working, 1 anna for tailoring charges for 1 yard of cloth when was a child, 6 Rs. was the most for sarees.

### **Tape 3/Interview 2: Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Company (CSWC)**

Male, Caste: Belija Naidu, born 1911, age 65, soon to retire, father died in 1960, born Chemanuru, lives in Gandhipuram, lived here since 1946. Maintains connection to Chemanuru, his brothers still live there. He has 5 siblings (1 sister, and 4 brothers). Can sign his name but does not education. Does not regret having an education, because he is too old to regret it now. Reckons had he studies, he might have become a head-jobber or a writer, but because he does not have education has to work with the machines. Was 21 when he got married, spouse was 17. Has 2 boys, and 2 girls of his own – none of whom work in the mill. He would prefer them to work in the mill, and his son could possibly join the mill then (some hereditary job scheme).

First came to Coimbatore in 1923 at the age of 12-13 because he wanted to work in a shop, no electric lighting in the streets, mud roads, first house tiled roof , brick wall, cement floor, present house cost him 40 Rs. a month.

First started working in a vessel shop, got 5 Rs. a month. Decided to join mill work after some of his friends brought him to the mill and got him a job. Lived on his own, and also prepared food on his own before he got married, used firewood which cost about 8 annas/10 kg; was not very comfortable but managed to get by. Did consume rice daily, and pulses too. Meat was consumed once a week. Could buy clothes for himself with the salary he had but did not have enough to celebrate festivals.

Has no strong opinions about mill work, he treats it as a just a phase of his life. However, mill work as opposed to shop-work (vessel shop) provided job security, increased and regular wages. The mill did not give the workers cloth at reduced rates, nor did the mill provide any presents to the workers. Mill work also did not provide enough to celebrate festivals, or spend on clothes etc. Family did not keep animals at home.

In his childhood, he had to walk a bit to gain access to good water, nor even in Sukruvarpet where he first moved in, in Coimbatore (not even street lighting). Claims that every year there was an epidemic – perhaps referring to the 1930-40s. Garbage was dumped in the streets, and the municipality would clean it. Back then 120 litres of rice cost 7-8 Rs. in around 1923, sugar cost around 8 annas for a kg, meat around 2 annas for a pound. Shirt fabric cost around 8 annas for a yard, and the tailoring was about 4 annas back in the 1920s.

Claims he would go to the general hospital in Coimbatore, if he or his family fell sick.

**Tape 5/Interview/see also: Questionnaire 2, No. 46:** CSWM, Male, age 52, born 1924. Caste: Udaiyar, Hereditary occupation – Pottery. Native: Ganapatty (3 miles north from Coimbatore), still lives in Ganapatty in his ancestral house, travels by bus to the mill. Father was a potter, studied till 5<sup>th</sup> standard. Maradkutti too has studied till 5<sup>th</sup> standard. He can read newspaper, and small magazines, but not for long. Reckons that education might've helped him at least gain a teacher job, and avoided mill work; says that education is important for all jobs/occupations, and to know 'anything and everything'. Has two sisters (he is the oldest sibling). Was 23 at the time of marriage, spouse was 16-17, and has never worked in the mill. He has no children.

Began working in the mill, at the age of 14 (1938). Bus service has been available only for the past 10 years, before which he used to walk to work (6 miles a day). Quite a few employees of CSWM are from Ganapatty. Tiled roof, stone floor in his ancestral house. Slight changes in the house – he has expanded it to include 3 parts in the house (around 6 rooms totally, a separate kitchen). Has electricity connection in the house, available for the past 3 years. Streetlights in Ganapatty available only in the last 10 years, tar roads laid only in the last 10-15 years. Major changes in Ganapatty include electricity, Panchayats clean the streets, and have also increased the house tax, and also one requires permission from the Panchayat to construct a house.

His father was a potter (earned close to 40 Rs. a month, and was at times also paid in kind through food grains), and the interviewee says that in those days "everyone performed their hereditary tasks"; further claims that people were happy living in the village in those days.

He joined mill work (and has worked only in one mill all his life) because it seemed to him that pottery was no longer feasible i.e. to first collect all the raw materials, but now the mud required to make the pots have become expensive; and this means they don't make enough money to survive. At the point he began work, there were 2 wage-earners (father and himself), aggregate income was about 30 (father's) + 7 (his income from the mill) + some food grains that his father received as payment. Rice was eaten twice in a week, traditional grains (ragi, solam etc.) were consumed otherwise. Pulses were consumed 4 days in a week, and meat was consumed once a week. New clothes were purchased 4 times a year. No debts – 1000 Rs. was taken for the expansion of the house, but it was repaid. The interest rate was 12% every year, from the Bank.

Worked over 10 hours when he started working in the mill; while his father worked 5-6 hours, it was not fixed i.e. did not follow a schedule.

Expresses no strong opinion about mill work but does say that it is a difficult job to do now (compared to when he started). Mainly because the speed of the machines has increased, and so have the number of sides, particularly in the last 4-5 years. He says this has increased due to increased productivity demands.

First job in the mill was as a doffer (1 and a half years, 7 Rs.), then a spinner, half sider (9 Rs.), 3/4<sup>th</sup> sider (11 Rs.), and then full sider (about 3 years after he became a spinner, 13 Rs.) – if you performed night work, you were paid 16 Rs.; and if you came to work 26 days regularly, you were paid 2 Rs. as bonus. He remains a spinner today. He finds mill work monotonous, but not always – he says it is particularly when the machine is troublesome that the work becomes monotonous. Penalties were imposed if you did not show up for work, but not for any basic damage to the thread (for instance if it gets cut). This interviewee says that the mill provided cloth to him (and other workers) at discounted rates (there seems to have been a difference of 1 anna between the mill cloth and the cloth purchased in the market, most of these were offered during Diwali).

In his childhood, he had to draw water from the well but that provided brackish water; there seems to be a water problem in the town. One drum of water costs 4rs today privately, municipality supplies 2 drums every 2 days directly through pipes – at times you get excessive supply of salt water which one cannot use even for bathing.

Remembers that the area was affected by a plague, and cholera epidemic but does not remember the exact year. No toilets in the houses at the time of interview, open defecation. Garbage is disposed in pits, and then it is taken by the farmers.

Visits the hospital for illness, but not in his childhood when his father treated him with home/native medicine.

**Tape 6/Interview 1:** Female, born 1920. Caste: Vellala Gounder. Native: Theruparayarampalyam lived there till 1965, for the past 11 years, she has lived in Pilamedu in Balaranganathapuram. Father owned 8 acres and was an agriculturalist. She is not educated, does not regret having an education – claims she was not good at studying, and therefore did not pursue. She was 14 when she was married, to a mill worker, who was 22 at the time of marriage (he is now deceased). She does not have children. 5 siblings, one of her younger sisters too worked in the mill until the time of her marriage. Due to retire from the mill in 1-2 years.

Started working in the mill in 1938, worked about 8 hours a day then, has stayed in the same mill since.

Was a construction coolie to begin with at the age of 13 (and worked as a construction coolie for 5-6 months), was paid 1 and a half Rs. per day. She was later employed in the reeling department. Many of her fellow villagers came as construction coolies and were later employed as mill workers in the reeling department.

At the time she started in the mill, the aggregate income was about 10-12 Rs. in the family (from her father's and her income).

Walked to the mill until bus service was established a few years ago.

Was offered promotion as a jobber but she refused apparently, because she is not literate, and cannot count the number of baskets etc. Does not regret it all (and she expressed this in writing (it is not mentioned to whom though).

She says that mill work is difficult, claims to have body-aches due to the work; but not rheumatism – shoulders, and hands ache during work. She says that she has always had these body aches.

She says she has no friends. In her native town, irrigation canals supplied water; there was not pipe water supply at the time she left for mill work. Does not remember the outbreak of any epidemic.

In the 1965, there was no bathroom or toilet in her native village. In the 1930s garbage was dumped on the roads, and “Harijans” would come clear it away.

It was a difficult life in her childhood, rice was eaten only on festive occasions, pulses were eaten everyday (mostly horse gram, and tuvar dal). Meat was eaten only once a month, the meat was usually purchased along with 3-5 other families (1 pound for 12 annas), and cooked. In her childhood, one bag of rice (120 measures) cost 7-8 Rs., one and a half measures of dal were around 1 Rs., tuvar dal about 4 Rs. for one and a half measures, green gram about 3 Rs. for one measure.

The family would purchase clothes only once a year, during Diwali (1930s). A saree was around 7 Rs. back then, 4 Rs. for a 4 yard dhoti. Family also owned one cow and one buffalo, milk was consumed by the family, festivals were not often celebrated, and not until she started working in the mill.

**Tape 6/Interview 2:** Male, age 58, just retired from mill work (from Rangvilas Mill). Caste: Vellala Gounder. Native: Chekkalur. Lives in Peelamedu now. Father owned land (around 5 acres, 3 acres of which was irrigated – paddy was grown here, sorgam grown on the other 2 acres). Still owns the 5 acres, and his brother’s sons looks after it (has 2 brothers, both deceased, and 2 sisters; he is the second oldest). Later in the interview, he says all his siblings have worked in the mill. Father was illiterate, he has studied till Class I. Cannot read – not even numbers, his memory is not strong. Regrets not having an education and affirms that education is necessary for mill workers in order to understand what the work involves.

Was married at the age of 27, spouse was 18. Has 5 children (3 boys, 2 girls). One of his sons works in the mill (on his recommendation, and the job was offered to him given the interviewee is due to retire). Daughters have studied until class 3-4.

Arrived in Coimbatore 40 years back, in around 1936. Family migrated to Coimbatore, quit their agricultural occupation due to the shortage of rainfall. Originally lived in a rented house in Coimbatore and paid around 12 annas or 1 and a half Rs. initially. In Coimbatore, his father worked as an agricultural labourer. He started working in the mill at the age of 15; appeared before the gates of the mill, but also other mill workers went around town looking for workers.

Claims that the area had street lighting even 40 years back, stones and mud roads were provided by the Panchayat back then, now the roads have been laid (tar roads) by the municipality. The houses had a tiled roof, uncemented floor, and brick wall.

His own house has a tiled roof, stone wall, and a cemented floor. This house built 25 years ago, cost him 4,000 Rs., the money was drawn from savings (looks like his wife worked too). Yes, his wife worked in the mill too. Part of the money required for construction was borrowed (around 1,500 Rs.) from a local Gounder he knew (based on trust). Money lent without interest, and the amount was returned within 3 months.

His older brother died due to a heart attack, the younger brother had a brain tumour, and died after (or during the operation).

Has been a *mestri* for 25 years. When he started working in the mill, he worked for 9 hours. He says that he enjoyed working in the mill, doesn't mind doing it again if he had the chance – but phrases it in terms of saying 'one has to work hard, so might as well be this'. Does not find mill work monotonous.

Interestingly, he says that as a child he could go and work in any mill he wanted to depend on the demand for labour, he has however been employed in the present mill for about 33 years. Shifted mills in order to augment his income – for example, if he was employed in one mill as a half sider, he could go work in another mill as a 3/4<sup>th</sup> sider etc., and thereby get paid from both mills.

Started off as a sweeper (for 6 months, 6 Rs.), then a doffer (7 Rs.), spinner later as an half sider (age 17, 8 Rs.), 3/4<sup>th</sup> sider (age 19, and was at a different mill Radhakrishna Mills, 11 Rs.), then worked in the Fire Service for 6-7 years in the mill (19 Rs.), then a full sider in the spinning mill (for 3 months; was paid 19 Rs. based on a law which prohibited reducing a person's salary), finally became a *mestri* in 1949.

When he initially moved in to Peelamedu, there was only a well from which one had to draw and bring water. Pipe water is available only for the past 15 years. 7-8 years after his family migrated to Peelamedu, there was a cholera, and plague epidemic, and around 25 people in the neighbourhood died.

**Tape 7/Interview 1:** Male, CSWC, Muslim, age 59, father died at 80, worker was around 22 then. Native: Kuniyamuthu, still-resident of Kuniyamuthu, 3 miles from the mill. Father worked in the railway workshop in Pothanuru, as a blacksmith. Father was not literate, he himself has studied until class IV (in Tamil, although he says he studied “only Tamil” in a government elementary school in Kuniyamuthi). Can write letters and is able to read papers in Tamil. Reckons that education is important for mill work. Folks who do not have education are not able to participate in such activities, and also take exams – mills also do not offer classes.

