

#### 4. INTERVIEWS WITH INDIVIDUAL WOMEN: RESULTS

In what follows, and in the related tables, all the data refer to the present survey unless otherwise indicated. The survey produced much more data than is presented in the text and the tables. The data are stored in the BOBP files in Madras.

It should be borne in mind when reading this section and when analysing, interpreting or using the data, that they are essentially oral replies to questions, obtained during interviews or discussion, and not facts obtained by direct independent observation. The presence or absence of menfolk during all or part of such interviews was noted (Table 1). The presence or absence of the mother, mother-in-law, or other older women was not recorded.

##### 4.1. Social data

###### 4.1.1 *Family status*

Tables 2a and 2b give the age structure and family status of the adult female population of the villages. It will be seen that of all the women interviewed, only about one in eight in the age group 13—17 is married. Girls generally do not get married before the age of 18. Much reliance cannot be placed on this sort of figure, however, because many women were not able to state their exact age.

Unmarried girls live with their parents. In general they help with household activities but are seldom allowed to take part in fish marketing: their movements are restricted to the village boundaries unless a male member of the family accompanies them.

###### 4.1.2 *Family patterns and family size*

Table 3a indicates that 90 per cent of all households in the three villages consist of nuclear families, that is wife, husband and children. A quarter of the nuclear families have a dependent grandmother or grandfather. The average nuclear family consists of five people (Table 3b).

Less than four per cent of households consist of the lineally extended type, that is to say, including grandparents, parents and children. Their average size is 12 members.

The remaining six per cent of households consist of collaterally extended families, that is, more than one son with his wife and children residing in the same house. Here the average family size is 11.6.

Only one household, in Perianeelankarai, consists of a family of the collaterally lineally extended type: It has 19 members.

The overall average family size is 6 members. The average number of children living in the household of their parents (and excluding those that have died) is 2.7. This is a low figure compared to that in the agricultural sector.

The predominance of households consisting of nuclear families is said to be recent and the proportion is said to be growing. It has both positive and adverse effects on the role of young wives: on the one hand it ties them to the household when there are small children to be looked after and consequently deprives them of the opportunity of undertaking fish marketing activities; on the other hand it abolishes the control of the mother-in-law and enables the young wife to make her own decisions.

###### 4.1.3 *Education and literacy*

(a) Education (information from interviews of key persons):

As indicated in Chapter 3.1.6 the education opportunities for children are not good. 3½ years ago, 30 pupils from Chemmencheri were enrolled in primary school and 50 pupils in the middle

school, both schools located in Kovalam, just about one km away. Since then no children from Chemmencheri have attended these schools because of a quarrel between the fishermen of Chemmencheri and Kovalam, which resulted in the death of a man from Kovalam. The people of Chemmencheri were urged not to send their children to the school at Kovalam. Since then they have not attended school.

School attendance is irregular and in most cases poor. This is because children have to work at home as well as because of the parents' indifference to education. It is also due to the acute shortage of educational facilities, equipment and water facilities. Teachers are paid a poor salary (Rs. 330 net salary outside city limits); hence there is no incentive to work with interest and enthusiasm. Often teachers absent themselves, resulting in the school having to be closed for those days. Occasionally, the teachers' decision on the success or failure of a student in examinations depends on the supply of fish to them by the student.

169 boys and 126 girls from three settlements are enrolled in the middle school near Pattipulam; 50 are from Pattipulam kuppam. According to the headman 20 boys and 10 girls attend this school regularly. According to the headmaster of the primary school attended by the Perianeelankarai children, 105 pupils are enrolled and 35 are not enrolled but attended classes. Based on the information given by the headman, of the 140 children only 15 boys attend this school occasionally, and 5 boys and 5 girls attend regularly.

(b) Literacy (information from interviews with individual women)

Because of the situation described above, the rate of literacy is very low. Only one in 30 of all women interviewed claims to be able to read and write fluently. Just over one in seven answered that they possess basic knowledge but five out of six of the women are totally illiterate.

This situation however seems to be improving very slowly. Whereas over 90 per cent of the women older than 45 years are illiterate, about 19 per cent of those between 13 and 17 years of age possess some knowledge of reading and writing (See Table 4).

#### 4.2 Nutrition

The quality and quantity of the diet depends on the fishing season and the amount of catch. Nearly two-thirds of all women have stated that when the catch is very low, or when there is no catch at all, the family will go without a meal for the whole day (Table 5a). The frequency with which this happens seems to vary from village to village; in Perianeelankarai there is occasional income from film companies who come once in a while to make films in the village and pay the village council a sum of money with which paddy will be purchased and shared between the families according to the number of members.

As in other communities, the wives and mothers are the ones who bear the consequences of food scarcity first and are most affected. Even when there is some food available women may not get a relatively equal share. Over a quarter of all women claimed that their daily food supply is not sufficient and that they feel weak in consequence (Table 5b).

Table 5c gives the reasons adduced for the family having to go without food. On two-thirds of all occasions it is because there has been no catch, and therefore no fish to eat, or to sell so that other foodstuffs can be bought.

Nevertheless, over the year as a whole, fish is consumed on at least half of all days in the year. Dried fish is eaten more seldom, although one in 10 of the women (from the more affluent families) answered that they eat it daily (Table 6). Only one in five eat vegetables daily, two-thirds every second day, but mainly in curry which means the quantity eaten is very small. In over sixty per cent of all cases meat (chicken and goat) is consumed only on festival days, nobody eats it daily, and only one in thirteen of the women cook it as often as once a week. Milk is only taken in coffee or tea; eggs are eaten only in curry dishes.

#### 4.3 Medical facilities and health

Almost all the women in the three villages (over 90 per cent) have been treated at least once in their life by a doctor. Slightly fewer of the women from Perianeelankarai, which is the closest

to a hospital (15 km) have been given medical treatment (Table 7a). These answers do not necessarily signify that the treatment was sufficient or successful: nearly one-third of the women stated that they felt sick. Less than three out of five have their own, traditional methods of treating pains and diseases.

Only four per cent of all women have received medical treatment through the Health Inspector who visits Chemmencheri, but arranging for treatment is not his primary function.

Some basic modern medicines are available, mainly general pain-killing tablets which can be got from the shops in all the three villages, and in Pattipulam, from the headman; he distributes them to the fisherfolk on request and eight out of nine women approach him for tablets. Nine out of ten of the women answered that they have to buy tablets. In Perianeelankarai nearly four out of five of the women get free tablets from a person referred to as L.F.A. (Lady for First Aid). This however does not seem to meet their needs sufficiently as three out of four mentioned that they buy medicine from the shop (Tables 7b and 7c).

Though more than half of the babies are born at home there is a strong trend towards deliveries in hospitals. Whereas nearly three quarters of the women older than 35 years had their children delivered at home with the help of a midwife, only two out of five women between 25–30 years of age had their deliveries at home. The trend towards hospital deliveries is strongest in Chemmencheri, for both older and younger mothers (Table 7d).

#### **4.4 Water and energy supply**

##### *4.4.1 Water supply*

In Chemmencheri only two private wells exist; water is free of charge but the wells dry up during the summer months and the women have to walk about one km to get water from a well. For the old and sick this is a big burden. Because of this, five women say that they get their drinking and cooking water from a village pond which is also used for bathing and washing clothes (Table 8).

