CENSUS OF INDIA 1961

VOLUME IX

MADRAS

PART VII - A - IV

HANDICRAFTS AND ARTISANS OF MADRAS STATE

FINE MATS OF PATTAMADAI

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of the Indian Administrative Service

Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras

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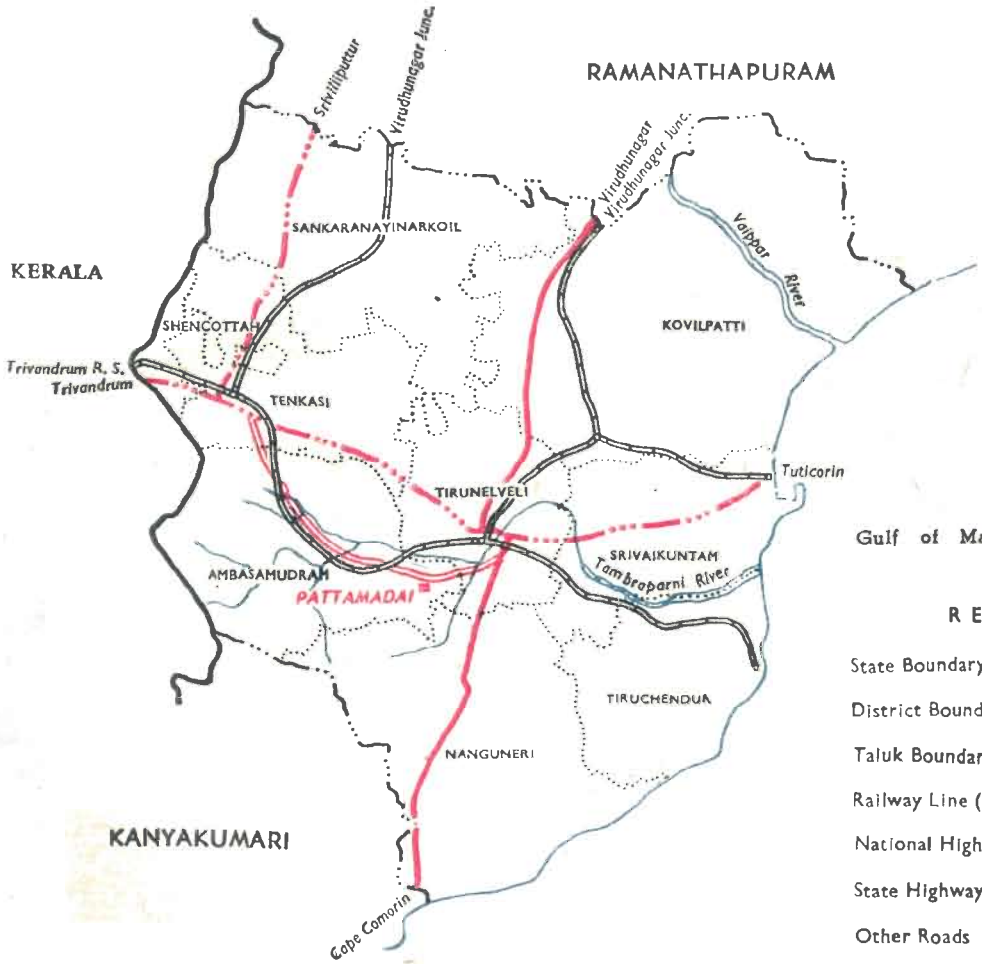
LOCATION MAP
OF
PATTAMADAI
AMBASAMUDRAM TALUK
TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

SCALE

Miles 10 0 10 20

10 0 10 20 Kilometres





REFERENCE

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

FOREWORD

One of the firt steps to be taken in the First Five Year Plan was the establishment of six Boards for the promotion of handicrafts, village and small industries : (1) The Khadi and Village Industries Board; (2) The All-India Handicrafts Board; (3) The All India Handloom Board; (4) The Central Silk Board; (5) The Coir Board: and (6) The Small Industries Board.

The rapid expansion of the activities of these Boards which concentrated not only on production and techniques, but also on organisation, extension, credit, marketing, and export, consolidated and enlarged the position that the household industries sector had so long enjoyed in the nation's economic life. It was this fact that forced itself upon the preparations for the 1961 Census and demanded that household industry should be separately investigated for a proper accounting of the nation's manpower resources and its specific contribution to the national income. The 1961 Census therefore asked a special series of questions on household industry, input of family and hired labour, and the periods over which household industry is conducted. It was felt, however, that an enumeration of the total number of establishments and their industrial classification would be incomplete without a proper description of what they produce and how they produce. It was important to make an assessment of the limits of rigidity within which traditional skill operates. This could be obtained by studying the caste, occupational, social and economic stratifications, the limitation of credit and marketing facilities, the dominance of custom over contract, the persistence of traditional tools and design forms, the physical limitations of transport, communication and mobility, the inability to adopt new lines or adapt to changing circumstances. It was important also to make an assessment of the limits of flexibility that traditional skill is capable of because the transformation of traditional skills to modern skills is easier said than done and a thorough study may well reveal that it is perhaps cheaper from the social point of view to develop industrial skills from scratch than to try to graft traditional skill on alien soil. A rather tragic case of failure to make what would on the face of it seem a minor adjustment cast its heavy shadow on the nation when it was discovered that goldsmiths used to working on 22-carat gold all their lives felt sadly helpless when asked to work on 14-carat, so narrow and unadaptable were the limits of their skill and proficiency and so rudimentary the tools and equipment with which they and their forefathers had worked. This fiscal accident revealed that tools are even more important than skills.

An early opportunity was therefore taken in February 1960 to suggest to State Census Superintendents, that the Census provided a unique opportunity for conducting and documenting a survey of this kind. As such a survey was quite outside the usual terms of reference of Census work it was thought prudent cautiously to feel one's way with the thin end of the wedge of what would, it was hoped, prove to be an exciting pursuit. It was therefore considered the wiser course to wait until the State Census Offices felt so interested that they would no longer take the inquiry as an imposition but rather want to do it on their own and ask for the necessary staff and equipment. This office, too, in its turn, could make use of the interval to organise and elaborate the design of inquiry in order to feed the appetite that work in progress would serve to whet. Because it was a labour of love, sought to be unobtrusively

thrust on one's colleagues and because the inquiry itself was so vast that normally it would demand in any country as big a set-up, if separately established, as the Census organisation itself and that over a much longer period, and because it was almost a pioneer venture, nothing like it having been undertaken since the 1880's, it was decided to move towards a build-up by stages, to let the inquiry unfold itself only as fast as my colleagues chose to ask for more.

Thus, in the first circular of 18 Fcbruary 1960, it was suggested that the inquiry might be conducted through the agency of the Development Department, the State Director of Industries, the Director of Tribal Wel-fare, the Registrar of Cooperative Societies, and other organisations concerned with the promotion of household industry. A draft questionnaire containing 30 questions in three parts was recommended for canvassing. It was suggested that information on this questionnaire, village by village and area by area might eihter be obtained through the regular departmental channels of the State Government, or through the newly set up Census organisation, or through the hierarchy of the newly-created Panchayats. Stress was laid on the need of photographic documentation and illustration of designs. shapes and forms not only by photographs but with the help of line drawings or sketches together with a full description of the materials used.

Almost the whole of 1960 and the first half or 1961 were spent in organising and taking the Census count, although several States even durlng this period had not allowed the grass to grow under their feet but made exploratory studies and decided in their minds how the inquiry should be organised. A series of regional conferences held in Trivandrum, Darjceling and Srinagar in May and June 1961 revealed much enthusiasm among State Superintendents to proceed with the survey, but the need of separate staff and equipment was felt at the same time as the realization dawned that this was much too serious an inquiry to be treated casually and left to be achieved through the usual administrative channels and State Census Superintendents proceeded to augment their staff with qualified research and investigating officers, technical persons, photographers, artists, draughtsmen and other trained personnel.

This was followed by rapid progress in coordination between the Central and State Census offices in the matter of exchange and processing of information, documentation and investigation, of assisting each other with trained investigators and in editing and finalizing drafts, layouts, presentations.

Mention has been made of a questionnaire in three parts and thirty questions. The idea was to make a beginning with empirical, analytical studies based on a structured questionnaire which would replace general descriptive accounts that had obtained so far. The primary aim was to obtain a picture as much of the artisan himself as of his craft, to obtain a perspective of the artisan and his craft in his social and economic setting, the extent to which tradition bound him and the winds of change ruffled him, the extent of his mobility and immobility, the conditions of market, credit, new contacts and designs in which he operated, the frame of new as well as traditional producer-customer relationships in which he still worked, and how far he was ready to pierce his own caste-tribe socio-economic cocoon and make a break through to new opportunities promised by the Five Year Plans. Thc aim was to hold up the mirror to hereditary skills struggling with the dialectics of tradition and change.

Thus the first part of the questionnaire, purporting to be a village schedule, sought to take account of the size and population of the village, its remoteness from or proximity to

centres of trade and commerce, in short, the degree of isolation in which the artisan worked, and the relative strengths of various communities in the village which would afford clues to social interdependence and the prevalence of the JAJMANI system. The second part was devoted to artisan communities in the village: the several castes of artisans, the number of families in each, the total number of workers, males and females, the extent of cooperative activity among them, the extent of dependence upon employers and of wage or contract labour. There were questions on the raw materials used, the means of their procurement, the possible extent of dependence on others for raw materials, the extent of the material that artisans can handle within the limits of their skill. There were other questions on the exchange and flow of designs, the use of colours, the ancientness of the craft and legends associated, the colonization of the craftsman, on patrons and customers and on social and economic contact with the world inside and outside the village. There were specific questions on the workshop itself and particularly the tools and the source of supply of these tools, because it was felt that tools decide everything and are the surest index of inertness or flexibility. Separate blocks of questions were designed to bring out the ramifications of artisan castes throughout the country and the ways they sustained themselves, the type of clientele they catered for, the extent to which they operated on money or barter or service, how specialized their craft was, how wide the market, how dependent they were on their socially preordained clientele and how restricted the latter was by the seemingly unalterable laws of social custom; the extent to which they could operate in the open market, the range of their wares and the sizes to which these were ordinarily restricted either by the limits of their own skill or the length of their customers' pursestrings. Inquiries were to be made about the operation of middlemen and of cooperative societies, the people who gave new designs and demanded new products. Finally the several stages of production of the articles themselves were to be fully described including the final and finishing stage and a list of very skilled craftsmen of each community was to be furnished. The third part was devoted specially to tribal communities and designed to find out how self-sufficient or dependent they were on the production and supply of manufactured goods, the extent to which they produced themselves or depended on others, their contacts with other communities and the specific forms of production and commerce through which these contacts were maintained.

Particular emphasis was laid on the need of obtaining as full an account as possible of unique regional design differentiations as they reflect not only the very culture patterns of the country but the persistent inventive faculties of the craftsmen. The importance was emphasised of giving full attention to articles of domestic use as it is in their shapes, designs and forms that the culture patterns and traditional skills persist most tenaciously.

Simultaneously with the investigation of specific crafts, State Superintendents proceeded to compile a comprehensive list of all types of handicrafts obtaining in their State. As for the specific Crafts to be investigated several tables were devised from the structured questionnaire in order to guide investigators toward pointed observation and analysis, to enable them to write, not just general descriptions, but with their eye on the object and on facts.

Investigations conducted between September 1961 and May 1962, including a study group of all States and the Social Studies Division in December 1961 at Delhi, stimulated many of the States into going in for a much enlarged schedule. The revised village schedule itself, the counterpart of the first part of the February 1960 schedule, contained 19 large sections containing elaborate and probing questions. The Family Schedule for practising artisan families similarly contained 19 main questions each subdivided into many questions. The

Family Schedule for non-practising artisan families contained 21 questions. There were schedules for the study of cooperative societies, of production-cum-training centres, and of consumer's preference. This enlarged schedule of investigation, in the formulation of which the States themselves actively assisted, was greatly welcomed. The surveys that will appear in this series will therefore consist of two main types: (a) those based on the original short schedule and (b) those based on the much enlarged schedule. In some cases Census Superintendents felt enthused enough to scrap the work based on the original short schedule and do it over again on the enlarged schedule. In the meantime much experience was gained on the analysis of facts and figures to clothe each observation with plenty of authentic information so that the reader could make his own judgement instead of being expected to see all the time through another pair of eyes.

This programme of survey of handicrafts and household industries has been fortified by several ancillary surveys, each one of which would deserve major attention. Along with the survey a compilation has been made of all handicraft centres in each State and an inventory prepared of skilled craftsmen. Photographic and other documentation has been built up to constitute what may now be regarded as the most considerable repository in the country. Elaborate and accurate maps of craft centres in taluks, tehsils and districts are either ready or under preparation. A full census of all fairs and festivals, weekly hats and markets, throughout India, has been taken and is being published for the first time. Andhra Pradesh has embarked upon a project of chronicling the social and religious antiquity and uniqueness of every fair and festival. A separate volume will be devoted to each district which promises to be of the utmost value to sociologists and orientalists. A full and complete inventory, replete with sketches and measurements of every object has been prepared of exhibits in museums of tribal crafts in India. There has been a fairly satisfactory survey of houses and buildings, indigenous architectural designs and use of local building material of the whole country. All this has been entirely a labour of love, patiently organised and executed under great strain and in disregard of health and comfort, for which I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation and grateful thanks to my colleagues.

New Delhi
July 30, 1964.

ASOK MITRA
Registrar General, India

PREFACE

Sri A. Mitra, Registrar General, India has in his foreword indicated how a study on handicrafts was planned as part of the 1961 Census on an All India basis. Against this background, I will indicate briefly what has been done in Madras State.

> In "Harijan" dated 10th November, 1946, Mahatma Gandhi wrote as follows:
> "The villagers should develop such a degree of skill that articles prepared by them should command a ready market outside. When the villages are fully developed, there will be no dearth of men with a high degree of skill and artistic talent. There will be village posts, village artists, village architects, linguists and research workers. In short, there will be nothing in life worth having which we will not have in village."

It has been the pride of India that her arts and artisans have been well-known throughout the world. It has also been the endeavour of the Government of India to preserve our crafts and raise the economic standard of the artisans through various measures initiated during the First and Second Five Year Plans. In a mixed economy, it is necessary to maintain a balance between Industrial development and the development of our village crafts and industries. This volume is an attempt to study the conditions of handicrafts including village industries and craftsmen of Madras State, on a statistical basis. It will also be our endeavour to examine how far the village of Gandhiji's concept is being maintained in India and to what extent the crafts could be sustained on a competitive basis, which in the long run will add variety and artistic value to the various products which this State can produce.

This study was undertaken at the instance of Sri Asok Mitra, Registrar General, India. The relevant extracts of the letter written by him in 1960 are reproduced below:

"You will recall that we have introduced special questions on household industry in the household schedule and on establishment and workshops in the houselist in order to obtain a frame for all types of industries in the country. There was of course, a special request from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in this regard, but from the census point of view, it is important to assess the magnitude of the household industries and small establishments, so that it can be related to livelihood of the population and enumeration of the total number of establishments and their industrial classification would be incomplete without a proper description of what they produce and how they produce. Census Organisation can well afford a comprehensive survey of a descriptive nature and I believe the Census really provides a unique opportunity for conducting such a Survey."

This volume entitled 'Handicrafts and Artisans of Madras State' is the result of his letter. As the survey in this State was begun before the Social Studies Division was set up in New Delhi, it has not been possible for me to follow the questionnaire evolved on an All India basis. I have followed my own method of study. It was my intention to collect information on all the Handicrafts practised in the State and build up tables for the State, district by district and taluk by taluk. Some work was done in this direction. But the project had to be given up because of the difficulty involved in conveying a proper concept of handicrafts to

different agencies filling in our schedules. So our attempt has been limited in preparing monographs on selected industries noted for their artistic appeal.

Detailed monographs on Silk Weaving at Kancheepuram, Palm leaf products of Manapad and Nagore and Art Metal Wares of Tanjavur have been published. The present one is on Mats of Pattamadai. Monographs on the following have been prepared and will be issued in due course :

1. Bronze Icons of Swamimalai
2. Woollen druggets of Wallajapet
3. Glazed pottery of Karigiri
4. Bell metal and Brass metal work of Nachiarkoil
5. Wood carving of Madurai and Virudhunagar

It is also hoped that during intercensal period more monographs will be prepared on other handicrafts. This survey was rendered possible by the sympathetic attitude adopted by Government of Madras who directed the Director of Industries and Commerce, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, the Director of Information and Publicity and the Director of Harijan Welfare to extend their full cooperation to me in the study.

This survey was conducted by Sri Anser Ahmed, Research Assistant which was supervised by Sri P. Murari, I. A. S., Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras. Sri A. Mitra, Registrar General, Dr. Roy Burman and Mrs. Ruth Reeves have perused the draft and have given useful suggestions. In making the survey a success Sri V. S. Mohammed Mohideen Lubbai, Secretary of the Pattamadai Fine Mat Weavers' Co-operative Society and his staff have extended full cooperation. I also wish to place on record my appreciation of the good work done by Messrs Janatha Printing & Publishing Co. Private Ltd., in Printing this Volume.

Madras
August 28. 1964

P. K. NAMBIAR

TAJ MAHAL.



PATTAMADAI FINE MAT

FINE MATS OF PATTAMADAI

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Along with basketry, mat-weaving is practised throughout India and among various communities. Wherever necessary raw materials are available. Mats of cane, grass, palm and date leaf are made all over India. These mats are used as floor coverings in Indian homes, serving the same purpose as the woollen carpets and hence in many places are dyed or ornamented with silk work. Mats are also used as wall decorations, table covers, bed spreads and for various other purposes. Floor mats are commonly made in South India. Regarding them, Dr. G. Bidie has written "the finest counts are made of the CYPERUS PONGANIS and are left either un-coloured or decorated with two plain bands of red and black at each end. They may be made so fine that a mat sufficient for a man to lie on can be rolled up and packed into the interior of a moderate sized walking stick".[1] At other places, the mats are decorated with geometrical patterns, especially those made at Palghat. These mats are made on a crude type of loom, the warp consisting of cords of common twine separated more or less according to the quality desired. The woof consists of strips of split sedge dyed or of the natural hue. The black colour is produced by iron filings, gallnut powder and bark of the Babul (ACACIA ARABICA). The red dye is got by boiling the split sedge in water with the wood of VARTHANGI (Caesalpinia Sappan) and the leaves of the Kasan (MEMECYLON EDULE). For yellow, which is not often used, the colour ingredient is turmeric".[2]

According to Pandit Natesa Sastri, "plain but very fine mats are made at Pattamadai in Tirunelveli district, the weft being of Korai grass and the warp of cotton or even silk threads of 80 to 100 counts. The surface of the mat is softer than silk. It can be folded like cloth and carried in a man's fist if rolled like a stick. However, in the harmonious intermingling of Hindu colours and Hindu patterns of decorations, the Palghat mat alone stands uninvaded. The best quality mats are superb specimens weighing by only 12 or 13 ounces, and are so pliable that they can be easily folded without suffering any damage."[3]

Mat weaving is a popular handicraft of Madras State. Centres in which this craft is practised are scattered throughout the State. Please see map. 1. Tirunelveli has been an important centre of mat weaving. Besides the coarse variety of mats produced at Veeravanallur and Harikesavanallur, a finer type of mat is produced at Pattamadai. In both these places, weavers are Muslims. But, in Pattamadai, greater skill is shown by the weavers in that finer specimens of mats are produced which have become famous throughout India. In this Report, we propose to give first a detailed account of the production of fine mats in Pattamadai followed by an account of the production of coarse mats at Veeravanallur and Harikesavanallur. In the course of our discussion, the differences between these two processes will be highlighted.

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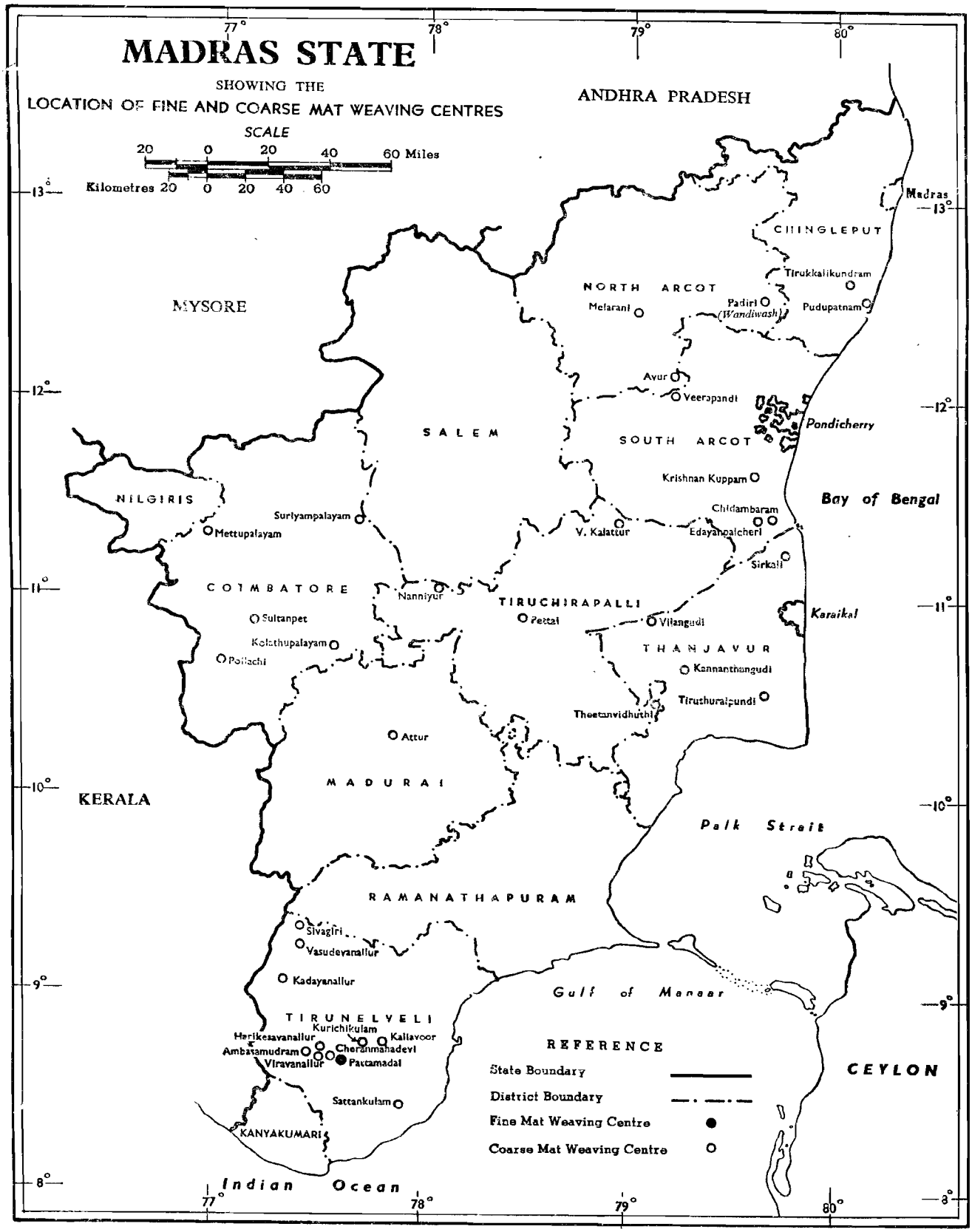
1 Rustam J. Mehta: The Handicrafts and Industrial Arts of India, p. 141.
2 Rustam J. Mehta: The Handicrafts and Industrial Arts of India. p. 141.
3 Ibid, p. 142.

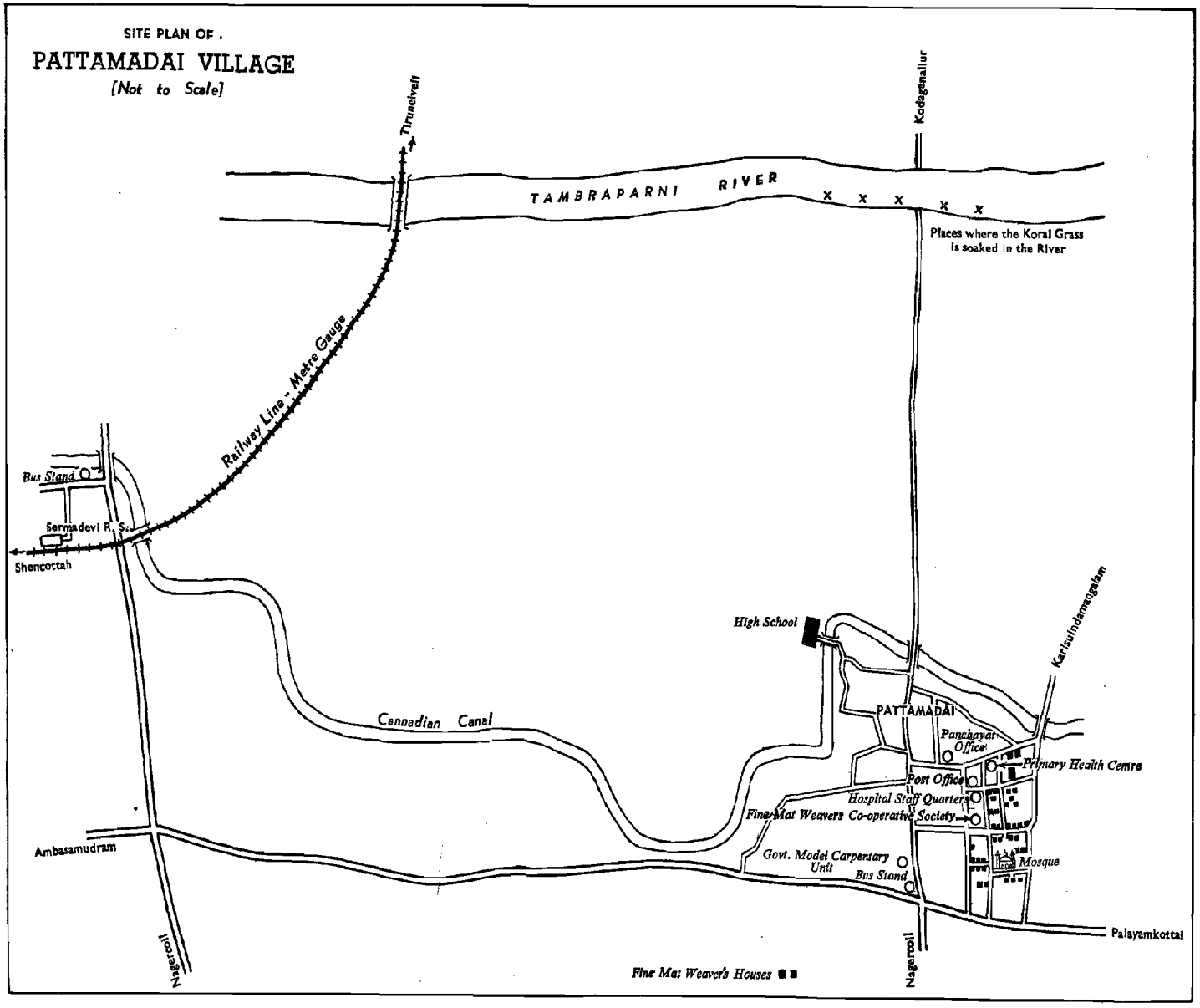
Mat-Weaving Centres

Before making a study of the mats of Pattamadai, it would be interesting to recount details regarding mat weaving centres in Madras State. Mats are produced on a large scale in all parts of Madras State. The leading centres of this industry are located in the districts of Tirunelveli, Tanjore, South Arcot, North Arcot and Salem. Mats are made out of screwpine, palm leaf, coconut leaves but mostly out of Korai grass which grows wild on river banks and on the sides of pools, streams and water channels. Though this grass is also cultivated in regions of Tiruchirapalli, Thanjavur and North Arcot, it is believed that only the wild variety gives the finest mats. Korai grass which grows abundantly in Wandiwash taluk of North Arcot and Ambasamudram Taluk of Tirunelveli district is claimed to be of superior quality. These varieties are exported to other districts where mat industry dominates among the rural crafts. The former variety is also imported into Tirunelveli district. In Madurai district, the Public Works Department leases out Korai grass which grows wildly on the sides of the irrigation channels.

Muslims, Nadars, Kallars, Irulas, Vedakaras and Kurumbas are the chief communities engaged in the craft. The most important product of the Vedakaras is the familiar bamboo mats used for flooring and construction of pandals. Screwpine mats are made of screwpine leaves in Tanjore district by Muslim women. They strip the leaves of the thorns, dry them in the Sun for 6 or 7 days till the leaves turn grey, dye the leaves and plait them. The mats are made of varying sizes and thickness. Usually, the mats consist of one layer but there are mats with two layers called quilt mats and 4 layers known as Java mats. But mat weaving out of Korai grass is the most important industry engaging a number of workers throughout the State. Since it is an important industry in the economy of the State, there exist several Co-operative Production-cum-Sales Societies, Marketing and Credit Societies and design centres in the districts. In Chingleput district, a mat centre functions at Sriperumbudur taluk where a Skilled Assistant supervises the work and also fashions the designs. The Mat Weavers Co-operative Society at Kudimuniyandi Thope combines both credit and marketing facilities. It also imports Korai grass from Wandiwash taluk of North Arcot district and distributes the raw material to the local weavers. Tirunelveli district, a famous centre for mat weaving, contains a number of Cooperative Societies in the taluks. There is a Society in Srivaikuntam taluk. There are also Production and Sales Societies at Harikesavanallur, Viravanallur and Pattamadai of Ambasamudram taluk. An Industrial Cooperative Society for palm-leaf mat weaving functions at Chettikulam village of Nanguneri taluk. Two more societies have been established-one at Murungaikulam and the other at Keelavaram of Tenkasi taluk. A Credit and Marketing Society and a working Centre to improve designs have been organised in Dharapuram taluk of Coimbatore district. Cooperative Societies function in Namakkal in Salem district. There is a Training Centre in Polur taluk of North Arcot district and there exists a Cooperative Society in Tiruppattur taluk of North arcot district. In Tiruchirapalli district, there exists the Woraiyur Mat Weaving Cooperative Production and Sales Society in Musiri taluk. A tabular statement indicating the number of families and workers in the various districts of the State has been appended (APPENDIX I-A) to this Report.