Has 4 siblings - 2 other brothers, and 2 sisters (total 5 children). He is the third child. Both of his older brothers worked in the mill, they are now retired. He does not remember when he got married but does remember that it was after he joined mill work; suddenly says he was married in 1948 (about 32). Has 3 children, 2 girls and 1 boy, none of whom work in the mill. His wife has not worked in the mill. His boy failed his SSLC, he works in a cloth-shop; girls have studied until class II.

Walked to the mill, and then later used cycles. Still lives in the same house, but for some time he lived in a rented house. Street lighting in Kuniyamuthu was introduced around 16 years back (approximate, his memory does not serve him right). 50% tar and 50% mud roads, tar roads built 8 years back. House, he grew up in had tiled roof, mud walls, and mud floor; it was a one-room house. He has purchased a house (in 1965) that is divided into two portions. The house cost 3,000 Rs., and it came largely from his savings. Father never took a loan, neither has he. However, while he has not taken loans, he does borrow money and pay it back soon. The workshop was moved from Pothanuru to another place in Trichy, and his father became a bullock-cartsman. This did not let them lead a good life, it was a significant drop in standards from when his father worked at the workshop. Consequently, this also meant he could not pursue his education anymore.

He joined the mill through a *mestri* known to him and has been employed in the same mill since. Started working at the age of 20 (in around 1937). When he started out, he worked for 10 hours; his father worked around 10-12 hours too in the workshop, and around 12 hours when he was a bullock-cartman.

Started out as a sweeper (for 6 months, paid 7.50 Rs.), then a doffer (for 4 years, 8 Rs.), then an oiler in the rowing department (for 16 years, 12 Rs.), then a *mestri* (28 Rs. initially) in the same department.

He has had an accident in the mill in the rollers (in the drawing department), while he was trying to ‘repair’ the machine, while another worker turned the machine on – and he has lost a digit. Was given first-aid, dressing was done in the mill, in a separate room maintained for medical aid. Got his finger amputated in the general hospital. The mill gave about 80 Rs. as compensation, and also paid 2 months’ salary (full salary) while he was allowed to rest at home.

When he was a child, they ate rice 2-3 times a week, pulses about 2-3 times, meat was not consumed a lot, and just about once a month. Meat was often purchased along with other families; this was a common practice in his village. There was no separate meat shop – so it seems like they bought an animal, slaughtered it, and cooked it for all the families.

**Tape 7/Interview 2/see also: Questionnaire 1, No. 48:** Male, CSWC. Retired mill worker, age 59, born 1917. Caste: Pillai. Father died in 1947. Native: Palghat, moved to Araswaram at age 7, and lived in the workers' block since 1940. Has no education, can sign his name.

Does not know why his parents decided to migrate to Coimbatore. His father was unemployed, had assets in the village but lost them all. After moving to Coimbatore, he worked in the mill, same mill. He has no idea how his father lost his land. His father was a coolie at the mill – transporting cotton and remained as a coolie. Has no relation to his native.

In Katur where he moved in when he was a child, there was street lighting in the 1920s. Tar road was built around 20 years ago (1950s). There was no school in those days, but there is now. The closest school was 2 miles away (someone else says Rs. Puram).

He joined the mill because he did not find employment elsewhere. Began work only at the age of 30 but this seems inaccurate – he must have been in his 20s. Worked in the same mill. Started as a doffer (for 5-6 years, 8 Rs.), then a spinner as a full sider immediately (for 10 years, 13 Rs.), then an oiler (for 15 years, 17.50 Rs.), and then a *mestri* (in around 1960, 48 Rs.) – claims he became a *mestri* because of his smartness, and capacity to learn.

**Tape 7/Interview 3/see also: Questionnaire 2, No. 36:** Male, age 59. Caste: Kuruvan, hereditary potters. Father worked as a potter. Father was 85 when he passed away, around 10 years back (1966). Native: Nayakanpalayam, about 5 miles north of Coimbatore. Father studied until Class 5, he has studied until Class I. Can only sign his name, and the family did not have enough means to provide him with further education. He regrets not having a higher education, as this may have offered him the opportunity to become a clerk, or a *mestri* outside – since it may have paid more.

Has 4 siblings (2 brothers, and 2 sisters, one of the sisters is dead now). His younger brother too works in the same mill in the spinning department. He was 22 when he was married, his first wife was around 17 during marriage (and she was a mill worker). His first wife passed away during childbirth in the hospital. Had 3 children through his first wife (1 boy, still alive, works as a teacher – 2 seemed to have died). He married a second time at the age of 30 (his second wife was around 25). Has 2 boys and 1 girl through his second marriage. One boy has finished SSLC, and the other works in a grocery shop. The girl has finished SSLC but has not found a job, they are getting her ready for marriage. Many of his friends are mill workers.

Commutes to the mill by cycle, before which he worked (10 miles a day). Still lives in his ancestral house. Remembers stuff about his native from the age of 7 (he claims this). House was a hut initially. Now it is a tiled roof, mud walled, and stone floored house. It has 3 rooms; house has electric lights (brought in about 5 years back). Street lighting in the village available only for the past 4-5 years. Only mud roads, not tar roads. The village has an elementary school (for the past 30 years) but has no bus service.

He joined mill work because there were no other opportunities but for coolie-work. Pottery was also not a very lucrative option, but his father was satisfied with this work. He came to know about the mill, because his friends told him about it (the name of the mill was Cambodia Mills, worked there for 4 years). He joined at age 15 (Around 1932) and was asked to provide a doctor's certificate. In the mill, he was not provided any technical education. He says that in those days, the mill took in anyone.

His native village is under a minor Panchayat now, the Panchayat has been in existence only for the past 30 years.

Worked for 10 hours when he started off but worked in 2 shifts (day and night). His father worked for about 5-6 hours a day as a potter.

Started off as a sweeper (for 3 years in Cambodia Mills, paid 6 Rs.), then he was transferred to CSWC as a doffer (for 4-5 years, 8 Rs.), then a half sider (for 2-3 years, 9 Rs.), then a 3/4<sup>th</sup> sider (2 years, 9 Rs.), then a full sider (10 years, 13 Rs.), then an oiler (4-5 years, 48 Rs.), then a *mestri* in the doffing section (10 years, 51 Rs.). Has not met with any major accidents in the mill.

In his native village, there were wells to draw water from (good water), his house also had a well. Now piped water is provided by the Panchayat (for the past 20 years), there is no water in the wells now, it is all dried up. There was a plague, and cholera epidemic in his village when he was 5 years old (1929), with 100 people dead including his younger sister (of plague). Has been no plague epidemic for the past 30-40 years. His house does not have a latrine even today, the Panchayat has not provided communal latrine. In his childhood, they used to dispose garbage in the pits, and wait for it to decompose – the farmers would collect it after 6 months-1 years, for which they would also pay 1 Rs. for a vehicle-load, now they are paid 5-6 Rs.

They ate rice about 2-3 times a week, pulses once in 2 days, meat once a fortnight or once a month. The meat was collectively purchased, and now it is purchased from the butcher. Tuvar dal was about 4 annas for a measure, one sack of rice was about 6 Rs. (100 litres, fine quality rice). Purchased clothes only once or twice a year. A 4-yard dhoti cost about 12 annas, a small towel was 8-10 annas, an 8-yard dhoti was around 2.50 Rs., saree was under 5 Rs., cloth for shirt (1 yard) was 8-10 annas, tailoring work was about 4 annas. The family had 2 buffaloes when he was a kid, 5-6 goats, they did not maintain chickens. The goats were kept for breeding, and sale. The buffalo milk was for self-consumption.

**Tape 8/Interview 1:** Male, age 56, born 1920, Caste: Chettiar, hereditary potters, father died in 1956, born 1866 around. Native: Kararimalai, moved to Kalayampalayam before he turned 18. Father has studied till Class I but could not read and write. He has studied till Class II, and he cannot read or write either. He can count only till 100 and says he can sign. He did not go to a school but had lessons from a private teacher. He regrets not having an education, and he feels he might have been better off even in the mills with education. His father had 5 boys, 3 girls (3 boys, 2 girls still alive), apart from him only one other sibling was in the mill (he is dead now). The others pursue their ancestral job – pottery.

He was married at the age of 25, his spouse was 18. They have 4 boys, and 2 girls (all alive), none of them have worked/are working in the mill. The eldest son is in a workshop, the others are studying, the girls have been married off. He would prefer his children to work in the mill.

Started working in the CSW mills before he turned 18.

Moved to Kalayampalayam with his parents, and they moved because they could not earn a living in the village – the pots that were being made were not being sold adequately (not a lot of demand, he says). Also, he reckons that people just bought for their basic needs, and unless pots broke, they did not buy new pots. His father remained a potter until his death. The interviewee reckons his father may have been better off by joining the mill, but also says that his father was already too old to join the mill, and that meant he had to take up mill work. Stays in the same house that he first moved into in Kalayampalayam. He does not maintain any contact with his native, but his father did. Initially, it was an open space on which he built his hut, now it has a tiled roof, mud walls, and mud floor. There was a lot of open space when he first moved into the town, but now there are a lot of huts in those spaces, mostly occupied by mill workers.

Water was drawn from the wells, situated at the distance of one and a half furlongs, the town does not have pipe water yet.

There is electricity in his house, available for more than 15 years. When he first moved to the town, there was no street lighting, streetlights were available since the 1940s. The roads in the town are still mud roads; there is only one tar road (the main road).

He joined the mill in order to earn a living (pottery was not sustainable). He joined the mill by asking the head watchman of the mill if there were jobs available, and since the mill faced labour shortages, he was employed immediately. Worked 9-10 hours when he started working. His father (as a potter) worked around 4-5 hours a day.

He has a couple of friends in the mill. He is happy with the work he does in the mill, and he has worked in the same mill all his life.

Started working as a doffer (for 2 years, 7 Rs.), then a spinner (for 3 years, 9 Rs.), then an oiler (for 10 years, 12 Rs.), then a doffing jobber (70 Rs.). He acknowledges that he liked being an oiler more than a spinner, and also says that promotion within the mill has given him a sense of satisfaction. He does not look back at the doffing jobs with anger and says that it is because of his hard work that he got promotions. Has not met with any accidents in the mill.

He says that there was no cholera or typhoid epidemic in the town even in the 1930s. His present house does not have a latrine yet. In the 1930s, garbage was disposed on the street, and it was later taken by the farmers who paid them about 1-2rs for a cartload of rubbish. Now, after the changes introduced by the Panchayat, garbage is disposed in pits, and then later sold in auction (by the Panchayat) to the farmers.

When he first moved to Kalayampalayam, his father and older brother were the only ones earning. When his father, both his older brothers and he started working, the household earned around 40-50 Rs. This was not sufficient to provide everyone with enough food. Rice was eaten only once a week; pulses were also consumed daily – tuvar dal was eaten most often. Meat was consumed once in 2-3 months. His mother used stem of the sugarcane, and sorgam stems as firewood, which were foraged from the nearby fields of farmers they knew. No animals were kept in the house, no villages were grown on the land. There was no ground rent on the open space that they lived on. The family did not buy clothes very often, clothes were purchased only once a year during Diwali. Appears to have a difficult childhood, and he says it was very difficult to celebrate festivals or buy clothes.

The mill he is employed in offered cloth at reduced rates; 4-yard dhoti was around 1 Rs. 8 annas, and it cost 4-8 annas more in the market.

**Tape 8/Interview 2:** Male, age 57, Caste: Vellar. Father born around 1885 and died app. at the age of 50. Native: Bhavani. Lives in Rs. Puram now, has lived there for 20 years. Father sold coconuts, plantains etc. – not clear whether as someone who bought good from the farmers and sold it (since he says his father was a ‘businessman’), or whether his father was a fruit vendor. His father was not educated, he has been educated till Class IV in a govt. run elementary school, and he can read newspapers. He reckons that it is better if one is educated, because it might help dealing with the authorities, and might also help him not be uncivilized.