147 women say that their source of drinking water is a well; 157 get their drinking water from pumps; one in six from their own pump; one in fifty from neighbours' or relatives' pumps and one in three from public pumps. The public pumps are often out of order, and it seems to take much time for the villagers to join together to get a pump repaired. Some are said to have been out of order for years.

In Pattipulam only 11 women have regular access to pumps. According to the headman, five pumps were removed by government authorities because of alleged poor maintenance by the villagers. The great majority of women in this village say they get their drinking water from wells.

Despite these implications of neglect, lack of leadership and inability to take joint action, both in Chemmenchen and Pattipulam action has been taken in the past to clean the wells and many villagers have contributed money and labour.

In Perianeelankarai there is still sufficient water available from three public pumps. There is also a large public bore well which is not utilised because of pollution; 4 out of 7 pumps are under repair but require further action to be taken before they can be put back into service.

##### *4.4.2 Sources of energy*

The main source of energy for cooking purposes is firewood, mainly collected casuarina twigs and needles and palm leaves; very rarely large pieces of firewood, which have to be purchased from the shop. As indicated in Table 9, over 98 per cent of all women use only firewood for cooking, the remainder also use kerosene once in a while. No woman cooks entirely with kerosene because of the expense and the inadequacy of supplies: there is not enough kerosene to light the houses every evening. Five out of six women live in houses where kerosene is used for lighting; about one in nine live in houses lit by electricity; the remainder (one in 25) live in houses where both forms of light are available.

## 4.5 Fisherwomen and household activities

Thirteen of the interviewed women were too old to take part in an activity, and have to be cared for by others. As the following questions only deal with involvement in economic activities which were irrelevant to these women, they could not give answers. Consequently the number interviewed from Question 18 onwards (See Appendix 1) amounts to 287.

### 4.5.1 *Types of activities*

Household activities are time-consuming. The women clean the house and compound daily; the area is plastered with cowdung bought for the purpose once in a while to make it look similar to a cement floor. Except on days when there is no fish to eat or to sell in order to buy other foodstuffs, the housewife will cook at least one meal per day. If the catch is sufficient, two meals (lunch and dinner) will be prepared. Cooking is done either in a separate shed or in the open yard. A small clay stove of dimensions 20 cm x 20 cm approximately holds clay or metal pots. Collecting firewood requires much time. Fetching water in general is not as time-consuming as in many agricultural villages, where water has to be fetched on foot from considerable distances.

Foodstuffs are bought in the village from bicycle traders or at the markots where some of the women go to sell fish. Shopping does not take up very much time.

Some households rear chicken; a few keep a goat; the responsibility for this livestock is the women's. Just over a third of all women said they grew a few vegetables. Gardening is regarded as difficult because of the poor quality of the soil and lack of fencing material to protect plants from chicken and goats, rather than because of poor water supply or lack of space.

Household work is shared in those families where there is more than one woman. Of all the women interviewed two-thirds share household work with at least one female family member. In general young unmarried women are not so fully occupied with household or other duties, including fish marketing; their mothers do most of the work. Nearly one in three married women and widows get up before 6 o'clock in the morning; only one in five of the unmarried women are up at that time (Table 10a). Those women who are involved in fish marketing rely on the help of others for cooking, cleaning and washing, and care of children. Nearly two out of three of those women whose household work is shared are engaged in marketing (Table 10b). Nuclear families in which there is not a girl old enough to assist in house work face the problem of not having anybody to take fish to the market, and it has to be sold to a trader at a lower profit. See also 4.6.4 below.

### 4.5.2 *Spare time at the disposal of women*

The answers given regarding the hours the women have at their disposal differ according to their involvement in non-household activities e.g. fish selling (Table 11). Seven in ten women who are involved in fish marketing say they have less than 4 hours of spare time per day; two in three of the women not involved in marketing say they have more than 4 hours. Rather less than half of the women have 4 to 6 hours of spare time every day and a quarter of them say they have up to 8 hours at their disposal. There therefore seems to be a large unused potential for productive work among those women who are not involved in marketing.

This group consists mainly of young unmarried women who help with household work but who are not allowed to undertake activities outside the village, including selling of fish, because of social customs (See also 4.9.4, and compare with Table 30).

## 4.6 Involvement of women in the fishing economy

### 4.6.1 *Curing of fish*

Fish curing is typically a woman's activity. Fish will be cured e.g. gutted, slated, sun dried, whenever there is likely to be difficulty in selling it fresh. For sun drying the fish is spread out either simply on the sand or on old bamboo or coir mats. Normally it is covered with an old piece of net fixed at the edges with stones and held in the middle by small branches of trees to protect it from the birds and chickens. The drying place is close to the house, either in the small yard or by the roadside.

#### 4.6.2 *Processing of prawns in freezing plants*

Some women in Perianeelankarai once in a while get an opportunity to work in a prawn freezing plant situated at the entrance to the village. This occurs only during the peak season for prawns, when a lot of labour is needed for prawn peeling. Only very young women, even 10 year-old girls, are employed. Payment depends on age and work performance; it ranges from Rs. 70 to Rs. 120 a month. The working week is seven days. No woman from Perianeelankarai has ever been employed continuously for more than 6 months. For the core of their labour force the factory owners prefer hiring young unmarried women from far away places like Kerala whose religious background (Christian) allows them to move more freely than Hindus, and whose economic situation necessitates migration for some months. Being separated from their families, these women will easily agree to almost any conditions of work, payment and treatment. They have to work night shifts, which would be unthinkable in the case of young women from Perianeelankarai, whose culture and traditions do not allow them to leave the village after sunset.

#### 4.6.3 *Net-making and mending*

The manufacture of nets is no longer the important cottage industry that it was until 5—10 years ago, when nylon yarn and net making machines were introduced in Tamil Nadu. Since then most fishermen and women have given up making their own nets. The supply of machine-made nylon netting is more than sufficient and the cost of a net made from it is slightly lower than that of a hand-made net. Nevertheless the majority of fishermen prefer to use hand-made nets because they believe they are sounder construction; this is not agreed to by all fishing technologists familiar with the situation. However, some people still make their own nets. A few women also make nets for other families who supply them with the yarn, which is easily available in the market.

Mending of nets is almost exclusively men's and boys' work. It is very rarely that women assist in this activity because it is carried out immediately after the men return from fishing; at this time the women are preoccupied with cooking or with selling the fish.

#### 4.6.4 *Marketing of fish*

##### 4.6.4.1 *Importance of women as vendors:*

The women are deeply involved in marketing of fish, which is in contrast to practice in other districts of Tamil Nadu. Of the total number of women interviewed, six out of ten have an income as vendors. The remainder (Table 12a) do not sell fish for various reasons, like social restrictions arising from their unmarried or newly married family status (four out of ten); because another female family member is a vendor (three out of ten); because they are invalid or have a small child; or because the young wife comes from a village where the women are not used to marketing activities.

Leaving aside the fish for domestic consumption, not all of the remainder is taken to the market by women. Fish traders come to the village on bicycles; many families have borrowed money from them and the debts are usually repaid in the form of fish. 129 out of 287 women say they occasionally sell fish to the trader (Table 12b, and see also Tables 25a, 25b); three out of ten of the 129 women must sell their large fish to the bicycle trader for this reason. Nearly four out of ten sell him big fish and parts of exceptionally large catches because there are no transport facilities. One in seven sell the fish to the trader on days when he pays a good price, and one out of ten said that they sell it to him occasionally when they do not want to walk to the market.