Sri H. R. Pate, I.C.S. states that "mats of korai grass are made mostly by Muhammadans in several villages throughout the district, the chief being Pattamadai, Alwarkuruchi of Ambasamudram taluk, Kayathar, Ayyanaruttu of Koilpatti taluk and Kalakkad. For the ordinary mats, the korai is obtained form the beds of tanks and channels in the district, the right to gather it being sold in auction by Government. It is dyed to a variety of colours and woven


MADRAS STATE
SHOWING THE
LOCATION OF FINE AND COARSE MAT WEAVING CENTRES
SCALE
20 0 20 40 60 Miles
Kilometres 20 0 20 40 60
77°
78°
79°
80°
13°
12°
11°
10°
9°
8°
ANDHRA PRADESH
MYSORE
KERALA
Madras
CHINGLEPUT
Tirukkalikundram
NORTH ARCOT
Melarani
Padiri (Wandiwash)
Pudupatnam
Avur
Veerapandi
Pondicherry
SALEM
SOUTH ARCOT
Krishnan Kuppam
NILGIRIS
Suriyampalayam
Mettupalayam
Chidambaram
V. Kalattur
Edayanpalcheri
Bay of Bengal
Sirkali
COIMBATORE
Nanniyur
TIRUCHIRAPALLI
Sultanpet
Pettai
Vilangudi
Karaikal
Kolathupalayam
Pollachi
THANJAVUR
Kannanthangudi
Tiruthuraipundi
Theetanvidhuthi
Attur
MADURAI
Palk Strait
RAMANATHAPURAM
Sivagiri
Vasudevanallur
Kadayanallur
Gulf of Manaar
TIRUNELVELI
Kurichikulam
Harikesavanallur
Kallavoor
Ambasamudram
Cheranmahadevi
Viravanallur
Pattamadai
Sattankulam
KANYAKUMARI
CEYLON
Indian Ocean
REFERENCE
State Boundary
District Boundary
Fine Mat Weaving Centre
Coarse Mat Weaving Centre


SITE PLAN OF .
PATTAMADAI VILLAGE
[Not to Scale]
Tirunelveli
Kodagenallur
TAMBRAPARNI RIVER
Places where the Koral Grass is soaked in the River
Railway Line - Metre Gauge
Bus Stand
Sermadevi R. Sta.
Shencottah
High School
Karisulndamangalam
Cannadian Canal
PATTAMADAI
Panchayat Office
Primary Health Centre
Post Office
Hospital Staff Quarters
Fine Mat Weavers Co-operative Society
Govt. Model Carpentary Unit
Bus Stand
Mosque
Ambasamudram
Nagercoil
Palayamkottai
Fine Mat Weaver's Houses

by hand on to a warp which is usually made of aloe fibre. The finished articles are sent in large quantities to Pettai whence they are distributed within the district and beyond it, large numbers being sent to Nagapattinam and Tuticorin for export to Burma and Straits Settlements. Its manufacture which is now the monopoly of 4 or 5 Muhammadan families appears to be of purely indigenous origin and to have evolved itself from long experience in the production of coarser varieties. The excellence of these mats has been acknowledged by the award of medals to their makers at several public exhibitions, amongst them the Delhi exhibition of 1902. So fine is the texture of the best of them that though crumpled in the hand like the pocket-hand-kerchief they will remain undamaged."[1]

Pattamadai

The village of Pattamadai which is so famed for its fine mats is situated in Ambasamudram taluk of Tirunelveli district two miles from Cheranmahadevi, the headquarters of the Sub-Collector. It is connected by the trunk road between Palayamkottai and Shencottah and lies 14 miles due west of Palayamkottai. The approach to this village from Cheranmahadevi is marked by the prominent Maradiya Sasta set on a pinnacle of a rock".[2]

Regarding the etymology of the place Pattamadai, Sri Pate states as follows:

"The obvious conjecture that the name originates from the number of sluices which irrigate the village, pattu meaning ten and madai meaning sluice is discounted by the fact that there are in fact 11 sluices".* The alternate legend is, therefore, preferred. In early days, there were no sluices to regulate the flow of water for irrigation facilities through channels. At present the Kandyan (Kannadiyan) channel provides irrigation facilities. So in order to obviate difficulties in irrigating fields the ryots tried to create a passage for the easy flow of water to the fields by diverting water from a tank into the fields with the help of a scooped-out trunk of palmyra tree. This pot hole sluice which in the native terminology was called Pattal Madai provided the name Pattamadai for the village.

The climate of the village is hot throughout the period from April to June. When the cool season starts from the middle of June in the nearby beauty spot called Courtallam, the weather takes a turn for the better with a continuous light drizzle accompanied by a cool breeze. The River Tambaraparani flows at a distance of two miles from this village and the wild korai grass growing on its banks provides the raw material for the Muslim weavers. This industry is almost the sole monopoly of 61 Lubbai Muslim Families in the Pattamadai village. Even though there are many Rowther Muslims who engage themselves in weaving of ordinary mats, fine mats are produced only by the Lubbais. In 1917 according to the District Gazetteer there were 4 or 5 Muslim Lubbais who were practising this craft. In 1962, at the time of our survey, there were 61 families engaged in this craft. It would be interesting to know why the Lubbais have taken up the production of fine mats whereas other communities are engaged solely in the production of ordinary mats. Is it because the Lubbais possess some extra - ordinary skill or have they had a headstart and successfully prevented other families from breaking into their monopoly?

Lubbais are Tamilians who embraced Islam during the early Muslim invasion of South India. The most probable reason for their conversion may be due to their low

1 H. R. Pate, I.C.S. Tirunelveli District Gazetteer.
2 Ibid
* Ibid

social status. Originally, Lubbais started as Preachers of Islam but, later for reasons of economic necessity, became traders. However, they have not abandoned the work of preaching but continue it side by side with their trading.

Lubbais

"The Muhammadans belong, with a few exceptions, to the widespread class which speaks Tamil and generally designated by the comprehensive term Lubbai. Of the four religious sects deriving their origin from four disciples of the prophet only two—SHAFI and HANAFI — are represented in many considerable numbers in the district. As a rule, members of different divisions do not marry into one another's family though in regard to ordinary social intercourse with one another, the two classes observe no restrictions. Amongst themselves, the title Lubbai is, as a rule, reserved for priests or men of some learning; Sahib (in theory only) is a title conferred on men of still greater learning, such people as the Hindu might style as Guru. Ordinary persons who make no pretension either to learning or unusual piety are known as Rowthers. From their speech, custom and dress, it is evident that most of them belong to the same race as the bulk of the Hindus of the district and though scarcely any tradition survives as to the circumstances under which they adopted their present faith it is reasonable enough to suppose that most of them were forcibly converted to Islam during the past periods of Muhammadan domination."*

Origin of the Craft

Lubbais are Sunnies, their main aim being to propagate their religion. The story current in the village regarding the emergence of Lubbais in Pattamadai is as follows. This was the story related to us by some of the patriarchs among the Lubbais. More than three generations back a Lubbai by name Syed Khalifa Meeran landed in Pattamadai. His exact origin is not known except that he hailed from the West Coast. He settled down permanently at Pattamadai and married a girl from the Rowther community in the village. He found the place suitable to carry on preaching as there were some Rowther Muslim families engaged in agriculture. The children of Kalifa Meeran were not satisfied with mere preaching and so they took to mat weaving which was a flourishing industry in Tirunelveli district, to supplement their income. With their natural talent, they mastered the craft and so the succeeding generations have become the sole monopolists of mat weaving. The 61 families of Lubbais are said to be the descendants of Syed Khalifa Meeran and his sons. Seeing the Lubbais combine preaching with mat-weaving the Rowthers started to dovetail their occupation of agriculture with weaving of rough quality mats as the latter was more suitable and convenient for their women in PURDAH. The production of fine quality mats is attributed to Hassan Bawa Lubbai, a descendant of Syed Kalifa Meeran, who lived about a century ago. As has been stated earlier, his forefathers were engaged in the preparation of rough quality mats. On one occasion, it is stated, he was drying wild korai grass in the open Sun when it started raining heavily accompanied by squally winds. His korai grass was blown off into the river. After the rains had stopped he found his korai grass floating in the Tambraparni river, nicely and thoroughly soaked in water. Tambraparni or more correctly Tambravarni means "Copper Coloured." The name is derived from that the waters of this river get a red colour from the rising sun. He salvaged the korai grass and found to his surprise the grass soft and smooth. He quickly separated the fibre from the waste and found that he could split the korai fibre into a number of strands of a fineness he had never seen before. Hitherto he could only obtain 30 to 40 counts of strands, now he found

* H. R. Pate: Tirunelveli District Gazetteer.

he had before him strands of 100 to 120 counts. With these strands, he commenced weaving. He found the product of such softness that he decided to experiment with his korai grass by soaking it in the Tambraparni river water. The next stage was the cutting of korai growing wild on the banks of the Tambraparni river and repeating the process of soaking. From that time onwards, out of his loom poured mats of excellent quality and smoothness. This started attracting the attention of his fellow artisans who learnt from him the secret and from that day the Lubbai community in Pattamadai inaugurated the production of Fine mats, which still stand unsurpassed and unrivalled by weavers in other parts of the country. It can be reasonably asked why in Pattamadai alone should such quality mats be produced and not in the adjoining villages of Harikesavanallur and Viravanallur which are also important centres for mat weaving of 20 to 40 counts? This is due to the fact that the particular kind of korai grass from which fine strands can be extracted grows naturally on the banks of Tambraparni river on a stretch of 5 acres, opposite THARUVAL village, 7 miles from Pattamadai. What peculiar property the waters of Tambraparni river possess that this korai grass soaked in these waters can yield soft fibre capable of being split into strands of such fineness no one has been able to say. But the fact remains that the effect of the combination of the Tambraparni waters and the wild korai grass which is peculiar only to Pattamadai is the main reason for the establishment of this industry at Pattamadai. The Rowther Muslims in Pattamadai, Harikesavanallur and Veeravanallur who weave rough quality mats do not have facilities to extract this korai grass, the land and its usufructs being enjoyed solely by Lubbais of Pattamadai and so they are unable to break through the monopoly of the Lubbais. Further, the latter have a 100 year's start over their rivals in the art of weaving fine mats and with the intricate techniques involved this monopoly is likely to vest with the Lubbais for many more years to come. It is only in recent times, with the setting up of a training centre at Pattamadai, that the first serious threat to this monopoly has been posed. Rowther Muslims from adjoining villages have been trained in weaving techniques connected with the manufacture of fine mats and are setting up looms to produce these fine mats. But it will be many more years before they can claim to be serious rivals to the master craftsmen among the Lubbais. Thus, it was by sheer accident that this famous handicraft was established at Pattamadai. Of the 80 families of the Lubbais, only 61 are engaged in fine mat-weaving. Of the remaining, 10 are merchants and 9 heads of families are employed in Government Offices.

The Lubbais are very religious-minded people. They are held in high esteem by Rowthers who invite them for ceremonies and functions as chief guests to pray and bless their families. Almost all the Lubbais pray 5 times a day and adhere strictly to the Islamic tenets. Their dress is simple, the women wearing 7 to 8 yards Sarees with blouses and they observe Purdah. The male members usually wear caps, Lunghis and shirts. They are Spartan in their habits and the State Government, because of their poverty, have classified them as belonging to the Backward Communities.

The history of the craft through the decades is as follows :—

History through the decades

Though fine mats were produced for a long time, the Lubbais never thought of organising themselves into any association or society to present an organised front both in the matter of procurement of raw materials and in selling their products. Mats were produced individually and sold to wholesale merchants who in turn disposed these goods for profits ranging between 30% to 50%. It was in the interest of the wholesale merchants to prevent any organised effort towards forming an association or a society. Some of the Lubbais used to transport their

products personally to Tirunelveli, Ambasamudram and Veeravanallur. But even then there was no guarantee that the products could be disposed of at a fair price. Some philanthropic customers, who had placed their orders direct and who were not traders, during their visit to Pattamadai saw the woeful state in which the weavers existed and advised them to unite together to form some sort of Association to improve their economic condition. Thus, in the year 1937, an Association was formed with 40 members. The membership gradually rose to 48 in 1940, 55 in 1950 and 74 in 1954. This Association was not registered and its main work was to collect korai grass and distribute it equitably among its members. Even this item of work was not carried out efficiently, as the Secretary of the Association who was himself a wholesale merchant used to purchase the finished products at a low price and make a profit by selling it at a high price. There was no steady market for the goods, as the orders were not executed through the Association but only on an individual basis. This state of affairs could not continue for long and so a fresh Association was formed and registered in 1950. In 1954, the Association had to be dissolved as it failed to maintain uniform quality of products. The Association was ineffective in its control over finance and marketing of finished goods. It was every man for himself and no one worked for the benefit of the Association and as no accounts were kept of production and sales from 1937 to 1954, it looked as if the Industry was reaching the very nadir of its existence. At this state Sri V. A. K. Rangan, Agent, Royal Insurance Society, Madras placed an order with the mat weavers for a fine mat of value Rs. 150/- to be presented to Queen Elizabeth II of England during her coronation on 2nd June 1953. The mat was duly presented to the Queen and was on exhibition along with other presents. This superb specimen attracted the attention of foreign tourists, overseas buyers, the British public and the Indian delegation to the Coronation. It was at this stage that the All India Handicrafts Board became alive to the existence of this craft. After this things began to move swiftly. A team of the All India Handicrafts Board led by its Chairman Smt. Kamala Chathopadyaya visited Pattamadai and studied the economics of this craft. Realising the need for stabilising the craft, measures were initiated to form a Cooperative Society in place of the defunct Association. A grant of Rs. 5,000/- from the funds of the All India Handicrafts Board was quickly sanctioned towards working capital of the Cooperative Society which was formally registered, on 7th January, 1954.

On the formation of the Pattamadai Fine Mat Weavers Cooperative Society in 1954, Mr. Chellapandian, M.L.A., the present Speaker of the Madras Legislative Assembly, was elected as President of the Cooperative Society. He continued to hold office during the years 1954-60. During his term of Presidentship, production in the Society reached a high water mark. Consequent on his becoming the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, he had to resign and the vacancy has been filled up by the election of Mr. Thanu Pillai, an ex-Member of Parliament. At present, the Society is having an Honorary Secretary, Sri Mohammad Mohideen belonging to the Lubbai community. He was the first Secretary of the Society between the years 1954-1957. He has been again elected as Secretary from the year 1961.

At present, there are 173 persons employed in the production of fine mats, all belonging to Lubbai Community composed of 69 males, 78 females and 26 children. Of these 102 composed of heads of families and female workers are members of the Cooperative Society. No fine mat weaver is outside the control of the Society. There are no independent workers. This is a unique feature of the craft. Pattamadai has at present a population of 9,952.

CHAPTER - II

TECHNIQUES OF PRODUCTION

Raw Materials

The special kind of korai grass growing wild on the banks of the River Tambraparni and found in certain select villages of Ambasamudram taluk forms the main raw material for weaving fine mats. Korai grass "cyperus" grown in Tharuval village, 7 miles from Pattamadai and in Mela Thiruvengadanadapuram village, also a few miles from Pattamadai is most suited for high count weaving. It is difficult to cultivate this Korai grass as is being done in Wandiwash Taluk of North Arcot and Karur of Tiruchirapalli district. The korai grass found on the Tambraparni river bed in Ambasamudram taluk persistently resists any attempts to cultivate it. Perhaps, the wild nature of this grass is ideally suited for mat weaving. Since the grass available locally is insufficient to meet the demands of the weavers of Pattamadai, about 80 bundles of grass have been arranged to be imported annually from the Cauvery river bed near Karur by the Pattamadai Fine Mat Weavers Cooperative Society.

The climate of the taluk and the soil characteristics may perhaps explain the growth of Korai grass in the area. The rainfall is light and evenly distributed and the temperature is equable. The soil characteristics are as follows : Along the foot of the Ghats there is a belt of 10 to 20 miles width of light loam and sand and along the coast 3 to 15 miles width of sand. These two widen and cover the country south of the Tambraparni. North of Tambraparni, there are wide areas of sandy soils and north and north-east of this lie broad level plains of rich black loam. The black soil of the river valley overlies a stiff yellow clay known as " Kurugai Mun ". The alluvial soil on the banks of the river is ideally suited for the growth of Korai grass. But the mystery regarding its wild growth and the resistance to cultivation has not been solved. The most famous of the varieties of Korai grass is the " Karungadu Korai " which grows on 5 acres of land opposite Tharuval village situated on the Tirunelveli-Shencottah Trunk Road. The Korai grass grows upto a height of $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft. to 4 ft. and there are two harvests in a year—one in September-October and again in February and March. It takes three to four months for the Korai grass to grow fully before harvest. The grass is green in colour, the lower end being of a whitish hue.

In the year 1939, the weavers who had formed themselves into an Association, approached the Government for help and were successful in obtaining on lease the land near Tharuval where the grass is grown. This land taken on lease was in turn sub-let to the successful bidder who took the responsibility for providing a limited supply of Korai grass to the weavers. This short-sighted policy created a lot of difficulties to the weavers notably that it did not ensure a steady supply of raw material. When the Cooperative Society was formed in 1954, they approached the Government with a different proposal viz., the free removal of korai grass from the porom-boke lands in Block III of Tirunelveli taluk. They obtained a free lease of 2 acres on the Tambraparni bed near Mela Thiruvengadanathapuram village. The Cooperative Society attempted to harvest the produce for one or two years and finding it not a profitable venture sub-let it to a villager in the same village on condition that 19 ATHALAVUR KORAI BUNDLES and 18 MARMATHAM BUNDLES should be provided by him to the Society every

year. This roughly cost Rs. 250/- and was insufficient for the 61 families. The excess could be enjoyed by the lessee to provide for his cultivation expenses. The villager usually sold his surplus grass to the Society. The initial process such as harvesting and drying in the Sun was done by the lessee himself. Further requirements for the weavers was met by harvesting of grass from Tharuval village. Some scarcity of raw materials is being experienced by the artisans of Pattamadai. The Society is attempting to get over the difficulties by importing Korai grass from Karur in bulk. But this grass is not suited for the weaving of fine mats. Only medium quality mats can be woven out of the korai strands taken from the Karur grass.

Three kinds of korai grass grow on the banks of the Tambraparni river. They are :-

1. POOKATTAI
2. ATHALAVUR
3. MARMATHAM

The classification is based on the height to which they grow.

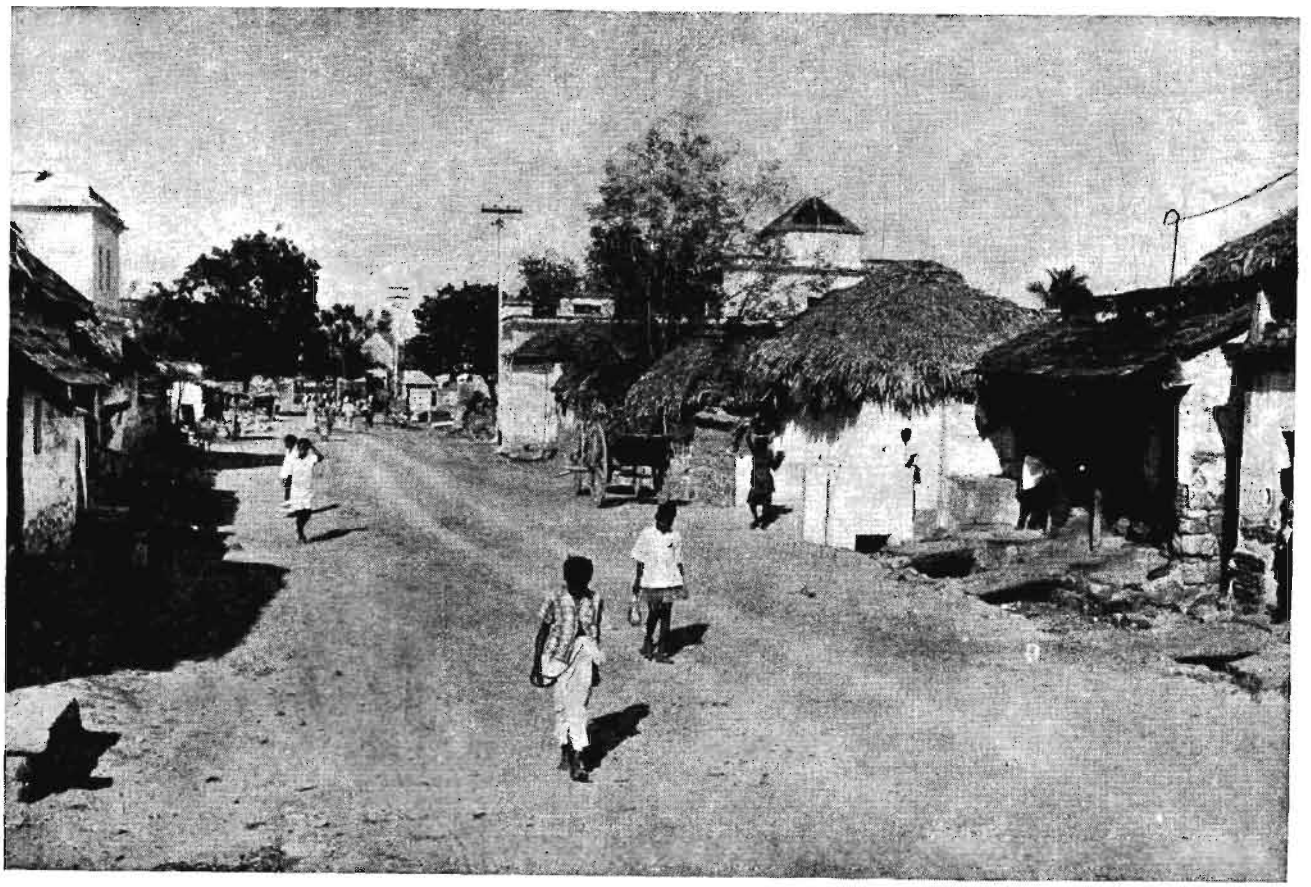
The first type is suitable for the production of table mats upto a size of 11" x 24", the second for weaving of fine mats of size 24" x 50" and the third for weaving mats of size 30" x 72".

Classification of korai grass

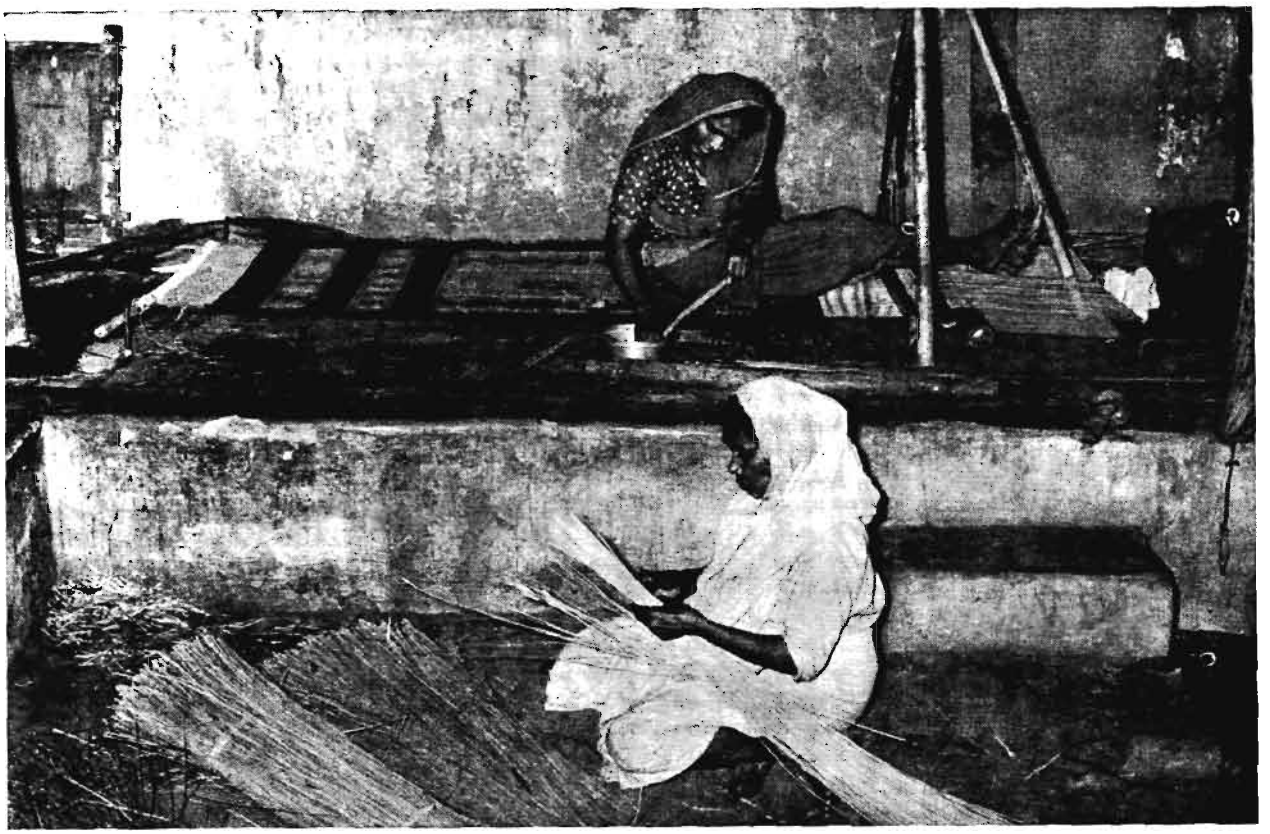
The second and third varieties are in great demand as they are suitable for weaving fine mats. The entire output of raw material from the two acres in Mela Thiruvengadanathapuram is cornered by the Cooperative Society from the lessee. These varieties are also grown in Tharuval village and purchased nowadays by those Rowthers in surrounding villages who have taken to the weaving of fine mats as well as the Lubbais of Pattamadai. The first variety is sold by the lessee to other mat weavers. After the harvest season, the korai grass is brought to the village and stored separately by mat-weavers in their houses and also in a room belonging to the Society. The korai grass is transported to the village in carts. One cart can hold 12 bundles weighing upto $\frac{3}{4}$ ton. Three carts are sufficient to shift the entire annual requirements of korai in the village, which is roughly $2\frac{1}{4}$ tons. Many of the independent weavers find difficulty in obtaining the special type of korai grass grown on Tambraparni river bed and therefore import the ordinary korai grass from Karur which can be utilised for the weaving of mats 40 to 50 counts. The ATHALAVUR grass which is suitable for weaving medium-count mats is also imported from Karur. About 80 bundles are imported by the Society and about 25 bundles by independent weavers. Chettipalayam and Hunnur villages which lie along the Cauvery river banks in Karur taluk feed the Pattamadai mat weavers with Korai grass. This grass grows upto a height of $5\frac{1}{2}$ ft. and one large bundle costs roughly Rs. 20. The korai grass is transported by lorries to Pattamadai and about 105 bundles can be loaded into a lorry at a time. The Society bears the transport charges on behalf of its members and sells it to the weavers earning a net profit of annas four per rupee. Usually, the Society sends two members to Karur who select the best variety of korai grass and bring it along with them to Pattamadai. The following is the statement of purchase and sale of Karungadu korai as well as Karur korai between 1958-62, by the Society.

Purchase and Sale of Karungadu Korai as well as Karur Korai from 1958–62

Year	Purchase		Sale		Profit	Balance Bundles
	Bundles	Sale value Rs.	Bundles	Sale value Rs.	Rs.	
1958-62 (1st five months)	505	7524–54	390	9396–29	1871–75	115



The main street of Pattamadai Village.



After the Korai grass takes the golden tinge, small bundles are prepared.



Koral grass in small bundles tied to a medium size stone and plunged in the river in the direction of the flow.



Every day in the early hours the weaver visits the river,
opens the bundles and cleans the grass.

Cotton Yarn

Cotton thread is the next important raw material used for weaving of mats; it serves as a warp and the kind and quality of yarn used for warp varies with the quality of the mat. Cotton yarn of 20 to 40 counts is used for weaving mats of 40 to 50 counts while 80 to 100 counts cotton yarn is used for weaving mats over 100 counts.

Dyes

The weavers of the fine mats have always evinced particular preference for traditional colours, red and green. In olden days, organic dyes were used, they being of red, green and black colour. The grass to be used is mixed with the dye and boiled. The process of dyeing was as follows:

The dye powder was sprinkled over the split korai grass which was then folded and immersed in salt water. The vessel containing the salt water and grass was allowed to stand in the Sun for about 10 days till the latter was uniformly dyed. The black dye was obtained by first colouring the material red and then immersing it in a solution of iron refuse and gallnut powder. But even by 1917 Sri Pate has recorded that the use of chemical powders were usually preferred by these weavers. The traditional colours of red, green and black were obtained from Tirunelveli and were the products of YUSUF ALY and SARAF ALY of Bombay. However, during the last 30 years, weavers have introduced various colours and purchase dyes from CIBA and Imperial Chemical Industries. The more common colours now utilised are green, red, maroon, orange, violet and black.

We have now mentioned about the essential raw materials, Korai Grass, Cotton Yarn and Dyes. The following are the important tools of the trade.

Tools and Implements

1. Loom which is locally made
2. Knife
3. Charka (Spinning wheel)
4. Polishing stone
5. Planks
6. Chatti or Mud Pot
7. Basin
8. Porcelain cup

} available locally

9. Metal Vessel
10. Drawing wheel (Pudi Thalai)
11. Turning bamboo rod (Parivattam)
12. Mathu (Mortar)

and 13. Tablespoon

These are locally available and can all be purchased for less than Rs. 50/-. Appendix II indicates the various tools, their availability and price.

STAGE I

As already discussed, the three varieties of Korai grass are harvested by the contractor who is in charge of supplying the grass. He then splits each korai grass into two, bundles them

up and sends it to Pattamadai. This grass contains a little of moisture and has to be processed before use.

Manufacturing Process

When the semi-dried grass arrives at Pattamadai, it is greenish at the top and white at the lower portion. The artisan who obtains the grass spreads it in the open Sun for 15 days till the greenish hue is lost and the grass acquires a light golden colour. The length from top to bottom is about 45". When the fibre is separated from the waste, the length varies from 35" to 38" and hence a mat of 33" breadth can be woven out of this grass. After the grass has attained a golden colour, it is bundled again and soaked in the running waters of the Tambraparni river for 10 days. Thus these two initial processes take 25 days from the receipt of the raw material; the days on which the weaver obtains no payment as wages. The soaking of the grass bundles in the water is itself a delicate process. The grass is tied into small bundles to which a medium sized stone is tied as weight and is immersed in the waters down-stream away from harsh sun light. Every day, in the early hours of the morning, the artisan has to go to the river edge, remove the bundles, open them, wash the grass in the running waters, re-tie the bundles and immerse it once again in the river. There is no security for the artisan during these 10 days. Though an unwritten code that korai grass should not be stolen exists, yet its safety depends more on the goodwill of the people around rather than on any sanction imposed. The unpredictable monsoon may also work against the artisan. On a rainy day, he may find the level of the water rising in the river and, on the morrow, the artisan on arriving at the spot may find his precious korai bundles missing, washed downstream. During a particularly severe summer, the artisan may not find enough running water in the Tambraparni river to soak his precious bundles. Not all bundles need be soaked for 10 days. The soaking depends upon the count of mats to be woven. Normally, the korai grass from Karungadu used for weaving mats of 100, 120 and 140 counts has to be soaked for 10 days and the korai grass imported from Karur used for the weaving of mats of 40 to 50 counts has to be soaked for 3 days. The soaked grass, which is soft to touch, is brought from the river and placed in the shade. Care has to be taken to ensure that these bundles are kept away from the rays of the sun.

STAGE II

This is an exacting and difficult process which is peculiar to the production of fine mats. Before the grass is split, the waste must be separated from the fibre with the help of a sharp knife. The outer covering of the grass is what is used for weaving while the pith will be discarded. The korai grass is taken one at a time and split lengthwise into as many strands as possible. For removal of the pith, a sharp knife is used. The skin and the tough outer layer is also removed and the inner layer split into fine strands for the weft, varying in sizes from 1/10 to 1/20 of an inch. The person who undertakes the job must be a skilled weaver and must have a good eye-sight as the work needs delicacy of touch and careful handling. The weaver keeps a bundle of wet korai, picks up one grass, separates the waste, removes the pith and the transparent tough outer layer skin and with the help of a knife pierces the inner



Splitting Tool — Knife

strands at three or four places. Then the strands are separated by placing a finger in the hole or by running the knife through it at a fast pace. This work is done only by men. The following table indicates the time taken for the splitting of strands of various sizes and thickness and the splitting charges for the same.

Counts	Size in inches	Splitting charges for one mat		Time taken
		Rs.	nP.	(Hour)
40	11 x 17	0	12	½ (half)
	18 x 24	0	19	1
	30 x 72	0	75	6
	36 x 72	1	25	6
	39 x 72	1	25	8
50	11 x 17	0	12	½
	18 x 24	0	37	1 ½
	30 x 72	1	00	8
	36 x 72	1	25	8
	39 x 72	1	50	10
100	11 x 17	0	37	2
	24 x 50	3	50	15
	30 x 72	3	50	20
120	11 x 17	0	50	4
	30 x 72	4	00	25
140	11 x 17	0	75	6
	30 x 72	6	00	30

The Tirunelveli District Gazetteer by Mr. Pate contains an excellent description of these three processes. It is to be noted that the techniques of production have not changed much since the beginning of the century.