His father had 8 children (6 boys, 2 girls) – only 2 boys, and 2 girls are alive now. None of his siblings worked in the mill. He was married at the age of 23-24, his wife was around 16-17. She works in the mill and was working in the mill even before she got married. He has no children, but he brings up his sister’s children (adopted them). Moved to Coimbatore (in Sukruvarpet) when he was around 22, his parents had passed away by then, and he came alone. His sister was married and lived in Coimbatore, and he moved in with her. He was a driver before he joined the mill – in the course of that job somebody named Krishnan told him about the mill.

When he first moved to Sukruvarpet, it had electric lights, there were tar roads at that point. The house that he moved into did not have electric lights i.e. his sister’s house (rent was 7 Rs.). The house had a tiled roof, mud walls, and mud (and cemented) floor. The house that he lives in has brick walls, cemented floor, and a tiled roof. The house has an electricity connection, and he has lived there since 1956. It is a rented house, and he paid 10 Rs. initially when he moved in. He maintains contact with his native town and goes there on any major occasion.

Worked 9 hours when he started working for about 2-3 years, and then it was an 8-hour shift after the Second World War.

**Tape 9/Interview 1:** Male, age 57, Caste: Naidu. Native: Peelamedu, Father lived until 77 (about 20 years back), father was a road contractor (for government works contractor), studied until till Class 4-5. He has studied until Class 4 but can read and write in Tamil. The Board school he went to did not charge fees. He says further education may not have helped him at all, but the little education that he has is helpful for him in his work – particularly in writing/reading reports (since he is a jobber).

Father had 7 boys and 1 girl; he was the second child. One of his brothers is a mill worker, while 3 others are employed in the foundry.

Was married at the age of 27, spouse was about 19-20. Has 5 children – 2 girls, 3 boys. The second son has studied BCom (but has not passed the exam). He does not mind his children working in the mill but says that there are not a lot of opportunities for them.

Joined the mill because he had no other livelihood options and was told about the mill by his friend (Who worked as a *mestri* in the mill). Joined the mill work in 1932, when he was about 13. Started working only half-time, and for 4 hours a day. When he joined the mill, he had to stop studying (at the age of 14, he stopped). Started as a doffing boy (1 year, 4 Rs. as a half-timer), then a half sider (1 years, 12 Rs.), 3/4<sup>th</sup> sider (1 year, 14 Rs.), full sider (5-6 years, 16 Rs.), then an oiler (2 years), spinning *mestri* (about 30 years). So far, he has not faced met with any accidents in the mill.

His father's house he grew up in was a small house, with a tiled roof, mud walls, and mud floor. That room had one room, and one kitchen. The family drew water from the wells (300 ft from the house), it was largely salt water. The town was very small, with a lot of little houses scattered, and lot of open space in the village. Electricity was introduced around 30 years back, and tar roads were laid only 10 years back. There was only one school in the village when he was a child.

He has now constructed his own house, with a tiled roof, brick wall, and mud floor with cement plaster, 1 kitchen, and 3 rooms. There is pipe water now (introduced 10 years back, but still salt water). The house does not have latrines, and he still goes to the woods. He built this house 12 years back (1965 around), and the house cost 4,000 Rs. For the construction he had to take a partial loan, borrowed from neighbours, and friends. The interest on the loan was about 8%. Most of his friends are in the mill.

Has been in the same mill all his life.

He has never participated in the labour strikes, although he does say that there were strikes in 1936, 1942 etc. Remembers that there was a plague epidemic about 20 years back.

In his childhood, garbage was disposed in the streets in a garbage pit and was later collected by the farmers.

His father earned about 30-40 Rs. a month as a road contractor. At the time that he started working, one of his older brothers worked in the mill; at that point the total household income was around 50-55 Rs., which was sufficient to provide for the family. Rice, and solam were eaten often; rice was consumed once a day, ragi and solam the other times, pulses were available 3 times a day, meat was consumed once a week, and was purchased along with the neighbours. Firewood was used for cooking, and also cow-dung cake – at times it was bought, and it was also foraged.

In his childhood, one measure of rice (per litre) was about 48 old paisas (4 annas, in 1976 it is 25 paise). Ragi was about 24 old paisas (2 annas), meat was about 3 annas per pound, and a goat was about 3 Rs. His family bought clothes once in 3 months, a 4-yard dhoti was about 1 Rs. 4 annas. They were able to celebrate festivals with their saving, but also by borrowing from their neighbours.

When he was a child, he would be taken to the municipal hospital if he fell sick, neither his siblings nor his children were born in the hospital – they were all born at home.

**Tape 9/Interview 2:** Male, age 56, Naidu, Caste: Naidu. Native: Peelamedu. Father passed away in 1961 at the age of 74. His father was an agriculturalist and worked on a leased land of about 6 acres. His father may have hired a private tutor, as there were no schools in those days (but may have studied only until Class I or II). He has studied till Class IV for 3 years in Odayampalayam (Board School), and then 1 year in Peelamedu. He can read Tamil with some difficulty but can write – he says he is forgotten because he has not read regularly, and also because he is grown older. He says there was no means to study further but does reckon that if he had studied further, he might have had a better life – maybe as a clerk.

His father had 2 sons, and 2 daughters; he is the second child. One of his sisters, and a brother worked in the mill. The sister got married, and the brother joined a workshop (worked for 10 years). He was 33 when he got married, his spouse was 18. She has never worked in the mill. He has 3 daughters; the oldest daughter has finished BCom (but is not employed). All his daughters are educated, and he hopes they find a job even if it is in the mill.

His father owned land, and the land was taken by the government for the aerodrome construction. The compensation was not adequate – he says, “even if you give a lakh Rs., that land cannot be got back but, in those times, the land was simply given”. Their land was irrigated by water from the well. His father’s house had a tiled roof, stone floor, mud walls, and had 2 rooms including the kitchen. He has since purchased another house and lives there. The house has 2 rooms, and one kitchen. Has a tiled roof, mud walls, and cement plastered floor. The house was purchased in 1965, and it cost 6,000 Rs. He borrowed money for buying the house. The loan was received from the very same person he purchased the house from, and he paid about 112 Rs. a year as interest (12% interest). In order to pay off this loan, he borrowed 1000 Rs. from the bank (by pledging his wife’s jewels), but he is not sure of how much interest the bank charges.

As a farmer working on leased land, his father earned about 1000 Rs. per annum, with 300 Rs. paid as lease. But the money was sufficient to run the family. The owner of the land was a relative on his mother's side, and his name was Kaveri Naidu (same caste).

Started working in 1933 in the mill due to financial difficulties, as a half-timer for about 1 year, and then at the age of 14 he became a full-timer. When he started, he worked for 5 or 5 and a half hours – he was made to clean, and oil the machines after he finished his work. He was not paid for that extra half hour of work, and he was paid just about 3 Rs. 50 paise when he started. He joined the mill directly by coming to the gates of the mill, there was no need for recommendation, he thinks. Has worked in the same mill all his life.

Started off as a doffing boy (2 years, paid 19 Rs. – seems inaccurate though), then a full sider (in 1935, 14/16 Rs.) – he says there was no half sider then, and he was promoted because of his efficiency. After a full sider, he was a bander (22 Rs.), he was an oiler (in 20 years), and he has now been promoted to a doffing *mestri* just in the past year and a half.

He remembers a General Strike in 1938, and also in 1942 and 1948. In the 1938 General Strike, it was not all the mills on strike but in 1948, all the mill workers were on strike – this was the General Strike, not the one in 1938. The 1938 strike was for increase in wages, service promotions, and went on for about 10 days. The 1938 strike was broken, some mill workers were laid off from the mill. He acknowledges that the strike was not successful. There was also a strike in 1931 in Rangvilas Mills, but he does not remember what the demands were because he was still at school.

He remembers Peelamedu as a tiny village with mud roads, and very dilapidated houses in his childhood. His mother drew water from the well, and it was salt water. Good water was available in the wells (in the agricultural fields). He remembers a plague epidemic in 1943, and there was one before that as well, but he does not remember it very well.

**Tape 9/Interview 3:** Location, Radhakrishna Mills, Male, age 50. Caste: Naickar. Native: Peelamedu. His father was about 40 when he passed away, in around 1931, he was just about 4-5 years. His father was an agriculturalist and owned 2 acres of land. The land is still owned by the family, and he looks after the land, and grows solam. His father was educated till Class 4-5, he has studied till Class 6 in an aided school. He says that education is good for mill work, in order to understand the new machines, and other technical details.

His father had 4 children, and his older brother worked in the same mill in the spinning department.

Was 27 when he got married, his spouse was about 23. She has not worked in a mill. He has 1 boy and 1 girl, the girl is in Class 9, and the son is in Class 3. He had two previous children, who passed away due to illness. He does not mind his son joining the mill, but as a Section Head.

He was brought up by his mother, who was a mill worker, and she worked in the reeling department. His mother earned about 30-40 Rs. a year. Tiled roofs, mud walls and floor, one room house, and it was his father's own house. He lives in the same house even today, but he has renovated it a bit, and has built a kitchen. The house has electricity connection, made available in 1962 – about 14 years back.

He joined the mill because he wanted to – he had a certificate. He joined when he was 15, and worked about 10 hours initially, and found it very difficult/" hard". He has worked in the same mill all his life.

Most of his friends are mill workers, and they are from different mills.

He started off as a doffing boy for 9 years, 3.50 Rs.; then a half sider for 1 year, 7-8 Rs.; then a full sider for 14-15 Rs.

In his childhood, water was drawn from the wells, which was about 10 ft. from his house. Piped water has been available only for the past 10-12 years, salt water is what is available in the pipes.

Remembers a cholera, and plague epidemic in 1939-1940. The villagers were asked to evacuate and stay in the neighbouring villages during the epidemic.

At the point he joined the mill, both his mother and older brother were employed in the mill. He earned about 30-40 Rs. The family ate a mixture of rice, solam, ragi etc. while pulses were consumed daily. He does not consume meat, but the family did consume meat once a month. The family did not keep animals, nor did they grow vegetable in a patch at home.

New clothes were purchased once a year during Diwali, and it was not always easy running the family.

The family did not go to a doctor, but preferred home, and country medicine when he was a child. His children were born in the hospital.

**Tape 11/Interview 1:** Male, age 61. Caste: Potter. His father, a potter, was 75 when he passed away, he was 50 at that point. Native: Teethanpalayam, 12 miles east of Ganupatti. Has lived in Ganupatti for 37 years.

Came to Ganupatti in 1942 with his wife. Some of his relatives lived in Ganupatti, and he lived with them for about 1 month. He later brought his younger brother and got him a job in the mill. He says that since it was not possible to earn enough money from making pots, he decided to join the mill. He came to Ganupatti with the specific intention of joining the mill – his relatives had informed him of the possibility of employment in the mill. These were relatives on his wife's side, and his wife's sister worked in the mill.

The house that he stayed in for a month had a stone wall, tiled roof, and stone floor – it had only one room. The rent for the house cost 5 Rs. After staying with his relatives for a month, he moved to another place which had mud floor, tiled roof, and a stone/mud wall. The rent cost about 3 Rs. but this house was washed away in the floods. He moved to another rented house that had stone walls, tiled roof, and a stone floor. This house had 4 rooms, and 4 families lived there – the rent for his portion cost 5 Rs.

He started working in the mill only in 1942 (in Lakshmi Mills).

**Tape 11/Interview 2:** Male, born 1918, age 58. Railway Clerk in Lakshmi Mills. Caste: Vellala Gounder. Native: Ganupatti. Father was a road *mestri* for the District Board, grandfather was a cotton merchant. His father had 3 children - 2 sons, and 1 daughter. Sivaraman was the oldest child. Father only attended the elementary school, and he attended the elementary school at Ganupatti till Class 5. He reckons that education is important for the mill worker, in order to understand the work, and also reduce trouble by not participating in strikes. At the time of marriage, he was 30, and his spouse was about 20. She worked on her own agricultural lands. They have 6 children. His eldest son has studied until BSc, and also done a management course (MMS). 3 of his children are employed.

Moved to Lakshmi Mills colony quarters. Father's house was a stone walled, tiled, stoned floor, 3 room, 1 hall, and 1 veranda house. His relatives still live in Ganupatti, and he often visits them. In his childhood, Ganupatti had only a District Board school, and now it has a primary school, and a high school.

He remembers that the town had a Panchayat Board from about 1940.