Fish traders thus do not play such an important role as in other districts. Since the women receive the fish directly from their husbands or other male members of the family they do not have to go through an auctioning procedure. Auctioning would generally be to the disadvantage of the poorer women; also whenever fish auctioning is practised, fish traders have an advantage as the money normally has to be paid cash down. Since most women in these villages do not have any ready cash available, this would result in depriving them of opportunities to participate in marketing activities.

There are 26 nuclear families and one collaterally extended family (in Chemmencheri) where no women are involved in marketing due to sickness, small children, household chores or being unmarried (Table 12c). These women sell their fish partly to traders but to a large extent to other **women in their village who will carry it to the market (Table 12d).**

**81 women (just over one-third) have answered that they buy fish from other women (Table 13). 27 of these do this daily or almost daily. The remaining 34 women buy fish from other women once in a while, when their own catch is very low and other families have a larger catch; there is thus an understanding among the women that they will help each other when required. In the cases of widows who do not have any assets** it is a custom for the women who handle the catches to sell fish regularly to them as the profit from marketing is the widow's only source of income.

#### **4.6.4.2 Mode of marketing and transport to markets:**

Three-quarters of the women sell both fresh and dried fish (Table 14). Some women have specialised in selling only dried, or only fresh fish. **Two women sell only dried fish. They collect and store the different varieties for a week and take it to the weekly market (shandy). Eight women specialise in the sale of fresh fish.**

Fresh fish is sold once or twice daily and dried fish is sold either daily or at the weekly market. **In Perianeelankarai, 24 women answered that once in a while** they sell iced fish, but it is very rarely that ice is readily available in the village: they take the fish un-iced to the market in Madras, buy ice and cool the fish while offering it to the customers. Only seven women from Pattipulam once in a while buy ice to cool the fish while selling it in the Madras market. As hardly any fish is sold in Madras from Chemmencheri, no women from there use ice.

More than half the women carry the fish to the market exclusively by headload (Table 15): In Perianeelankarai only one woman comes under this category, but nine out of ten in Chemmencheri and three-quarters of those in Pattipulam carry their fish by headload. This severely limits the maximum amount of fish that can be marketed by individual women.

Women who transport by headload always take their fish to neighbouring non-fishing villages which in many cases can be reached only after a walk of 1–2 hours across the fields. During the rainy season it often becomes impossible to cross flooded fields and small roads — which means **the fish cannot be sold.**

Half the women in Perianeelankarai, unlike those in Chemmencheri and Pattipulam, always take their fish to the market by bus, either to Saidapet or to Madras city; buses run more frequently between Perianeelankarai and Madras, and are less crowded and cheaper than those from the other two villages. If they get an opportunity, women go to the market by lorry; occasionally a driver may stop to do the woman a favour and to earn a little pocket money. However this is not a mode of transport on which they can rely. The amounts of fish that can be sold to the markets by these various means are limited and this limits the amount that can be marketed directly by the villagers.

As only 14 women market all their fish in Madras and three out of ten go to the city once in a while, most of the fish sold by the women and the bicycle trader goes to relatively remote non-fishing villages and provides the people there with cheap animal protein (Table 16). Opinions of market women on the need for improved transport and for other improvements in the marketing system are recorded in Tables '17a and '17b. However, see also 4.9.2 below and Table 26. It is desirable that any improvement in transport facilities does not reduce supplies to the agricultural villages.

Transport by means of vans, lorries, rickshaws and bicycles would furthermore deprive the women of their traditional marketing activity, as such vehicles are operated exclusively by men. Unless a group of women hired a vehicle and went to the market themselves, they would be **deprived of an important independent source of family income, which would also be reduced** because profits would be smaller if the fish were all disposed of wholesale.

#### 4.6.4.3 Obstacles to immediate marketing of fish

The fish never remains longer than a few minutes on the shore because the women will be there in time for the men returning from the sea; they load the fish into their baskets and take it home to their huts. When the fish is landed early enough in the morning they will walk immediately to the market to sell the fish before lunch. If the boats return too late for this, the fish has to be stored without any ice until the early hours of the evening. It will be spread out in a shady, airy place or simply on the ground, and will ultimately be sold after approximately six hours of storage in the heat.

As indicated in Table 18, fixed market times are not the only obstacle to selling fish in fresh condition. 24 women reported that because of household duties they cannot go to the market immediately: they have to prepare lunch themselves if there is no other woman or elder daughter who can assist them. In that case they will sell all their fish in the evening market. 18 women answered that they do not go to the market when it is too hot but wait until the evening hours because otherwise the fish will get spoilt on the way to the market; moreover the fish in most cases is sold in places where there is no shade at all, and is completely exposed to the sun. The women who carry fish to market do not have any insulated carriers but only baskets.

### 4.7 Women's influence in family finances

#### 4.7.1 *Control of expenditure on food and household items*

A great part of the daily income is spent on food and other consumables, which are partly purchased in the village shop or from bicycle traders, but to a large extent in markets and bigger shops outside the village. Items from places outside the village are almost exclusively purchased by women after selling fish.

Only in four cases did a woman report that the money earned by her has to be given to the husband (Table 19). He will then decide on the expenditure. 12 women engaged in marketing answered that after returning from the market they have to hand over the profit from fish selling to another woman in their family, who is either the mother or the mother-in-law; thus older women have more status than younger ones even though the latter are the income-earners. 48 women reported that they decide how much money will be saved. Savings are never kept in a bank but always at home in a hiding place.

Three-quarters of all women engaged in marketing reported that they give pocket money daily to their husbands, to buy arrack, bidis (a type of cigarette) and coffee; the amount of the allowance will be decided mutually. In cases where the woman does not agree with the man and pays less than asked for, the man often buys bidis and arrack on credit; the woman has to repay the debts in due course.

#### 4.7.2 *Influence of women on purchase of nets and gear*

Two-thirds of all married women reported that they play a role in decision-making on the purchase of nets and fishing gear. In Chemmencheri one in 25 of the married women claimed to decide almost on their own; these women are strongly involved in marketing activities (Table 20a). Only one in seven of the wives reported that the husband decides on the purchase without consulting anybody else in the family. In extended families the mother-in-law mentioned that they, their son and daughter-in-law will decide on the purchase together. In only two families is the mother-in-law excluded from decision-making, because of very old age and severe illness.

Less than a quarter of the unmarried women take part in deciding on a purchase, mainly those who are involved in fish marketing, which seems to give them a relatively strong position among the older and male family members; earning an income seems to be the most important factor enabling women to have a strong influence on the control of expenditure. Of women taking part in financial decisions of a family, three-quarters take part in marketing the catch (Table 20b). These women seem to play an important role in decision-making regarding the purchase of nets and fishing gear. A similar situation seems to exist regarding purchase of fishing craft.

#### 4.7.3 *Opinions of women regarding men's eagerness to go fishing*

The income of the family depends most of all on the catching of fish by the male members of the family. Consequently the women have a strong interest in the men going out fishing as frequently as possible.