> "The KORAI which is found in swampy grounds in Travancore at the foot of the hills, is cut when fully grown; after being dried in the Sun for two hours, each culm is split lengthwise into two strips, which are again left to dry for a day. The strips are then bundled up and taken home and stored in a dry shaded place. Six weeks later the bundles are taken out and untied and left in the open for fifteen days and nights. This stage should be timed to occur somewhere between December and February so that the grass may have the benefit of the sun and dew alternately. After this the grass, which will have lost all trace of greenness, is taken in again and stored. A fortnight later, it is immersed for a few days in running water in a shady place, care being taken to see that the weight which keeps the stalks in their place is constantly changed from one end to the other. The single grasses are then taken and split lengthwise into as many strands, varying from 3 to 7, as

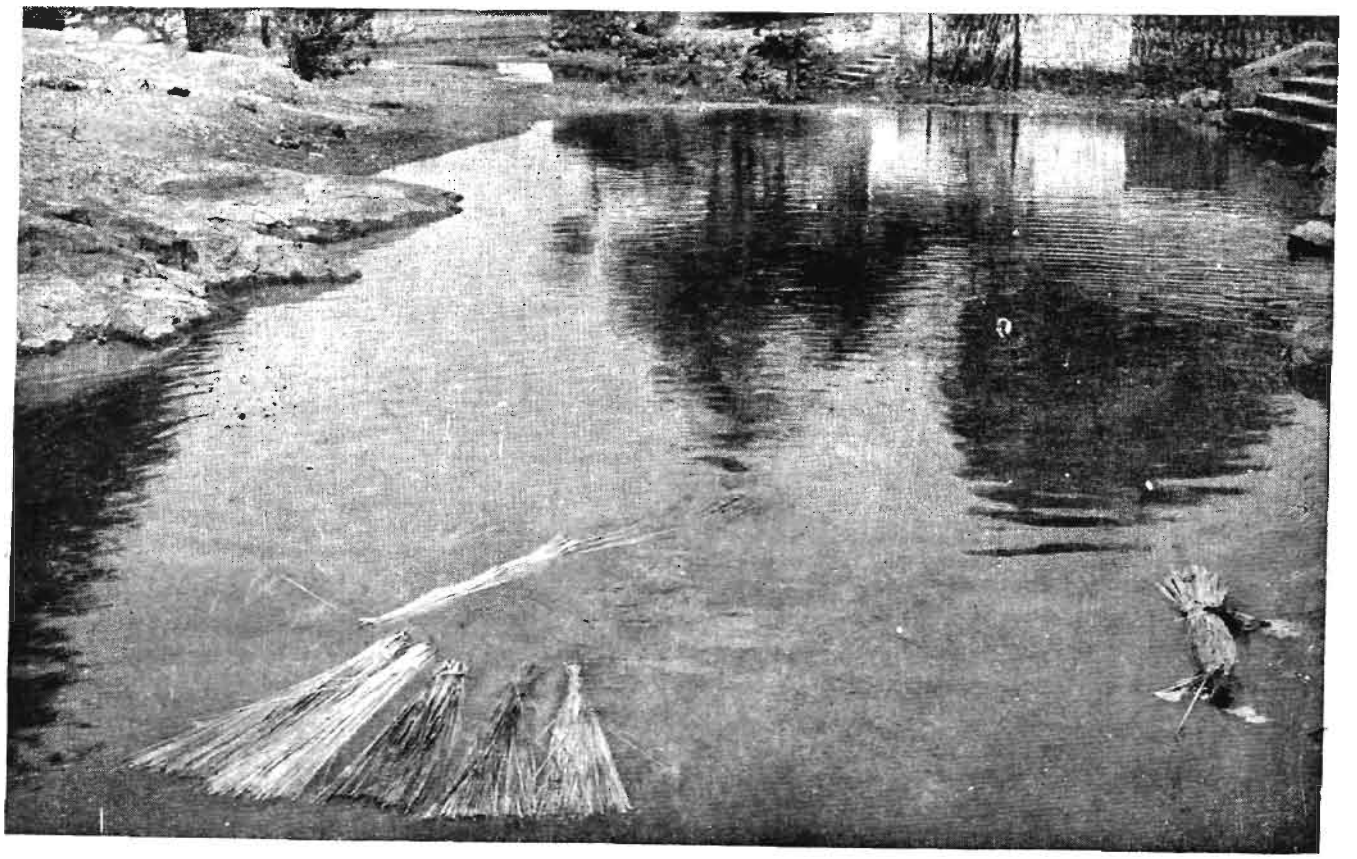
they will bear. This is the most difficult and delicate part of the whole process, the elimination of the slightest roughness with the knife requiring the most precise care."

Except for the fact that the Korai grass now utilised by the Pattamadai mat weavers is grown wild on the banks of the Tambraparni river and supply is effected by the contractor and six weeks are now not taken for the storing of the bundles of korai grass after it is cut, manufacturing processes were the same then as they are now.

STAGE III

Dyeing is a task preformed by both sexes. The men workers perform this task in their workshops but the women do it at home since they are in PURDAH. Soon after the dyes are dissolved in boiling water, some acetic acid is added for fast colours. A table spoon of gingelly oil is used in the case of red and green dyes to hold fast the colour. The quantity of dye used depends on the designs on the mat. If a plain mat is to be woven, the quantity to be used will be less, i.e. about 1 tola for small size mats and between 1 and 2 tolas in the case of large size mats. But if the mat is to take in a number of designs, about 3½ tolas of the dye will have to be used. The weavers from early times have had particular liking for the three traditional colours — red, green and black. But, of late, thanks to the encouragement given by the All India Handicrafts Board and the name which the Pattamadai mats have created in foreign markets, the weavers have switched over to colours like rose, brown, blue, yellow and violet. These colours do not require the addition of gingelly oil. The following table indicates the types of dyes used for mats of varying sizes and counts, the time taken for dyeing and the cost of dyes :—

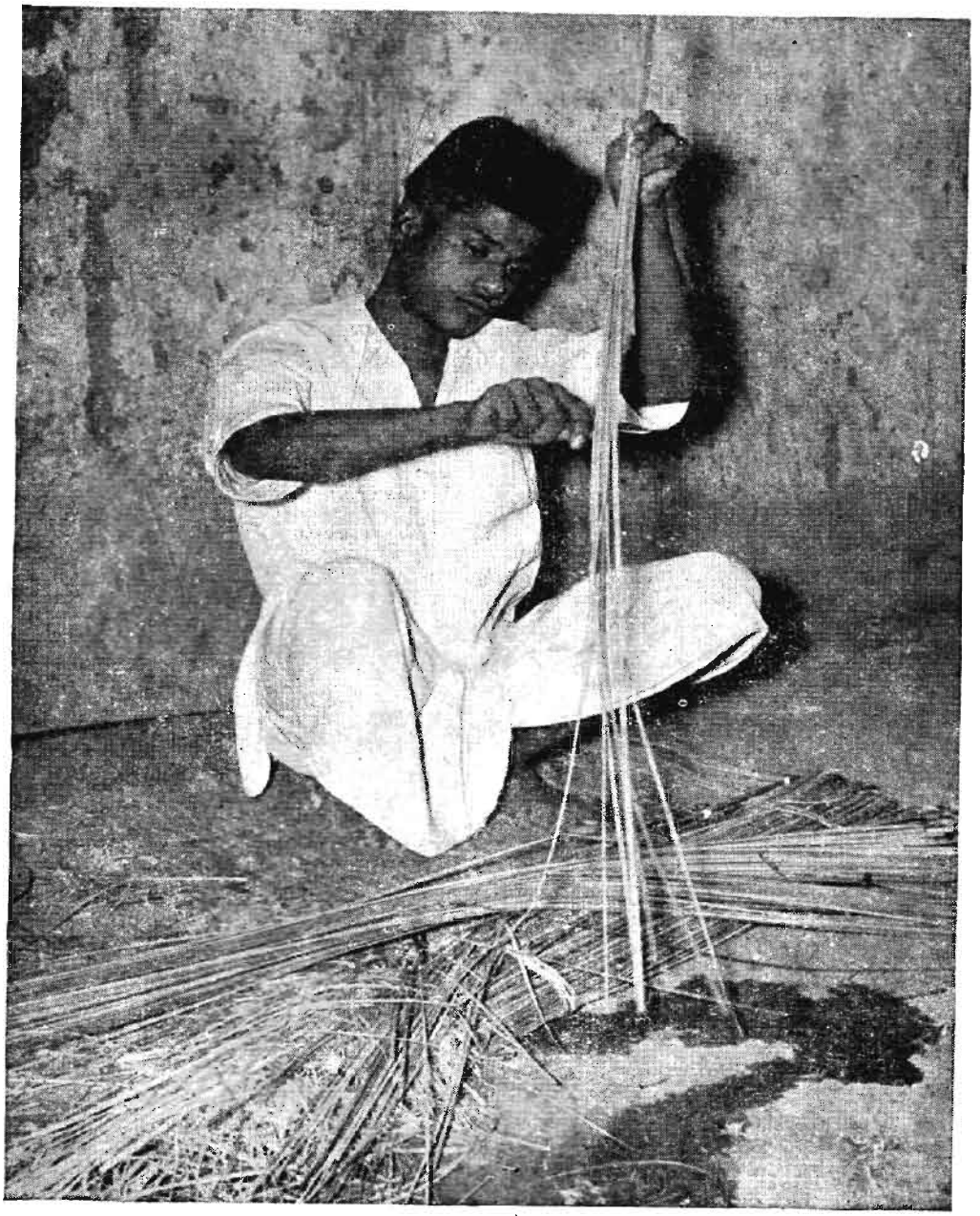
Count	Size	Cost	Tolas	For soaking		For cooling		Total	
				hours	minutes	hours	minutes	hours	minutes
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		(6)		(7)	
40	36" x 72"	0.75	2	0	10	0	5	0	15
	39" x 72"	1.00	2	0	10	0	5	0	15
50	36" x 72"	0.75	2	0	10	0	5	0	15
	39" x 72"	1.00	2	0	10	0	5	0	15
100	11" x 17"	0.25	½	0	7	0	3	0	10
	30" x 72"	1.50	3	0	15	0	5	0	20
120	11" x 17"	0.25	½	0	7	0	3	0	10
	30" x 72"	1.75	3	0	15	0	5	0	20
140	11" x 17"	0.31	½	0	7	0	3	0	10
	30" x 72"	2.00	3½	0	15	0	5	0	20



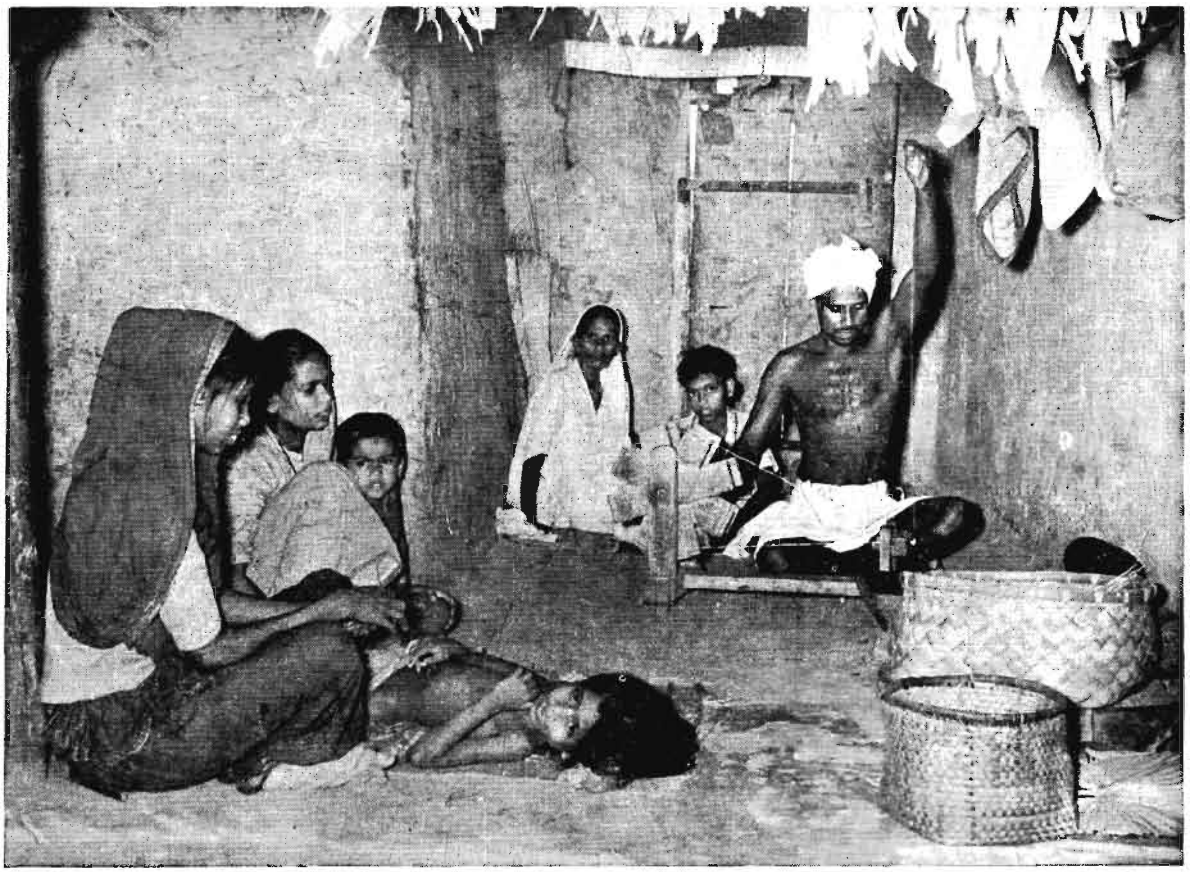
Bundles of Korai, in summer,' when there is not enough water over them.



Karungadu Korai is spread in the open sun, to be fully dried, for nearly fifteen days to dry out its moisture and greenish hue.
Thus it requires a beautiful golden colour.



A skilled weaver with a good vision displays extra-ordinary skill in splitting the single korai grass into many strands with the help of a sharp knife.



The Cotton yarn of four or five threads is attached to a Kathir and the charka is rotated with a twist to prepare the warp thread.

The majority of the mats do not have more than two colours. Cheap dyes are not normally used though it may bring down the cost. But for mats of lower counts, cheap dyes are used. The following are the various prices of dyes in Tolas.

1 Tin	=	18 Tolas
18 Tolas	=	200 grams.

Green	1. tola	75 nP.
Red	,,	75 ,,
Violet	,,	50 ,,
Orange	,,	19 ,,
Brown	,,	50 ,,
Blue	,,	50 ,,
Rose	,,	62 ,,

A medium sized vessel which can hold 3 to 4 measures of water is placed on a furnace. Water is brought to boiling point and a quantity of the required dye, depending on the size of the mat,



Medium size Vessel and bamboo rod

is taken and mixed thoroughly in the boiling water. If red and green dyes are used, a table spoon of gingelly oil is also added to the mixture; for fast colours acetic acid is also added. The split korai grass which has been dried in the shade is now taken and dipped into this boiling dye mixture and soaked for few minutes. The vessel remains on the furnace. The artisan with the help of a bamboo rod three to four feet in length, stirs the korai grass continuously during these 10 minutes. The vessel is then removed from the fire and allowed to cool for about 5 minutes. The korai grass is removed with the help of the stick, tied to a piece of rope above the ground and allowed to dry in a shaded place. The process of dyeing takes about half an hour. For a medium size mat of 30" x 72" with a few designs, one tola of colour will be required. But if there are many designs about three tolas of colour will be required.

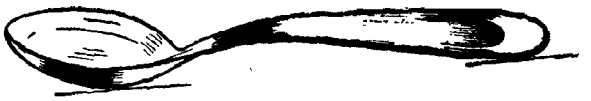


Table Spoon

STAGE IV

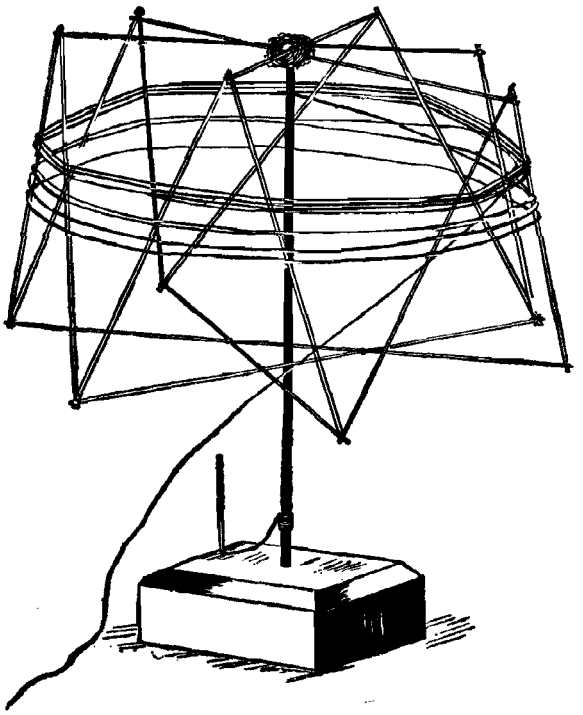
PREPARATION OF WARP THREAD

After the process of dyeing the weft kora strands is completed, the weaver turns his attention towards the preparation of the warp cotton thread. The cotton yarn ranging from 20 to 100 counts is purchased from the Tirunelveli market. The following specific numbers are given for various counts and sizes :—

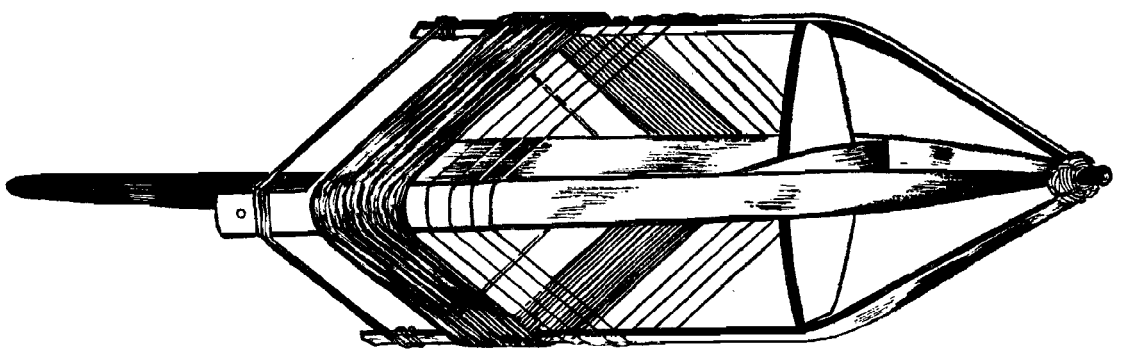
Counts	Size	No. of cotton yarn
40	36 x 72	20 x 4
50	36 x 72	20 x 3
100	30 x 72	80 x 5
120	30 x 72	80 x 4
140	30 x 72	100 x 4

The thickness of the cotton thread decreases according to the count of mat to be woven. As explained earlier, for 100 counts and more, 80 counts cotton thread is used ; for 120 counts

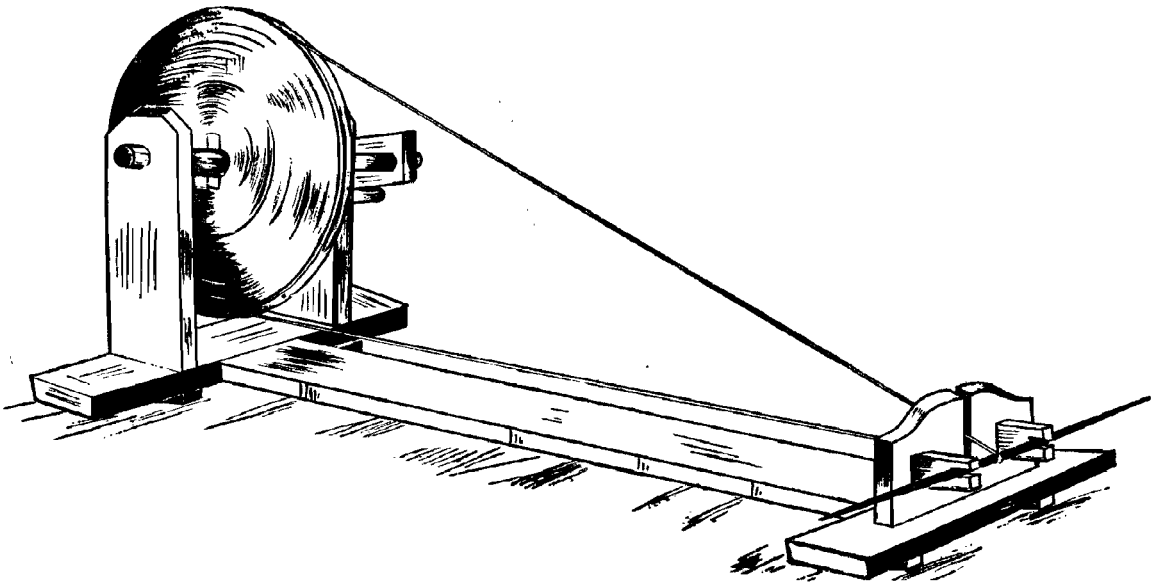
and 140 counts mat, 100 count cotton thread is used ; for 40 counts mat, 20 counts cotton yarn is used. Preparation of warp thread is a task normally assigned to both ladies and men of Pattamadai. Weaving at home within the confines of the room is the practice of the Lubbai women of Pattamadai. 4 or 5 threads of cotton yarn are spread on drawing wheel locally known as PUDI THALAI and rotated. The 4 or 5 threads are then taken on a turning bamboo rod called PARIVATTAM and finally twisted on the charka which is known locally as RATO. This consists of a horizontal spindle which rotates with the help of a driving wheel made of wood. The wheel is connected to an iron spindle 9" in length known as KATHIR. Two or three inches of the iron spindle is fixed inside the wooden plate attached by the driving belt of the thread known as MALLNOOL. The weaver holds 4 or 5 threads in his or her left finger and attaches them to the KATHIR. With the help of the right hand, the RATO or CHARKA is rotated. The thread which is on the spindle now twists and rolls on the spool. The twisted thread is removed from the spool and placed on the two standing spools known as VEESANAM. On an average, the spinner receives 37 nP. as wages for an 8 hour shift. The twisted thread is then taken and starched with rice gruel.