He joined the mill to earn money. He was advised to join the mill by the Managing Director's father who had visited his house to collect shares – both he and his father own(ed) shares in the mill.

He has friends both inside, and outside the mill.

He joined the mill at the age of 14 as an office-boy (paid 5 Rs.) and worked 14 hours at that point – he says that Factory Acts did not apply to regulate the working hours for office-boys. In 1945/1948 the working hours were shortened to 8-hour workdays. He was an office boy for 14 years, and since then he has worked as a railway clerk. First, he earned 5 Rs., then 7 Rs. in 1940, then 12 Rs. in 1943, 21 Rs. in 1948, and then 30 Rs., and then 80 Rs. – these wages were determined at the discretion of the Managing Director.

When he was a child, his father earned about 40 Rs. as a road *mestri*. Water was drawn from wells that were at a mile's distance from his house, and the water levels started reducing in the 1950s (insufficient monsoon, trees were cut down). The house he grew up in did not have latrines.

The Panchayat built the latrines only in 1965. He remembers the cholera, and plague epidemic in 1942/43; seems to have lost a few relatives as well. Does not remember similar epidemics before the 1940s.

At the point he started working the mill, the family income was about 50 Rs. in addition to the income from 12 acres of agricultural land. It seems to have been a joint family with about 12 members including his uncles living under the same roof. With his uncles' income, the family earned in excess of 75 Rs. a month at the point.

On the agricultural lands, coarse grains were grown – and he estimates that the yearly income from agriculture was about 1000 Rs. His father employed agricultural labourers, and 2 Dalit families (Chakkiyars). They were paid in kind (1 bag of coarse grain) and about 5 Rs. a month. His father sold these lands when he joined the mill in order to repay debts that were incurred from investing in the cotton business.

In his childhood, coarse grains were consumed most often, pulses daily. They did not consume meat – he claims that his family were 'pure vegetarians'. He is taken to alcohol now, chips one man present at the interview.

**Tape 12/Interview 1:** Female, aged 57, Caste: Chettiar, hereditary occupation – handloom weaver. Native: Coimbatore. Father passed away before he turned 60, in the 1920. She was just 7-8 years at that point. Was married at the age of 13, and her husband passed away soon after due to cholera. Has not remarried.

She is not educated, and neither was her father. She claims that there were not enough means available to get educated when she was a child, and hence it was pointless mulling over it now.

Her father had 3 children (all girls). Her elder sister cannot speak and could not work.

She lives now in Sukruvarpettai and has been here for the past 7 years. The house that she lived in as a child had a tiled roof, brick wall, and cement floor – she is moved houses a few times, twice in the same street. The rent in one of the first houses she stayed in was 15 Rs., and in the second house it was about 20 Rs. She visits her relatives in the suburbs of Coimbatore once in 3 or 6 months, and during festive occasions.

Her father was born in Coimbatore as well. Handloom weavers at that point worked for about 8 hours.

Has worked in the CSWM since the age of 14 and joined in the reeling department. She is still in the reeling department, and she admits that she tires, and finds the work monotonous, and without an end in sight. When she joined the mill, she worked for 10 hours a day. She joined the mill to earn her livelihood. She was informed about the mill by a fellow kinsman, but she could not say this to the supervisors in the mill. She then informed the supervisors of her conditions, and the passing away of her father, after which they took pity on her, and hired her in the mill.

Most of her friends are mill workers, but none of them work in the mill any longer.

She was the only wage earner in the family after her father passed away. She earned 5 Rs. when she first joined the mill, 6-8 years later it was increased to 25 Rs. She estimates that handloom weavers at that point earned about 50-60 Rs. a month. She is never met with any accidents in the mill.

On her earning alone, the family struggled to make ends meet. Only broken rice was consumed ('Burma broken rice'), and pulses since nothing else was affordable. Clothes were bought only once a year, and not always. Sometimes, these clothes were purchased by borrowing money from the neighbours.

The mill supplied cloth at reduced rates 2-3 years after she had started working there. But the mill supplied this cloth as a loan – so in turn, it proved more expensive than buying it in the market.

In her childhood, the street where she stayed in had no electric streetlights, she says it was very dark, and the road was not laid. Drinking water had to be drawn from a well that was far away, and brackish water was available through pipes. The house had a latrine, and also a bathroom. Garbage was disposed in the bins or in the street which 'manual scavengers' cleared.

She says that not very many people died in the cholera epidemic.

**Tape 12/Interview 2:** Male, Caste: Senguntha Mudaliar, hereditary occupation – handloom weavers. Native: Katooru (close to Kaleeswara Mills). His father passed away when he was 83 (in about 1971). His father was a mill worker, but he would occasionally spin cloth as well. His father was born about 7 miles from Coimbatore in Kuppanur. He has studied until Class 5 in a private school in Anupurpalayam. He enjoys reading mythological texts. His father studied until Class 8, and also worked as a voluntary policeman during the plague epidemic.

He regrets not studying further; he did not have the means to pursue education. He reckons education is important for mill work too, in order to distinguish between the machines, and the threads to use in order to avoid mistakes.

He lives now in Ratnapuri, 2 miles north of the mill (CSWM). He has lived there for the past 15 years. In his native (Katooru), his father's house had a tiled roof, stone and mud wall, and stone floor. The house was not changed much, except for basic maintenance work. His father purchased the house for about 200-300 Rs. The house did not have electric lights – he claims that at the point he sold the house even Coimbatore did not have electricity. He has seen a lot of changes in Katooru, in his childhood the place had a lot of fields, and very few houses. However, since the lands were no longer profitable, they were sold as house plots. Electric street lighting has been available for the past 40 years, and tar roads were laid in some areas some 35 years back (in the 1940s).

His father began working in the mill at the age of 15-16. Since he did not know how to work in the fields, and he had no assistance with the handloom work, he moved to Katooru. There was also a famine in Kuppanur, and his father lacked the capital to set up his own handloom weaving business – hence, he decided to join the mill, and provide for his family.

His father was about 21 when he got married, and his mother was 14. His mother worked as a doffer in the Kaleeswara Mills. His father seems to have worked 12 hours in the mill.

Before he joined the mill, he worked part-time at an Officer's club, in the tennis courts collecting balls etc. He says that he imagined mill work as providing better pay, and also a weekly holiday, and then requested the manager of the mill to hire him. He also seems to have worked as a domestic servant in a Bank of India employee's house back in the day. He claims that this employee offered him a job in the bank, but this was conditional upon him picking up English, which he did not have the means to do. He also says that the bank job would have been ideal and regrets this missed opportunity.

**Tape 13/Interview 1:** Male, age 53, Caste: Kammavaru Naidu, Native: Papanayakapalayam. Father was a building stone contactor, but he passed away when he himself was merely 12 years old. Father was illiterate, and he has studied until Class 7 at Sarvajana High School, a fee-paying school of 5 Rs. 25 paise per month for Class 7. He reckons education is important for everyone in the world, as it allows people to get rid of superstitions. He then chips in to say that while he believes in god, he does not treat prayers or visiting temples as everyday work. Furthermore, he reckons education will allow one to directly understand scriptures and understand the contemporary issues within religions.

Built a new house 8 years back, this house cost about 8,600 Rs. in total. The money for the house came from his savings – he invested in gold ornaments, and then later sold it for cash.

The house that he grew up in had a tiled roof, mud walls, a stone floor, and had 2 rooms. The major changes he observes lies in the fact that “people are more civilized now”, the houses have changed - pakka houses with terraces now inhabit the area. Electric street lighting was introduced in 1939-40. Earlier the people used ‘Vincent Dynamo lighting’ – this basically meant using the generators to electrify the main streets, each trunk roads would have these lights. He remembers these lights from 1932, and possibly they existed before. Tar roads were laid only after 1940.

He joined the mill in order to earn his livelihood, he could not study further, and after his father’s death it became necessary for him to earn an income to support his mother, and 4 siblings. His uncle was a foreman in the Lakshmi Mills, and introduced him to mill work. The uncle worked in the mill since 1910.

He began work in the Lakshmi Mills at the age of 12 as an office-boy – he collected tickets from the workers (‘ticket boy’). He was a ticket boy for 4 years (paid 4 Rs. 75 paise), then a doffing boy in the rowing section for 8 years (paid 8 Rs.), then a machine tenter for 2 years (18 Rs., on a piece rate basis), then an oiler for 14 years until 1963(paid 67 Rs.), and then a *mestri* in the rowing department (was paid 123 Rs. as basic wage). As a ticket boy he worked for 9 hours a day. His father on the other hand had no fixed work timings (as a building stone contractor).

The *mestris* handed out corporeal punishment to mill workers, and he remembers them vividly. He says that bamboo sticks, and ropes were used in order to get the mill workers to work quicker. He says that this practice was not necessarily wrong and was done only in order to get the mill workers to work better. By the time he became a *mestri*, corporeal punishment was deemed illegal due to a law passed in 1948 (Factory Acts). He reckons that mill workers today are lazy, and they need to be advised in order to work better.

Most of his friends (75%) are mill workers. No accidents in the mill.

He reckons that the wages increased after Independence, and in 1939 (he calls the Second World War “Japan War”) they were paid an allowance of 2 annas for every Rs. they earned.

He remembers the plague epidemic in the 1940s, and in this time every resident of Papanayakapalaym were housed in the mill; reckons that about 40 mill workers lost their lives due to the epidemic – one of his co-workers in particular succumbed to the plague.

In his present house, there is a latrine (flush-out latrine), whereas there was none in the house he grew up in as a child. In his childhood, garbage was dumped in pits and allowed to decompose, after which it was collected by farmers. They were paid about 1 Rs. 25 paise for a cartload of rubbish.

His father earned well enough and provide adequately for the family. However, after his father’s death, the family experienced hardship. When he was the major wage-earner, clothes were bought once a year for Diwali. Rice was consumed daily, pulses (tuvar dal) was also consumed regularly. The family had 16 pairs of bullocks when his father was alive, but they sold most of them.

The mill gave away dhotis or sarees in the event a worker got married, but cloth was not given at discounted rates.

He was also involved in the Family Planning programme and says that it is important to have small families in order to provide the best opportunities for children. He reckons that people understood the importance of his advice regarding family planning, and this is why the programme was successful.

He remembers a strike in 1937, the mill workers protested against the working 'double-side' i.e. against the intensification of their work.

**Tape 13/Interview 2:** Male, age 55, Caste: Kammavaru Naidu. Native: Sennamanayakanpalam, about 10 miles northwards from Lakshmi Mills. His father passed away at the age of 60, about 30 years back. He studied in St. Anthony School till Class 2. He regrets not having had a higher education and says that he might have improved and earned promotion in his mill work if he had been educated further. Furthermore, he says that education is important to learn about the machines, and other technical aspects, and often directly without anyone having to explain it to him.

His father had 4 children (2 boys, and 2 girls). His younger sister works in the same mill (Lakshmi Mills). He was about 24 when he got married, and his spouse was 20. He has 3 children (2 boys, 1 girl). His eldest son has done a diploma course in Mechanical Engineering, his daughter has studied until Class 10, and the youngest son is in Class 10. Does not wish for his children to work in the mill, wants his youngest son to be an engineer (and work in another sector, not textile mills since textile mills hire only one engineer), his oldest son has his own workshop.

Lives in Papanayakapalayam. His father had moved away from the native village because there was not adequate water for agricultural work. The family owned about 8 acres of land, of which only 4 acres was irrigated but due to the water scarcity the land was sold by his father.

He says that Papanayakapalayam has seen much development in the years. Electric street lighting was introduced in 1945-46, and tar roads were built after 1947. In his childhood, there were 2 schools within half a mile of his house. There was piped water supply in Papanayakapalayam at the point he started working in the mill. He remembers the plague epidemic and says that about 100 people (approximately) died at that point (does not remember the year).

He chose mill work in order to earn his livelihood, and there were many choices either at that point. He was about 13 when he took up mill work, and he joined as a full-timer. To join as a full-timer, he needed to produce a medical certificate that he did; however, the legal age for mill work was 14. The doctor gave him a certificate because he looked over 14 at that point. He worked for 11 and a half hours initially, and he reckons that since he was physically fit, he does not remember being very tired at that point.