Over a third of the women expressed the opinion that their men do not go as frequently as possible. When asked about the village men in general, nearly 80 per cent of the women expressed the opinion that men could show more eagerness to fish than they do at present (Tables 21a, 21 b). They feel that men stay away from work too often because of low catches and because of high consumption of arrack. The majority of women admitted that very often they press their husbands and sons to go out to sea even on days when there seems to be little fish. Since the boats are not motorised no expenditure is incurred for fuel and consequently there is little financial risk in going to sea. On the other hand, no woman will ask her husband or son to go to sea during rough weather: she will rather make them stay at home at such times because she knows well enough that she might lose not only a member of her family but also her main or only source of income.

#### 4.7.4 *Expenditure on alcohol and cigarettes*

It is a widespread opinion that fishermen in general spend a lot of money on arrack and toddy (A local alcoholic drink prepared in the village from palm trees). Women are therefore asked whether they thought that their male family members spend too much money on items like toddy, arrack and bidis. Forty-nine out of 114 women said that their men do not drink alcohol at all (Table 22a). Nearly a third reported that their husband/son/father drank but they did not consider it too much (an expenditure between Rs. 2 and Rs. 5 per day in 88 of the answers). Almost half of all women interviewed replied that their men consume too much alcohol. 59 out of 124 women who expressed this opinion reported that each man would spend between Rs. 2 and Rs. 5 daily; 50 women said that between Rs. 5 and Rs. 10 was spent by their husband/son/father; 13 women answered that more than Rs. 10 per day are spent on alcohol.

As is often the case in fishing communities many women criticise the men's proclivity to drink; they tolerate it to a certain extent as they feel a man needs some alcohol because of the hard life of a fisherman. Women themselves seem to consume alcohol rarely: it was reported that there are six women who consume it regularly: old women with family problems or illness (Table 22b).

In former years women have taken strong action against the opening of toddy shops in their village. It was said that one shop had to be closed as a result of the pressure exerted on the shopkeeper by a group of women.

### 4.8 *Role of credit in fishing communities*

Artisanal fisherfolk are used to taking credit from various sources. As the three villages investigated are relatively closer than some other villages to the city and its numerous banking institutions, it might have been expected that at least a few educated fishermen and women would have availed themselves of this access to bank loans and credit. This is not the case: not a single fisherfamily has received a loan from a bank and only two women reported that sometimes they pledge jewellery in a nearby bank.

#### 4.8.1 *Borrowing*

To investigate the validity of the general belief that most of the fisherfolk take credit, women were asked whether they or their family borrowed money and, if so from whom. Over 95 per cent answered that they are used to taking credit (Table 23a). This is used for food items during the lean fishing season, when the catch is very low, and in cases of long-lasting sickness or disease. Credit is also taken whenever large occasional expenditures have to be incurred, as in the case of purchase of nets, gear and boats. Furthermore money will be borrowed for family festivities like childbirth, maturity celebrations, weddings and death anniversaries; also for some religious festivities. Taking credit is not restricted to poor families. Even those families with comparatively



large assets take part in the system of borrowing for the various occasions just mentioned, and not only for the purchase of boats and nets.

#### 4.8.2 *Sources of credit*

Relatively small sums are borrowed from the headman, net-owners, local shop owners, neighbours, rice traders, relatives and fish traders. Prawn traders generally give much higher credit in order to secure their supplies of prawns; pawn brokers give high credit on such items as jewellery or household items like cooking pots and other vessels.

The two last-named groups were mentioned as the most frequent sources of credit apart from relatives. 130 women stated that they received credit by pledging jewellery with pawn brokers and banks besides borrowing from other sources; as many borrow money from prawn traders. 110 reported that they received money from relatives (Table 23b).

#### 4.8.3 *Level of indebtedness*

No attempt was made in the course of the present brief survey to ascertain the amounts borrowed from the various sources of credit. However questions were asked about the total amount of indebtedness. 273 women reported that they and their families are in the habit of taking credit but only 153 mentioned that they had borrowed money during the last year and were not able or willing to state the extent of their debt (Table 24). (Young unmarried women did not know enough about their family's indebtedness, and could not answer the question.)

The level of indebtedness amounts to Rs. 10,000 in one family and to As. 6,500 in another. 20 women stated that the extent of their indebtedness was between Rs. 2,500 and Rs. 6,500. Credit at that relatively high level will only be available to families with sufficient assets by way of nets; most of them claimed to own between 10 and 100 kg of nets. Over a third of the answers referred to debts in the range of Rs. 600 to Rs. 3,500 and most of these borrowers said they owned nets between 5—15 kg in total weight. Almost the same number of women replied that they have to repay debts between Rs. 200 and Rs. 600. Small debts up to Rs. 200 are reported only by 21 of the women. The last two groups do not own more than 10 kg of nets, most of them only up to 5 kg. This reveals that taking loans is not a typical characteristic of poor families; better-off families borrow at least as often and the amounts are much bigger. This seems to be nothing new as far as loans for purchase of means of production (nets, boats) is concerned, but it is surprising that people who own a fair number of nets and consequently earn good income still choose, or are forced, to borrow money for food items and family festivities.

Credits will not be taken from only one source. Most of the families were said to be indebted to numerous persons.

The mode of repayment will either be in cash or in fish. The rate of interest varies: prawn traders and pawn brokers charge the highest rates — at least 100% per annum.

#### 4.8.4 *Importance of fish traders and prawn traders as money lenders*

The information in this section is based on village group discussions.

Marketing of prawns is a well-organized business of private entrepreneurs. As almost all the prawn catch can be exported for high prices, there are export companies with their own freezing plants; cleaning is done either in the village by the fisherwomen or in the factory itself. The freezing plants have contracted with local traders to collect the prawns from the fisherfolk. In all the villages investigated, prawn landings are relatively small so that contracted bicycle traders come to buy them. They are given relatively fixed prices by the companies, but their margin of profit is believed to be higher than that of the fish traders.

Prawn traders therefore can and do give higher credit to fisherfolk higher than fish traders but at the same time demand a high rate of interest. The fisherfolk have to sell all their prawns to the trader as they are indebted to him; most of them will have borrowed cash, others rice, during the lean season. The mode of repayment is exclusively by means of prawns. Most of the women reported that half the daily catch of prawns is taken by the trader to clear the debt; for the other

half they are paid in cash. The trader so manages affairs that the fisherfolk are still in debt at the need of the prawn season, and give him the prawn catch in the following year. rather than the fisherwomen selling it themselves in the city markets. As the mode of repayment is a fixed percentage of the daily catch and not a fixed amount of prawns or cash, the trader has to try and keep control over all the landings: he will be on the shore in good time so that no woman can go off unseen with a catch of prawns in order to sell it on her own for a better price. Many people seem to be aware of the fact that they are not paid a proper price for their prawns. Nevertheless they depend on the prawn traders as money lenders.

The prawn trader is aware of the economic position of each fishing family and can easily judge how much money he can risk lending to them. Though the fisherwomen and men are aware of the fact that the prawn trader is making a great profit, they do not like the idea of reorganising the mode of marketing prawns by eliminating the trader because this would result in the loss of an important source of quick credit.

As the people of these fishing villages do not have any long-term savings (more than a few days) they often have to borrow money for occasional expenditures and even for food during the lean fishing season. They seem unable to control income and expenditure and unaware of the need for saving money during the peak season. Consequently no bank will give them credit or loans for festivities, illness or accidents, or for the purchase of boats and nets.