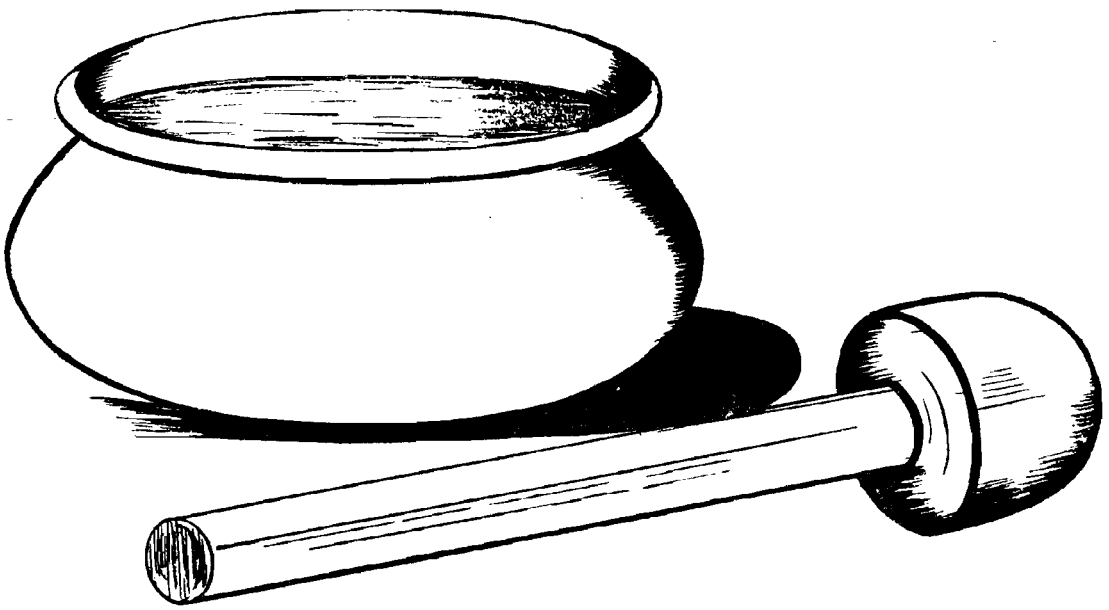
Drawing Wheel



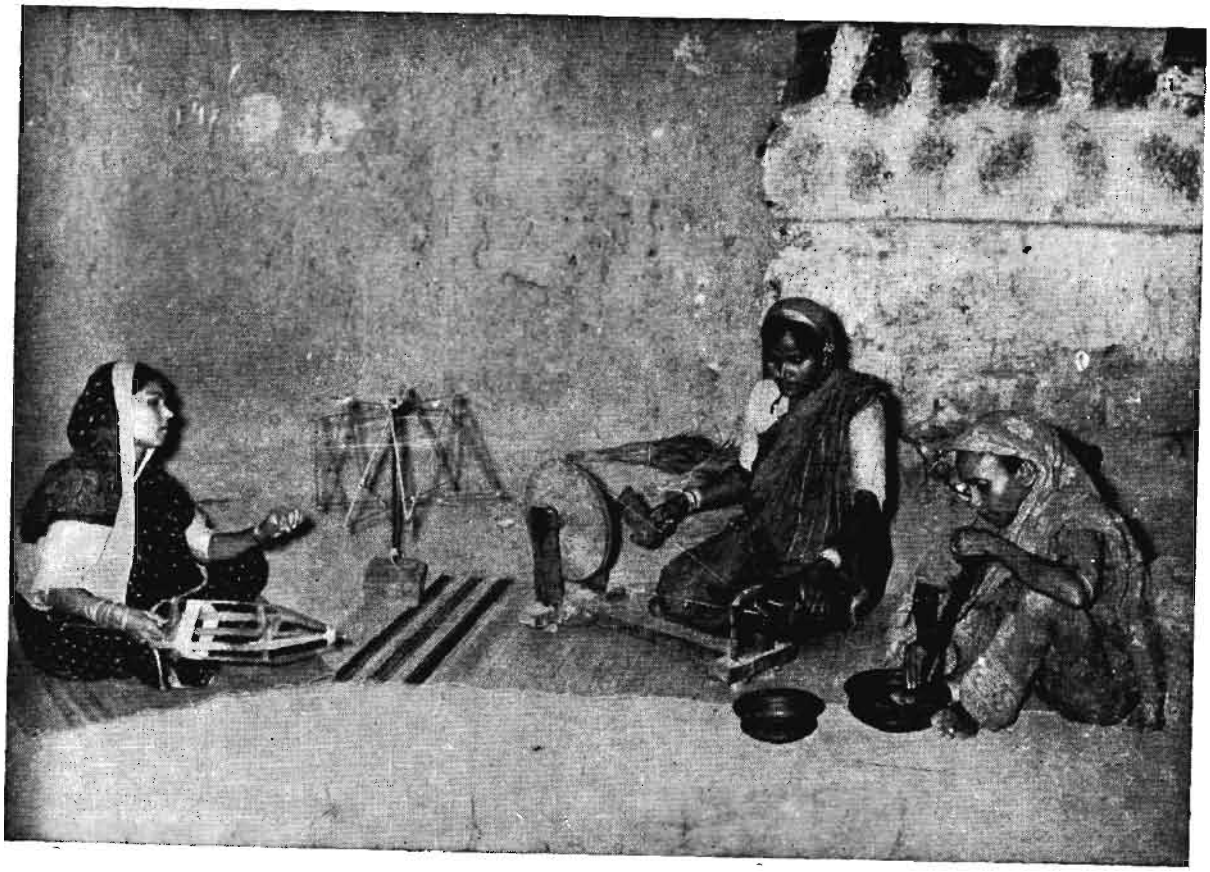
Parivattam



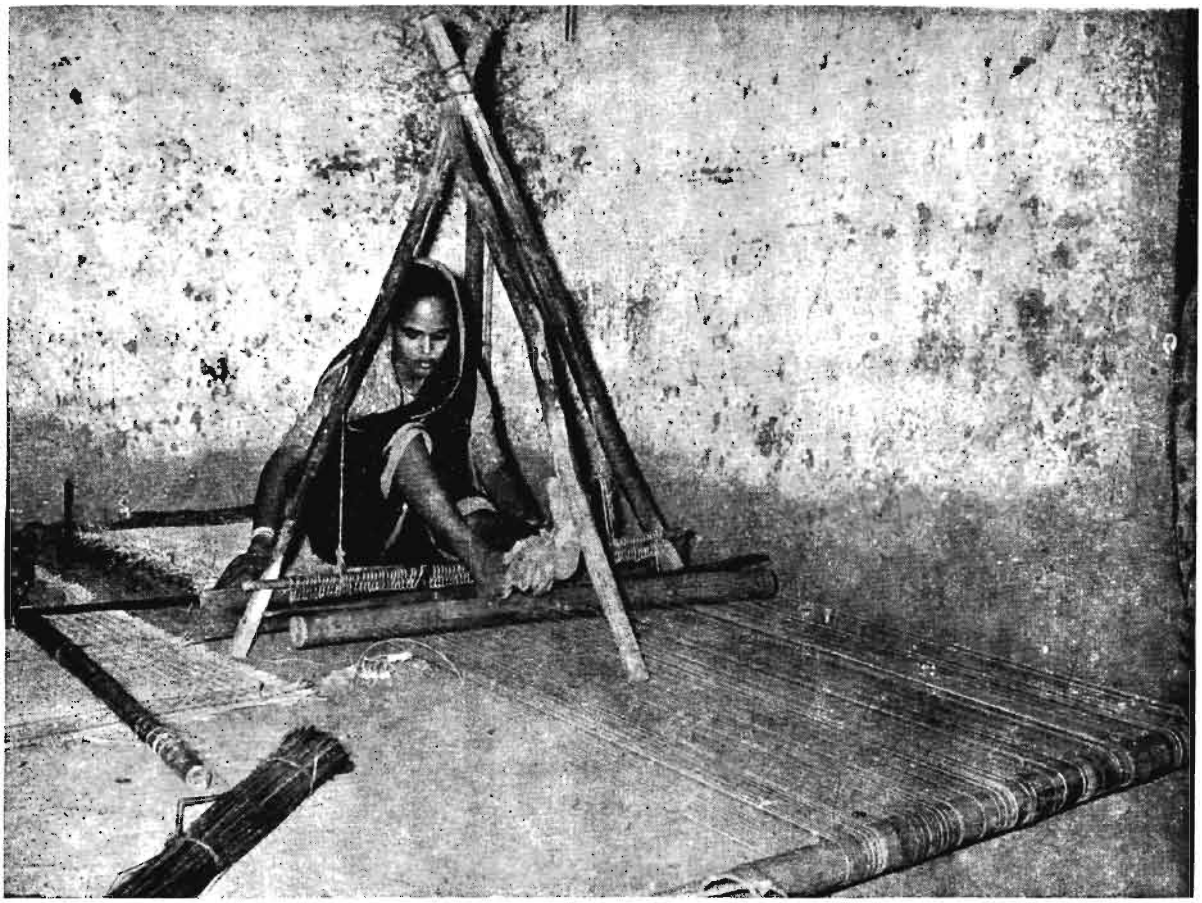
Charka



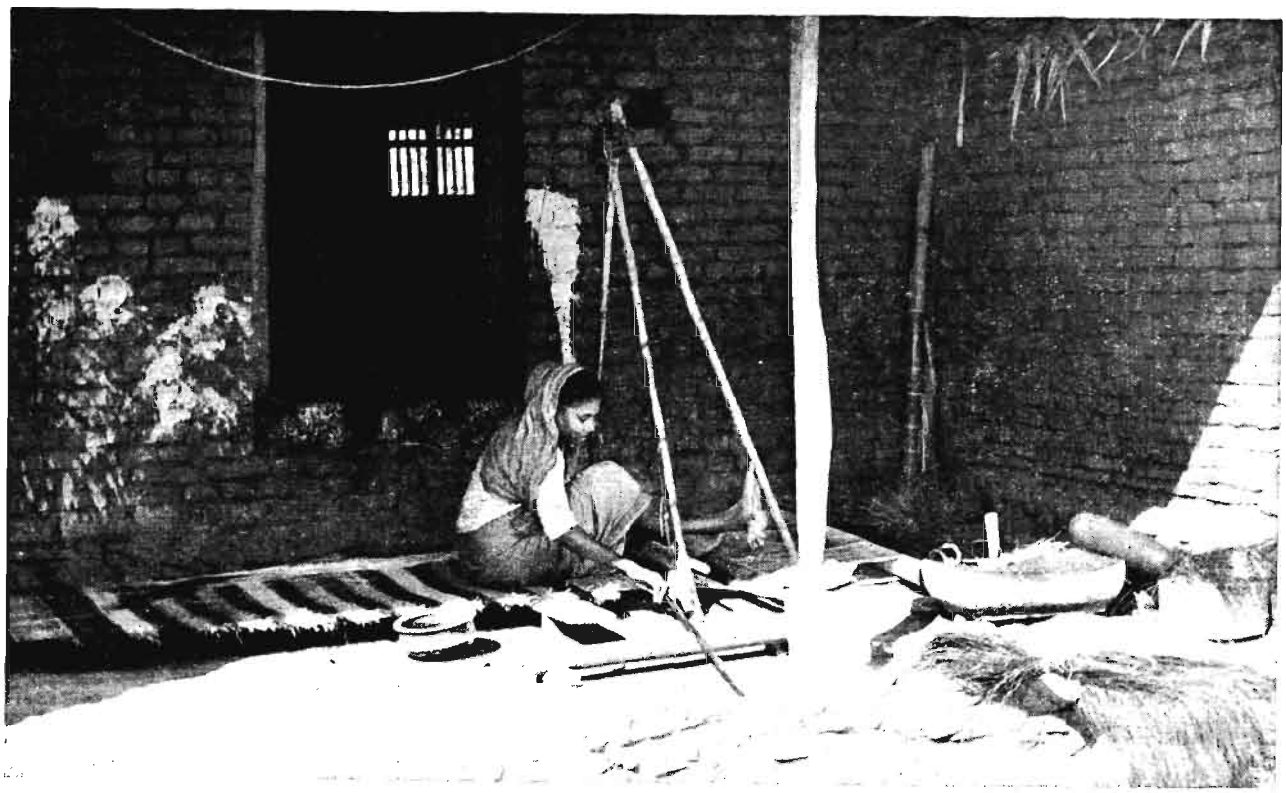
Pasai Chatti and Mathu



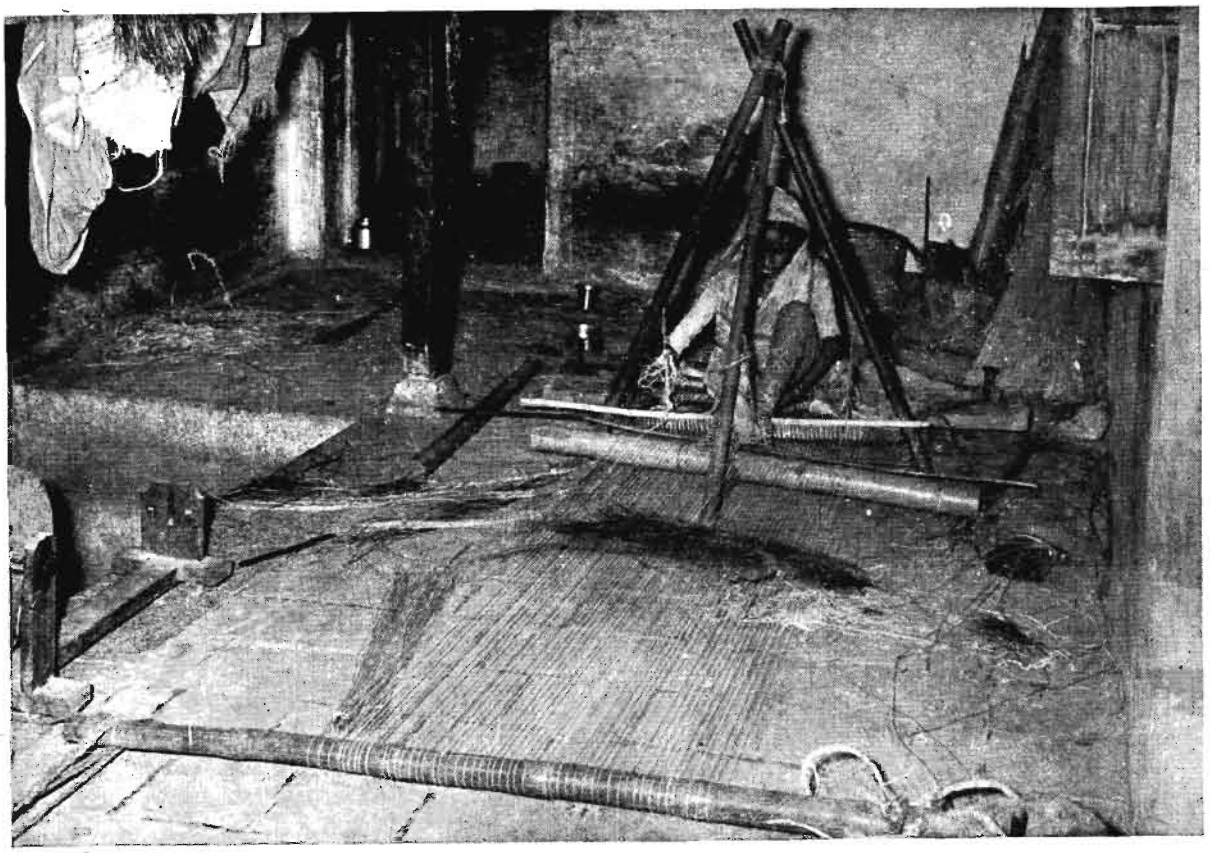
To give extra temper to the twisted cotton thread it is rinsed in rice kept in a small dish, crushed and made into a paste with the help of a wooden log called Mathu. Some women are busy in preparing the warp thread.



A lady weaver is just pressing a Kuchaali (Needle) inserted with a korai grass through the warp thread.



The Kuchaali is being removed from the warp, retaining the weft korai in between the threads.



Korai grass is twisted to make it strong.

The rice gruel is prepared as follows:

Rice is placed in a pot containing water and allowed to soak. It is then removed and placed on a small dish known as *Passai Chatti* and pounded with the help of a wooden log called *Mathu.* The rice paste is then mixed with water and cotton yarn rinsed twice or thrice in this solution and then dried.

The stiffened thread is now ready to be placed on the loom as warp, for weaving of mats.

STAGE V

Before describing the actual process of weaving, it will be interesting to study the various parts of the loom. Appendix III indicates the various types of tools used, their size and cost price. There are 12 parts which go to form the mat weaving loom. The loom is horizontal in structure permitting the expansion of the length of the mat to any desired size. The following are the various parts of the loom:

Parts of the loom

1. Mana Palagai (Sitting Plank)
2. Mulai Kambi (Wooden pegs)
3. Suthu Pirimaram (Beam)
4. Mun Dhandu (Frontal Beam)
5. Achu (Reed)
6. Veludu Kambu (Beam)
7. Mukali (Tripod-stand)
8. Mithi Pattai (Treadle Beam)
9. Anai Kuzhal (Separating Beam)
10. Kuchaali (Needle)
11. Ethi Kathi (Round Bamboo Stick)

and 12. Cotton Pad (Leg rest)

To set up a loom, a space of 12′ x 6′ is required.

Manapalagai

This wooden plank is utilised by the weaver to sit and weave a mat. It is four feet in length and ¾ ft. in breadth.

Mulai Kambi

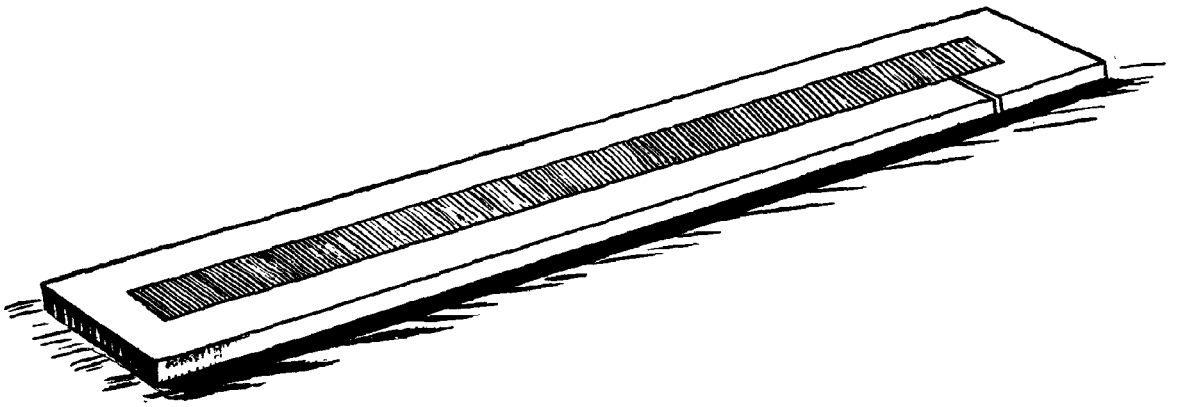
These are four iron pegs, each 2 feet in length driven into the ground to a depth of 1′ 3″ which form the four corners of a rectangle of about 8′ x 5′. These rods firmly hold the loom in position.

Suthu Pirimaram

This is a bamboo rod 6′ long and 3″ thick placed in front of the two iron pegs which are 5′ apart. The cotton warp thread is wound round this beam.

Mun Dandu

This is another bamboo rod 6′ long and 3″ in diameter placed on the inside of the rectangle formed by the iron pegs 2′ in front of the other two iron pegs and tied to them with coir ropes. The cotton warp thread is looped over this beam and taken to the Suthupirimaram.



Achu

Achu

This is a piece of wood 6′ x 3″ containing a number of holes. The cotton warp thread is to be passed through the holes of Achu. Like the *Reeds* in a cotton or silk weaving loom, this Achu acts as the reed. The thickness of the mat depends on the Achu. In a space of 9″, if it has 40 holes, the mat will be of 40 counts; if it has 140 holes, the mat will be of 140 counts. The warp thread after being looped round Mun Dandu is passed through the holes and then tied to the Suthu Pari.

Veludu Kambu

This is a bamboo rod 6′ in length suspended from the two legs of the Mukali by means of thick cotton thread. Cotton thread is also wrapped round this beam. This beam hangs horizontally 2″ above the warp thread. The bottom rows of the warp thread are passed on both sides of the cotton thread wound round the Veludu Kambu.

Mukali (Tripod Stand)

These bamboo rods of 4′ length and 1½″ diameter are tied together to form a tripod. Each leg is 2½ feet apart. Holes are bored at the top of each rod and aluminium wire passed through them and wound together to hold the rods in position. The Veludu Kambu is suspended from the two legs of the tripod and from the third a big loop of cotton thread is suspended to act as a hanging pad for the weaver while weaving is in progress.

Midhi Pattai

This is a split bamboo piece about 5 feet in length and it helps to provide the necessary shedding. This is found in between the Veludu Kambu and Anai Kuzhal over the two rows of warp thread. While weaving, the korai grass is passed into the warp, then one of the legs of the weaver is pressed on the Midhi Pattai and the top rows of the warp thread is brought below the bottom rows. The necessary shedding is thus provided.

Anai Kuzhal

It is also about 5 feet in length placed between the two rows of warp thread near the Midhi Pattai. Its function is to separate the bottom and top rows of warp thread. After insertion

of the weft korai grass the Anai Kuzhal will be brought nearer the Veludu Kambu. This provides the Ani or cross.

Kuchaali

This is 4 feet in length and resembles a long fine stick with a hole at one end and can be compared to a gigantic needle. Into this hole the korai strand is inserted and the stick is inserted into the loom. Afterwards the stick is removed, the grass which is retained between the warp threads is held on both sides with both hands and slightly twisted to provide uniform roundness and strength. Then the Achu is beaten to keep the korai weft in position.

Ethi kathi

It is an ordinary round wooden log 4' long kept by the right side of the weaver to rest the Kuchaali after its removal from the warp thread, so that it may not be spoiled by its constant touch with the ground.

Cotton Pad

The cotton pad acts as a leg rest for the legs when they are to be alternatively pressed on the MIDHI PATTAI.

The following is the description of the process of weaving:

Setting up the loom

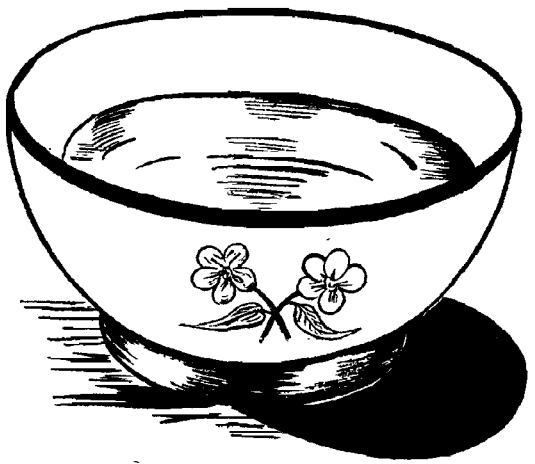
The four iron pegs are firmly driven into the ground up to a depth of 1¼'. They form a rectangle 9' x 6'. The Suthupirimaram is placed breadthwise on the outer side of the rectangle created by the iron pegs and tied to the two pegs by means of coir ropes. The Mun Dandu is placed two feet away from the other two iron pegs and tied to each peg by means of stout coir ropes. The Achu is placed vertically between the Suthupirimaram and the Mun Dandu, about 1' away from the former. It is supported with a medium size stone which is later removed when the loom is finally set up. Now the cotton warp thread is taken up. One end of the thread is knotted round the Suthupirimaram commencing from the left. The loose end is then passed through the hole in the Achu and looped over the Mun Dandu, brought back, again passed through the same hole in the Achu and looped round the Suthupirimaram adjacent to the first knot. The loose end of the looped cotton warp thread is again taken, passed through the second hole in the Achu and after looping it next to the first loop in the Mun Dandu is once again passed through the Achu and looped round the Suthupirimaram. This process goes on till the warp thread is completely looped round these two beams. The warp thread is laid out according to the size of the mat. Afterwards the weaver tightens the coir ropes wound round the iron pegs and Mun Dandu to provide necessary tension to the warp. The distance between the top and bottom rows varies between 2" to 3" according to the diameter of the beam. Now the Anai Kuzhal is inserted between the two rows of thread. The space between each longitudinal thread depends on the fineness of the mat. For a mat of 20 counts there will be 20 threads for every 9" and for a mat of 100 counts, 100 threads for 9" and so on. The weaver next fixes the tripod stand. The two bamboo legs of the Mukkali or tripod are placed at two sides of the warp in front of the Suthupirimaram and the Achu and the third leg is placed in the middle at a distance of 2½' from the other two legs. The Veludu Kambu is now suspended horizontally over the warp threads by means of ropes attached to the 'base' legs of the tripod. Cotton thread is wound over this Veludu

Kambu and the thread at the bottom row of the warp consecutively till the Mun Dandu is reached. The Midhi Pattai is now placed between the Anai Kuzhal and the Veludu Kambu and above the bottom warp threads. The loom is now ready for weaving. The weaver sits facing the Suthupirimaram. He faces in order the Suthupirimaram, Achu, Veludu Kambu, Anai Kuzhal and Mun Dandu.

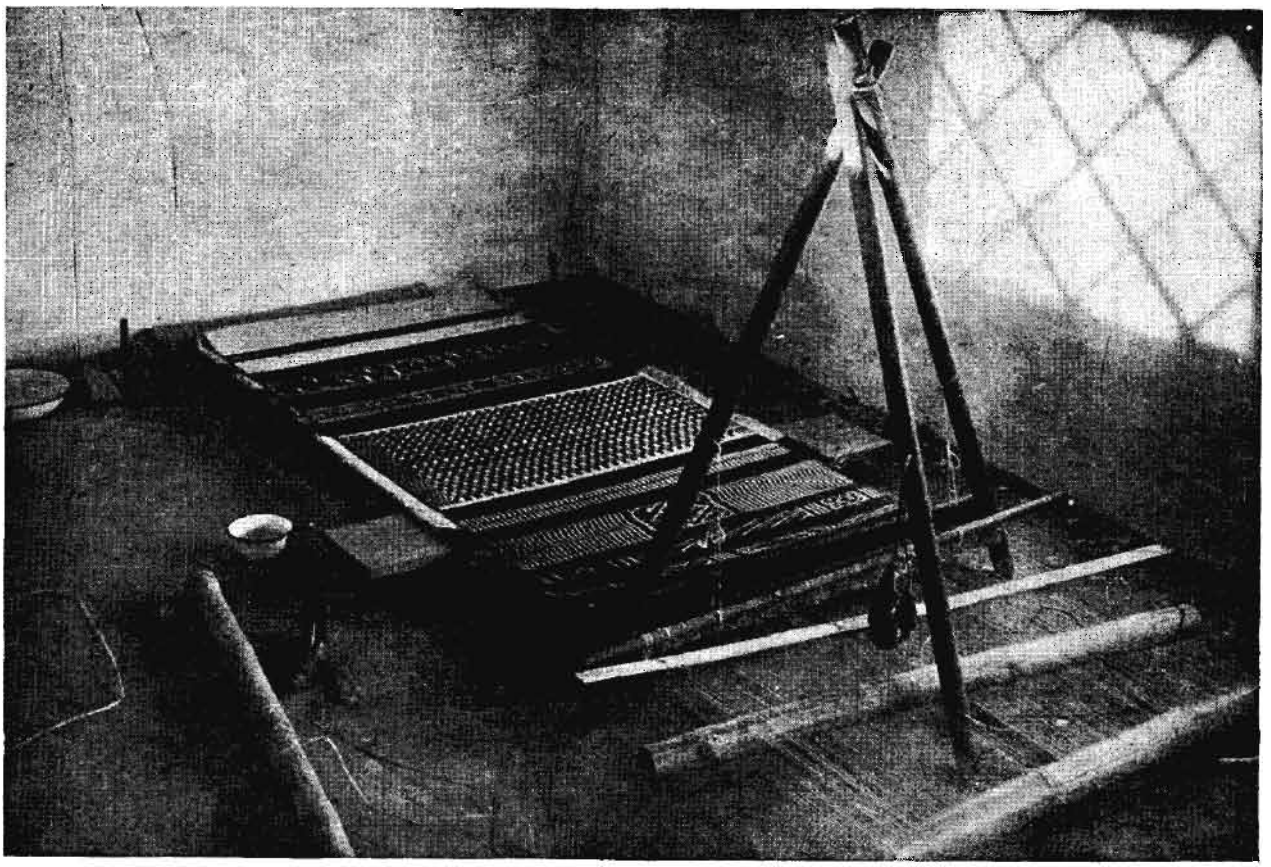
STAGE — VI

Weaving

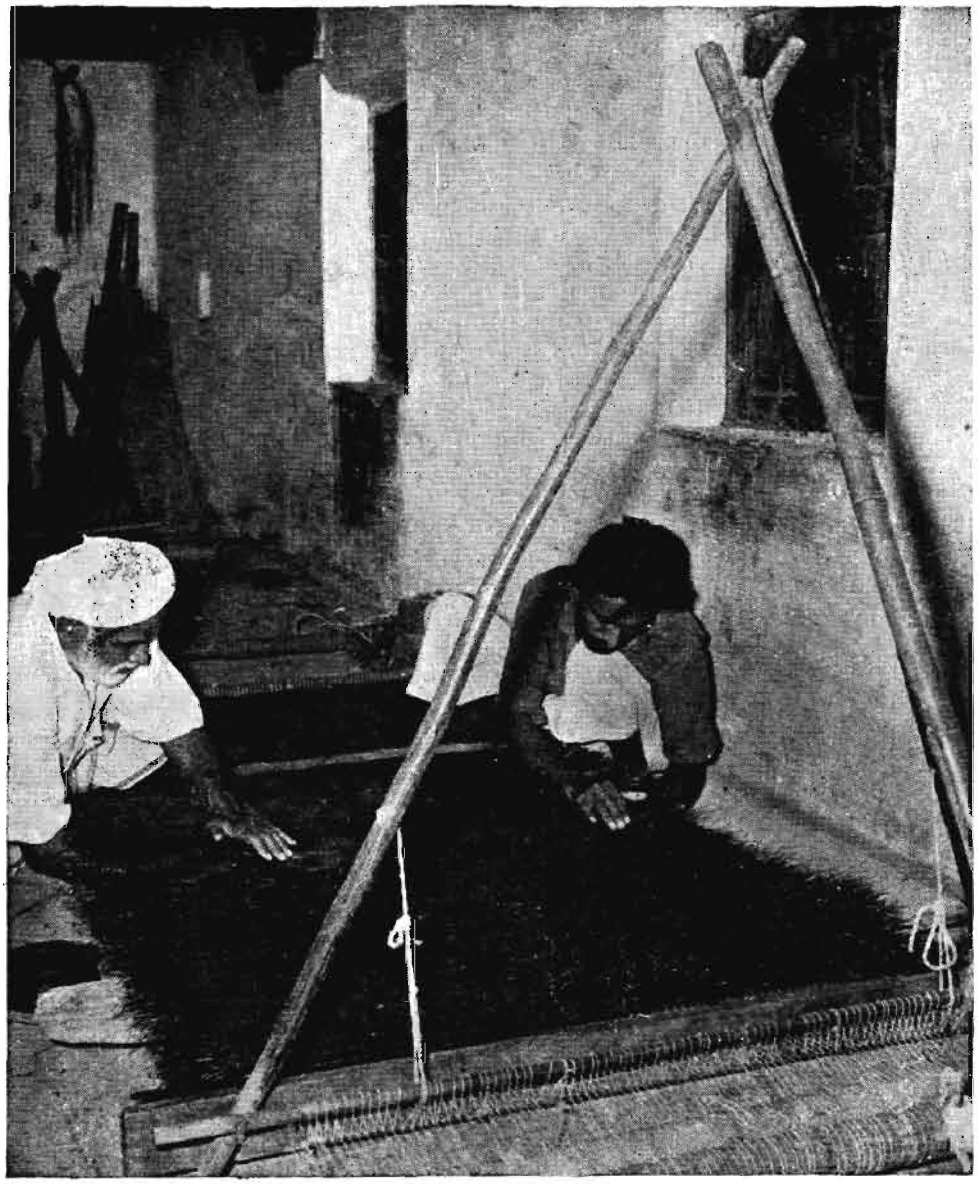
Weaving commences from where the warp threads are wound round the Suthupirimaram. The weaver's legs rest on the cotton pad hanging from the Mukali tripod bamboos. The warp threads pass beneath the sitting plank. As each weft is a separate strand, it is not possible to use a shuttle. The weft is, therefore, passed through the warp thread with the help of KUCHAALI, which is, as described earlier, shaped like the gigantic needle having an eye at one end through which the grass strands can be passed. Where the mat has a complicated design, 2 or three kuchaalis are used. Each korai grass strand is taken up by the weaver, dipped into a cup of water to make it soft and smooth. One end of this weft is inserted into the eye of the Kuchali and the latter is passed between the top and bottom rows of the warp and drawn through breadthwise. As soon as the needle reaches the other end of the warp the needle is removed retaining the weft korai in position. The ends of this korai is twisted with both hands and beaten into position by the reed. The weaver now pushes the Anai Kuzhal forwards from the Veludu Kambu and presses the Midhi Pattai with his leg. By this act the top rows of the warp threads come below the bottom rows i.e. the necessary shedding or cross is provided. The weaver takes another korai grass and dipping it in water inserts it into the eye of the Kuchaali and introduces the latter in between the warp threads. The weft retained is again twisted and beaten into position with the reed. The Anaikuzhal is now withdrawn back to its original position beside the Veludu Kambu and this results in the top and bottom rows of the warp thread attaining their original positions. Once again a weft is introduced and so the process continues. One more precaution is taken by the weaver to ensure uniformity in texture and weave. If in the first instance the tip of the korai is inserted into the eye of the Kuchaali for the second weft yarn the bottom end of the korai strand is inserted and so it goes on alternatively. As the mat is woven, the weaver moves slowly the sitting plank, the Achu, the tripod Midhi Pattais and Anai kuzhal towards the Mun Dandu till the mat is completed. The pressing of the Midhi Pattai is the work of women. Almost all the Lubbai women know weaving. Skilled weavers



Porcelain Cup



A finished Malaikulam mat with some initials on it.



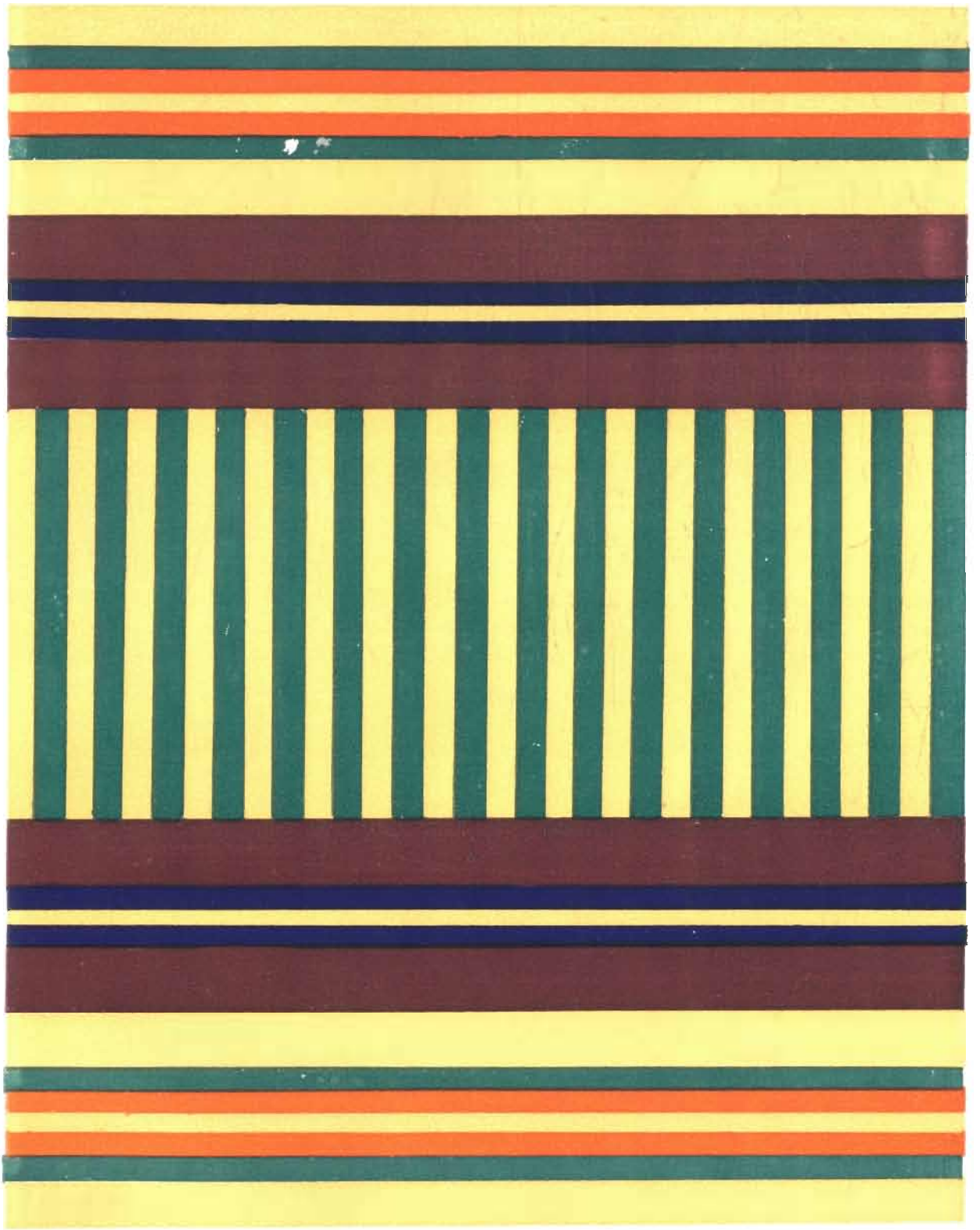
Two male members sit on either side of the mat, dip their hands in a bowl of water and tighten up the koral grass by applying full strength.



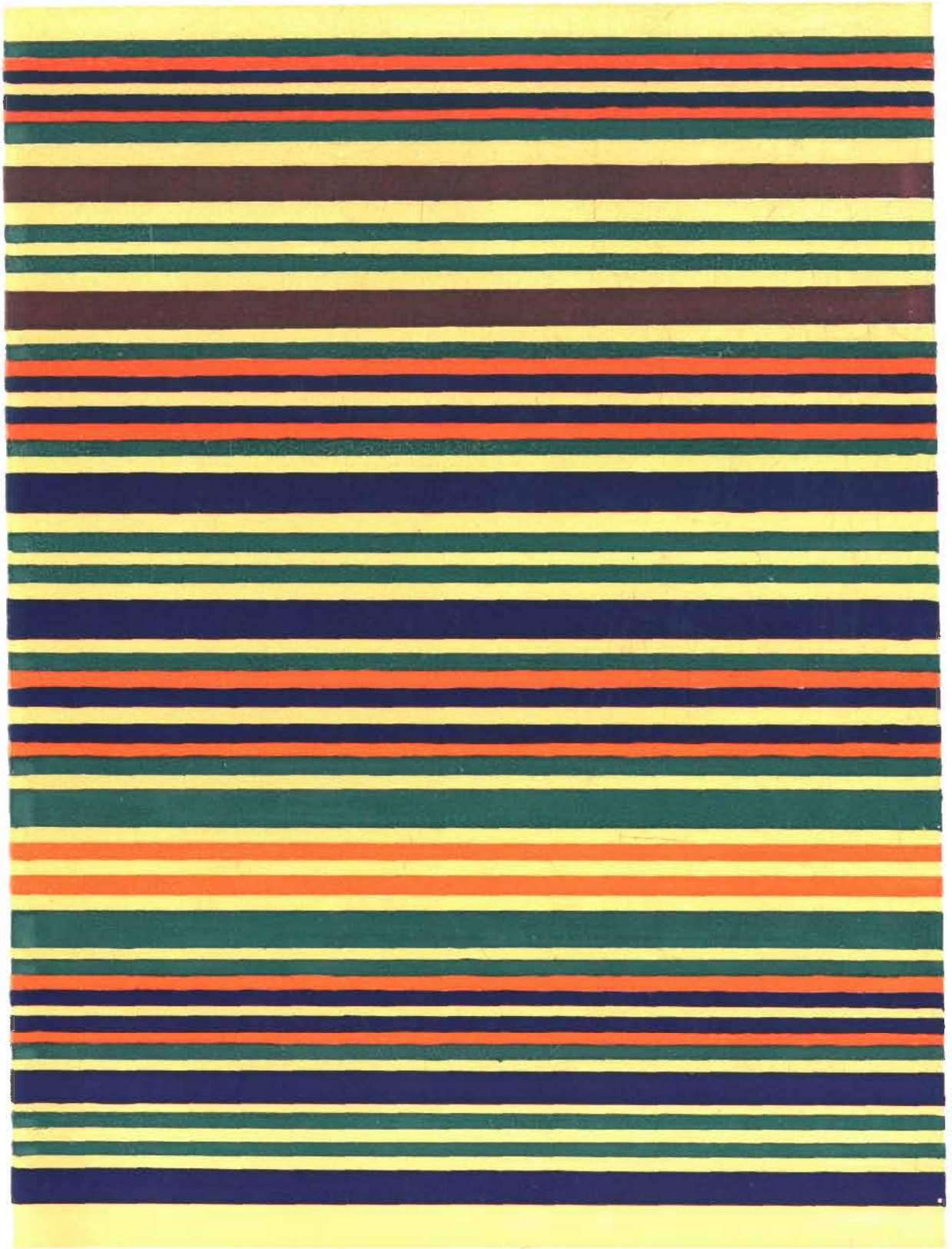
The weaver sits down with some colour threads to bind the edges. Three or four weft korai strands will be knotted and bound together. Another person with a knife is busy in cutting the edges.