At the age of 13, he was hired as a doffer (for 1 year, paid 7.50 Rs.), then a half sider (for 2 years, 9 Rs.), then a 3/4<sup>th</sup> sider (for 2 years, 11 Rs.), and then a full sider (for 5 years, 14.50 Rs.). He then was a reserve piecer (for 5 years, 14 Rs., 14 annas), then a fitter (50 Rs.) in the spinning department. Now he is the Head Fitter, specifically a Comber (occupied this position for the past years). Has not met with any accident in the mill.

Most of his friends are workshop owners than mill workers. He says that he enjoys mill work and takes to it with enthusiasm.

In the 1950s, the mill provided a housing colony for the workers, and for the past 15 years there has also been a school. There is also a crèche (and has been for the past 25 years), and also a tiffin shed (apparently since the very beginning), and a canteen (for the past 30 years) in the mill.

He has his own house now, and that has a latrine (flush-out toilet). This house was built only 5 years back, and cost 60,000 Rs. He borrowed a loan from the government for about 20,000 Rs., and then both his son and he have invested 20,000 Rs. each on the house.

**Tape 16/Interview 1:** Male, age 56-57, Caste: Kammavaru Naidu. Native: Athipalayam (6 miles north of Lakshmi Mills). Does not remember when his father passed away, presumably was very young. His mother too passed away when he was young, and he was brought up by his sister. His parents had 6 children (5 boys, 1 girl), he is the youngest. He was married at the age of 22-23, and his spouse was 19. They have 6 children (5 girls, 1 boy). The boy has studied until BCom – he works in Tanjavur now. He tried getting a job for one of his daughter's in the mill, but she did not take it up, and took up another job as a clerk. 4 of his 5 daughters have been married, and the boy is married as well.

He has studied until Class 1, and can read Tamil (a little), and can also sign his name. He regrets not studying further, and says that in his childhood, it was difficult to sustain his livelihood, and therefore education was not an option available to him. He says education is important for a mill worker in order to understand standard measures (for example a millimetre, or an inch etc.)

Moved to Papanayakapalayam at the age of 16 with his older sister in 1936. They rented a 1 room house, tiled roof, brick walls, and cement floor for 4 Rs. A year after, a house (originally a thatched hut) was built with a one hall, one room and one kitchen with a tiled roof, with electricity, and water. Electricity was introduced in 1946. He bought the house for 800 Rs., he spent 15,000 Rs. on renovating it – he did this gradually, once in 2 years or more. The money came through his savings, and also from his sister's house.

His sister is still a mill worker, and his aunt was a *mestri* at the Lakshmi Mills. His aunt got his sister a job in the mill. He remembers his sister working in the mill since he was the age of 10, he mentions that his sister was brought up by his 'Periamma' (mother's older sister), and it appears that his brother too worked in Coimbatore. He joined the mill on the insistence of his sister, and on the recommendation of his 'Periamma' (a *mestri* in the reeling department).

At this time, he lived only with his sister, who earned about 18 Rs. a month (and later he earned 7 Rs. when he joined the mill). He says that they lived a comfortable life in the 1930s with 25 Rs. as their monthly earnings. Rice was consumed every day, and so were pulses (mostly tuvar dal). Meat was consumed once a week. Meat wasn't purchased along with other families; instead once the animal was butchered, meat was sold in the neighbourhood, and purchased. Clothes were purchased thrice in a year. They did not keep animals at that point, and there was no space to do so (but he does maintain a cow now). His aunt (periamma) maintained a cow, and he would often get milk from her place. Festivals were celebrated well (Pongal, Diwali etc.). The mill gave a bonus for Diwali in 1937, and 1938.

In the 1930s he went only to a country doctor if he fell sick. Neither he nor his sister have any outstanding loans, he says that all the money spent was through his savings.

He began work in 1937, when he was 17. He started off working in the bundling department, he worked here for 10 years. For the first month he was not paid and was later paid 7 Rs. He then joined the spinning department, as a person who cleaned the machinery (for 25 years). He is now a spinning fitter. He finds his current work more interesting than his work in the bundling department.

Most of his friends are mill workers, he has worked in Lakshmi Mills all his life. He has not met with any accidents in the mill. He says that while the mill work was hard to begin with, he now looks back at it with contentment (he calls it good work/ "nalla vela"). He says he wants to engage in business after retiring, he is due 25, 000 Rs. on retirement (as gratuity) but he is not clear what sort of business he might want to get into.

In his childhood Papanayakapalaym had piped water supply in his house. The house also had a latrine (no flush, you had to pour water), there were no communal latrines. When he first moved in, the garbage was disposed in the pits, and it was cleared daily by the municipality workers.

He says that the town has changed considerably, there have been developments in electric street lighting, road construction, piped water supply, and latrines in the house, and also there are modern houses now. In the 1930s there was a lot of space, which are now filled with houses. There are not a lot of agricultural fields now, in the 1930s sholam, ragi, and other coarse grains were grown in the fields – he says that it is only after 1950 that the town started changing significantly.

He remembers the plague epidemic in 1942, and also says that most of the people of the town moved into Lakshmi Mills until the area was declared safe again passed away in the epidemic.

**Tape 16/Interview 2:** Female, age 51, Caste: Kammavaru Naidu. Native: Papanayakapalayam, still resides in the same town. Her father passed away at the age of 85 in about 1936. Her father was an agricultural coolie, and so was her mother. She has not been educated (and neither has her father); she says there is no point of regretting the lack of education now (there were no means to get educated back then). She also quips that she has not missed much and has a good mind and can work in any department.

Her father had 2 children (both girls, her older sister was physically handicapped and could not take up work), she is the youngest. She was 16 at the age of marriage, and her spouse was 19. They have one child of their own (a boy). He husband worked in another mill. Their child has studied until Class 9, but he is not employed (he was attending the workshop, but that seems to have stopped). She wants him to join the mill, and she has been petitioning the manager to get her son a job in the mil.

Retired of her own will, because of illness. She says that her illness was due to the nature of the work (a pain in the lower abdomen, and stomach).

She lived in a rented house for a long time but has now purchased her own house. The rented house had a tiled roof, brick wall, and cement floor; it had only 1 room, and it cost 2 and a half Rs. She reckons that house would cost about 30 Rs. today. She then moved to a house which cost 7 Rs. in rent (for 30 years she lived in this house), and later bought that very house about 4 months before (in 1976). She bought the house for 3,500 Rs. by borrowing money from outside (not bank, neighbours). The interest was about 3 Rs. for every 100 Rs.

She joined the mill at the age of 15 to earn her livelihood and support the family. She chose mill work over that of an agricultural coolie due to interest, and she thinks mill work is better than agricultural work (one does not have to work in the sun, she says). She joined the mill on the recommendation of the owner (GK Sundaram apparently). Her family lived in the agricultural land of the owner, and hence she knew him.

She first joined the mill as a reeler (for 16 years), then in the winding department. She found reeling slightly easier to perform than winding. She says that winding was physically more demanding – it needed a lot of elaborate procedures, needling, cleaning, and other details. She earned 10 Rs. at the point she started working.

Her father had stopped working when she had joined the mill (she says that it was his decision not to work that forced her to take up mill work). Her father earned about 12 annas per day as an agricultural coolie, and her mother earner about 4-8 annas at that point. There were no fixed wages in agriculture (and sometimes the labourers were also paid 2 annas). Her mother stopped working when Ragammal took up mill work.

Her parents worked about 20 days a month as agricultural coolies – the days were not fixed, and they had to work whenever they were called to work in the fields. Rice was consumed every day, and so were pulses (tuvar dal in the form of kuzhambu). Meat was eaten twice a month and was purchased directly from the shops. Clothes were purchased about twice a year (mostly during Diwali, and at another festival). They also had a buffalo at that point; no vegetables were grown in the backyard. She says that the family did not borrow money to celebrate festivals, and it mostly came from their earnings.

When she started working in the mill, she says that the family experienced no change (her parents had retired, and she was the sole earner). They would visit the hospital in case of illness. Her son was born at home though.

She does not remember when Lakshmi Mills first had living quarters for the workers.

Her friends are not mill workers (mostly housewives).

She misses not going to the mill to work. She now passes the time by making idlis and sells it - people buy the idlis right from her house.

She remembers the town from the age of 15 (from the time she started working in the mill). The town had Sirivani piped water supply throughout the day but not in the houses. It was supplied to specific points in the streets, from which it was collected. She remembers the cholera epidemic – both she, and her husband suffered from cholera. She suffered from typhoid in 1932 but she recovered; her husband however was struck by typhoid in 1934 and unfortunately passed away. The house that she lived in at that point (in the 1930s) did not have a latrine, there were communal latrines at the point though.

**Tape 18/Interview/see also Questionnaire 2, No. 28:** Male, age 77. Native: Thottipalayam. Father was a barber; he was not educated. He is not educated too, he does not regret missing education. He says that he might have had a better standard of living with education but says that it is too late to think about that now. He says education is important for everyone, but during the time he grew up there were not a lot of schools, and opportunities for everyone to gain an education (most of the people from his village of his age-group do not have an education).

His father had 9 children (3 girls, 6 boys); one of his brothers is 80.

His wife still works in the mill, none of his siblings did. He was 19 at the time of marriage, and his spouse was 12. They have had 9 children (5 boys, 4 girls). One of his boys worked in the mill, but no longer does now. Two sons work in a workshop, one cultivates land, two perform shaving, and cutting – all of his children are married, and have their own children. He has about 17 grandsons, and 22 granddaughters. None of his grandchildren work in the mill, and they could not get hired in the mill.

Has worked in Sri Ranga Vilas (SRV) Mills. Most of the people in his native town came to work in the mill, agricultural land was not owned by most people, and not over 6 acres.

Electric street lighting has been available since the 1940s in Thottipalayam, his house does not have electricity. The roads are mud roads. The village does not have a school to this day, the neighbouring village has one (and that is 3 furlongs away).

In his childhood, they had to walk at least 1 furlong to draw water from the wells (good water). At present, there is still no piped water supply to all the houses in the village, but there is piped water supply to the street corners from which water is drawn (this has been available for the past 10 years).

He remembers the outbreak of epidemics a “long time back” in his village, he must have been about 15 years at that point; he also says that the outbreak of cholera and typhoid was recurrent in those days. He has personally helped in carrying the dead bodies to the burial grounds – not many people did this for fear of infection.

His present house still does not have a latrine nor a separate bathroom, and they defecate in the fields. In his childhood, garbage was disposed in an open field – if it rained, it would get washed away (some 60 years back, in the 1910s). However, now the garbage is allowed to decompose.

He says that his family had to endure significant hardship in his childhood – there were about 6 wage earners in the family then (his father, 3 of his brothers, and 2 of his sisters); and the family earned an equivalent of 160 litres of coarse grain. The earnings were not often in money-form, unless the family requested for money in times of need. Clothes were purchased only once a year – he says all that was worn at that point was just a dhoti, and a cloth around their chest. Festivals were not celebrated often due to insufficient funds. The family had a few chickens (when he was about 10), and the eggs were consumed in the family. The family did not eat rice very often, mostly coarse grains, and pulses were consumed. Horsegram was consumed regularly. Meat was consumed once a month, about 10 people got together and purchased the animal, and the meat was later distributed among the families. One goat cost about 1 Rs. and 25 paise in about 1936. In the 1910 about 3 kgs of meat cost about 2 annas (the animal was jointly purchased, and then divided). 3 measures of rice cost 4 annas, 6-7 measures of horse gram for 4 annas. The minimum cost of a dhoti was about 2 and a half annas, a towel was about 1 and a half annas. In the 1920s, 3 kgs of meat cost 12 annas, 1 and a half measures of rice were about 4 annas, 30 vellams (or salaga) of horse gram was 6-7 Rs. A dhoti cost 1 Rs., and a towel cost about 6 annas.

He does not remember his father having any debt, and at present he does not have any outstanding loans. He had borrowed money for marriages, other celebrations, and for building a house for each son. The house cost about 300 Rs. in the 1920s (it was 12 measures in length, and 10 measures in breadth, and a tiled house).

He joined the mill work because he was not able to make a living with his hereditary occupation. He has worked in the same mill all his life. He was referred to the mill by the very person who had constructed the mill – he knew the person because he used to shave and cut his hair. His uncle, and mother finally brought him to the mill.