While the prawn trader ranks first as a source of credit, the fish trader plays a smaller role for the three villages. Though seven out of ten of all women reported that they sell fish to him, only just over a quarter of them do so because they borrow money from him which they pay back to a large extent by means of fish (Tables 25a, 25b; see also Table 12b). This does not mean that their total catch has to be given to the trader; part of the daily catch can be kept back and sold by the indebted women in the markets. The reasons for women selling their fish to the trader are various — they include, for example, lack of transport for large catches; household work; small children; illness.

#### 4.9 Opinions of women on improvement of their socio-economic situation

Before initiating any programmes for improving the socio-economic situation of fisherwomen and their families, it is well to ascertain the opinions and attitudes of the persons concerned so that they can be taken into account in preparing proposals, discussing them and implementing any that are agreed.

##### 4.9.1 *Increase in fishing equipment*

A widespread opinion among the women in the three villages is that the family lifestyle can most effectively be improved by each family acquiring ownership of its own boat or boats and by owning more nets. Between a third and a quarter of all answers expressed the need to have more nets and one in seven wanted to own more kattumarams (Table 26).

Most of those women who demanded more nets in order to improve their lifestyle are from families that own nets already, whereas not much more than half of the women from families without any assets, in terms of nets, feel that by owning a net they could improve their income. Most of these latter women are from families without adult males to operate any nets. Furthermore, a fisherman without nets would not possess a kattumaram either, and is tied to another man owning nets and at least one kattumaram: the labourer would not be allowed to operate his own net unless he also finds his own kattumaram. Thus merely giving nets to those families who do not have any assets will not improve their living conditions: they have also to possess a kattumaram, and any indebtedness towards boat owners in the same village has to be liquidated. The present sources of income of these families are recorded in Table 27.

All this of course begs the question whether the stocks of fish accessible from these villages using the traditional craft are capable of higher yields if fishing effort increased. The women's answers suggest that they are unaware of the concepts of limited resources or the law of diminishing returns.

If the answer to this question is favourable, and if the problems mentioned earlier could be solved, then there might be scope for improving the incomes of those who are in most need of it by giving them the means to catch fish for themselves, assuming that the men concerned possess sufficient skill to make such an enterprise pay.

#### **4.9.2** *improvement of transport facilities to the fish market*

Improvement of transport facilities to the market were not as much sought by the women as items like kattumarams, nets and loans (Table 26). Only 10 women mentioned it among other requirements (Compare Tables 17a, 17b). When the other women were asked directly whether more fish could be sold for a better price if there were improved transport facilities, they agreed that by arranging for bus or lorry transport more income could be derived from fish selling. This suggests that the majority of women are of the opinion that though better transport facilities will enhance their income it will only be to a limited extent. By receiving a bigger share of the catch or a larger and continuous catch on the other hand, the income would increase much more. As already remarked, whether these opinions are valid and based on a realistic appreciation of the resources and skills available, is a different matter.

Better transport facilities mean better incomes only sometimes; according to 25% of the answers, fish is given to the trader only when catch is too large to be carried by headload (Table 25b). Only one in thirteen of the women sell their fish exclusively in Madras whereas six out of 10 go to scattered neighbouring villages (Table 16). It might not be remunerative to organise a mechanised mode of transport if the villages are too scattered; more detailed information has to be gathered before a definite statement can be made; to engage a bus or lorry only to the Madras market should not be considered unless this can be arranged in such circumstances that there will be no fall in supply to the agricultural villages.

#### **4.9.3** *Extending and improving vegetable gardening and animal husbandry*

When asked what would improve family living conditions, no woman offered the conjecture or opinion that this could be done through growing vegetables. A few suggested the rearing of animals for home consumption or sale. After putting the question directly to the women whether they would like to grow vegetables or improve their present kitchen garden, over a third claimed that they had experience of growing vegetables and as many as nearly two-thirds said they would welcome assistance in making effective kitchen gardens (Tables 28a, b, c). Chemmencheri forms an exception: only one in five women from this village feel that extended and improved growing of vegetables will be effective, to a great extent because of poor water supplies.

In only six families are goats kept whereas more than half of the families keep chicken (Table 29a). Nearly half of the answers mentioned lack of finance as the reason for not keeping chicken. One in six mentioned lack of space (Table 29b). As regards keeping of goats, over half the answers mentioned lack of money to buy goats; one in eight mentioned lack of space and one in ten, paucity of fodder (Table 29c). 19 women said that they were not interested in chicken and 29 women did not want to keep goats; the remainder did not reject the idea but pointed out its limitations.

Thus the fisherwomen of these villages do not consider vegetable gardening and animal husbandry as worthwhile sources of income. It has to be admitted that to achieve a better income from these sources, financial investment and much time and care are needed.

#### **4.9.4** *Additional job opportunities and social facilities*

Among other things, a few women demanded improved health facilities. Seven women — all from Pattipulam — expressed satisfaction with their situation and stated that it does not require any betterment (Table 26). A great number of women (64) among other things want job opportunities for themselves and their daughters in order to improve the situation of the family. Most of them were not in a position to specify the activities, but they stated that they could carry out a job in their village or in a place close to the village. Many have spare time (Table 30, and compare with Table 11).

#### 4.9.5 *Scope for handicrafts activities and cooperatives*

When women were asked directly whether they would be interested in earning an income from handicrafts, 196 (two-thirds) of them responded positively (Table 31). One in eight pleaded lack of time as they were preoccupied with marketing of fish. One in ten felt that they were too old or sick to carry out new activities, some had to look after small children and some simply were not interested. Only one woman replied that her family would not give her permission to take up such activities. Young women in particular expressed their interest in earning an income from handicraft activities; they are not yet so much involved in fish marketing.

Handicrafts and fancy work are preferred to physically heavy activities. Many women, mostly the younger ones, expressed eagerness to learn tailoring with a machine. They were not interested in learning to sew by hand. Other young women who already had some skill in embroidery asked for assistance in getting orders, which they had failed to do. During the group discussions some women stressed that net making would be more suitable to them since nets could be sold within the village itself. Most of those who preferred net making to other activities knew this skill and occasionally made a net for their neighbours on order. They were interested in making nets for money but not for their own family.

Since production and marketing of handicrafts are difficult tasks to carry out individually, women were asked for their opinion on establishing a co-operative. Though the fisherwomen are not familiar with group action as there is neither a formal or non-formal women's society or group, nearly 60 per cent grasped the idea of establishing a women's co-operative in order to improve their income; only one in 16 of the respondents appeared to be pessimistic (Table 32). They felt that women would not be co-operative enough, specially in Perianeelankarai. Almost one in five could not express an opinion, probably because they were not used to the idea of a women's group and they could not imagine how it would function.

#### 4.9.6 *Possibilities of participation in training courses outside the village*

New activities may require courses of training. It is therefore necessary to ascertain whether women will be permitted to participate in training courses conducted outside the village over a period of a few days and would be willing to do so. Only 36 women of the 228 who answered replied that they would be free and interested to participate in such training. 58 said that because of restrictions imposed on them by husbands/mothers-in-law/parents they could not take part in courses conducted outside the borders of the village. 94 women would not be able to participate because of their involvement in household activities (Table 33).

The conclusion that can be drawn from the answers is that any training courses for women would have to be organised in the village itself, so that women who are restricted by tradition and those with household activities can also benefit by participation in the training and follow-up activities.