This is the final stage. The mat is placed on a wooden plank and both the sides are polished with a smooth stone of $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. weight.



CHINTAMANI DESIGN



BHAVANI CARPET DESIGN

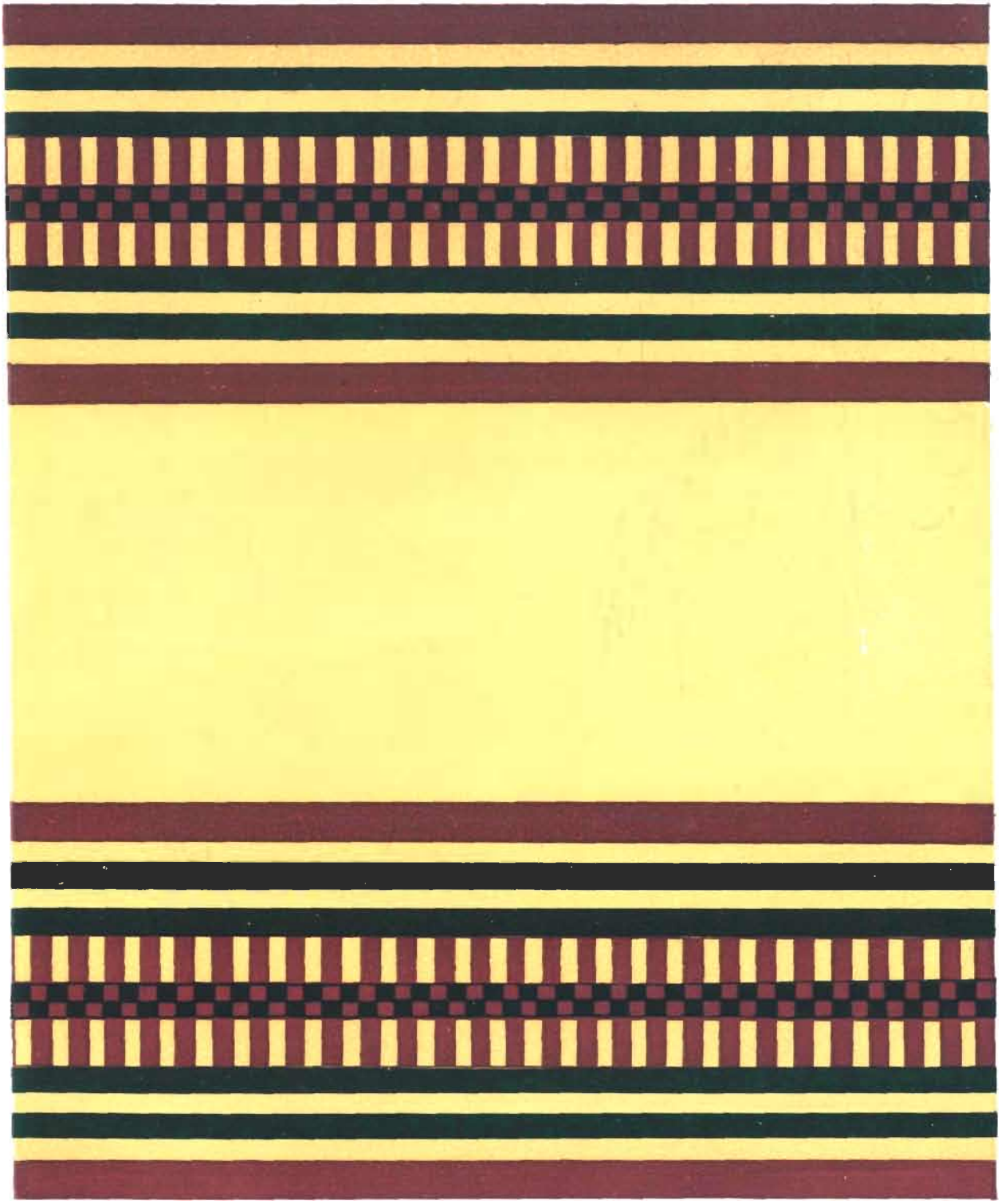


TABLE MAT

take over only where an intricate design has to be woven or lettering is to be done. In mats of higher counts, there is a certain limit beyond which the breadth of a mat cannot be extended. Not more than a 30" breadth can be woven, but in the case of counts below 80, a maximum of 48" can be woven. The breadth of a mat depends on the length of the korai grass. The Tambraparni korai grows up to a length of 3 feet and so 30" mats alone can be woven. In the case of Karur korai which grows upto a height of 5 ft., 48" mats can be woven. The length of the mat is normally 72". This is the standard size. However, lengths vary between 11" and 72". The fineness of the mat is estimated, as explained earlier, according to the number of longitudinal threads (KAN) used for a span width of warp, the figure varying from 20 to 40. The count 42 is generally considered to mark the dividing line between the ordinary and superior.

STAGE VII

Designs

Various designs are in vogue in Pattamadai, both among independent artisans and in the Cooperative Societies, depending on the type of articles to be produced whether they be ordinary mats, prayer mats, table mats, wall mats, bags, suit cases or ladies' hand bags. Names and letters are also woven on the mats used for table decoration or wall decoration with different colours, with silk thread or lace or korai grass. The women weavers are good at weaving ordinary designs but in the case of intricate designs, a few skilled men artisans take over. But the skilled weavers who can do lettering work are few in number, there being only 5 at Pattamadai. For many years, the weavers of Pattamadai were weaving designs in red, green and black. Now they are utilising a variety of colours. There are a few standard designs which go by the nomenclature Bhavani, Malaikulam, Prayer, Tajmahal, Gopuram, Carpet and Kutub-minar. The following is a brief description of designs :

Full White

This is a mat woven in higher counts. It possesses the natural colour of korai grass, having only two or three slender coloured lines on both sides dyed in fast colours. This is a mat to attract the eye of the discerning and the connoisseur. Its simple lines without frills make it graceful without a hint of gaudiness.

Bhavani

This design has been copied from the silk carpet produced in Bhavani of Coimbatore District. This consists of a number of colours resembling the solar spectrum and, if well finished it is difficult to distinguish it from a mat of cotton and silk. This mat enjoys an extensive demand within the country and abroad.

Malaikulam

The borders of the mat woven 6" above the ends are of plain white ; Below it, ordinary geometrical designs are woven. The middle of the carpet is woven with squares of different colours red, green, violet and orange.

Plain carpet design

This design is different from that described earlier. The borders are designed with light dots, diamond squares or cross hatches. The centre of the mat is decorated with floral designs. The colours may be of red, orange, green or blue.

Tajmahal

This design, though rare, is capable of being woven by one or two master craftsmen. It is in very great demand. All the colours, red, orange, violet, maroon, black and green are used in the weaving of this design. The borders are woven with plain bands of colours and in the middle the TAJMAHAL is woven. The slender minarets and the stately dome of the Tajmahal are faithfully reproduced in korai grass.

Gopuram

This is also a difficult and intricate design calling for extra-ordinary skill. This design is also the monopoly of one or two weavers in the village. The mat has only two colours, green and the natural colour of korai grass. The centre portion of the mat contains the design of the temple GOPURAM a difficult design to reproduce.

Weaving of letters

We now proceed to give a description of the weaving of some of the designs and letters on the mat. The usual procedure for weaving a design or a letter is as follows : At first the weaver weaves one foot of the mat in plain korai colour. Then he starts weaving the letters from the right to left. Before he could proceed on this difficult job some preliminary arrangements are made and each letter which has a fixed number of warp threads are calculated and arranged in mind. Following are the calculated letters with their fixed number of warp threads.

A	14	G	14	N	14	U	11
B	12	H	14	O	12	V	14
C	11	I	4	P	14	W	21
D	12	J	14	Q	18	X	18
E	14	K	15	R	14	Y	14
F	14	L	14	S	11	Z	26
		M	16	T	14		

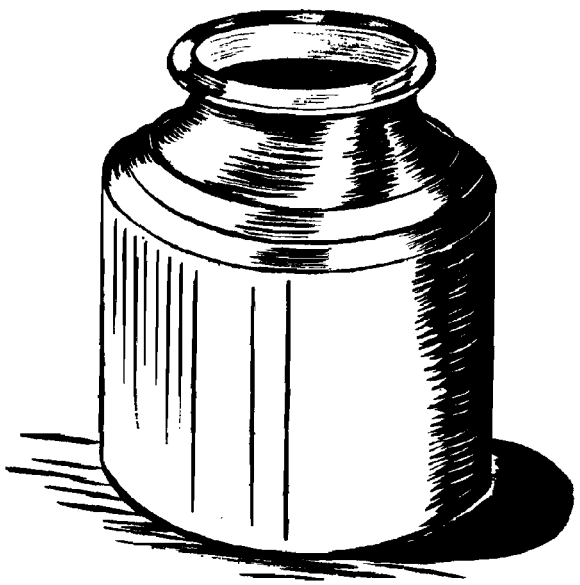
Suppose the weaver has to weave the word "WELCOME" on a 100 count mat, some threads on the side are left out and so at both sides of the mat 5 warp threads are left out. There are normally 330 warp threads on the loom. The total number of warp threads to be utilised for "WELCOME" to be woven will then be 102 according to the table given above. For each letter 2 threads have again to be left out in between and so 12 threads have thus to be left out. Thus the total number of threads to be left out will be 114 (102 plus 12). If we include the 5 threads to be left out on either side, the total will then be 124. Thus the number of warp threads to be utilised in weaving leaving out the 124 warp threads will be 206 i.e. 330 minus 124. These 206 threads are divided into two equal parts at the centre. After making a preliminary calculation the weaver sits on the wooden plank and commences weaving. By his side, he has two or three

kuchaalis to be utilised at different stages. He starts by leaving out 103 warp threads, takes up 21 threads for "W", the first letter and pierces the Kuchaali behind the Achu. The weaver takes up the weft thread, depending on whether silk or lace or korai is to be utilised as weft thread, and passes it through the warp thread by means of the kuchaali. The process of weaving is the same for the other letters. A formula exists for calculating the number of warp threads to be utilised for other designs ; to quote a few examples for a diamond design 11 warp threads have to be left out; for a star design, 27 warp threads ; for rectangular design, 40 warp threads ; for Chettai, 7 warp threads and so on. For weaving designs, the weaver uses more than one Kuchaali. If korai is to be used in different colours, 2 strands of korai of different colours, white and green are passed inside the warp thread with the help of the Kuchaali. Then green korai is passed as weft inside the warp thread and the white korai placed underneath it. Thus the weaving of letters commences.

STAGE VIII

Tightening the weft

After the weaver has woven a few inches of the mat, he has to undertake what is known as "tightening the weft". This has to be done only by male members as it requires a lot of stamina and physical endurance. This process provides closeness of texture as the korai grass used during weaving is wet and shrinks when it dries. To avoid gaps in texture, as soon as weaving has been done upto 6" or so, the weft will have to be tightened. Two people are required for this process. They sit on either side of the mat, dip their hands in a bowl of water and placing one hand palm upwards under the mat and the other hand palm downwards above the mat by exerting full strength and utmost pressure, they rub on the surface of the woven piece so that the weft strands come in close juxtaposition to one another, thus ensuring that there is no discernible gap in the texture. To the uninitiated, this may appear to be an easy process. But from the rough palms of the weavers and from their statements it would be gathered that this is one of the most difficult processes in the entire weaving operations. While tightening the weft, care has to be taken to ensure that the cotton threads of 80 to 100 counts which have been used as warp do not get loose or break off.



Tightening Tool—Metal Vessel

Before tightening the edges, the loose fringes of the korai mat will have to be twisted and the korai strands knotted together. Thus in a span of 9", there will be a knot for every 50 strands in 100 counts, 60 strands in 120 counts and 70 strands in 140 counts.

STAGE IX

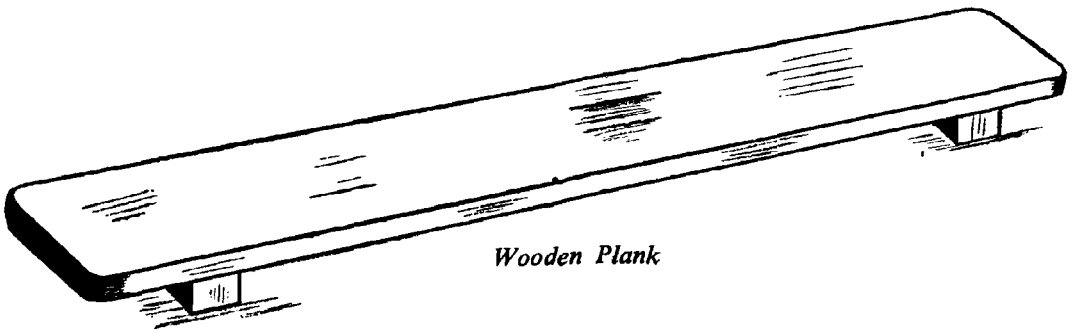
Binding the edges

After tightening the weft on the loom, the mat is removed from the loom as follows: The tripod including the Veludu Kambu, Midhi Pattai and Anai kuzhal are removed. The warp cotton threads are cut at a distance of 3" from the last weft and every thread of the top warp is tied to the bottom thread with the knot close to the last weft. Afterwards the ropes with which the warp is attached to the Suthupirimaram is loosened and the mat removed from the loom. Afterwards the weaver sits down with some colour thread to bind the edges. This is a simple but time-consuming process and it takes one man almost a day to bind the edges of a mat of more than 100 counts. The weaver commences the work from the bottom and works his way upwards. Both sides of the mat are rubbed with water and with the help of white or red thread, three or four weft korai strands will be knotted and bound together. After the binding has been completed, the edges are cut with the help of a semi-sharpened knife: the knife should not be too sharp lest it cut the texture of the mat. This work is done by both the sexes. The four corners of the mat are then tied with red thread to which coloured tassels are attached. This is more a decorative piece of work.

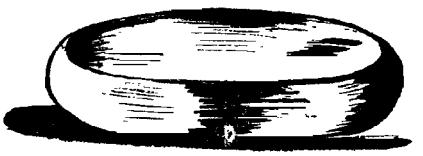
STAGE X

Polishing

This is the final stage in the weaving of Pattamadai mat. After the edges of the mat have been bound, it is placed on a wooden plank 4 feet in length and the weaver polishes both the surfaces of the mat with a polishing stone ½ lb. in weight. The stone used is a pumice stone with a smooth surface. The stone is taken in the right hand and rubbed slowly and steadily over the surface of the mat. For a mat of 120 counts the polishing takes nearly one hour.



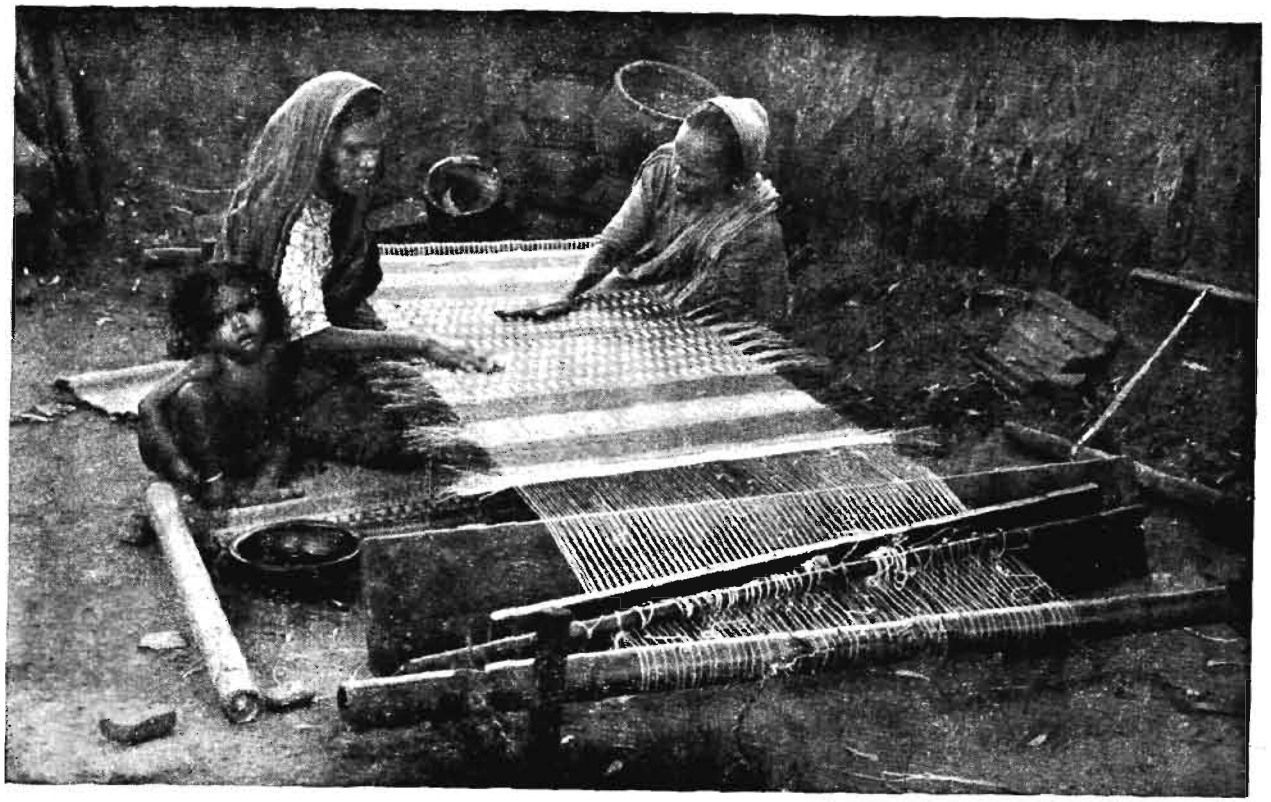
Wooden Plank



Polishing Stone



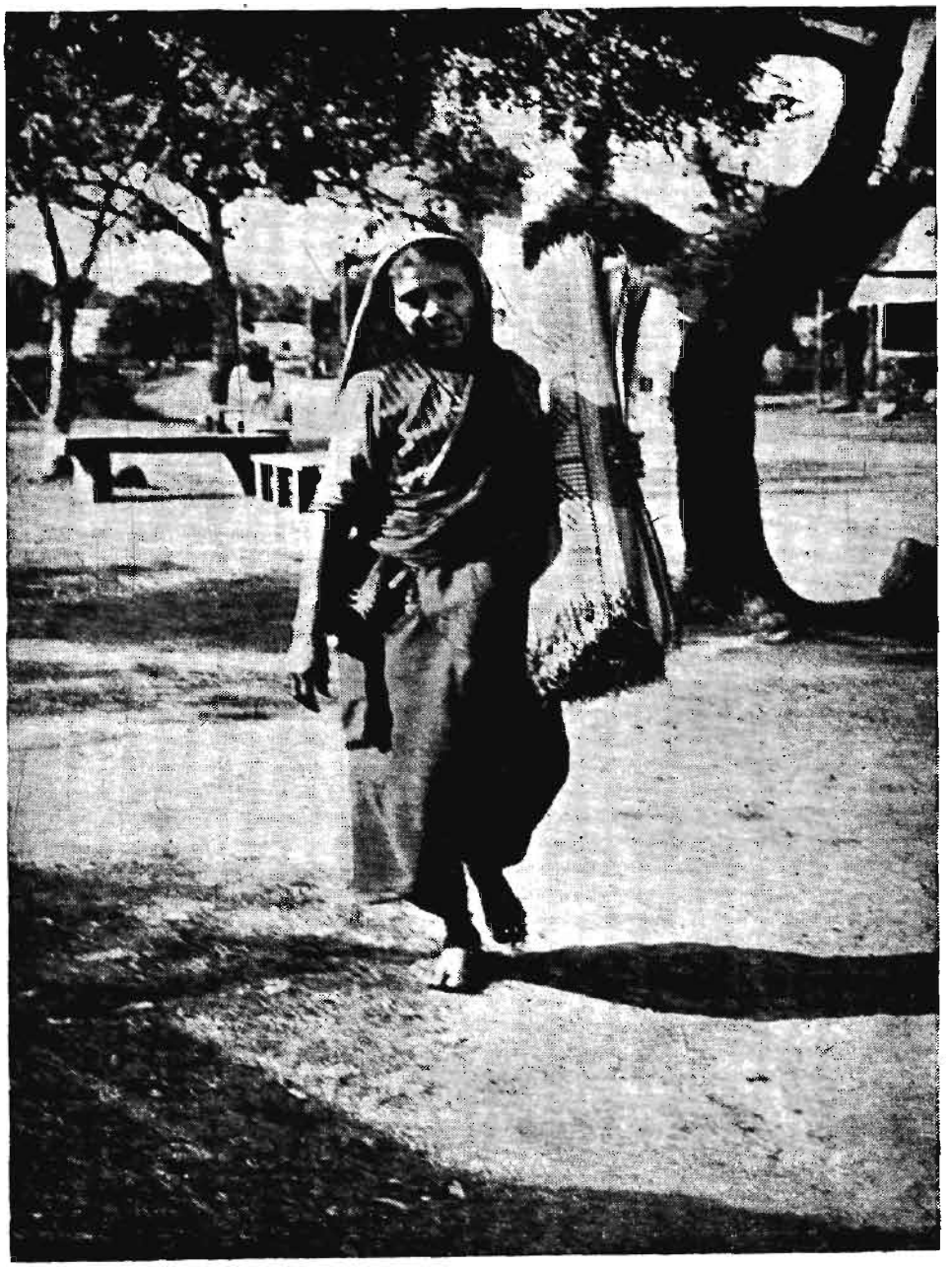
This simple process of dyeing is attended to by a middle-aged Rowther woman. After constant stirring for ten minutes, the pot is allowed to cool and the Korai strands are taken out to be hung for drying.



Tightening the weft does not call for extra-ordinary skill or physical labour.
Even women perform this operation and no wages are paid for it.



For medium-count mat binding the edges is a minor item which can be finished in no time.



An old lady after labouring hard for nearly five days to earn a meagre sum of Rs. 3/- proceeds with a finished mat to the Co-operative Society.

Thus since the receipt of the raw material, it takes a weaver of Pattamadai nearly 20 days for weaving a mat of over 100 counts.

MANUFACTURE OF HAND BAGS AND PURSES

This was introduced and encouraged by the All India Handicrafts Board which selected two prominent weavers from Pattamadai and imparted to them training in the manufacture of fine articles with the help of korai grass on sewing machines. The demand for these products exceeded all expectations and hence the Pattamadai Fine Mat Weavers' Cooperative Society approached the All India Handicrafts Board to assist them in training some more weavers. This request was complied with and four weavers from Pattamadai were sent to Delhi to be trained in the weaving of fancy articles. The Industries Department of Tirunelveli came to know about this development and to encourage the manufacture of these articles sold 2 sewing machines to the Cooperative Society at half Pattamadai and demand collected in instalments.

Purses

Without using card board as stiffener, purses can be manufactured in different sizes. The raw materials required are a piece of cloth, a fine mat woven by the weaver and rexine. These are taken and separately spread on a Cuddapah stone slab, rubbed with rubber solution and allowed to dry for 15 minutes. Designs are drawn and cut on card board conforming to the size of the article to be produced and designed. Three pieces of rexine are taken and rubber solution applied on both sides. Normally, one gallon of solution costs Rs. 5.10 nP. This solution will be sufficient for the manufacture of 18 small purses or 12 medium sized purses. After this stage, a piece of cloth on which the solution has been applied is attached to the mat and placed on the card board on which the design has been drawn. A sharp knife is taken and the mat is cut conforming to the design drawn on the card board. Once again rubber solution is applied over the outer surface of this mat to which the cloth has been pasted and allowed to dry. The Rexine piece which has been treated with rubber solution and allowed to dry is again cut according to the design on the card board and pasted firmly over the cloth and mat. It is tapped gently with a hammer.

During the next stage rexine is taken and cut lengthwise and stitched on the special type of sewing machine with the thread of the same colour as the mat. This lengthwise strip is taken and stitched to the first piece prepared and kept ready. The inner receptacle of the purse to hold coins and notes is then prepared in a similar manner with the help of the rexine and Pattamadai mat and stitched on to the outer piece already prepared. The corners are now folded together like a purse, stitched and tapped firmly with a hammer. For fixing a press button, a hole is made both at the top as well as at the bottom. The two parts of the press button are now embedded in position. The purse is ready for sale.

Ladies hand bag

Since there are a number of designs current at Pattamadai, the required design is cut on a card board. If the bag requires a stiffener, a double thick card board is taken and rubber solution applied to it. After the card board is cut to the required size, a plain piece of cloth is cut and pasted on this card board with rubber solution. On top of it, a piece of fine mat is pasted and the sides trimmed to the required shape with the help of a sharp knife. On the

inner side of the card board, rubber solution is again applied, rexine, leather, silk or velvet, depending on requirements, is pasted over it and this is allowed to dry for a few minutes. It is now folded and stitched on the sewing machine. The lining alone will be in leather or rexine to enhance the appearance and value of the hand bag. The strap and fastener are prepared and stitched on to the hand bag.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMICS OF PRODUCTION

For many years, the mat weavers of Pattamadai have been producing mats of high counts; but with the sudden rise in the price of raw materials, the non-availability of raw materials to feed the needs of handicraft, the change in public taste and the uncertain demand for the products coupled with the time consumed in the manufacture of high count mats which is not commensurate with the return obtained has forced many of the mat weavers to take up the production of medium quality mats of lower counts with korai grass imported from Karur taluk to supplement their income. This grass is quite unsuited for the manufacture of high count mats and, therefore, more and more weavers have taken to the weaving of medium count mats. Further, the prohibitive cost of the Pattamadai fine mats take it beyond the pale of the ordinary and they are bought only by those who can afford to have artistic objects in their homes and have expensive tastes. For ordinary day to day life and to the poor who form the bulk of the population, these fine mats are well beyond their means to purchase and so their demand is limited to medium count mats which may be used as floor mats for sleeping. Therefore, the mat weavers of Pattamadai have switched over part of their production to weaving of medium count mats. Though the margin of profit for medium count mats is lower compared to fine mats, still artisans of Pattamadai, including the members of the Cooperative Society, derive the major portion of their income from the sale of medium quality mats. The following is the statement of marginal profit for mats of different counts and sizes :—

Count	Size	Cost price	Fixed sale price	Marginal profit
		Rs. nP.	Rs. nP.	Rs. nP.
40	11" x 17"	0 76	0 88	0 12
	36" x 72"	6 49	7 50	1 01
50	11" x 17"	0 81	1 00	0 19
	36" x 72"	7 43	10 ...	2 57
100	11" x 17"	2 30	2 75	0 45
	30" x 72"	15 76	19 12	3 36
120	11" x 17"	2 79	3 62	0 83
	30" x 72"	17 87	28 75	6 88
140	11" x 17"	3 62	5 87	2 20
	30" x 72"	26 49	37 12	10 63

The following statement also indicates the cost price, sale price and marginal profit for the manufacture of purses and hand-bags.

Name of the fancy article	Size	Card Board	Rexine	Cloth and thread	Fine mat	Solution	Button	Wages	Total	Sale price	Profit
Purse	2½" x 4"	...	12 nP	6 nP	31 nP	12 nP	37 nP	12 nP	Rs. 1.12	Rs. 1.37	25 nP
Hand Bag	11" x 7"	25 nP	Rs. 2/-	25 nP	Rs. 3.50	50 nP	50 nP	Rs. 3/-	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 13/-	Rs. 3/-

The following table indicates the total production and sales of mats in the village of Pattamadai for the year ending 61-62 both of fine mats and medium quality mats. It will also indicate the shift from the production of fine mats towards production of medium quality mats:

Note: This table will not tally with the table on marginal profit given below as the society has calculated the profit taking into account all the sizes in each count whereas in the former the marginal profit was calculated only for two sizes.

Production 1961-62 including small mats as well as big size			**Sales 1961-62 including small mats as well as big size**		
Count	Total mats produced	Value Rs. nP	Total sale of the mats	Value Rs. nP	Mats yet to be sold
140	200	2,603.58	142	2,465.36	58
120	36	818.18	29	823.30	7
100	2,043	14,086.41	1,310	11,982.53	733
50	811	2,849.40	721	4,380.65	90
40	5,466	15,037.67	4,523	12,914.71	943

The above figures indicate that during the year 1961-62, 2279 fine mats were produced in the village compared to 6227 of medium quality. The number of medium quality mats produced was nearly 3 times that of fine mats. The sales figures also indicate that more medium quality mats were sold compared to fine mats. The following table would indicate the total production and sale of mats of all sizes and counts during the year 1958-63.

Year	Production of mats including all sizes	Value	Sales of mates including all sizes	Value (profit included)	Gross Profit
		Rs. nP.		Rs. nP.	Rs. nP.
1958–59	9413	28,186.46	9157	22,146.36	4,959.90
1959–60	7838	29,330.57	7164	32,587.82	3,257.25
1960–61	7211	30,643.07	7065	34,751.25	4,108.18
1961–62	8556	36,395.24	6725	32,566.55	3,828.69

This statement indicates that production was at its highest in the year 1958–59 and sales were also commensurate with production and there was a net profit of nearly Rs. 5,000/- the highest during the last five years. Production dropped by 17% in the year 1959–60 and the sales also

dropped to a lower figure. The net profit earned also fell by as much as 34% during this year. The decline continued in the year 1960-61 and production reached its lowest water mark but the net profit earned increased to Rs. 4,110/- i.e., a spurt of nearly 28%. Production again increased in 61-62 by 18% but also dropped down considerably and the total profit earned also fell by about 8%. Since all the persons engaged in the production of fine mats are members of the Co-operative Society figures relating to the production and sale in the Co-operative Society have been furnished. The Co-operative Society which has a shop at Courtallam is able to dispose of a major portion of the stock during the Courtallam season which starts in the middle of June and lasts till September. On an average, every year, it is able to market Rs. 5,000 worth of goods. Purses, Ladies' Hand Bags and other fancy articles are also manufactured during the season. In the year 1961-62, the Society, however, had to face stiff competition in the matter of sale of medium quality mats from the Veeravanallur Mat Weavers' Cooperative Society which displayed their goods for the first time during that year at Courtallam.

The demand for these products is also great during festival and marriage seasons. The majority of the buyers, according to the weavers of Pattamadai, are Hindus especially Brahmins.

Wage Structure

The worker normally takes 20 to 22 days to weave a fine mat of 140 counts super fine, 14 to 16 days for 120 counts, 10 to 12 days for 100 counts, and 5 to 7 days for 50 and 40 counts. Thus it is seen that roughly one fine mat and one medium quality mat can normally be woven in one month by a weaver. The average price of a fine mat 6' x 3' ranges between Rs. 10 and 39, a few rupees more being added for any special design. Thus it is seen that a weaver can hardly get Rs. 40/- per month. For these two mats, the members of the family have to join together to work and earn this meagre amount. The cause for this is inherent in the very nature of the craft which requires the laborious processing of the raw material preparatory to weaving and the arduous manual labour involved in the weaving. Thus in spite of exquisite craftsmanship, the income earned is not commensurate with the craftsmanship involved. Women members dominate in weaving, while the other processes are taken over by the menfolk. In spite of the meagre wages and apparent poverty, the Lubbais, as a rule, are united and wages are based on mutual understanding. The following table indicates the wages for splitting the korai grass.

Count	Size (inches)	Wages for splitting Rs. nP.
40	11 x 17	0 12
	18 x 24	0 19
	30 x 72	0 75
	36 x 72	1 25
	39 x 72	1 25
50	11 x 17	0 12
	18 x 24	0 37
	30 x 72	1 00
	36 x 72	1 25

100	11 x 17	0 37
	24 x 50	3 50
	30 x 72	3 50
120	11 x 17	0 50
	30 x 72	4 00
140	11 x 17	0 75
	30 x 72	6 00

The wages are the same for weaving per day. The following tables indicate the wages for binding edges and for polishing :

WAGES FOR BINDING THE EDGES & POLISHING
(Per Mat)

Counts	Sizes	Wages	Time
100	30″ x 72″	0.75 nP.	3 hrs.
120	30″ x 72″	1.12 nP.	5 hrs.
140	30″ x 72″	1.50 nP.	8 hrs.