He says that if he had another opportunity, he would work in the mill, but he then quips someone needs to give him a job in the first place. He says mill work was difficult, and then changes it to saying that the work itself is not difficult, and the difficulty occurs when one does not work, and has to struggle to find food.

He says that he has not retired from working entirely. Since moving on from the mill (after retirement), he has continued to perform his ancestral job of shaving, and cutting hair, some agricultural work, collects garbage and sells it to the farmers. He cultivates 4 acres of agricultural land on lease and has been cultivating on this land for 40 years. Initially, he paid 30 Rs. every year for the land, and paid this for 7 years. For the next 7 years, he paid 50 Rs., 70 Rs. for the next 7 years, then 90 Rs. for another 7 years, then 120 Rs. for the next 7 years. He says that the price for the lease kept going up because the price of agricultural products also increased.

He is built a new house, and he has not changed it much. It had a tiled roof, stone walls, and a cement floor.

Most of his friends are mill workers, and some of his friends are also farmers (from neighbouring villages).

When he joined the mill, he was first a sweeper for 2 years – he was paid 7 Rs. (for 1 month), and then later 10 Rs. (from the second month), and finally 12 Rs. (for 1 or 1 and a half years). He says that there was an increase in wages for all mill workers, but this was not due to any strike. He says that wages were increased every year. As agricultural labourers, men were paid 4 annas per day, and women only 2 annas per day in the 1920s-early 1930s. He used to work as someone who took the goats to graze in the agricultural land; the goat's refuse was then used to fertilize the soil, and he handled the goats of many farmers. For this he was paid only in kind – coarse grains of about 4 litres (ragi for instance) per month from each farmer whose goats he tended to.

He says that while he liked working in the mill, he could not make earn sufficiently from mill work, and hence had to do multiple jobs – he gave oil baths, and massages to the rich landlords in the village, and also to the mill owner.

He has not met with any accidents in the mill.

**Tape 19/Interview 1:** Male, father died at 75. Native: Putturu village, Vadagupalayam (Udamelpetai Taluk). His father used to sell agricultural products (onions, and other products). His father could sign, while he has studied till Class IV. He can sign his name too, he reads newspapers, and also storybooks in Tamil (such as Ramayana, Vikramaditya stories). He went to a Convent school (apparently there was no municipality school when he studied). He says education is necessary for everyone, and also for mill workers. He quips that uneducated people are 'fools', and educated people are 'clever'; furthermore, that the former can only use their thumb impressions while the latter can sign their names. He does not remember his father regretting missing education, but he tried to ensure his children were educated. His father had 3 children (1 girl, 2 boys). His sister died.

He was 25 when he got married, and his wife was 16-17. She works in the mill too and was employed in the mill even before he took up mill work. They have 6 children (all boys), however 3 of the boys are dead. One of them died due to chickenpox, the other drowned, and the other boy was born sick, and eventually died. One of his sons works in the same mill (SRV Mills) as a spinner. One of the other boys is a tobacco businessman, and lives with his father-in-law, while the other is unemployed.

Moved to Peelamedu at the age of 21, in 1936 (he later says 25) with his parents. He says that his parents in because they found it difficult to make a living in his native village due to famines, and lack of rainfall. His father continued selling agricultural produce even after the family moved into Coimbatore, and apparently managed to manage his business better. His father-maintained contact with the native village, and so does he – he often visits his native for festive occasions (marriages etc.).

He says that his parents were able to provide enough food for the family when he moved to Peelamedu. Rice was consumed 4-5 days a week, and pulses were consumed once in 2-3 days. Meat was consumed once or twice a month, but the meat was purchased from the butcher directly (in kg). 6 measures of rice (all varieties, he says) cost about 1 Rs. back in the day. 3-4 measures of Tuvar dal cost about 1 Rs., 1 kilo of meat (goat mutton, not sheep mutton) was 1 or 1 and a half Rs. They also had enough clothing, and clothes were purchased 2-3 times a year (during Diwali, and Pongal). A 4-yard dhoti cost 3-4 Rs., an 8-yard dhoti cost (6-7 Rs.), one yard of shirt fabric was 10-12 annas, a saree was 6-7 Rs., and the tailoring cost for a shirt was about 8 annas. The family did not keep animals, nor did they grow vegetables in the backyard. The mill gave cloth at a discounted rate (and also for free). 4 yards of dhoti cost 2 Rs. (half price then inside the mill). The mill also gave bonuses/incentive for festival celebration.

His father never took a loan, and neither has he.

When he first started working in the mill, there were 3 wage-earners in the family (his father, his wife, and himself). Their joint earning was about 100-200 Rs. a month. He says that the mill used to give 3 months maternity live, and his wife gave birth to the children in the general hospital in Coimbatore.

When he first into Peelamedu, he lived in a rented house, with a tiled roof, mud wall, and cemented floor; it was a single room house. The house cost about 4-5 Rs. a month to rent. At present, he lives in his own house, which has a tiled roof, mud wall, and uncemented floor. It also has only one room. This house cost him 2,000 Rs. to construct in the early 1960s. Since the time he moved to Peelamedu at the age of 21, he says he has seen a change in the water supply situation - when he initially moved in they did not have water supply, and had to walk to the wells to get water. The well was about 4 furlongs (half a mile) from his mile, and it was brackish water. Now there is piped water supply to all houses for the past 10 years (Sirivani piped water supply). When he first moved in, he says there was no street lighting, and it is only in the last 20 years that he remembers seeing streetlights. He says that the roads are still mud roads.

He remembers a cholera epidemic in about 1946 – his sister died due to cholera in 1946. He says that he remembers about 50 people losing their lives in the epidemic. The house that he moved into initially did not have a latrine, and a bathroom. His own house at present does not have a latrine too but has a bathroom.

Garbage was dumped in the backyard of the house and allowed to decompose back in the 1930s. The farmers would later collect it and pay about 1 or 1 and a half Rs. for a cartload. Now, the municipality (later he says the Panchayat board, and not the municipality) deals with the garbage. He says that garbage from about 10 houses is dumped into an open ground ('madaan'), after which the Panchayat board collects it in a lorry – this has been the practice for the past 15 years.

He says that if given the opportunity again, he would still choose mill work, and he finds it interesting. He says he has no friends, and he is content with his house (he means to say that he is content being a family man). He also says that he has worked in the same mill all his life.

When he first joined the mill, he worked in the blow room, and this is where he worked until the day he retired. He says he has never found his job monotonous, and one has to cultivate interest in one's work. He initially got only 16 Rs. but after 15 years, it increased to 75 Rs. per month. However, this was not due to a labour strike but because of a government order.

**Tape 19/Interview 2:** Male, SRV Mills, age 55, Caste: Kammavaru Naidu, Native: Veerampatti (30 miles south of Peelamedu). His father was not educated, while he has studied until Class V in his native village (in a private school) and reads old religious scriptures. Despite not having an education, his father tried to send his son to school, but unfortunately passed away when he was still at school, and this meant he could not continue to study further. He says that education is necessary for a mill worker in order to know and understand things/machines, and also to increase one's self-knowledge. He reckons that there might have been changes in his life had he studied further but cannot guarantee it.

His father had to children (both boys). His younger brother too works in the mill.

He was about 25 when he got married, and his spouse was 20. They have 3 children (1 boy, 2 girls). His son works in the mill too and has studied until Class 8. His daughters do not work – one of them has studied until Class 6, and the other until Class 4. All his children are married. He wishes his daughters to work in the mill too but says that they might not be able to manage the same kind of work that he does.

Moved to the mill quarters at the age of 16 in 1937 when his father died. The proprietor of the mill who used to buy cotton from his father promised employment to the son – and after his father's demise, the son had no other option but to join the mill. He says that the population has increased in Peelamedu, and the people have become more 'civilised' today. By 'civilised' he indicates changes in the food that people eat, and the clothes that they were today compared to the 1930s. The house that he moved into initially had a tiled roof, mud walls, and a cement floor. He says that the mill quarters have remained the same since he moved in. He now lives in a rented house that has a tiled roof, mud walls, and a cement floor. The house has had an electricity connection for the past 4-5 years. The house has 4 rooms, while the mill quarters had just one room (and one veranda).

The rent was one and a half Rs. at the mill quarters. The mill quarters did not have latrines, or bathrooms in the 1930s, and he says the quarters still do not have latrines/bathrooms to this day. When he lived in the mill quarters in the 1930s, water was supplied through irrigation wells from which people had to fetch water. The well was about 1 furlong from the quarters. He says that the same system exists even today in the quarters, but the situation is worse because the wells have dried up, and people have to buy water (has been going on for the past 10 years). A pot of water cost about 10 paise at the time of the interview. He remembers the outbreak of plague in 1942, none of his relative died but he says about 100 people died in Peelamedu. Garbage was dumped in a separate area in the mill quarters. The farmers would then collect it with 'harijans'. He retained contacts with his native village, and visits the village for festivals, or marriages.

He worked about 10 hours when he first started working in the mill. He was a sweeper first (for about 1-2 years, earned 7 Rs.), then a doffer (1 year, 9 Rs.), then a spinner (11 Rs. – later it was made 16 Rs. after 5 years), at present he is a *mestri* (for the past 1 year). He says that one cannot like/dislike the jobs he is done, and even if one finds the work monotonous it is better to brush it off and get on with the work.

He says that when he joined the mill, he was able to provide enough for the family (younger brother, mother, and himself). He was the sole wage-earner for a month but after a month, his brother too started working in the mill (he must have been about 13). The family had rice, and pulses daily. Meat was consumed once in a fortnight, and meat was bought both from the market, and also along with other families. In 1937, about 125 measures of good rice cost about 6 Rs., 4 measures of tuvar dal was about 1 Rs., 1 pound of meat was 2 annas, 1 and a half kg of sugar was 2 or 2 and a half annas, 1 and a half kg of tea leaves (or dust) was about 10 annas, 1 measure of milk (just over a litre) was 4 annas. The family did not keep animals nor grow vegetables in the backyard in the mill quarters. Clothes were purchased 2-3 times a year. A 4-yard dhoti was about 1 or 1 Rs. 4 annas, 8-yard dhoti was 5-6 Rs., 1 yard of shirt fabric was 10-12 annas, and the tailoring cost varied between 4 annas to 1 Rs. The mill also provided cloth at reduced prices: there was a difference of 4 annas on average on a 4-yard dhoti (1 Rs. to 1 Rs. 4 annas he says).

He remembers the 1948 mill strike; he says that the mill workers held the strike against the intensification of work. There was a law passed requiring mill workers (spinners presumably) to work two-sides, and this led to a strike. However, the strike was not successful, and the two-side rule was enforced.

He says that he does not mind doing mill work again if he had the chance to rethink his life – he says that “at the age of 16 one needs to earn a livelihood”. He remembers a mill-school in the 1930s (factory school) that is still functioning. All his friends are mill workers too. He has not met with any accidents in the mill.

His wife was taken to the Puttusamy Naidu hospital during childbirth. This hospital was built in 1950-51. When he first started working the mill, there was a doctor in the mill, and also a compounder so workers could consult them. Medicines were provided free of cost at that time.

**Tape 20/Interview 1:** Male, age 62, Caste: Kammavaru Naidu, Native: Peelamedu, Father from Idikarai. He was 3 years old when his father died. His father was an agriculturalist, on a leased land. After his father’s death, his mother brought him up; she was an agricultural coolie. His father has studied until Class 4-5, while he has studied until Class 3-4. He manages to read newspapers (not fluently) and writes with difficulty. However, he can sign his name. He says that he might have lived better if he had studied further, as this may have provided him better employment. He says he could have taken up mechanical or electrical work if he had studied further. He considers education important for mill workers, as this would enable mill workers to understand instructions better.

His father had 3 children (3 boys), and he is the youngest. Both of his brothers worked in the same mill and were *mestris*. He was married at the age of 33, and his spouse was 27. His wife has never worked in the mill nor has she worked in the agricultural fields. They have 4 children (2 boys, and 2 girls). Both girls have studied until PSC, the youngest son is in his SSLC, and the older son is unemployed now. He says that if his sons have education, they can seek employment elsewhere, and if not, they might have to join the mill. Many of his friends are mill workers.