**Table 1**  
**Presence of men during interviews of individual women**

		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Men not present		76	64	77	72
Men present part of time	%	8	9	11	9
Men present all the time	%	16	27	12	19
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	86	112	89	287

**Table 2a**  
**Age structure of adult women**

Age group in years		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
13—17	%	17	18	17	18
18—44		55	61	65	61
45 and above	%	28	21	18	21
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	87	121	92	300

Age group		13—17 years				18—44 years				45 years and above			
Family status		Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total
Single	%	87	91	81	87	8	10	8	9				
Married	%	13	9	19	13	79	88	87	85	63	48	69	59
Widow	%					8	1	3	4	37	52	25	40
Separated						5	1	2	2		—	6	1
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	15	22	16	53	48	74	60	182	24	25	16	65

**Table 3a**  
**Family types in the three villages**

Family type		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Nuclear	%	91	90	88	90
Collaterally extended	%	5	7	5	6
Lineally extended	%	2	3	7	4
Collaterally lineally extended	%	2	—	—	1
Total		100	100	100	100
	No.	57	72	59	188

**Table 3b**  
**Size of family by family type**

Type of family	Village			Total
	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Nuclear	5	5	6	5
Collaterally extended	11	11	13	12
Lineally extended	6	8	7	7
Collaterally lineally extended	19	—	—	19

**Table 4**  
**Rate of literacy of women by age**

Age group		13—17 years				18—44 years				45 years and above				All age groups
		Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Total
Illiterate	%	60	86	88	79	79	76	86	80	92	96	94	94	83
Slightly literate	%	33	14	12	19	15	24	7	16	—	4	6	3	14
Fluently literate	%	7	—	—	2	6	—	7	4	8	—	—	3	3
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No,	15	22	16	53	48	74	60	182	24	25	16	65	300



**Table 5a****Women who do not get any meals on some days**

(Number of women)	Perianeelankarai (N:89)	Chemmencheri (N: 121)	Pattipulam (N:92)	Total (N:300)
%	25	71	82	61

**Table 5b****Weakness due to lack of food**

Frequency of weakness		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Daily	%	22	25	32	26
Once in a while	%	78	75	68	74
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	50	76	53	179

**Table 5c****Reasons adduced for meal-less days**

Reasons		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
No catch	%	68	60	72	66
Husband sick	%	21	34	18	25
Husband spent all the money	%	2	4	1	3
Others	%	9	2	9	6
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	81	121	89	291

**Table 6**  
**Frequency of intake of selected food items**

Frequency of intake		Vegetables				Meat				Dried fish				Fresh fish				Milk				
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total	
[ 30 ]	Daily	%	14	6	10	10	—	—	—	—	5	1	14	6	40	83	70	66	15	7	10	10
	Twice a week	%	71	68	56	65	4	5	2	4	31	34	39	35	53	16	27	30	11	9	4	9
	Once a week	%	7	20	25	18	12	6	5	8	32	39	24	32	7	1	1	3	6	10	4	7
	Less than once a week	%	8	6	9	7	38	14	27	25	32	2	23	27	—	—	2	1	68	24	82	54
	Only on festivals	%	—	—	—	—	46	74	66	63	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Non - consumers	%	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—50	—	—20	—
Total		%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
		No.	87	121	92	300	87	121	92	300	87	121	92	300	87	121	92	300	87	121	92	300

**Table 7a**  
**Sickness and source of treatment**

(Number of women)		Village			Total (N: 300)
		Perianeelankarai (N:87)	Chemmencheri (N:121)	Pattipulam (N:92)	
Women who have availed of medical treatment by doctors	%	86	97	90	92
Women claiming present sickness/ disease		25	37	30	32
Women using own treatment for pain/ sickness	%	52	63	54	57

**Table 7b**  
**Women who have access to modern medicines**

(Number of women)	Perianeelankarai (N: 87)	Chemmencheri (N: 121)	Pattipulam (N: 92)	Total (N: 300)
%	95	92	96	94

**Table 7c**  
**Source of modern medicines (multiple answers)**

Source of medicines		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Headman/lady trained in first aid/health inspector	%	51	5	56	39
Local shop	%	49	95	44	61
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	133	117	144	<b>394</b>

**Table 7d**  
**Place of child delivery by women of different age groups**

Age of women		15—20 years				20—25 years				25—30 years				30—35 years				35 and above			
Place		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total
Home by midwife	%	50	—	33	36	33	46	38	41	24	64	46	42	40	73	67	58	71	73	71	72
Homebyrelative	...	—	—	—	64	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	2	10	—	—	4	—	2	—	1
Hospital	%	50	100	67	64	17	46	50	41	24	18	7	16	—	9	—	4	—	5	—	2
Midwife	%	—	—	—	—	50	8	12	18	52	18	40	40	50	18	33	34	29	20	29	25
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	6	2	3	11	6	13	8	27	17	11	15	43	10	11	3	24	28	45	35	108

**Table 8**  
**Source of water by purpose of consumption (multiple answers)**

Purpose		Drinking/cooking				Bathing				Vegetable garden			
Source		Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total
Own pump	%	18	18	12	16	18	18	12	16	24	32	25	28
Private pump	%	—	3	2	2	—	3	—	1	—	—	—	—
Public pump	%	82	23	—	33	82	23	—	33	76	17	—	26
Well	%	—	52	86	47	—	51	88	48	—	51	75	46
Pond	%	—	4	—	2	—	5	—	2	—	—	—	—
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	87	130	92	309	87	128	92	307	17	41	20	78

**Table 9**  
**Source of energy for cooking and lighting**

		Cooking				Lighting			
Source		Peria- neelan- karai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelan- karai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total
Firewood	%	97	100	98	98	—	—	—	—
Kerosene	%	—	—	—	—	85	81	88	84
Electricity	%	—	—	—		9	19	3	11
Firewood & kerosene	%	3	—	2	2	—	—	—	—
Kerosene & electricity	%	—	—	—	—	6	—	9	5
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	87	121	92	300	87	121	92	300

**Table 10a**  
**Time of morning when women get up by family status**

Family status		Unmarried women				Other women			
Time of day		Peria- neelan- karai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelan- karai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total
Before 6	%	12	29	11	21	25	28	34	28
Between 6 and around 7	%	88	71	83	77	75	72	66	72
Later		—	—	6	2	—	—	—	—
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	17	27	18	62	69	85	71	225

**Table 10b**  
**Involvement in marketing by women who share household work**

		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Marketing undertaken	%	49	76	58	62
Not involved in marketing		51	24	42	38
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	53	74	67	194

**Table 11**  
**Spare time of women by their involvement in marketing**

		Market women				Non-market women			
Spare time in hours		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	Total
Less than 1	%	13	9	14	12	3	9	3	5
More than 1 less than 2	%	6	5	39	16	—	2	6	3
More than 2 less than 4	%	44	51	30	42	18	27	22	23
More than 4 less than 6	%	37	28	17	27	59	29	53	45
More than 6 less than 8	%	—	7	—	3	20	33	16	24
More than 8	%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	52	67	57	176	34	45	32	111