The following indicates the wages per mat for the various operations connected with fine mat weaving, depending on the quality of the mat : —

	Various Processes	Size	Counts 40	50	Size	Counts 100	120	140
1	Splitting the korai grass	36″ x 72″	1.25	1.25	30″ x 72″	3.50	4.00	6.00
2	Twisting the warp yarn	,,	0.19	0.25	,,	0.45	0.50	0.62
3	Weaving	,,	1.25	1.25	,,	3.50	4.00	6.00
4	Binding the edges	,,	0.19	0.25	,,	0.50	0.75	1.00
5	Tightening the weft	,,	1.25	1.25	,,	3.50	4.00	6.00
6	Polishing	,,	0.12	0.19	,,	0.25	0.37	0.50

Let not the reader be carried away by the impression that the income earned by the average weaver is an economic one. Firstly, for splitting the korai grass, it takes nearly a week to earn Rs. 6/-. The average wage if he works 6 to 8 hrs. per day will be only about 50 nP. Twisting of warp yarn is done by both sexes, though mainly by women, and the rate varies from 0.19 nP to Rs. 0.62 nP. depending on the count of mat to be woven. On an average, they earn 25 to 37 nP. a day. The wage for weaving is the same as for splitting the korai grass and the wages for tightening the weft is the same as for weaving. These processes are complementary to each other. Only in rare cases, we came across men as well as women working on daily wages, as all members have their own looms in their houses. It is only when difficult designs and letters have

to be woven that the services of a skilled artisan are called for. The skilled artisans may earn Rs. 20/- to Rs. 30/- more than their fellow artisans. For ordinary items of work, mutual help is solicited but the payment is made in the shape of a cup of tea. Wages for binding the edges vary from 19 nP. to Re. 1/- and on an average the weaver gets 37 nP. per day. Lastly, polishing which does not call for any special skill but only physical labour is generally performed by male members and the wages vary from 12 nP. to 50 nP. On an average, the weaver gets 25 nP. per day. Thus spread throughout the month, the weaver gets on an average only Rs. 30/- and a skilled artisan gets Rs. 60/-. The following table indicates the monthly average income of some of the artisans pursuing different avocations in Pattamadai village.

Artisan	Monthly average income
Fine mat weavers	Rs. 30/-
Medium quality mat weavers	Rs. 45/-
Handloom weaver.	Rs. 45/-
Carpenter.	Rs. 60/-
Potter.	Rs. 40/-

It is thus seen that the plight of the fine mat weaver is indeed pitiable. Generally, the mat weaver is economically worse off compared to artisans employed in other occupations. But as between a fine mat weaver and the weaver of a medium quality mat, the fine mat weaver's position is worse and his skill does not fetch him even a subsistence wage. It is only the creative genius in him and the will to survive which is keeping him in the pursuit of this specialised craft or else he might have foresaken it for some other lucrative profession long ago.

The cost of initial equipment is not considerable and is within the reach of any mat weaver. A wooden loom, a knife, a plank, a dish, a charka and a vessel for dyeing can all be purchased within the village on a total outlay of Rs. 50/-.

The economic condition of the Pattamadai weaver is deplorable. The enclosed photographs of their huts will give the reader an idea into their living conditions. Many of their huts were in a dilapidated condition with the thatched roof leaking, mud walls having crumbled away with hardly adequate space for a family of three to live in. In spite of these difficulties it is surprising to note that many of the weavers have not switched over to other occupations. If at all they have, it is the switch-over from production of fine mats to that of medium quality mats. This will be apparent from the age structure of the mat weavers in the village.

Age group	**Mat weavers**
5 — 10	9
11 — 15	21
16 — 20	29
21 — 25	28
26 — 30	13
31 — 35	13
36 — 40	40
41 — 45	17
46 — 50	8
51 — 55	7
56 — 60	6
61 — 65	5
66 — 70	5
70 — 75	2

There are as many as 59 people engaged in mat weaving between the ages 5-20 ; between the ages 21-40, there are 94 persons. Thus it is apparent that necessary enthusiasm and skill is there; but what is required to stabilise this craft will be a better market for the products.

Training of Artisans

This is a craft calling for hereditary skill and it still remains the monopoly of the Lubbai community. It is interesting to note that whereas in certain other crafts like Pottery, manufacture of Palm Leaf Articles and silk and cotton weaving, the monopoly of a particular community like that of the Kumbhars or Velars for pottery, the Muslims for palm leaf products, the Sengunthars, Pattusaliyars and Sowrashtras for silk weaving, has been destroyed by artisans from other communities learning the techniques of the craft and making serious inroads into the hitherto privilege of these select communities, in fine mat-weaving alone nobody has ever attempted to break into the monopoly of Lubbai Muslims. This may at first sight seem paradoxical, for, if the difficult crafts like pottery and silk weaving could be learnt by non-hereditary communities, why not mat weaving ? Are the techniques of this craft so difficult to master that it still remains the hereditary monopoly of the Lubbais? The answers to these questions are in the negative. It is true that this craft calls for a high order of skill, but does not need any initial equipment. And by constant application and practice under good artisans, one can master this craft. The reason then is not so much the hereditary monopoly but the incentive of workers to pursue this craft. Even the master craftsmen who are at present engaged in the manufacture of fine mats are finding it extremely difficult to make both ends meet. They have themselves switched over to the production of medium quality mats. Such being the case, it is not to be wondered that members of other communities have not thought it either lucrative or necessary to master this craft and take to this avocation. Further the return is not commensurate with the labour involved. This is the main reason why Fine mat-weaving continues to remain the monopoly of the Lubbai Muslims of Pattamadai throughout the centuries.

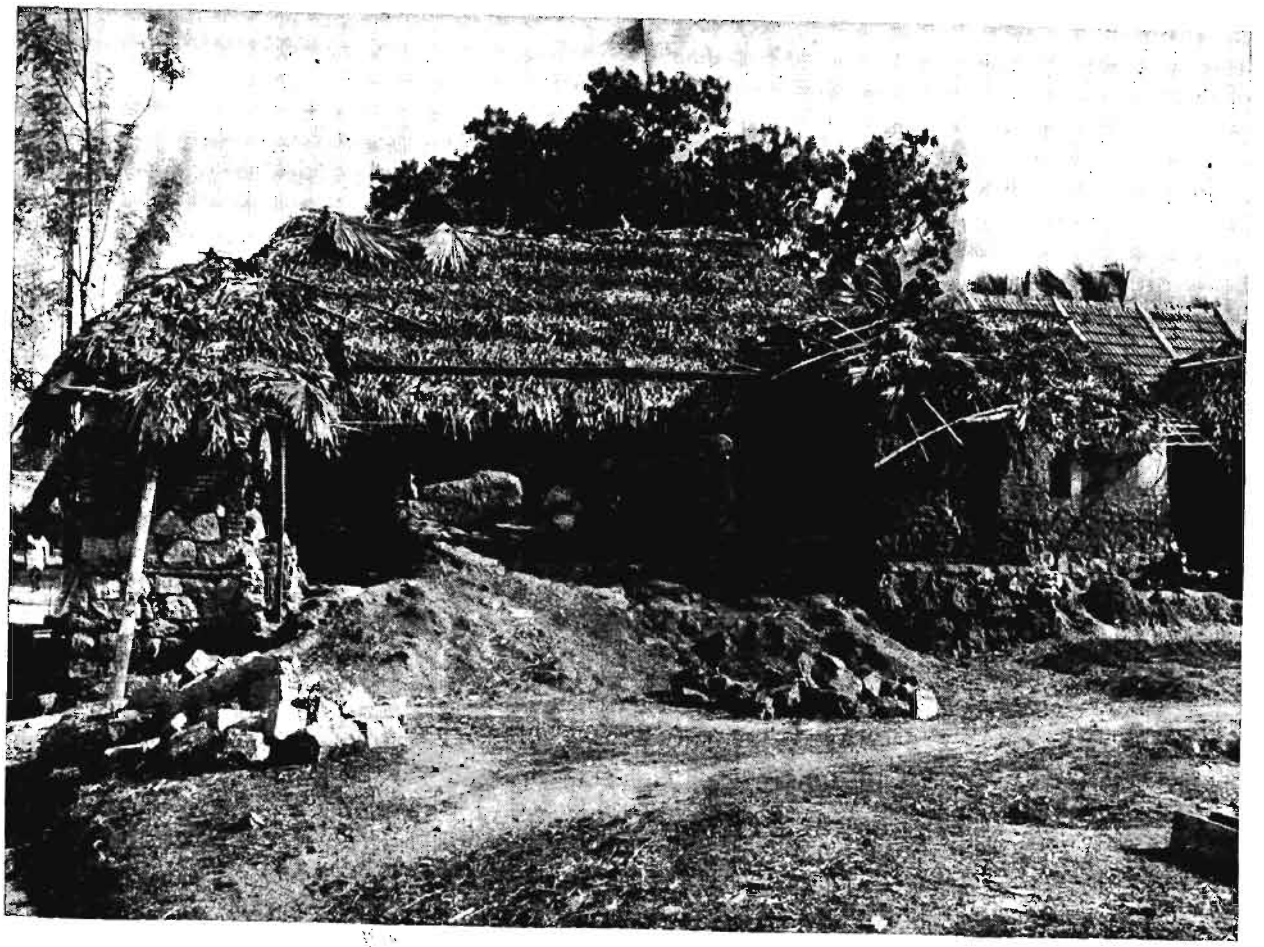
Medium quality mats are, however, woven by members of various communities including Lubbais, Rowthers, Vedakaras and Chettiars etc. Training for this craft is always imparted at a very young age, the son or the daughter sitting by the side of the father or the mother and cleverly following the deft movements of the fingers, taking up the preparatory process at the beginning and by gradual process of apprenticeship learning the rudiments of the craft until he or she is able to take the place of his or her father or mother at the loom. So much for traditional training. As regards specific training to be imparted in the finer techniques of the craft, the All India Handicrafts Board and the Departments of Industries and Commerce of the State Government have done much to foster new techniques of production and evolve better designs so as to increase marketing and export potential. The All India Handicrafts Board has given financial assistance of Rs. 5,000/-, the State Government Rs. 7,000/- and the Lubbais Muslims Union Rs. 900/- to form the Pattamadai Fine Mat Weavers Cooperative Society in 1954.

Realising the fact that the future growth of any craft lies on the young shoulders, the Madras Government came forward and sanctioned Rs. 13,600 for training the artisan in Fine mat weaving specially to train them in weaving names and designs on the fine mats.

Rs. 2,500 has been spent for constructing the training shed and the balance of Rs. 11,100 will be spent on the following.



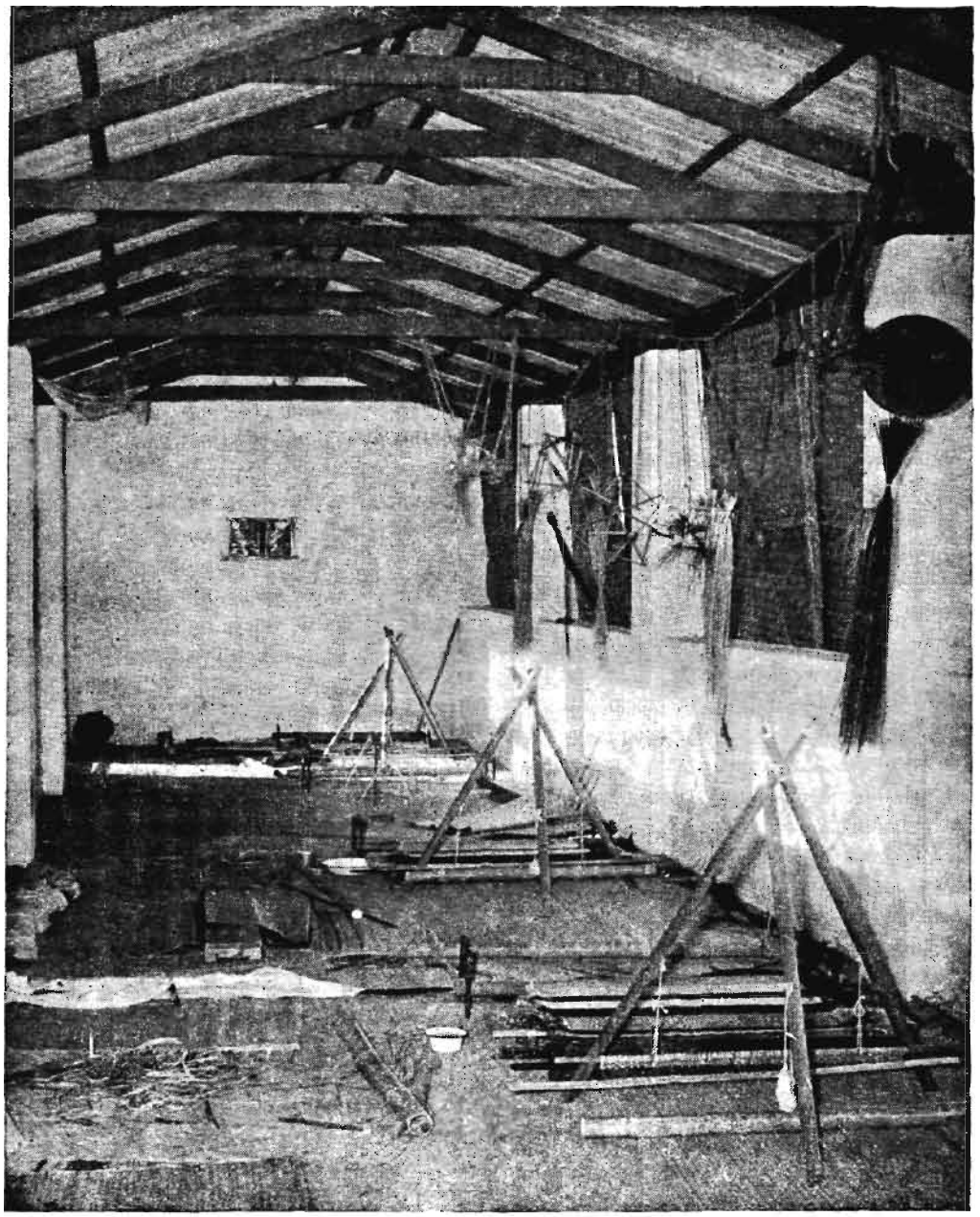
It is only the creative genius in these ladies and the will power to survive which is keeping them attached to their craft.



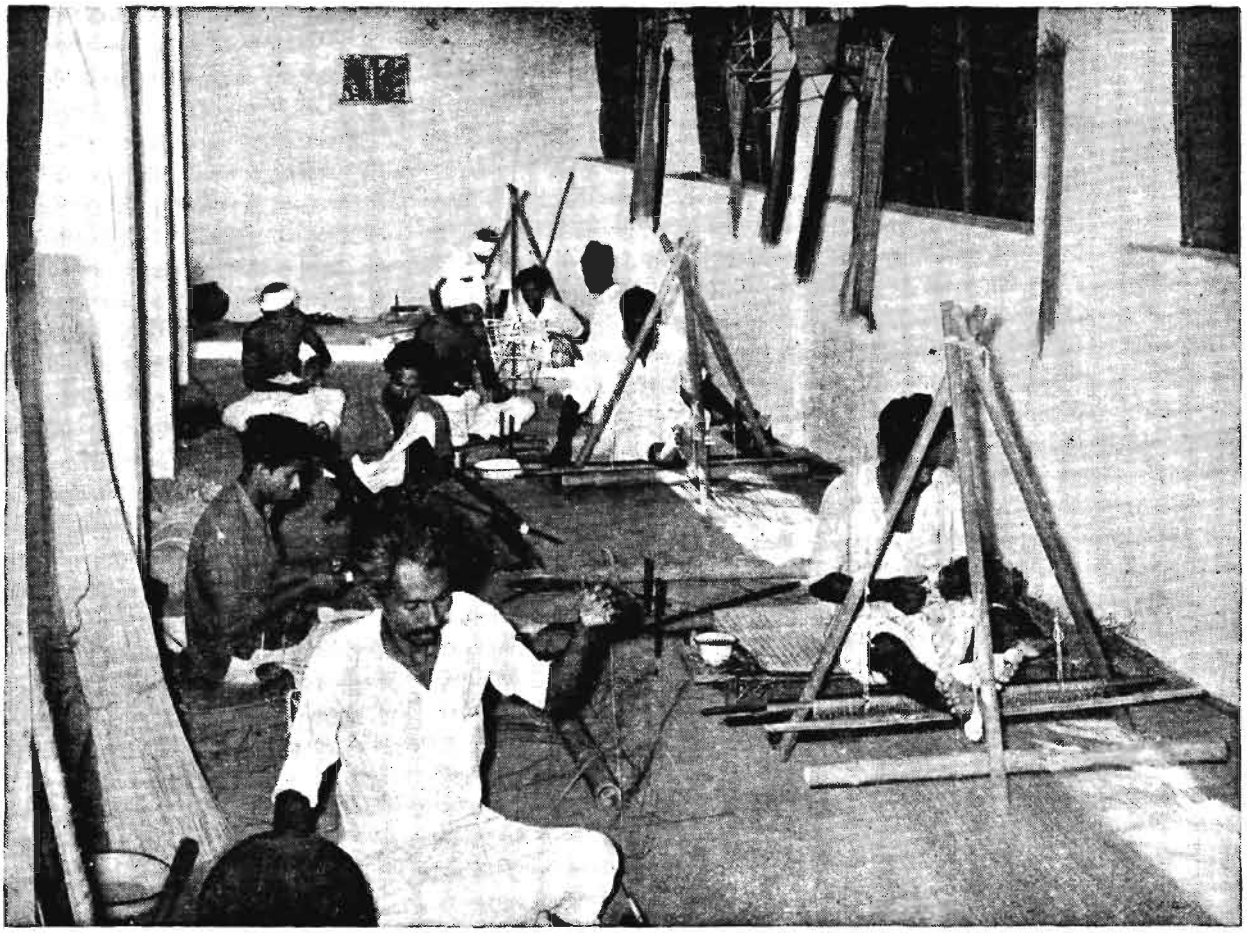
This deplorable house, with thatched roof leaking, mud walls having crumbled to pieces is none other than the house of the Secretary of the Pattamadai Fine Mat Weavers' Co-operative Society.



Another pitiable half tiled and half thatched house of
a fine mat weaver of Pattamadai.



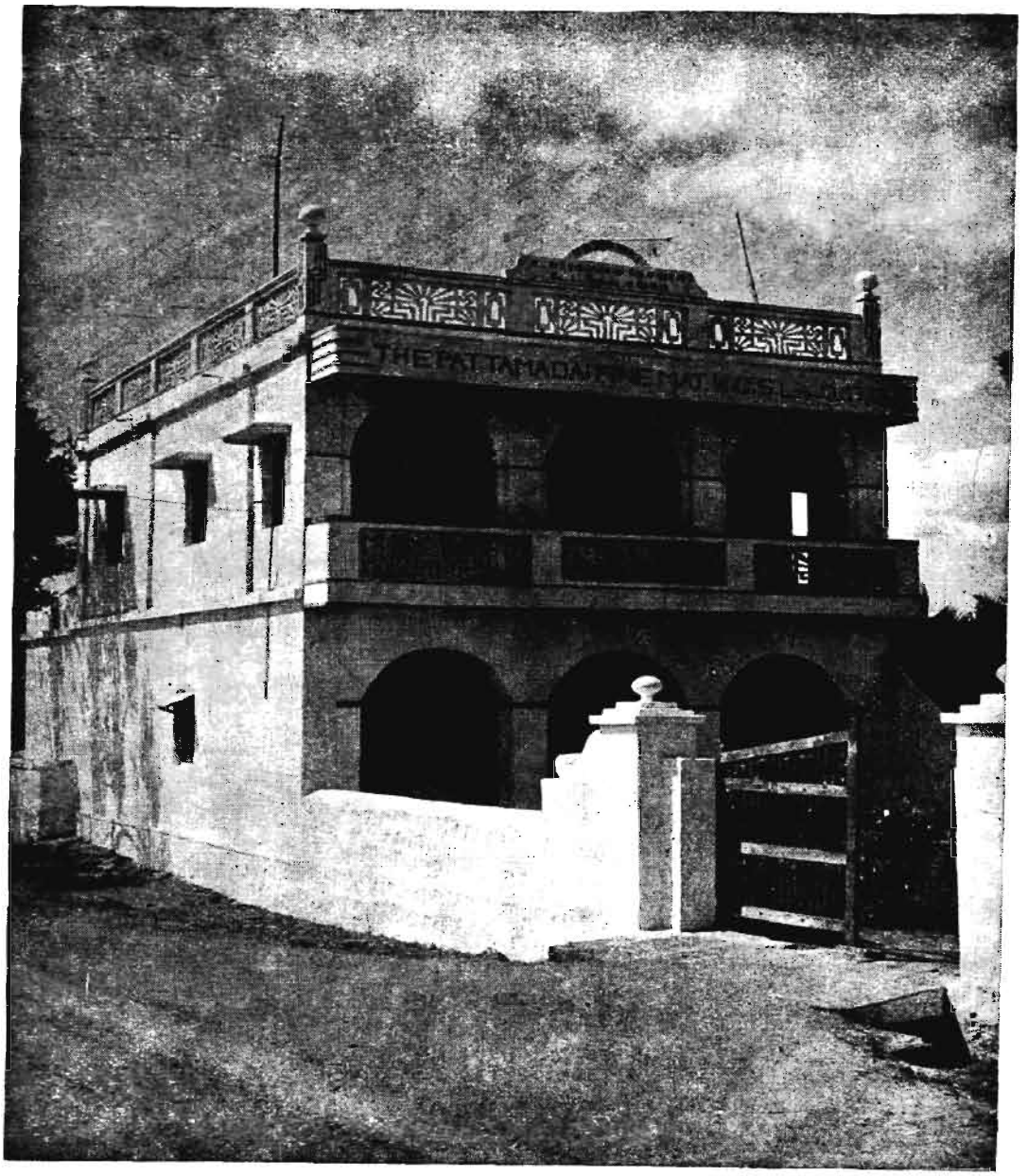
The training shed with the looms and various tools.



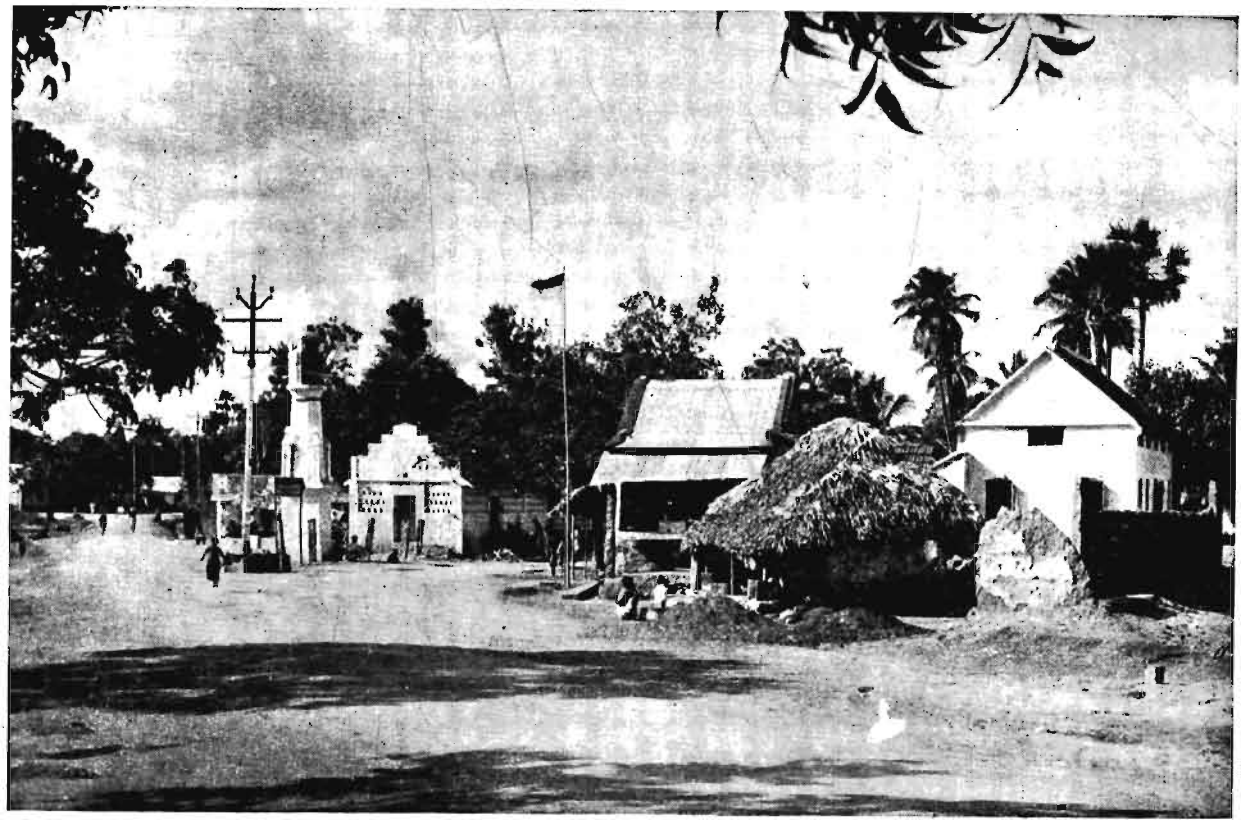
Trainees from other centres undergoing training in different processes.



Batch of 10 trainees along with their Instructors and master weaver.



The Pattamadai Fine Mat Weavers' Co-operative Society building, the best in the whole of Pattamadai village.



Main road of Viravanallur. Buses ply on this road between Palayamkottai and Shencottah.

Master weaver to guide the trainees.	Rs.	120	per month
Instructor.	Rs.	60	,, ,,
Training 10 boys in one batch (Rs. 30 per artisan.)	Rs.	360	,, ,,
Clerk.	Rs.	50	,, ,,
Total per month	Rs.	2,360	

The entire amount is in the charge of the society which conducts the training class. According to Madras Government plan and order, out of this amount, 40 students must be trained each in a batch of 10. The duration of training will be about 4 months for each batch. The training centre was opened on 14-2-1962.

Every four months a batch of 10 people are selected by the Assistant Director of Industries and Commerce, Tirunelveli. Usually all the trainees come from neighbouring villages and they happen to be skilled weavers in medium quality mats. Though few mats were produced by the trainees in the training centre it cannot be called as a production-cum-training centre.

There is no follow-up programme by any Government agencies.

The Cooperative societies of the neighbouring villages of medium count mats select the names of the skilled weavers and recommends to the Industries Officer to undergo training in Fine mats at Pattamadai. A monthly stipend of Rs. 30 is paid for four months. These ex-trainees who hail from other villages are absorbed in their village cooperative society as Master craftmen and Instructor to teach the art of weaving names and designs on Fine mats to their kins as these societies are very keen and particular about producing higher count mats in their own villages. During our survey, ten people were undergoing training—4 from Pattamadai, 3 from Veeravanallur and 3 from Harikesavanallur. The trainees were benefited in the art of weaving names and complicated designs on fine mats. They are trained in splitting, tightening and dyeing processes. In fact two trainees from West Bengal came to Pattamadai and they were at the Training Centre for six months. The All India Handicrafts Board has planned to depute some more trainees from other States. Two Pattamadai mat weavers went to Delhi and received training in the making of Purses, Ladies' Hand Bags, Suit Cases and Brief Cases etc.

Co-operative Society

The Society was set up on 5-1-1954 and started functioning from 7-1-1954. It was set up at a time when the Association of Weavers was not providing any help to its members and the industry almost faced extinction. Its avowed object was to improve the mat industry and the economic conditions of the mat weavers. It raised money from weavers by issue of shares, by borrowing in the form of deposits. It purchases raw materials and appliances and sells the same to members either for cash or credit. The raw materials are advanced to the weavers who convert them into finished goods and deliver them to the Society which pays wages for the finished goods. It also acts as an agent to the members and for the sale of finished goods. The net profit is either ploughed back into share capital and Reserve Fund or paid out as dividend to the members. At present, it has 102 members and 102 looms with a share capital of Rs. 10,020/-. It has received a loan of Rs. 5,000/- from National

Extension Service Funds on 25-12-55 and repaid the entire principal and interest by 25-12-1960, in five equal instalments. It has also earned a net profiit during the 5 year period as follows :

1954-55	1210.25
1955-56	1531.50
1956-57	2866.94
1957-58	980.63
1958-59	607.00

The main cause for the success of the Cooperative Society has been the universal membership of all the weavers of the Lubbai community in the area, whether by compulsion or on a voluntary basis, it is not known, and by the unswerving loyalty of the members to the Society. Thus in the initial stages, when a training scheme had to be inaugurated, all the Lubbai members joined together and contributed Rs. 900/- as subscription. All problems regarding marketing and any misunderstanding between the members are solved at a General Body Meeting through mutual understanding after discussions. Even the site on which the building stands was donated by the Lubbais. This loyalty is all the more heart-warming, considering the poverty of the mat weavers. The building which is the best in the area, presents a sharp contrast to the dilapidated huts of the weavers, and stands as a lasting monument to their courage and perseverance. The following are the sources through which the Society received grants and loans :—

Note : The dctails of loan appended below does not include the loan of Rs. 7,360 contributed by the Central Government.

All India Handicrafts Board Working Capital	..	Rs. 5,000/-
B.D.O. Cheranmahadevi loan towards working capital	..	Rs. 4,000/-
Madras Government grant for building	...	Rs. 1,500/-
Madras Government loan	...	Rs. 1,500/-
Lubbai Union (Free Grant)	...	Rs. 900/-

The Cooperative Society building was constructed at a cost of Rs. 4,000/-. It received another Rs. 5000/- as half loan and half grant for effecting improvements to the existing building from the Government of Madras. A store room and a hall were constructed. The Society in addition to the repayment of the loan taken from the Block Development Office, Cheranmahadevi, also repaid the loan of Rs. 1,500/- taken from the Government of Madras for construction of building. The Industries Department of the Government of Madras gave tools, machines etc., at half cost to the value of Rs. 900/-. This had to be repaid in 5 equal instalments and already three instalments have been repaid. The Central Government have contributed Rs. 7,360/- at various times for the following purposes

Purchase of site	Rs. 1,360/-
Mat looms at half cost (50 looms for 50 members)	Rs. 1,000/-
Expenses for marketing order etc,	Rs. 2,640/-
Exhibitions	Rs. 2,360/-
	Rs. 7,360/-

Before the formation of the Cooperative Society, the weavers experienced considerable difficulties in marketing their finished goods. This burden has been removed form their shoulders by the advent of the Cooperative Society which has laid down certain conditions, and prescribed the rates for various sizes and counts. The mats are purchased directly from the members and it devolves on the Co-operative Society to dispose of the products. The members are permitted to work in their own homes with their own tools and raw materials purchased from the Society. After finishing the work, the products are handed over to the Society and wages are paid according to the work done. The Society takes upon itself the responsibility of supplying dyes, silk and lace at cost price to its members. It makes a profit on the sale of cotton yarn at the rate of 6 nP. per rupee and on the korai imported from Karur at the rate of 12 to 25 nP. per rupee. The following is the statement of accounts of the Cooperative Society from 1-4-1961 to 31-3-1962.