The house he grew up in as a child had a tiled roof, stone wall, and stone floor. The house was owned by his father, and had 3 rooms, 1 kitchen, and 1 bathroom. He still lives in the same house and has renovated the house a bit. The floor has been changed to cement floor, and he has also built a latrine.

He says the town has changed a bit, and now has schools, hospitals, and more than 20,000 houses. Electricity was introduced about 20 years back, and tar roads were laid about 10 years ago.

He remembers the temple festival celebrations in Peelamedu as a child. He says that his mother used to draw water from the wells, but it was salt water. Piped water supply has been available for the past 10 years. He remembers the outbreak of cholera when he was a child (he was in school at the point). He does not remember a lot of people dying due to the epidemic, and also says that injections were given to contain the spread of the disease, and people were also evacuated.

He joined the mill because he could not cope with school education and decided to take up work. His brother who used to work in the mill, recommended him to the mill.

Before first joined the mill, his mother earned about 15 Rs. per month as an agricultural coolie. His older brothers (one brother worked as a sider in the mill) earned 15 Rs. each – and the family earned about 45 Rs. a month. He says that the family could eat well with the monthly income they earned when he was a child. Rice, and coarse grains were consumed daily (and at alternate times of the day). Pulses were also consumed daily, and meat was consumed once a week. Meat was purchased along with other families, and one goat cost 3-4 Rs. In the market, meat cost about 2 and a half annas for 1 kg. 10 measures of good quality rice cost about 1 Rs., 15 litres of solam, and ragi was 1 Rs. He does not remember how much kollu cost. Sugar cost about 2 and a half annas for a kg, jaggery cost about 1 and a half annas for a kg. The family did not keep animals (cows, goats etc.) Firewood was both purchased (he does not remember the cost), and also foraged. New clothes were purchased twice a year.

He says that they used to buy cloth only from the market, and not from the mill. While no loans were taken to celebrate festivals when he was a child, he says that he does borrow money at present for festive occasions. In his childhood, they used both country, and English medicine.

None of his children were born in the hospital.

He still maintains contact with Idikarai, to visit his relatives, and also for festive occasions.

He first joined RK Mills, but then left at some stage, and returned to RK Mills later. He says when there was not much work to do, he would seek employment in other mills such as in Lakshmi Mills, where he stayed for 2 years as a *mestri* (but it is not clear at what stage he joined the Lakshmi Mills as a *mestri* since he couldn't have gone from a sweeper to a *mestri* immediately). He remembers that the machines in Lakshmi Mills were powered by electricity, and when he returned to RK Mills he joined in as a *mestri*. When he first joined the mill at the age of 15-16, he was a sweeper as a part timer (worked for 4 hours). Later he was a doffing boy (4 and a half-5 Rs.), then a half sider (7 and a half Rs.). He then joined Lakshmi Mills as a *mestri* in erection works where he was paid daily wages of 1 and a half to 2 Rs. He then returned to RK Mills as a spinning *mestri* and was paid 25 Rs. (initially, he mentions oiler). He is been a spinning *mestri*, and he is now employed as a weaving *mestri* (for 25 years). He remembers the mill giving bonus ("protection bonus") every month, and also for Diwali.

He remembers *mestris* threatening mill workers with canes (and also verbally) before 1948 in order to extract work, but this is not possible now. He has been beaten as a worker, and when he became a *mestri* he has also used the cane on workers. He says that he was treated harshly by the other *mestris* when he was a mill worker.

He does not remember Lakshmi Mills giving money to workers for education, or health. Diwali bonus was given but cloth was not given away for free (saree, dhoti etc.). On the difference between Lakshmi Mills, and RK Mills, he says that the former had better machinery (since they were new), the wages were not different though. He says that both mills were equal in keeping free of cotton dust.

**Tape 20/Interview 2:** Male, age 58, Caste: Kammavaru Naidu. Native: Idikarai, lives in Peelamedu. His father was 80 at the time of his death and was an agricultural coolie. His father was not educated. He has been educated until Class 3, and can read newspapers, and write (albeit slowly). He does not regret having studied beyond Class 3 but says that education is important for a mill worker. He says that earlier workers managed to work through experience, but in order to keep up with the current changes in mill work, education would be useful/important. His father had three children (2 boys, and 1 girl). The younger brother is alive, and the sister is dead. He is the oldest brother. The younger brother still works in the mill.

He was 25 at the time of his marriage, and his spouse was 18-19. They have 3 children (2 boys, and 1 girl). One of the boys has studied until Class 8. One of his boys works in Radha Krishna Mills.

Has lived in Peelamedu for 40 years and moved in here with his parents when he was 18. His parents migrated to Peelamedu because he took up mill work in the town. They lived in a rented house when they moved into the town – the house had a tiled roof, stone wall, mud floor, and had 2 rooms. The rent was about 5-6 Rs. Now he has built his own house (built it 25-30 years back). The house cost about 2,000 Rs. and he used his savings, and also borrowed money to buy the house. The money was borrowed without interest from his neighbours. The house has a tiled roof, stoned wall, cement floor, 2 rooms, and 1 kitchen. This house has a latrine.

His father earned about 1 Rs. a day as an agricultural coolie in Idikari (native town) but did not take it up in Peelamedu.

When he moved into Peelamedu, there was only salt water which was drawn from the well. The well was about 250 feet away from his house. He remembers the cholera epidemic in about 1941 in Peelamedu, and one of his older aunts (father's older sister 'periattai') died in the epidemic, but he does not remember how many people from the town died.

He has not maintained any contact with his native town (Idikari)

His friends are not mill workers. His uncle was a supervisor in the mill, and introduced him to mill work, he was 18 when he took up mill work. He was the only wage-earner at the time he joined the mill, his father had some savings from his time as an agricultural coolie. He is worked in the same mill all his life. He was a doffing boy (was paid 7-7.50 Rs.) for 3 years, then he was put on machine work – as a roving framer (was paid 12 Rs.). He is been a *mestri* for 25 years in the roving department.

When he was the only wage-earner in the family, the family had some trouble getting by. Rice, solam, and ragi were consumed regularly, and so were pulses. Meat was consumed once a month, and a goat was purchased along with other families, butchered and shared. A goat cost 6-7 Rs. Clothes were purchased during festivals, during Diwali (and about once or twice a year). The family kept 2 cows, and the milk was both sold, and kept for self-consumption. 1 litre was sold for 2 and a half annas. Festivals were not celebrated in a grand manner. The family used to take country medicine back in the 1930s. His children had a homebirth.

**Tape 20/Interview 3:** Male, age 58. Caste: Kammavaru Naidu. Native: Peelamedu (also the native town of his father). His father died at the age of 84. His father was an agriculturalist, and also a cotton supplier (sold it to RK Mill in fact). He can read newspapers, and also write letters. He studied at a school in Peelamedu. He regrets not studying further, and says that he was mischievous in the school, and this made his parents insist on his taking up work. He says that his chances of gaining a promotion were affected due to the lack of his education and says that he now feels education is important for mill workers.

His parents had 8 children (2 girls, 6 boys) of whom 4 are now dead. Now there are 3 brothers, and 1 sister alive, he is the third child in the family. One of his brothers was employed in Lakshmi Mills, but has now migrated to Madras (bought land and settled there). Another brother is employed in Jayalakshmi Mills as a timekeeper.

He was married at the age of 35, and his spouse was 21. She is never worked in the mill (he quips “she has never seen a mill”). They have 3 children (all girls). The older daughter has studied until her PSC, and the second daughter is doing her BSc in Home Science.

His father’s own house had a tiled roof, mud wall, stone floor, and 2 rooms. They have now sold that house, and immediately bought a new house. This house has 4 rooms, a tiled roof, cement floor, and mud floor. The roof of the house has been renovated since. But it does not have a latrine.

He took up mill work as agriculture was not sustainable for his livelihood. The managing director of the mill (a distant relative) knew his father and hired him. He joined the mill at the age of 13 but did not need a Health Certificate to join.

He joined the mill in 1933 (4 years after the mill was established). His father was employed as a building supervisor, and as a *mestri* also in the same mill, alongside his cotton supplying business. His father earned about 600 Rs. a year through his cotton supply business, and about 25 Rs. a month as a building supervisor, and as a *mestri*. The family had 1 buffalo, and 2 goats, and 1 litre of milk was sold for 4 annas. 4 litres of milk were sold for 1 Rs.

He says that in his childhood, rice was eaten only once a week (mostly on Saturdays), coarse grains solam, and ragi were consumed regularly. Pulses were consumed daily, and meat was consumed twice a month (a pound for 4-8 annas). He does not eat meat now.

Good quality rice cost about 10 Rs. for a sack (max), 1 yard of cloth was 3 annas, best quality 4-yard dhoti was 1 Rs. 4 annas. Festivals were celebrated grandly, and they did not have to borrow money. Country medicine was taken during times of illness.

When he first started working in the mill, he was employed as a part-timer for 5 hours. He is worked in the same mill all his life. He first started off as a doffing boy just for a month (7 Rs.) and was then later sent to the mechanic shop where he worked for 4 months (11 Rs.). From here he was moved to the ginning factory as an oiler for about 6 months (11 Rs.). He was then made an electrician in the mill (21 Rs. initially) and is now a switchboard controller since 1936 - same year when the powerhouse was built. He earns about 100 Rs. as a switchboard controller. Before 1936 i.e. before the powerhouse was built, the mill used a DC generator (Direct Current generator). After 1936, the mill used Paikara (Pykara) electricity supply.

None of his friends are mill workers.

**Tape 21/Interview:** Male, age 54. Caste: Vellala Gounder. His father died at the age of 65 (he was 50 at that point). Native: Senniyanpalayam (4 miles eastwards from Peelamedu). His mother died when he was very young, and his father. His father was not educated, while he has studied until Class 3 – children were taken to a temple and taught there by a private tutor. He can sign his name but cannot read very fluently. He says he does not regret studying further since his family did not have the means to educate him. His father too did not regret having an education, but wanted to educate his children – unfortunately, he did not have the means to do so. He considers education necessary for mill workers, and he says in these times no job/work can be done without education, as it enables better comprehension. He also says that education may have improved his chances of promotion in the mill.

His father had 4 children (3 girls, 1 boy), he is the second child. His older sister had previously worked in the mill – about 4-5 years before marriage, but she died during childbirth. None of his other siblings are alive.

He was married at the age of 21, and his spouse was 20. She is never worked in the mill. They have 3 children (3 boys), and none of them work in the mill. He says that he does not want his children to face the hardship that he has experienced in mill work. His older son runs a cycle parts repair store, another son is a clerk in the Transport Corporation, and the last son is doing his BA. He says it is difficult for him to provide for their education with his wages – and has done so by borrowing money at times.

Still lives in the same house in his native town – Senniyanpalayam. He says that the population, and the number of houses in his native town have increased since his childhood. In terms of development, there is piped water supply now, town bus service, and more shops. Additionally, there is also electric street lighting in the town, introduced about 5 years back. The roads are still mud roads. Now the water is supplied in the streets – about 1 pipe for 30 houses. Street water supply has been available for the past 10 years.

He says he remembers the town well from 1937 (he was 15 and was working in the mill). The water had to be drawn from the well, and there was one just beside his house (and an irrigation well on the other side).

He remembers the outbreak of cholera in 1936, and he says about 50 people from his village died in the epidemic – his wife's brother died in this epidemic. His father's house did not have a latrine.

Garbage was dumped in the backyard of the house in a pit; it was later taken by the farmers after it decomposed (once a year). 4-5 Rs. was paid for 10 cartloads of decomposed garbage. Even today, the same practice continues. The family did not keep animals, nor did they grow vegetable (they did grow sorgam though).

In terms of changes to the house, it has been rebuilt, and the house now has an electricity connection. The house has a tiled roof, stone walls, and a cemented floor; during his childhood it had a thatched roof, mud walls, and an uncemented floor. The house has 3 rooms, and 1 hall. The remodelling of the house cost about 5,000 Rs. about 1942. In addition to his savings, he borrowed 2,000 Rs. as loan, with 9% interest per annum from a Gounder agriculturalist. The loan was repaid in 4-5 years.