**Table 12a**  
**Reasons adduced by women for not marketing fish**

Reasons		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Small child to be looked after	%	9	13	—	8
Unmarried	%	29	62	3	35
Permanently ill	%	9	9	6	8
Newly married	%	6	9	—	5
Somebody else in the family does marketing	%	18	—	85	30
<b>Do not know</b> how to sell	%	29	7	6	14
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	34	45	32	111

**Table 12b**  
**Reasons for selling fish to the trader occasionally**

Reasons		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
<b>Transport difficult</b> when fish catch is large or size is big	%	36	52	23	39
Sell big fish to trader because indebted to him	%	10	14	68	29
Better profit		—	31	2	15
Sickness	%	6	—	—	1
Housework	%	10	3	2	5
For convenience	%	38	—	5	11
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	31	58	40	129

**Table 12c**  
**Families with women engaged in marketing by family type**

No. of women		Families with no marketing women				Families with one marketing woman				Families with two marketing women			
Family type (Number of women)		Peria- neelankarai N: 52	Chem- mencheri N: 67	Patti- pulam N: 57	Total	Peria- neelankarai N:52	Chem- mencheri N:67	Patti- pulam N:57	Total	Peria- neelankarai N:52	Chem- mencheri N:67	Patti- pulam N:57	Total N:176
Nuclear		12	22	9	15	87	67	77	76	1	8	5	5
Collaterally extended			2	—	1	4	9	5	1	2	—	—	1
Lineally extended						2	3	7	4				
Collaterally lineally extended										2	—	—	1



**Table 12d**  
**Reasons for selling fish to other women in the village**

Reasons		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
No time (house work)		40	44	36	38
Large catch	%	30	11	31	25
Very low catch		30	39	2	19
Profitable		—	—	31	16
No. transport	%	—	6	—	2
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	10	18	29	57

**Table 13**  
**Fish bought from other women in the village for selling in the market**

Frequency		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Quiteoften	%	6	11	7	8
Daily		2	13	5	8
Once in a while	%	12	25	19	19
Never	%	80	51	69	65
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	52	67	57	176

**Table 14**  
**Form of product marketed**

Form of marketing		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Only dried fish	%	2	1	—	1
Only fresh fish	%	2	5	7	5
Dried and fresh fish	%	50	94	81	77
Iced once in awhile	%	46	—	12	17
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	52	67	57	176

**Table 15**  
**Mode of transport of fish to markets by women**

		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Headload	%	2	90	74	58
Bus	%	52	1	—	16
Lorry	%	—	—	—	—
Headload/bus	%	36	8	17	20
Headload/lorry		—	1	2	1
Bus/lorry		2	—	5	2
Headload/bus/lorry	%	8	—	2	3
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	52	67	57	176

**Table 16**  
**Place of marketing**

Place		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Madras		23	—	4	8
Nearby villages		8	70	28	38
To women in the village		—	3	1	2
Madras and nearby villages	%	33	5	14	16
Madras and to women in the village	%	13	—	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Nearby villages and women in the village	%	—	21	40	21
Madras, nearby villages and women in the village	%	23	1	9	10
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	52	67	57	176

**Table 17a**  
**Women who want better transport facilities**

(No. of women)	Perianeelankarai N: 87	Chemmencheri N: 121	Pattipulam N: 92	Total N: 300
	66	86	77	77

Table 17b  
**Opinions on required facilities for improved fish marketing by  
women's involvement in fish marketing**

Required facilities		Market women				Non-market women			
		Peria- neelan- karai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelan- karai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total
Ice	%	10	—	4	4	20	—	3	7
Transport	%	—	6	28	11	—	2	15	5
Ice and transport	%	60	78	56	65	65	78	46	65
Other facilities	%	10	—	—	3	3	—	—	1
Ice and other facilities	%	11	3	—	5	3	5	—	3
Transport and other facilities	%	—	—	2	1	—	—	5	1
Ice, transport and other facilities		2	10	—	4	—	11	3	5
None		7	3	10	7	9	4	28	13
Total		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	52	67	57	176	34	45	32	111

**Table 18**  
**Reasons for not marketing the fish immediately after landing**

Reasons		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
No market time	%	17	61	49	44
Household work	%	31	11	27	23
Toohot		38	11	7	17
Notransport	%		11	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
Waiting for trader		14	3	12	9
Waiting for village women to buy fish	%		3	3	2
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	29	36	41	106

**Table 19**  
**Control of income received from fish selling (multiple answers)**

		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Give all money to husband	%	1	1	1	1
Give all money to mother/mother-in-law	%	2	2	4	2
Buy food	%	35	29	<b>33</b>	32
Buy household goods	%	24	26	25	25
Save	%	12	11	5	10
Give pocket money to husband	%	24	25	30	26
Repay debts	%	2	6	3	4
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	135	219	149	503

**Table 20a**  
**Influence of women on the purchase of nets by family status**

Family status		Wife				Mother-in-law				Unmarried			
Level of influence		Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total
Itake part	%	58	71	71	68	57	25	67	50	29	26	11	23
I mainly decide	%	—	4	1	2	7	—	—	4		4	—	2
Husband decides on his own	%	24	11	11	14	14	25	—	14		15	11	10
Husband and mother-in-law decide	%	2	5	3	4								
Husband and wife decide	%			—	—	—	25	—	7	6	—	5	3
Others (father, mother, brother decide)	%	—	—	8	2	—	—	—	—	65	44	67	56
Not applicable, no nets	%	16	9	6	10	22	25	33	25	—	11	6	6
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	55	77	65	197	14	8	6	28	17	27	18	62

**Table 20b**  
**Involvement in financial decision-making**  
**for the family by involvement in marketing fish**

		Market women				Non-market women			
		Peria- neelan- karai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelan- karai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total
Participate in decision making	%	75	83	75	77	35	41	47	41
Do not participate in decision making	%	25	17	25	23	65	59	53	59
Total		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	52	57	67	176	34	32	45	111

**Table 21a**  
**Opinion of women on the frequency with which**  
**the men in their family go fishing**

		Village			Total
Opinions		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Go often enough	%	73	53	61	61
Stay back often	%	27	47	39	39
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	78	103	84	265

**Table 21b**  
**Opinion of women on the frequency with which**  
**men in the village go fishing**

		Village			Total
Opinions		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Men should go more often	%	81	98	51	78
I don't bother about others	%	5	1	29	11
I don't know	%	14	1	20	11
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	78	112	89	279

Table 22a

## Opinion of women on the amount of money spent daily by men on drinking and smoking

Estimate in rupees		Too much				Not too much				Don't drink			
		Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total
<b>0</b>	<b>%</b>						—	—	—	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Less than 2	%	4	—	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>49</b>				
<b>2 to 5</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>49</b>				
5 to 10		36	47	33	44		3	4	2				
More than 10	%	16	4	17	11								
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	25	57	42	114	34	29	27	90	23	21	17	61

**Table 22b**

**Answers from women regarding own drinking habits**

<b>(Numberofwomen)</b>	<b>Perianeelankarai N:86</b>	<b>Chemmencheri N:112</b>	<b>Pattipulam N:89</b>	<b>Total N:287</b>
%	4	2	1	2

**Table 23a**

**Women whose families borrow money**

		<b>Village</b>			<b>Total</b>
		<b>Perianeelankarai</b>	<b>Chemmencheri</b>	<b>Pattipulam</b>	
<b>Borrow</b>	%	<b>93</b>	<b>95</b>	98	95
<b>Do not borrow</b>	%	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Don'tknow</b>		<b>5</b>	1	—	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>		100	100	100	100
	No.	86	112	89	287