		Rs. nP.
Purchase of mats from members		31,510.22
,, yarn ,,		997.89
,, Powder ,,		312.99
,, Korai ,,		4,413.11
,, Lace and silk ,,		104.29
	Total	37,338.50

		Rs. nP.
Sales of mats from members		32,542.64
,, yarn ,,		969.83
,, Powder ,,		657.32
,, Korai ,,		3,324.57
,, Fancy bags ,,		1,472.70
,, lace and silk ,,		72.32
	Total	39,039.38

In addition, the Society collects 3 nP. in a rupee for the purchase of mats from members. The total thrift deposit collected during the year 61-62 amounted to 928.51 nP. Its sales are in cash and no credit is normally allowed or extended. Further, if any member finds himself in extreme difficulties to tide over the periods of financial crisis, provision exists under the bye-laws of the Society to extend credit upto Rs. 20/- towards unproductive expenditure, subject to the consent of the President, Secretary and Board of Directors. But in spite of this financial position of the Cooperative Society, the Members are still striving for a subsistence wage mainly due to the nature of the industry itself and because of the limited utility of the articles produced which, though artistic in merit and of exquisite workmanship, has limited utility value, the medium quality mats being preferred for day to-day use. Again, mat weaving being a widely prevalent craft in the area, within a radius of 10 miles there are three cooperative Societies - one at Pattamadai, one at Harikesavanallur and one at Veeravanallur and roughly 1000 families are engaged in the pursuit of this craft and it is not to be wondered that the out-turn being what it is and the demand being seasonal and limited in nature, the income accruing to the family is necessarily limited. And this is the reason why, in spite of best efforts, the Cooperative Society is not able to expand its markets and provide a larger income to its members. This is one of the reasons which has prompted the Cooperative Society to attempt the production of other articles like purses, Ladies' hand bags, brief cases etc. out of

Pattamadai mats so that there will be greater demand for these articles and, consequently, more and more of these utility articles could be exported, competing successfully with palm-leaf and cane products.

Marketing

Medium quality korai grass mats are produced in almost every district of the State, the better known being Tiruchirapalli, North Arcot and Thanjavur. Yet, Tirunelveli happens to be the largest producer of the Pattamadai mats holding pride of the place. The twin evils besetting the industry is the instability in ensuring the steady supply of raw materials and the absence of organised marketing facilities. Medium quality mats have a market everywhere because of their usefulness and are sold at any village fair. But fine mats being costly and artistic can only have a select clientele and have to be sold at big Emporia, Hotels, Airports and at important Exhibitions. Another difficulty arose out of the adoption of the same designs by the mat weavers throughout the years. After some time, old designs become obsolete and people turn their attention towards new designs. It is no doubt true that the traditional designs reflect native genius and any attempt to modernise traditional designs may stifle initiative and lead to a deterioration in craft techniques. But fashions and tastes change from time to time and the artisan practising a traditional handicraft like his modern counterpart in a factory always has to keep track of changes in taste and fashion. In Pattamadai, it has been done by the introduction of new designs thanks to the training imparted to the Pattamadai weavers, the Society's attempts to popularise the fine mats and by State Government's generous cooperation by way of presentation of fine mats to foreign dignitaries whenever they visited Madras State. It is also interesting to record that a fine Mat of Pattamadai was presented to Queen Elizabeth II during her Coronation. That the Pattamadai Fine mat is a wonderful piece of art was acknowledged by its display during the 1902 Indian Industries Exhibition at New Delhi. However facilities for marketing being disorganised and the cost of the article being slightly prohibitive, it has been always difficult for the Pattamadai mat weavers to sell their products in bulk at a decent profit. The following statement indicates the purchase and sale of mats of different counts during 1961–62.

	Purchase of mats by Society from its members					Sale of mats				
COUNTS	140	120	100	50	40	140	120	100	50	40
MATS	200	36	2043	811	5466	142	29	1310	721	4523

The following table furnished by the society indicates the gradual rise in the price of mats during the last 30 years :

Year	Size	counts		
		100	120	140
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1930	30" x 72"	12	14	18
1940	30" x 72"	15	18	24
1950	30" x 72"	17	22	31
1960	30" x 72"	20	30	45

The Cooperative Society clears its surplus stock during the various Industrial Exhibitions and during the summer season when there is an exodus of people to the summer resort of Courtallam every year. But it has no direct contact with foreign firms. It receives orders from the Central Cottage Industries Emporium, Delhi which in turn assists to deliver the goods to various foreign firms. Appendix 10 indicates the total sales made by the Cooperative Society to the various State Emporia during the last three years. In Madras City, the Victoria Technical Institute and the Handicrafts Emporium are the main customers. The following statement indicates the consolidated sales made in certain premier States of India by the Pattamadai Mat Weavers' Society.

	Total purchasers	Private purchasers	Exporium	40 to 50 cts. total amount	Fine quality total amount
Madras State	20,000	5,000	15,000	7,000	13,000
Bombay	12,000	5,000	7,000	4,000	8,000
Delhi	8,000	...	8,000	2,500	5,500

There is some possibility of developing the Export Market for these mats particularly in the Middle and Far Eastern, Countries such as Ceylon, Malaya and Pakistan and some of the Arab Countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran, as Prayer Mats are highly appreciated by Muslims. But the scope is limited. It will always remain an article of luxury.

The nature of the industry requires about 25 days to prepare a high quality mat with a number of intricate designs. Mechanisation is completely out of question. The initial process connected with the preparation of raw materials, the delicate process of splitting and weaving on the loom will still have to be done manually and it takes a major portion of their time. As such, it may be difficut to increase the production to a considerable extent. What perhaps could be done is to study the new designs and improve its quality but the increase of income will be limited. No weaver can become rich through this industry.

Even as early as 1917, Sri Pate, I.C.S., in his Tirunelveli District Gazetteer, writing of Pattamadai mats, has stated as follows :

> "In spite of their artistic merits, however. it is difficult to see that the mats are of much practical value; they form a delightful spread to sleep on especially in the hot weather, but for all the uses to which mats are generally put, they are by their fineness and deliacy less suitable than the ordinary coarser articles. Their production is expensive and for a mat of 6' x 3' the price varies according to the texture of the article from Rs. 10 to Rs. 35 and so on. There is unfortunately no good demand for them and consequently no market. The few sales that are made are usally the result of hawking on the part of the makers themselves."

Conclusion

It is thus seen that at present the price of the mats have gone up slightly and the demand for them is still limited to a select few because of the lack of utility and high cost. Though almost world famous and winner of several prizes and medals at various Exhibitions, the craft has still not been able to provide the artisans practising it a subsistence wage. The difficulty in procuring raw material, the time—consuming craft techniques have all played their part. There is also fierce competition from medium mat weavers utilising the same raw material. Will it survive as a craft in "stomach" conscious society, is the great question. It is a challenge to the All India Handicrafts Board.

PART II

COARSE MATS OF VEERAVANALLUR AND HARIKESAVANALLUR

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The villages of Veeravanallur, Harikesavanallur and Pattamadai are situated close to each other. Veeravanallur is 5 miles from Pattamadai, Harikesavanallur is 7 miles from Pattamadai and are both accessible, buses plying between them every hour. Just as Lubbais who hold the monopoly for the weaving of fine mats at Pattamadai, the Muslim Rowthers hold the monopoly in the manufacture of medium quality and coarse mats in these villages. Mat weaving industry is said to have originated in Veeravanallur a century back ; in Harikesavanallur, it is said to be in existence even prior to the Sepoy Mutiny. In Veeravanallur, Rowthers, before taking up weaving, were agriculturists by profession. Nobody knows about the origin of the craft in Harikesavanallur. In Veeravanallur, Meera Hussain Rowther and Alla Pichai Rowther are said to have taken up weaving to supplement their income from agriculture. They were not hereditary weavers, but as days passed, they picked up the rudiment of the craft and bade farewell to agriculture and took up in right earnest mat-weaving. They found that agriculture was not an occupation suited to the temperament of their Ghosha ladies, whereas weaving could be practised at home by women. This cottage industry employs nearly 1,500 persons. The number of women weavers far outnumber the males. Even children assist in the preparatory processes.

A few lines about the etymology of the names of these villages. Some 300 years back, there was a powerful king by name Veera Pandian who was ruling this part of the country. The village was named after him. A few furlongs away from the Cooperative Society building, we can see vestiges of a Fort of Veera Pandya which gives credence to this story. The Tirunelveli District Gazetteer (1917) states that "manufacture on a small scale of mats is taking place at Veeravanallur". Regarding the origin of the name Harikesavanallur, there are two legends. The first one states that the village was named after the main deity in the temple which stands on the bank of the Tambraparni river known as HARIKESAVA, to indicate the oneness of Vishnu and Shiva. Another legend states as follows:

Harikesavanallur is sometimes called 'Giriammalpuram'. The story goes that King Veerapandyan, on his return form the chase, saw a beautiful girl of the locality called Giri and was taken in by her beauty. He thereupon married her and as a token of his love named the locality Giriammalpuram. Harikesavanallur is the first village to start mat-weaving of a coarse variety. Though not as famous as the mats of Veeravanallur, yet we found the workmanship of the artisans of this place of a superior order. The medium and coarse variety mats of Veeravanallur have, however, become famous in Madras State and in many Northern States mainly because of the brilliant array of fast colours and the intricacies of the designs. In some cases, the colours and designs are superior to those of Pattamadai. It is the boast of the artisans of Harikesavanallur that mats woven by their ancestors are still hanging in the Fort Palace of the Maharaja of Travancore in Padmanabhapuram near Nagercoil.

The Zamindar of Kottar, a place near Nagercoil, married a girl of Harikesavanallur, A mat woven in the village was given as a present by the bride's party to the Zamindar who in turn presented it to the Maharaja. The mat is of 32 cts. with a Chockattan design woven on it. At present, there are 1,300 persons comprising of 350 males, 650 females and 300 children engaged in mat weaving in these two villages. Nowhere in the State can so many persons be found to be engaged in mat weaving in a compact area.

CHAPTER II

TECHNIQUES OF PRODUCTION

Raw Materials

Like the Lubbais of Pattamadai, Rowthers of these two villages are finding it extremely difficult to get the necessary korai grass for weaving. They have to collect the korai grass growing wild on the river banks from these places which are not the preserves of the Lubbais. They approached the Government for help and the latter were kind enough to sanction the free removal of the korai grass from Revenue Poramboke lands. The artisans of Harikesavanallur were allotted the poramboke lands of Nanguneri taluk and the artisans of Veeravanallur the Revenue Poramboke lands situated at a distance of 5 miles from the village. The Co-operative Societies in the two villages sub-let these lands to bidders on condition that the lessees hand over to the Societies a specific number of bundles of korai grass from time to time. Of the three kinds of korai grass available, POOKATTAI, ATHALAVU and MAR-MATHUM, the third variety is fit for the manufacture of high count mats and so the first two types are in great demand in Harikesavanallur and Veeravanallur. Pookkattai and Athalavu korai grass are suitable for weaving of table mats as well as floor mats of 50 counts and up to a size of 24″ x 50″. Further, during the year 1962, the two societies have started producing fine mats using Marmathum korai grass to rival those of Pattamadai. Before allotment of poromboke lands by Government, members of the societies were purchasing korai grass from private merchants. But the main bulk of the supply was effected through merchants from Karur taluk. The transport charges are met by the Societies which send two experienced members to select the best variety of grass. The Society charges 12 nP. per rupee as profit.

Coton Yarn

For the warp, cotton yarn is used. Medium count mats have a warp of 20 counts to 40 counts cotton thread while in coarse mats aloe fibre is used as warp.

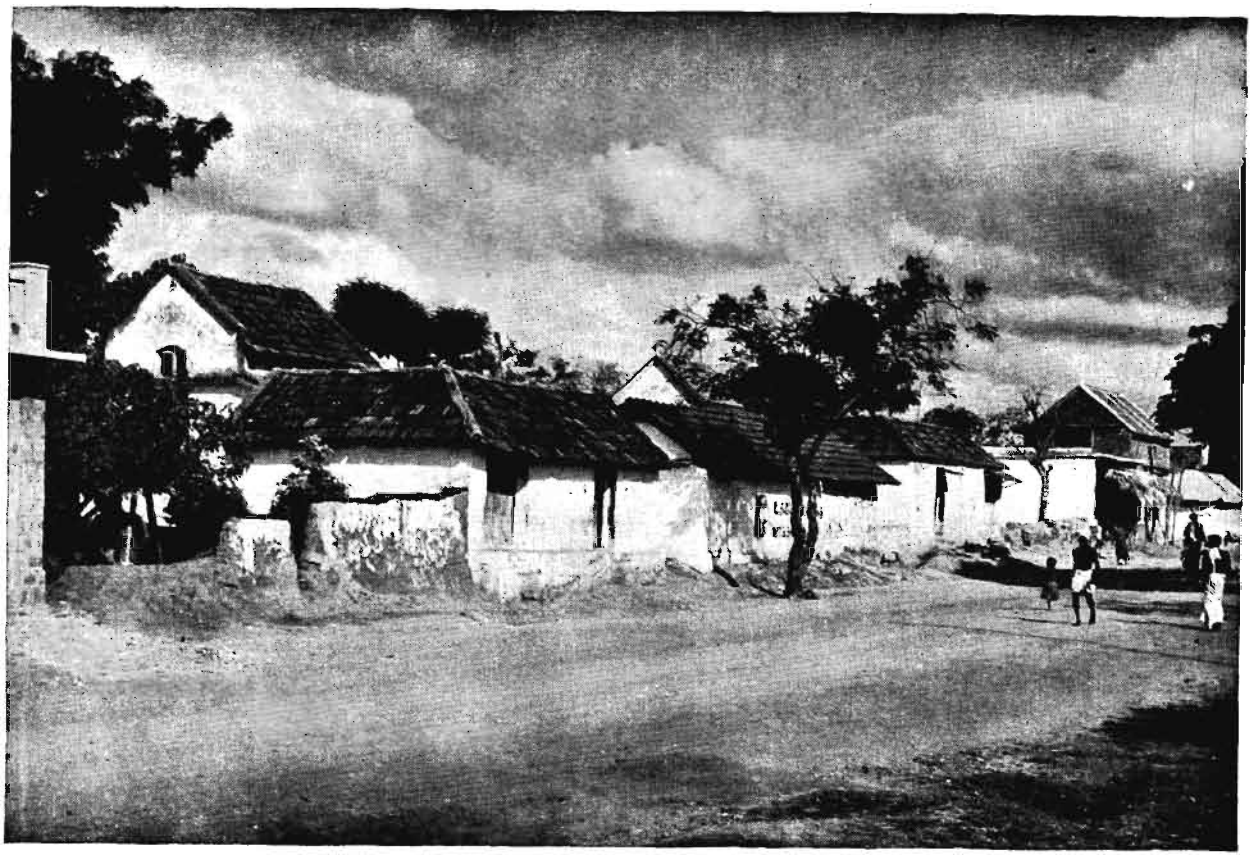
Dyes

The dyes of Yusuf Aly and Saraf Aly are popular among these mat weavers. They attempted to introduce red and green dyes of the I. C. I., but failed to get satisfactory results. No scales are used to weigh the dyes before being mixed in hot water. Some weavers measure dyes by spoonful while others use a copper tin to measure the dyes. By long experience they know the correct measurement. The price of some of the colours is indicated below :

Red	200 grams	Rs. 10/-
Green	,,	Rs. 14/-
Orange	,,	Rs. 5/-
Rose	,,	Rs. 7/-
Violet	,,	Rs. 7/-



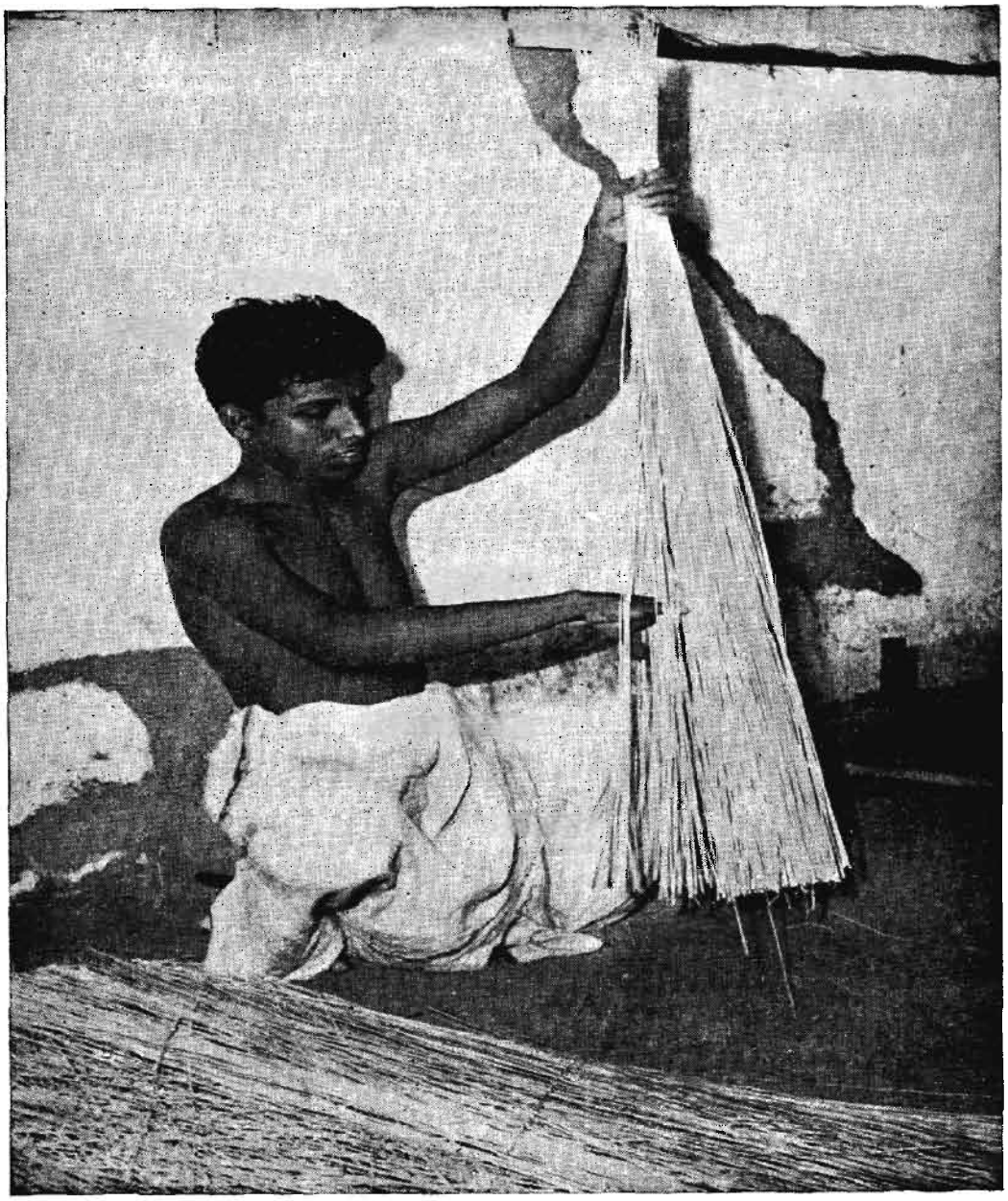
The main Street of Viravanallur village.



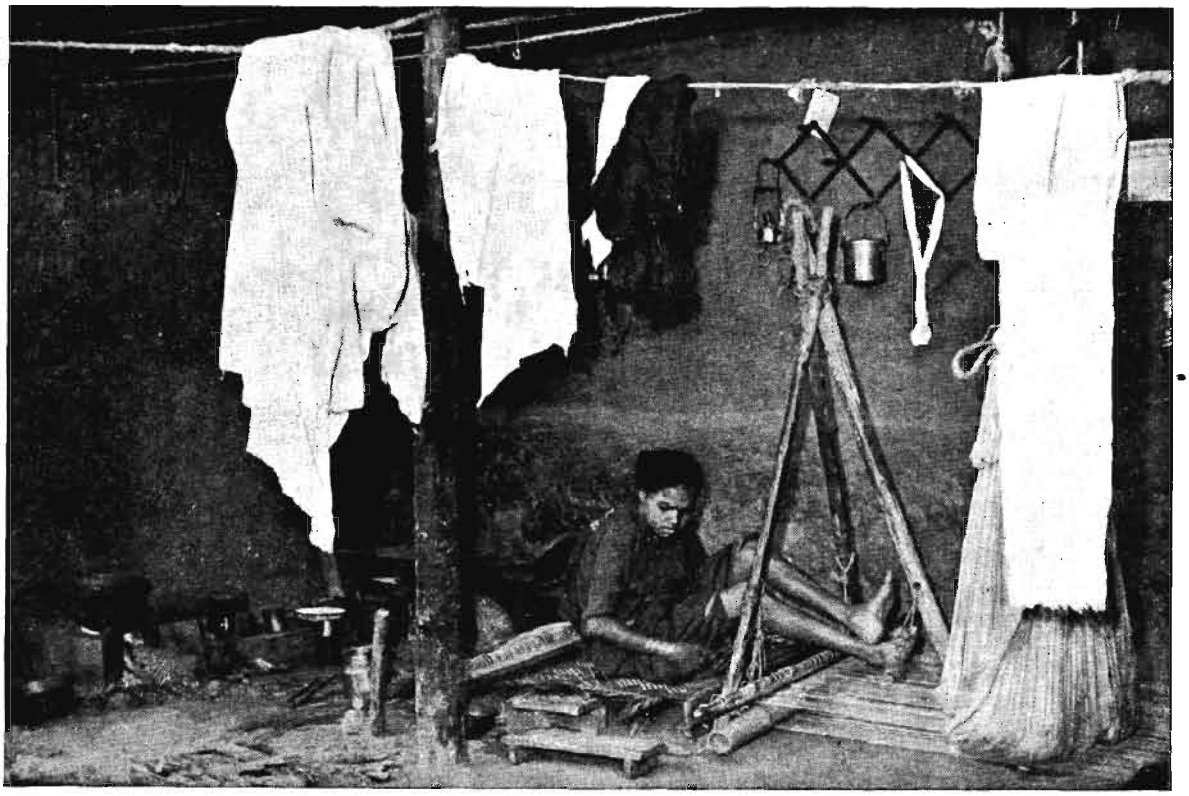
The Street where the Rowther Muslim weavers dwell in large numbers.



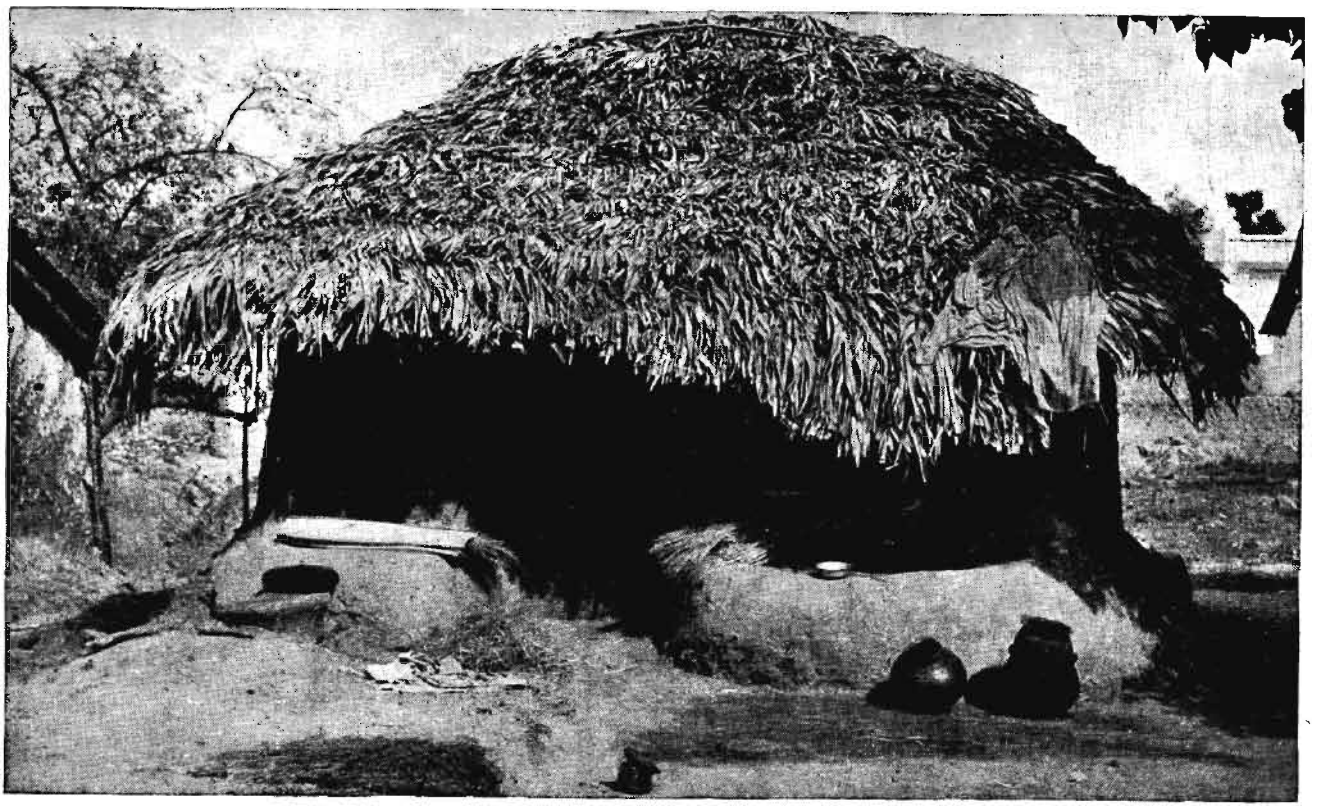
A skilled weaver who underwent training in Pattamadai is carefully separating the fibre from the waste with the help of a sharp knife.



The weaver holds a bundle of Korai grass and displays the difference in size and length of Karur Korai with that of Karungadu Korai.



The general condition of the house reflects social and economic conditions of the weaver.



Thatched house of a Rowther weaver in a dilapidated condition.



These mats of various size and design are stored in the racks of the Co-operative Society for onward transmission to Govt. Sales Emporia, hotels, airports, and to the Handicrafts and Hand-loom Export Organization of India Ltd.



The premises of Veeravanallur Co-operative Society started on 7-4-1955.

Tools and Implements

The tools and implements for weaving coarse and medium varieties are the same as those used for fine mats; only the ACHU is different. The counts of the mat depend on the number of holes in the Achu. The Achus utilised in Harikesavanallur and Veeravanallur have 40, 50 and 80 holes. In a span of 9", there will be 40 holes and this Achu will be used for weaving a mat of 40 counts; within the same space of 9", if there are 80 holes, the Achu will be used for weaving a mat of 80 counts; within 9", if there are 18 holes, this Achu will be used for weaving a mat of 18 counts.

Manufacturing Process

While the manufacturing process is practically the same for weaving a fine mat and a coarse mat, differences exist in soaking the korai, splitting the strands and preparation of warp thread. Korai grass is purchased from Karur, dried day and night, in the open for 15 days so that it may have the benefit of sun and dew alternatively and soaked in the running waters of the Tambraparni river for 3 days. The length of Karur grass is 60". When separated from the waste, mats upto a breadth of 48" can be woven. For coarse mats, the korai is split into two or used as it is in the shape of a single strand. For medium counts, the fibre is separated from the waste with the help of a sharp knife and split into thinner strands. This splitting is very easy and does not call for the patience and skill required in splitting korai grass for finer counts over 100. Even small boys and girls can split the korai into twos or fours at their houses. For coarse mats, no wages are paid for splitting while for the medium counts it varies from 25 np to Rs. 1.50 nP.

Dyeing is a simple process and is done by Rowther women. The dyes are dissolved in hot water. For coarse mats, fast or bright colours are not used as the primary object is not to allow the cost of production to go up. Green and red are still the favourite colours among these weavers, though orange, violet and rose are also preferred now-a-days. The korai grass is soaked in hot water along with the dye and allowed to boil for 10 minutes. After constant stirring for 10 minutes, the pot is allowed to cool and the korai strands taken out and hung out to dry.

The warp cotton thread is purchased from Veeravanallur. For medium count mats, twisted cotton threads of 20 to 40 counts are used while for coarse mats aloe fibre is used. The loom used for weaving is the same as for fine mats. For coarse mats, the korai grass is capable of being handled roughly while in the weaving of fine mats, they will have to be delicately handled lest the strands be broken while being inserted into the warp thread. In the weaving of coarse mats, even young boys and girls sit by the side of the loom and handle the Kuchaali and Achu. Again, whereas for fine mats every korai strand is twisted after insertion between the warp threads, in coarse mats such twisting is not done.

Designs

Much attention was not paid to designs till the last 2 years until a sense of competition with Pattamadai was fostered among the weavers. In Veeravanallur we found a number of weavers weaving modern designs as well as letters on mats. Some weavers of these villages have also been given training in the Pattamadai Fine Mat Weavers' Training Centre. During our visit to Veeravanallur Cooperative Society, we came across a master craftsman who wove in front of our eyes letters as well as designs, capable of being compared with the best products of

Pattamadai. However, the majority of the weavers in these two villages still follow the traditional designs which are simple but effective. The main point emphasised by these weavers is that intricate designs and colours are not required for coarse and medium quality mats as their prime purpose is to serve as floor mats for sleeping. Further, the larger the number of designs and the better the colours, the more costly becomes the finished product, with the result that it may be beyond the purse of many villagers who form the bulk of the consumers.

The tightening of the weft does not call for arduous physical labour as in the case of fine mats since the texture need not be very close. Even women perform this operation in Veeravanallur and wages are not paid for this task. It also helps in bringing down the final cost of the mat. Binding the edges is also a minor item which can be finished quickly. Polishing is done with a soft stone but since the family members do the polishing, no wages are paid to outside workers. The normal time for weaving a coarse mat is two days and for medium quality mats is 3 to 4 days and so the weaver engaged in the manufacture of coarse and medium mats can ordinarily earn Rs. 1.25 nP. to Rs. 1.50 per day, which is definitely more than what is earned by Fine mat weavers at Pattamadai.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMICS OF PRODUCTION

For more than 100 years, the weavers of Harikesavanallur and Veeravanallur have been engaged in weaving medium quality and coarse mats. The recent training programme initiated by the All India Handicrafts Board and the Government of Madras at Pattamadai emboldened some of these weavers to take to the art of fine mat weaving. Thus a surprising fact emerges viz., that the Fine Mat Weavers of Pattamadai finding it uneconomic to produce only fine mats have taken to weaving of medium quality mats while the Veeravanallur and Harikesavanallur mat weavers who weave medium quality mats are taking to the production of fine mats. The following table indicates the cost of production of coarse mats, sale price and net profit -:

Count	Size	Korai grass	Twisting the yarn	Dyes	Weaving	Binding the edges	Total	Sale price	Profit
		nP.	nP.	nP.	nP.	nP.	Rs.	Rs.	nP.
10	36" x 72"	56	19	12	25	12	1.24	1.61	37
22	,,	62	25	12	50	15	1.64	2.14	50
26	,,	75	31	15	75	19	2.15	2.62	50

Though the margin of profit per mat is low, they are able to produce upto 4 or 5 mats per week. Sales are also steady and so the weavers are fairly satisfied with their lot. As between Veeravanallur and Harikesavanallur, the mats produced in the former are more popular as they are dyed in bright colours and have a few designs and fetch a better market compared to the mats of Harikesavanallur. The following table indicates, as a sort of comparison, the production and sales in these two villages :-

Year	Production Rs.	Sales Rs.
	Veeravanallur	
1958-59	22,699.55	24,361.08
1959-60	37,507.23	45,311.94
1960-61	60,050.05	62,314.75
1961-62	101,344.76	109,225.33
	Harikesavanallur	
1958-59	39,585.00	40,199.00
1959-60	51,097.00	57,676.00
1960-61	53,592.00	49,787.00
1961-62	66,427.00	59,010.00

It is clear from the table that at Veeravanallur the production is almost 53% more than at Harikesavanallur and sales are nearly 84% more. In 1962 during the cool season from June to

September in a summer resort called Courtallam the Veeravanallur Co-operative Society displayed its products and earned a net profit of Rs. 400/- thus emerging as a formidable rival to the Pattamadai Fine Mat Weavers' Society.