His father was initially an agriculturalist but had to give it up after his wife died when he was young. So, he took up bullock-cart riding transporting agricultural produce, and his father also sold cow fodder. He says that his father was able to provide enough food for the children – since coarse grains like sorgam was grown in their own field. Rice was not consumed very often, and instead of pulses, 'kollu' was consumed daily. Meat was consumed once a month, but his family did not engage in joint purchase. His father used to leave some money aside for festival celebrations, but they were not celebrated in a grand manner.

His father had a debt of 1,000 Rs. that he borrowed to sustain his family, and to dig a well in the agricultural field. His father had the debt for 10 years, but when his mother died, his father had to sell the land in order to settle the debt.

One sack of solam (24 vellam, i.e. 96 litres) cost 5 Rs., 96 litres of rice was 7.50-10 Rs. Horsegram was 1 Rs. for 20 litres (for good quality), and 1 Rs. for 24 litres for slightly inferior quality horse gram. His father purchased clothes once a year for Diwali. A 4-yard dhoti cost about 12 annas, 1 yard of shirt cloth cost 2 and a half annas, and tailoring charges were 4 annas. The mill did not give cloth at a reduced rate to the workers, but the workers were given a pair of dhotis for Diwali as a present (this was got from the other mills since the SRV Mills did not manufacture dhoti). A pair of seven-yard dhotis were given for Diwali, and they cost 5 Rs.

He took up mill work because it was difficult for his father to sustain the family's livelihood. Many folks from his village worked in the mill, and it is through them that he came to know about mill work. At the time he started mill work, his father and sister were the wage-earners in the family. The family earned about 40 Rs. a month (sister earned 10 Rs., and his father earned 30 Rs.). His sister was in the reeling department.

All of his friends are mill workers and are employed in the same mill.

When he first joined the mill, he was a sweeper for 3 months (paid 2 and a half Rs. as a part-timer), then a doffer for 6 months (paid 5 Rs.), then a half sider (7.50 Rs.), 3/4<sup>th</sup> sider (9 Rs.), and then a full sider, was 20 then (13 Rs.). In 1943 he was paid 16 Rs. He is now an oiler, been one only for the past few months (since Jan 1976). He says that in those times one could find employment in any of the mills since there was a labour shortage.

He says that the work is more difficult now as compared to earlier times, since today the work of 4 workers has to be performed by 1 person due to the machines. He manages because of his experience and escapes the monotony. He has not met with any accidents in the mill.

His children were born at home under the supervision of local folks. In his childhood, self-medication, and country medicine was used.

He says that he will start something like a kirana shop, selling tuvar dal or rice after he retires – with the money he might get from the mill as gratuity. He also says he will use part of the money to educate his son further, and in case he doesn't set up the business he will deposit the money in the bank in a Fixed Deposit, and gain interest out of it.

**Tape 22/Interview 1/see also Questionnaire 2, No. 25:** Male, mechanical dept, SS Mill, age 52, born 1924. Native: Kalipalayam (15 miles north from the mill). His father was not educated, and neither is he. He regrets not having an education and says that if he had studied (or taken more interest in education) he might be better placed in life now. He regards that education is good for mill workers and says that this might help a mill worker become a foreman – he also says that not having an education would only mean 'service' or working manually for extended periods of time.

His father had 5 boys, and 2 girls through his first wife (worker's mother). He is the sixth child. All of his brothers have worked in the mill. His father had 2 girls through his second wife.

He was married at the age of 19-20, his spouse was 2-3 years younger than him at the time of marriage. He says that his wife never worked in the mill and says Muslim women do not work outside. They have 4 children (all boys). One of his boys has studied until Class 9, none of them work in the mill. Some of them work in the government offices. He wishes one of his sons to inherit his job in the mill.

Came to Rangagounder street at the age of 12 in 1936 with his mother, and siblings. Father was a personal peon to the munsif in the native town and remained behind. Worker's mother was the senior of his father's two wives. When they first moved into Coimbatore, they lived in a rented house that had tiled roof, mud walls, and mud floor. The rent was 7 Rs., and they lived in this house for about 5-6 years. The house had 1 room, and 1 veranda. There were about 6 people living in the household at that point (5 brothers, and the mother). Later, they stayed at Patel road, where they paid rent for the land, but built their own hut. The rent was about 2 Rs., the landlord was a Naicker. They lived in Patel road for 4-5 years. Now he lives in Ratnapuri and has lived there since 1962 in a house that he has built. The house has a tiled roof, brick walls, and cement floor. The house has 1 room, 1 veranda, and 1 kitchen. He took a loan of about 1000 Rs. from his Provident Fund and had about 3,000 Rs. in savings in order to purchase the house. The house has an electricity connection.

When he moved to Rangagounder street, the houses had Sirivani piped water supply. The house also had a separate latrine, but the town had no communal latrines. There was a well near the house, and even that water was used for daily purposes. The municipality would clear the rubbish, and they had a few drums in the streets to dispose of the rubbish. The rubbish was then cleared in lorries or bullock carts.

He joined the mill because he had no other job and had to earn his livelihood. His older brother had been working in the mill, and recommended him for mill work. His older brother is now retired and had been a mill worker for a sufficiently long time (he had also worked in Kaleeswara Mills previously) even before he joined the mill.

When they lived in Rangagounder street, they could live comfortably, and eat well on the income of the 5 brothers. One sack of rice was only 7 Rs. in those days. The family consumed rice daily, pulses were consumed once or twice a week, and alternatively with Rasam, and vegetables. Meat was consumed once a week, 1 goat was 4-5 Rs., but he does not remember the price of meat per kilo. Clothes were purchased twice a year (once during Ramzan). The family did not maintain animals, and the worker says one could not maintain animals in the town. He says that if the income proved to be insufficient, they would borrow money to celebrate festivals. His father would visit Coimbatore for Ramzan. The family went to the general hospital if they fell sick, and all of his children were also born in the hospital.

He does not remember the exact years in which there was an outbreak of cholera/typhoid but does remember people moving away from villages and towns. However, he claims to have stayed put during those times.

He does not maintain ties with his native town and says that this is so because there is nobody there at present. In his childhood, his father would occasionally visit Coimbatore, and the family would also visit Kalipalayam. His mother moved to Coimbatore because all the children were employed in Coimbatore.

He joined Kaleeswara Mills at the age of 12, but he did not provide a certificate. One of the engineer's brothers had recommended him on grounds of poverty, and this is how he got employed. When the Factory Inspectors visited the mill, he was working as a beller's boy in the mechanical department, and none of the Factory inspectors checked this area. He does not know how many other underage mill workers were employed in the mill.

He says that working in the mill means gaining a monthly salary. And he is unable to say what he does not like in mill work.

He worked for 5 years in Kaleeswara Mills, and then shifted to Somasundaram (SS) Mills. He says that there was a tinker working in SS Mills who got fired because he could not handle physical loads. Since the engineer of the SS Mills knew his brother, he was immediately employed at SS mill. He is a tinker even to this day – and has not been promoted since the 1940s. He was paid 7.50 Rs. in Kaleeswara when he began work, at SS Mills he was paid 10 Rs. Being a tinker involved making tin rolls, soldering of iron and other metal rods, fitting windows or glasses on windowpanes. He has never found the job boring.

He is met with no accidents in the mill.

His father was paid 7.50 Rs. as pay, and also paid for his travel when he worked as a peon to the Munisf in his native town.

**Tape 22/Interview 2:** Male, age 54, born 1922. Caste: Vellala Gounder. Native: Rangasamudram (in Palladam taluk). He says his father has studied until Class 4-5. However, he has not studied but has learnt to sign his name through experience. He says he could not pursue education due to the difficult circumstances in his childhood, and also says that it is too late to regret the missed opportunity at present. He says had he been educated; he might have been further promoted in the same mill. When he joined the mill, the *mestris* were not very educated (only until Class 3 or 4), and only supervisors were educated at least till Class 6-7. He says that in those days if one had studied until Class 8 it was easy to become a clerk or a supervisor. He says that education was not very essential in those days, but it is very important today.

His father had 5 boys, and 2 girls. He is the third sibling, and is the only person still working in the mill. One of his sisters worked in the reeling department for 2-3 years before marriage, and his mother worked for 20-25 years in the same mill (SS mill) as a waste cotton picker.

He was married in 1952 at the age of 30. His spouse was 25 at that point. She has never worked in the mill, and he says she was just from the village, and could not possibly work in the mill. His wife stayed back at home and helped his mother in household work. They have 3 children (2 boys, and 1 girl). 3 children died in children (so technically, they had 4 boys, and 2 girls) – all died at infancy, one at 11 days, the other at 11 months (due to chickenpox), and the other child had a stomach infection that couldn't be cured. His oldest boy has studied till Class 8 and did not want to study further. His daughter is in Class 9, and the youngest boy is in Class 7. He says his daughter cannot be employed in the mill because she will eventually get married, but he does not mind his sons seeking employment in the mill. He says that his children might take up mill work depending upon the circumstances after his retirement.

Family came to Coimbatore in 1936 because they lost the land. The grandfather was a landowning agriculturalist but got into debt, and his father had to sell the lands to clear the debt. Since his father did not want to become an agricultural coolie, a lawyer friend suggested that they move to Coimbatore. His father used surplus profit from the land sale and bought cattle herds to become a milk-seller but it was difficult to sustain the family on this income. Then the whole family (mother, father, and brother) was engaged for digging stones for building purposes, and by selling them for 8 annas a cartload for big stones, and 4 annas a cartload for small stones, the family managed to earn 4-5 Rs. a day. They came to Sullivan street in Coimbatore and lived there for a few years since 1935. The worker now lives in Gandhipuram.

In Sullivan street, the house was a tiled roof, mud walls, and a mud floor. It was a rented house in an area near coconut groves, and cost about 1 Rs. 8 anna (in 1936-37) - they also sold milk to the people in the area, and the rent did not cost much.

They then moved to Thomas street, and a timekeeper from the mill who lived opposite their house suggested that he take up mill work. He was 13 years old, and through his acquaintance with the timekeeper he found employment as a construction coolie in the mill. He was a construction coolie for 1 year, and later joined the textile department in the mill. He was 13 when he started working, but he provided a medical certificate only 3-4 months after joining the mill, along with 6-7 other child labourers. The government doctor provided a certificate saying that the worker was 16 years old.

He maintains contact with his native town because his uncle still lives there, and the family visits the native town for festive occasions.

He says the good thing about mill work is that you receive a monthly payment, if you work hard. He does not necessarily feel anything bad with mill work – he says that it all depends on the worker's perception, and attitude. From his experience in mill work, he does not necessarily see anything bad in it. Some of his friends are his mill workers, the others are in the banks, and some work in government offices. One of his older brothers is a watchman at the United Commercial Bank, his younger brother works in a cosmetics shop.

He has worked in the same mill all his life.

After 1 year as a construction coolie (paid 4 annas per day), he was employed in the mill as a doffing boy for 1 year (7 and a half Rs.), then a half sider for 9 months (9 Rs.), a 3/4<sup>th</sup> sider (11 Rs.) for 1 and a half years, then he was made a full sider (13.50 Rs.). He is now a reserve piecer, (apparently the same as a full sider) and has been for the past 9 years. He says if he had tried harder, he could have become a doffing jobber, but he did not want that job.

He once fell unconscious in the mill while working in 1973, and he got a cut on his forehead, and his chin. He was on medical leave for a week and was paid only half his salary (6 Rs. a day) for that week – the mill covered his travel charges to the hospital, and the hospital covered his medical expenses.

When the family first moved to Sullivan street, they used the water from irrigation pipes (since the house was in a coconut grove/field). The street also had Sirivani piped water supply, but the family used the water from the irrigation pipes more. One reason was because the piped water supply was used by people of all castes (particularly untouchables), and since most of the families in Rs. Puram there were Brahmins, piped water supply was used mostly by Brahmins. Eventually people took to piped water supply, a development accelerated by water scarcity as well.

The house he lives in now has a dry latrine, there is no flush-out latrine because the water supply connection is yet to be given to all the houses.

He remembers both a cholera/plague epidemic after the second world war. One of his relative's boy passed away in the epidemic. He says that at least 10-12 people died from Sullivan street, but the impact of the epidemic was a lot higher in Rs. Puram, Mettupalayam, and Sukruvarpet – where the density of population was a lot higher.

When he started working in the mill, there were 3 wage earners in the family (his mother, older brother and himself). His father had grown too old by then, and eventually his younger sister also worked in the mill.