**Table 23b**

**Source of credit (multiple answers)**

<b>Source</b>		<b>Village</b>			<b>Total</b>
		<b>Perianeelankarai</b>	<b>Chemmencheri</b>	<b>Pattipulam</b>	
Fish trader	%	5	4	21	10
Prawn traders	%	22	16	24	20
Rice traders		3	3	1	2
Money lender	%	2	8	5	6
Pawn broker and pledge in bank	%	28	18	19	20
Headman	%	1	4	—	<b>2</b>
Netowners		4	11	6	3
Localshop	%	3	4	—	2
Neighbours	%	4	10	2	6
Well to do people in the kuppam	%	5	3		5
Relatives		20	19	12	17
Don'tknow	%	3	0	3	2
<b>Total</b>	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	152	280	208	640



**Table 24**  
**Present stated debt position**

Level of indebtedness in rupees		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
1—200	%	15	17	7	14
200—600	%	54	25	35	35
<b>600—1000</b>	%	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>
1000—2500		18	41	31	32
2500—5000	%	5	12	11	10
5000—6500	%	3	1	7	3
6500—10000	%	—	1	2	1
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	39	69	45	153

**Table 25a**  
**Marketing of fish through traders**

(No. of women)	Perianeelankarai N:86	Chemmencheri N:112	Pattipulam N:89	Total N:287
%	57	76	73	69

**Table 25b**  
**Reasons for marketing fish through trader**

Reason		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Borrowed money from him	%	6	14	61	28
When catch is very large, presents a transport problem	%	31	38	15	29
Once in a while when house work is very heavy	%	8	2	2	3
No time for marketing	%	6	1	—	2
Profitable	%	—	27	3	13
Convenient	%	35	—	11	12
Sickness	%	4	—	2	1
Unspecified		10	18	6	12
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No	49	85	65	199

Table 26

## Opinion of women on how to improve family lifestyle (multiple answers)

How to improve lifestyle		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Acquire nets	%	26	23	41	28
Acquire a kattumaram	%	26	9	10	14
Buy a beach seine			1	1	1
Secure better credits	%	<b>20</b>	27	7	15
Increase catch	%	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	4	7
Improved transport	%		4	3	3
Need a job or useful activity	%	16	14	8	13
Marketing of handicrafts		5	5	<b>3</b>	5
Better education	%	1	5	4	4
Improved health		—	3	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
Less alcohol		1	1	2	1
I am satisfied	%			7	<b>2</b>
I don't know	%	3	5	5	5
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	<b>No.</b>	102	162	97	361

**Table 27**  
**Source of income of families without nets**

Source		Market women				Non-market women			
		Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total	Peria- neelankarai	Chem- mencheri	Patti- pulam	Total
Buy fish for resale from other women in the village	%	11	100	—	15				
Buy fish for resale from women belonging to other kuppam	%			7	4		—	—	—
Get share for working with beach seines	%			29	15		100	50	43
[47] Buy fish from other women and get share from beach seine owners	%	89		57	62				
Buy fish from other kuppams and get the share from beach seine owners	%			7	4	100		—	43
Other occupations	%						—	—	—
Help from relatives	%						—	50	14
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	9	3	14	26	3	2	2	7

**Table 28a****Opinions on need for improved vegetable growing**

(Number of women)	Perianeelankarai N:84	Chemmencheri N:112	Pattipulam N:89	Total N: 285
%	50	80	28	55

**Table 28b****Experience in vegetable growing**

(Number of women)	Perianeelankarai N: 86	Chemmencheri N:112	Pattipulam N: 89	Total N: 282
%	29	48	28	36

**Table 28c****Reasons for not growing vegetables (multiple answers)**

Reasons	Village			Total
	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Lack of knowledge	% 5	14	3	9
Don't grow well	% 35	47	51	45
Water shortage	% 4	6	1	4
Lack of fencing	% 19	5	14	ii
Lack of finance (seed, fertiliser)	% 6	8	9	8
Lack of space	% 8	7	14	9
Not interested. .too much work	% 23	13	8	14
Total	% 100	100	100	100
	No. 83	152	89	324

**Table 29a****Families rearing goats and chicken**

	Village			Total
	Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Goats	% 7	—	3	100
Chicken	% 61	49	64	100
Total families	% 68	49	68	61
	No. 39	35	40	114

**Table 29b**  
**Reasons for not keeping chicken (multiple answers)**

Reasons		Village			Total
		Perianeelankaral	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Lack of finance	%	40	39	71	49
Getstolen	%	20	7	10	11
No facilities	%	17	21	8	16
Noluck	%	—	13	8	8
Not interested	%	23	20	3	16
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	30	56	38	124

**Table 29c**  
**Reasons for not keeping goats (multiple answers)**

Reasons		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Lack of finance	%	65	45	59	54
Lack of fodder		13	9	11	11
No facilities		9	15	13	13
Getstolen	%	3	—	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>
Not interested	%	10	9	11	10
No time to look after	%	—	22	—	<b>9</b>
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	<b>No.</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>287</b>

**Table 30**  
**Available time per day for new productive activities**

Hours per day		Market women				Non-market women			Total	Marketing and non-marketing women Total
		Peria-neelankarai	Chem-mencheri	Patti-pulam	Total	Peria-neelankarai	Chem-mencheri	Patti-pulam		
Less than 1	%	13	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	—	4	9
More than 1 less than 2	%	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	8	—	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>More than 2</b> less than 4	%	38	51	49	47	15	27	16	20	36
<b>More than 4</b> less than 6	%	33	28	25	28	62	29	38	42	34
<b>More than 6</b> less than 8	%	6	8	2	5	20	33	40	32	15
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	No.	<b>52</b>	<b>67</b>	57	176	34	45	32	111	287

Table 31  
Expressed willingness to learn handicrafts

		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Am interested		68	65	71	68
Too old/sick	%	13	9	9	10
No time, I do marketing	%	8	19	9	13
Have small child	%	5	3	5	4
Not interested	%	6	4	5	5
Not allowed	%	—	—	1	0
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	86	112	89	287

Table 32  
Response accorded to the set up of  
women's production and marketing cooperative for handicrafts

		Village			Total
		Periarieelankarai	Chemmencheri	Pattipulam	
Women wil' join the cooperative	%	47	67	54	57
Women are too busy with other work	%	26	6	1	10
Women are not cooperative	%	13	3	3	6
Women have to beconvinced	%	—	—	3	1
It needs guidance	%	—	2	1	1
Only women who need more income will join	%	—	7	6	4
Noidea	%	14	15	32	21
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	77	91	91	259

Table 33  
 Restraint on leaving the village overnight for training courses

Nature of restraint if any		Village			Total
		Perianeelankarai	Chemmericheri	Pattipulam	
Husband will not allow	%	2	15	7	8
Mother-in-law will not allow	%	—	—	2	1
Have to look after household and children	%	46	46	33	41
Have to sell fish	%	9	1	2	4
Unmarried	%	20	15	16	17
Sick/old	%	6	1	16	8
Not interested	%	3	7	6	5
Yes, I can leave the village	%	14	15	18	16
Total	%	100	100	100	100
	No.	65	74	89	228