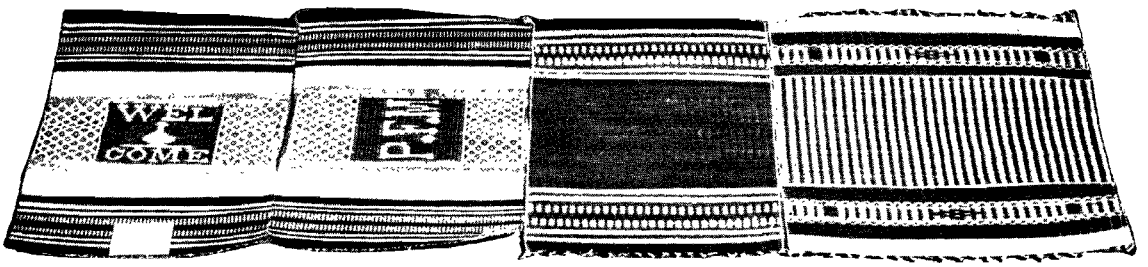
Wages

The wages are low when compared to those engaged in the production of fine mats but their social and economical conditions are much better. Production of a Fine mat takes nearly 20 days; within that period 6 or 8 coarse mats can easily be woven. The physical labour involved in splitting, tightening the weft, binding the edges and polishing is also very much less compared to the weaving of fine mats. Further, one weaver can undertake the various processes from beginning to end whereas in fine mats it requires the services of 2 persons or even more. Thus a family of weavers engaged in the production of coarse mats can earn between Rs. 40 and 50 per month. In the weaving of coarse mats, the wage for any one process hardly exceeds Rs. 1.50. In addition, the Society purchases the raw materials, and sells it to the members with the addition of a small margin of profit. Wages are based on mutual understanding. For splitting the korai grass, no wages are paid. The twisting of the warp cotton yarn is done by both sexes. Sometimes twisted yarn is purchased directly from the shop. For very coarse mats, aloe fibre is used. The rate for twisting ranges from 19 nP. to 31 nP. On an average, a weaver can earn between 25 nP. to 37 nP. per day. The wage for weaving is between 25 nP to 75 nP., a weaver earning on an average 50 nP. to one rupee, per day. The rate for binding the edges varies from 12 nP. to 19; on an average, a weaver earns 12 nP. to 25 nP. a day.

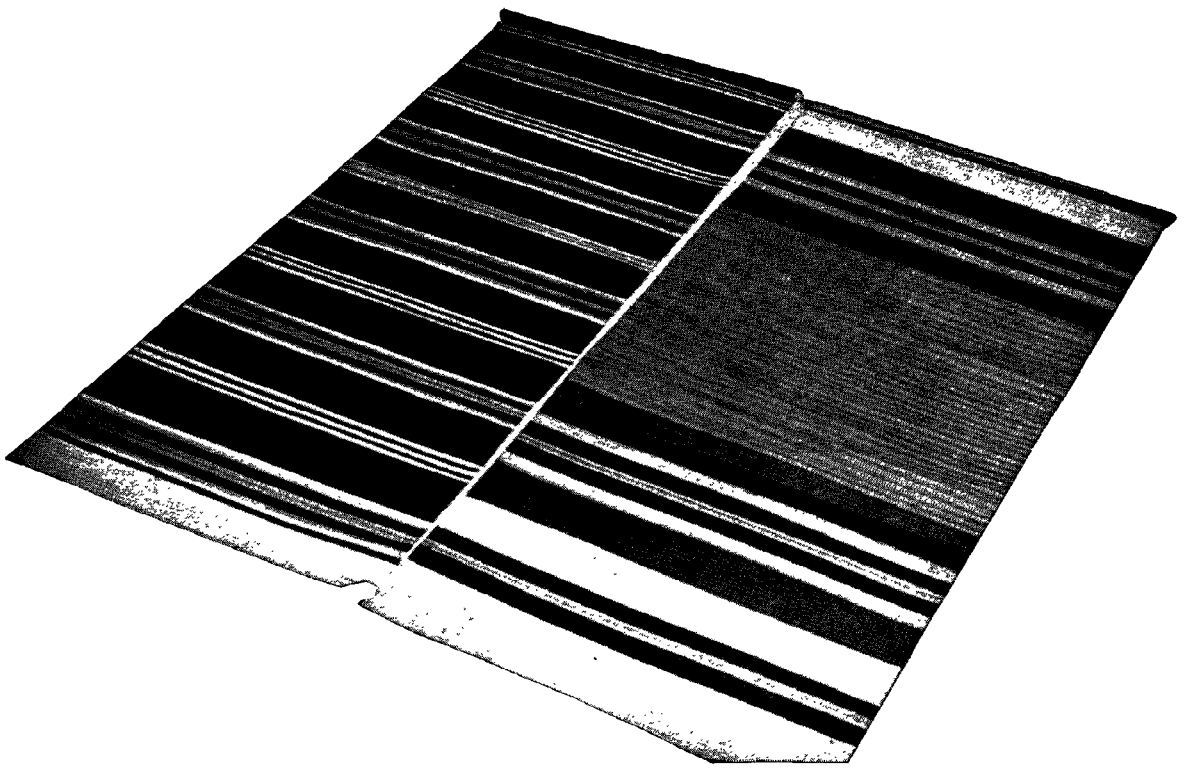
That their economic condition is slightly better off than that of the Fine Mat Weavers is conceded; yet no one can say that they are in affluent circumstances. Their houses are dilapidated and the roofs are leaky. For drying the korai and storing them in their houses, some space has to be left and the space in the interior of the hut is hardly enough to house the members of the family. During monsoon season, it becomes extremely difficult for the poor weaver to store his raw materials in dry condition.

Training of Artisans

The All India Handicrafts Board took up the initiative of training the artisans in advanced methods with modern appliances. At the beginning of 1962, facilities were provided to train some weavers of coarse quality mats at the Pattamadai Cooperative Society Training Centre in the weaving of fine mats. Three master-weavers from each of the villages of Harikesavanallur and Veeravanallur under-went training at Pattamadai. They were able to pick up the craft techniques relating to high count mat weaving within a period of 4 months. On their return to their respective villages, the cooperative soeiety to which they are affiliated members, with the assistance of the State Government began erecting new buildings and making necessary arrangements to train other weavers in the weaving of mats of high counts. Thereafter the artisans who underwent training at Pattamadai were appointed as Instructors or Skilled Assistants to train their fellow artisans. For this purpose, the Government of Madras granted Rs. 16,180/- to Veeravanallur Cooperative Society and Rs. 21,550/- to Harikesavanallur Cooperative Society. This amount has been utilised by the Societies for the provision of workshops with looms and for engaging technicians.

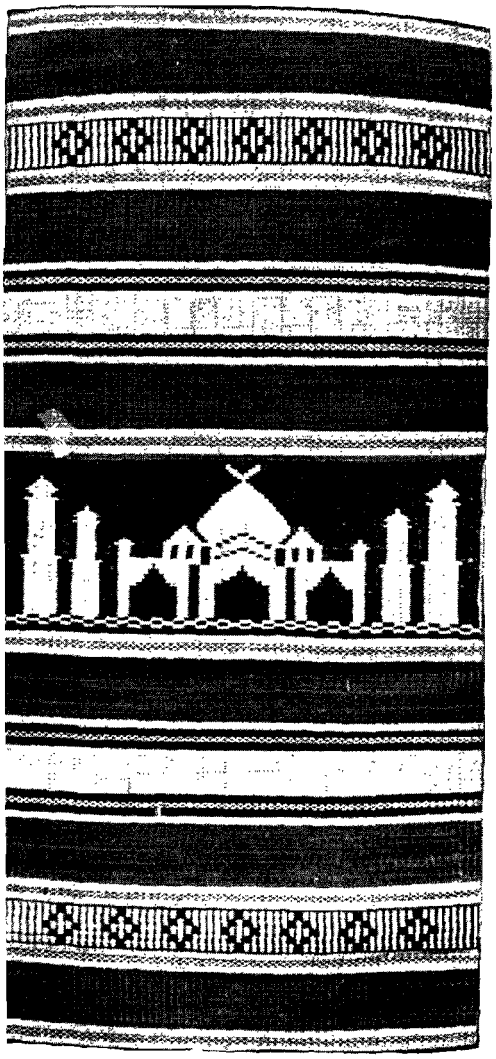


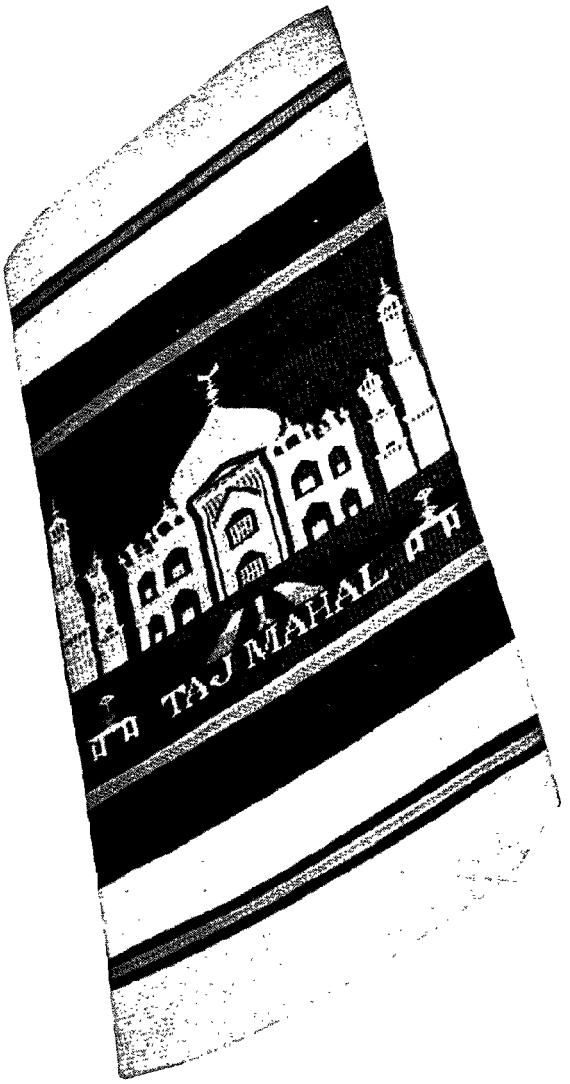
Some of the table mats woven in different designs with names and letters for the clients' publicity as well as for the novelty of the mat.



A famous Bhavani and Full White design woven in 120 count fine mat.

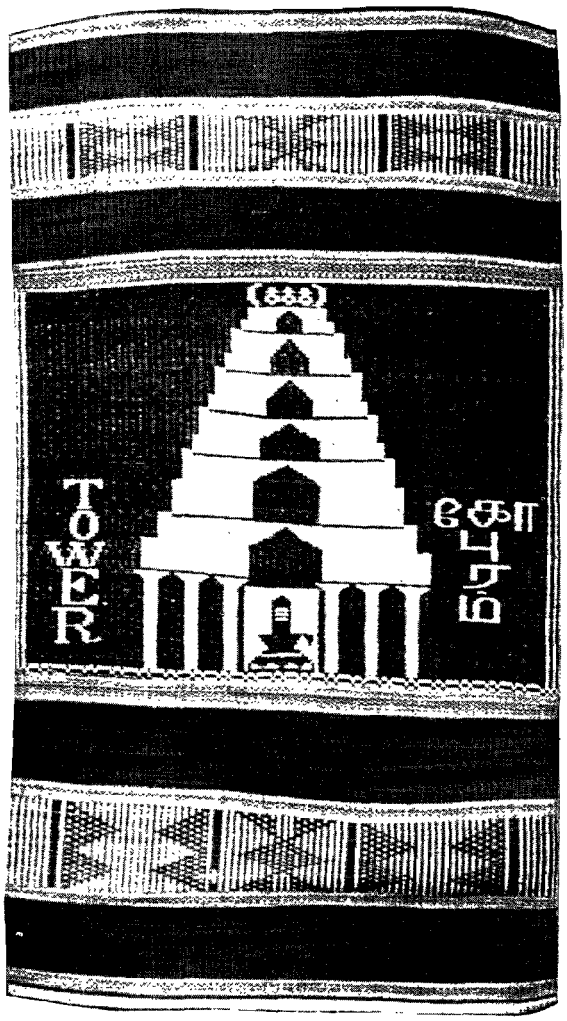
A mat with Taj Mahal design rivals the Pattamadai craftmanship but cannot surpass it.

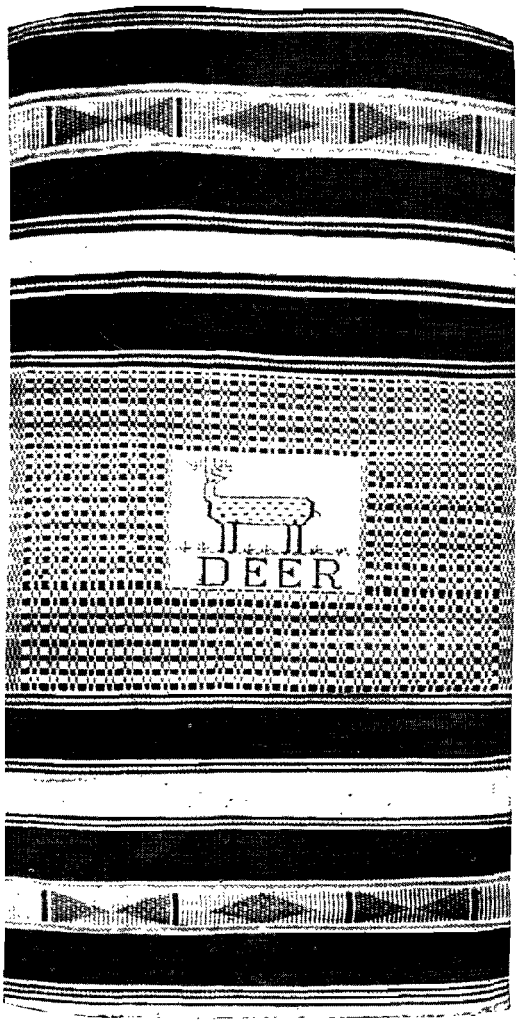




This mat of Taj Mahal design is more complicated than any other design. Thus it requires more skill and delicacy to achieve this unbelievable beauty.

This Gopuram design on a medium count mat clearly distinguishes the workmanship of Veeravanallur with that of Pattamadai.

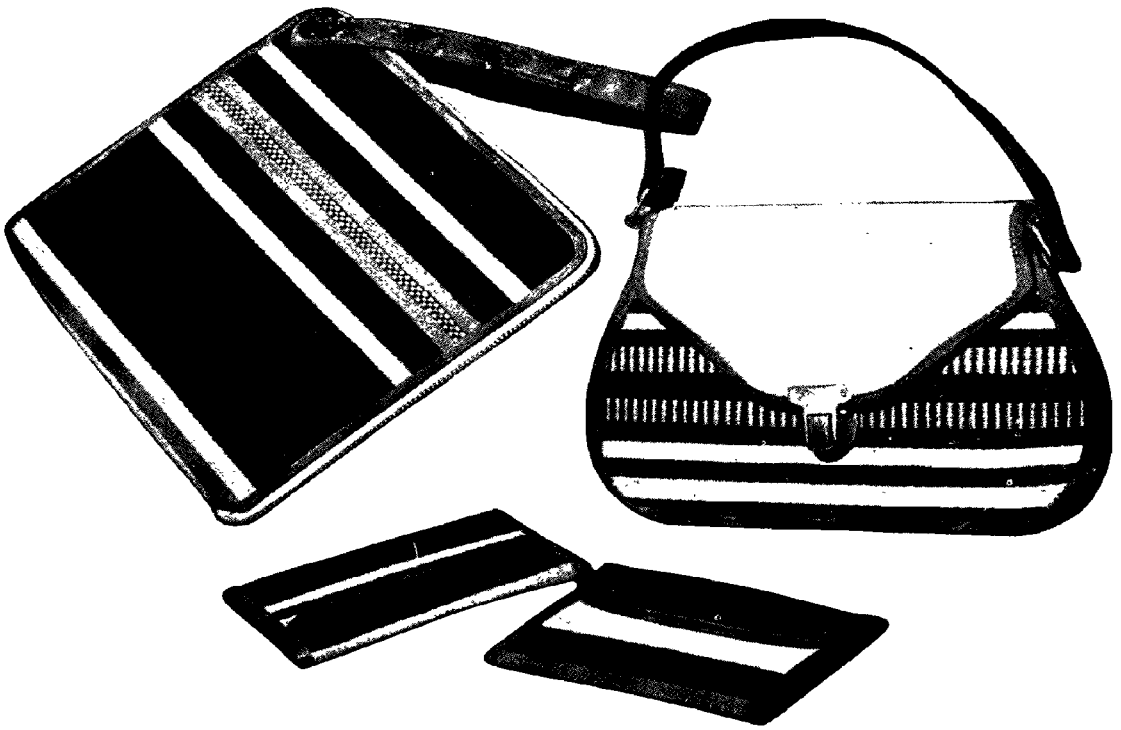




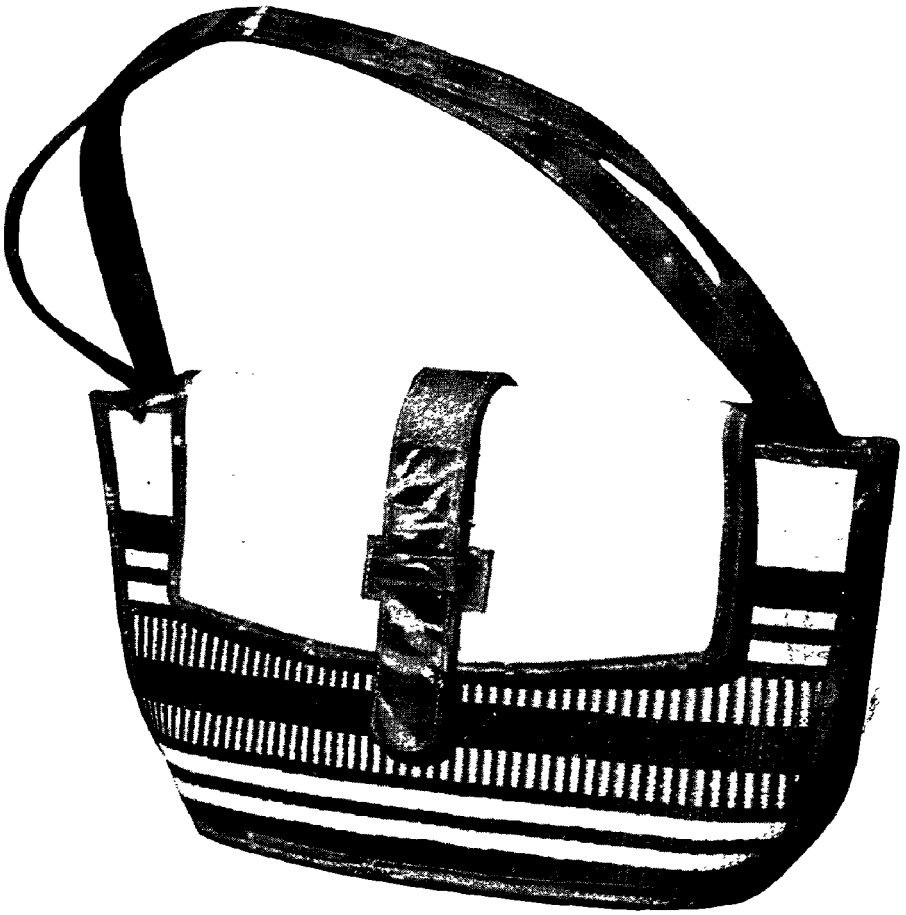
A medium count mat with letters and design of a deer.



With the help of All India Handicrafts Board some of the Pattamadai artisans have mastered this new technique of manufacturing fancy articles with Fine mat. Two designs of Fancy Ladies' Purses.



Some three or four weavers have mastered this art. Different sizes of purses are on display.



A beautiful Ladies' Hand Bag
produced in Fine mat. This fancy article
has great demand in India as well as by foreign tourists.



Thanks to the All India Handicrafts
Board who encouraged this artistic new type of art by
training some weavers in Delhi, a Ladies'
Hand Bag produced in Pattamadai is on display.

Cooperative Society

The Cooperative Society at Harikesavanallur was the earlier one to be started i.e. on 14-4-1944 with a total membership of 27. It was started on behalf of the Muslim women of the village whose husbands and relatives were not in a position to return from Burma during the Second World War. At present there are 208 members on the roll which excludes females and children.

The Veeravanallur Mat Weavers' Co-operative Society was started on 7-4-1955 at the initiative of the Block Development Officer, Cheranmahadevi. The main object was to provide work to the womenfolk and to augment the income of the poorer sections of the Rowther community. There are 158 members on roll. One advantage which the Veeravanallur Society possesses over Harikesavanallur is that even though the latter is only 2 miles away from the former, there is no proper road connecting these two villages and so prospective buyers are not inclined to visit Harikesavanallur but prefer to place orders with the Cooperative Society at Veeravanallur. The Government sanctioned a sum of Rs. 7,250/- to the Veeravanallur Cooperative Society for participation in various exhibitions and for paying the touring representatives to tour important business centres and canvass orders. But such an amount was, unfortunately, not sanctioned to Harikesavanallur Society for reasons best known to Government.

Marketing

Marketing poses as much problem to these societies as to the Pattamadai Fine Mat Weavers' Society. The Society at Veeravanallur purchases finished goods from the members at reasonable rates and sells them to merchants throughout India. Before the formation of the Cooperative Society, merchants and master weavers used to advance money and raw materials on condition that the goods are sold to them at cheap rates. Thus the condition of the weavers was deplorable. Even now, though there is a cooperative Society to organise channels of maketing, many of the members are still under the control of certain merchants who advance money to them during the slack season and insist that the goods be sold to them at cheap rates. Inspite of the instructions of the Co-operative Society that all goods should be sold through the Society, members still sell to merchants who advance money to them during times of financial crisis. The market is quite brisk for coarse and medium mats. The main market for these products are the States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. Table mats are also very popular and are sent to the various State Emporia throughout the country.

APPENDIX 1

MAIN MATERIALS AND SUBSIDIARY MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR FINE MAT WEAVING

Name of the material	Use of the material	From where it is got	Cost of the material per unit	How it is produced
1	2	3	4	5
MAIN MATERIALS			Rs. nP.	
1. a. Korai grass (Karungadu)	Main raw material used as weft for fine mats.	7 miles from Pattamadai village known as Karungadu.	3 00	It grows wild and there is no regular cultivation.
b. Korai grass (Karur)	It is the main material used as weft for medium and coarse quality mats.	It is grown in Chettipalayam & Hunnoor in Karur Taluk (Trichy district)	2 00	It is grown as a regular crop.
2. Cotton yarn.	It is one of the main materials used as warp in fine as well as in medium quality mats.	Cotton yarn is purchased from Tirunelveli and Cheranmahadevi.	2 50	It is manufactured in the cotton yarn mills at Madras, Coimbatore and Madurai.
SUBSIDIARY MATERIALS				
1. Dyes (Colours)	After splitting the Korai grass into different strands it will be dyed in various colours.	Purchased from Tirunelveli market.	20 00 (one tin)	Manufactured by I.C.I., Ciba, Esufaly and Sarafaly in Bombay.
2. Oil	While boiling the colours, a table spoonful of gingelly oil will be added to green and red dyes.	Pattamadai	3 00 (one viss)	It is manufactured in the oil mills by crushing the gingelly seeds.

APPENDIX 1 (A)

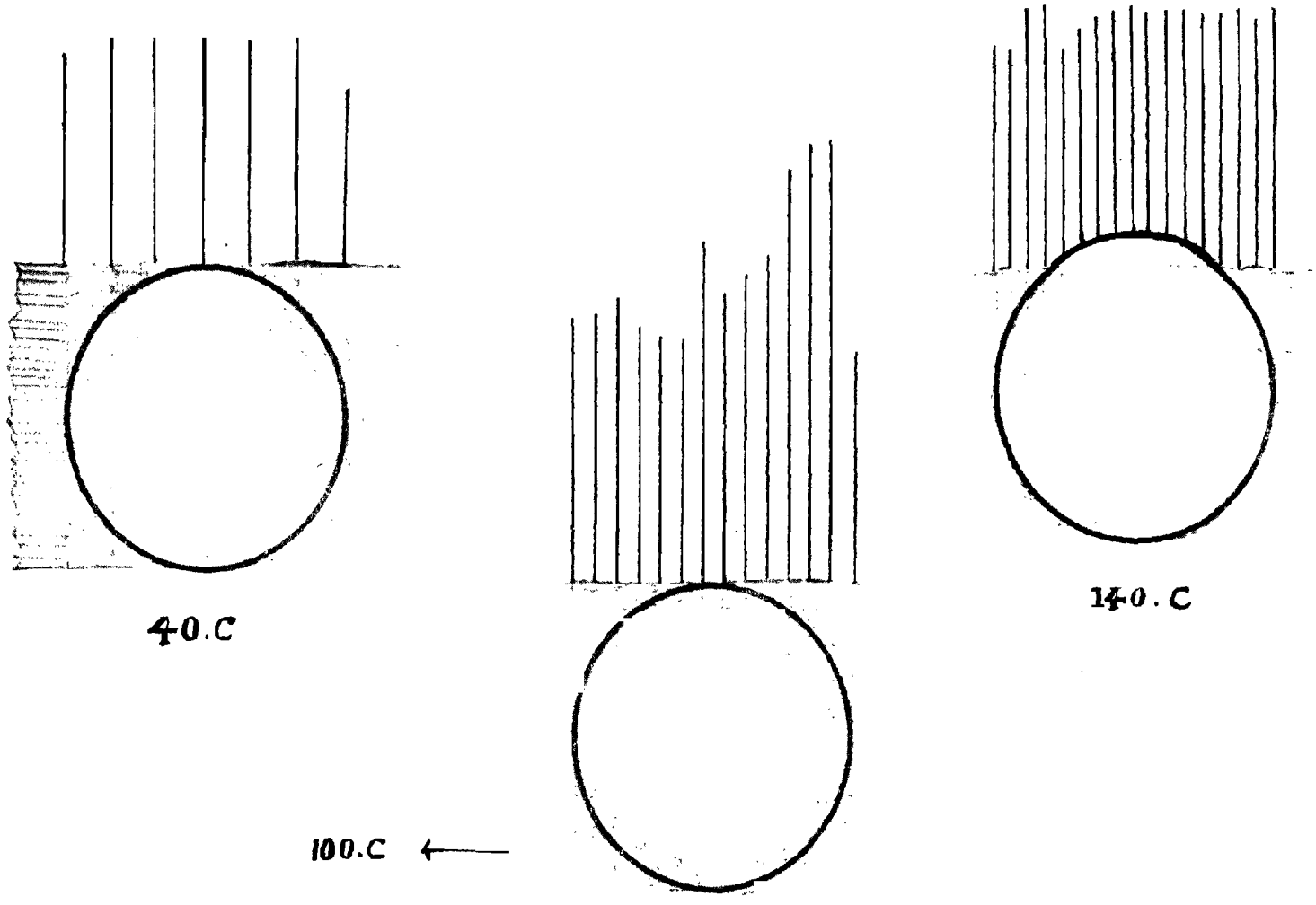
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF FAMILIES AND WORKERS OF MAT WEAVERS IN THE VARIOUS DISTRICTS OF MADRAS STATE

Name of the District	Name of the craft	Approximate No. of families	Total No. of Adult workers			No. of families working under Co-operation	No. of families working in their own house or in workshops set up by their employers
			Persons	Males	Females		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Chingleput	Mat weaving	233	441	223	218	44	189
North Arcot	,,	1,498	3,680	1,912	1,768	12	1,486
South Arcot	,,	1,207	2,206	1,412	794	16	1,191
Coimbatore	,,	223	630	125	505	16	207
Nilgiris	,,	...	...	...	...	...	...
Madurai	,,	2,040	4,199	2,250	1,949	25	2,015
Salem	,,	1,571	3,096	1,681	1,415	...	1,571
Tiruchirapalli	,,	1,747	2,595	1,950	645	169	1,578
Thanjavur	,,	3,763	6,991	4,221	2,764	278	3,485
Ramanathapuram	,,	311	814	82	732	...	311
Tirunelveli	,,	2,532	5,218	1,779	3,439	360	2,172
Kanyakumari	,,	975	1,892	466	1,426	105	870

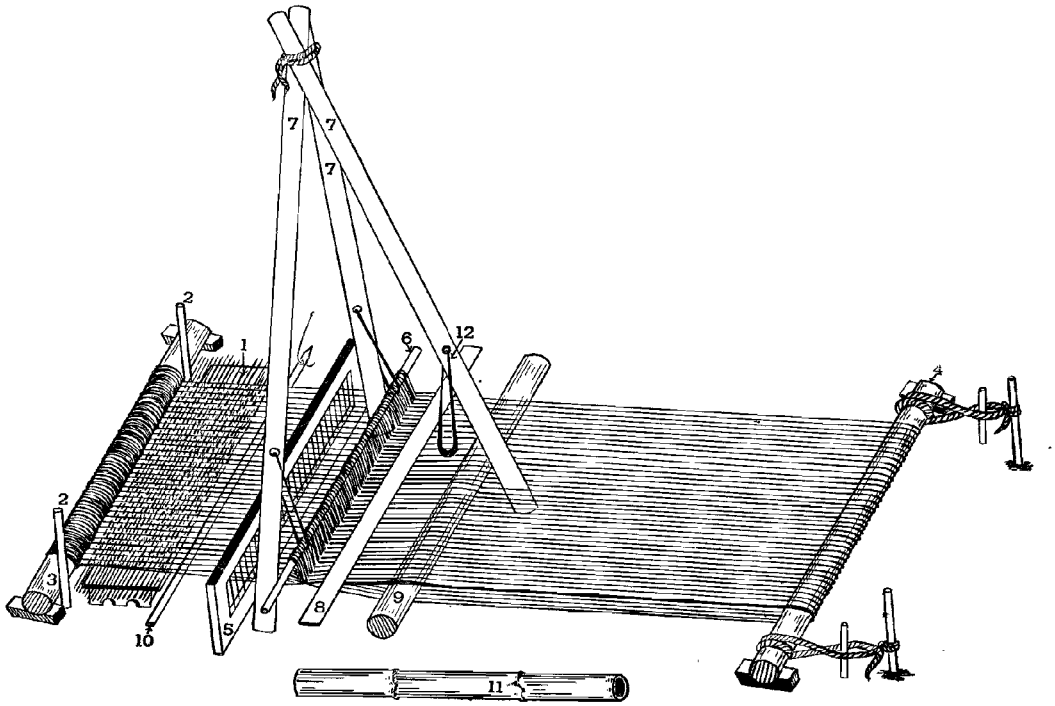
APPENDIX 2

IMPORTANT TOOLS

Sl. No.	Name of the tool	Name of the tool maker	Name of the place where it is manufactured	Cost of the tool	Use of the Tool
1	2	3	4	5	6
				Rs. nP.	
1.	Pudithalai or Matham Kuchikattai.	Carpenter	Pattamadai	1 00	The cotton yarn of 4 or 5 branches will be spread on it, rotated and taken into the turning bamboo.
2.	Parivattam	,,	,,	1 50	To take the cotton yarn thread from Manthan kuchikattai and later on twisted on to the charka.
3.	Rattu	,,	,,	10 00	It is used in twisting the cotton yarn thread which will be used as warp.
4.	Visanam.	,,	,,	0 75	It is used to place the twisted cotton yarn on it.
	TOOLS USED FOR GIVING TEMPER TO THE WARP THREAD				
1.	Pasai pot	Potter	,,	0 12	The cold rice paste is kept in this pot.
2.	Mathu	Carpenter	,,	0 75	This is used to pound the soaked rice.
	TOOLS FOR SPLITTING THE KORAI GRASS				
				Rs. nP.	
1.	Knife	Blacksmith	Pattamadai	1 50	It is used to split the korai grass according to the different counts as well as to cut the edges while binding.
2.	Enamel basin plate.	Factory	Tirunelveli	2 50	Before weaving commences the korai which will be used as weft will be dipped in the enamel basin filled with water.
3.	Polishing stone	Quarried	Pattamadai	1 00	It is used for polishing the mat.



Different Counts of Korai Grass



Mat - weavers' Loom

APPENDIX 3

LOOM AND ITS PARTS

Name of the Tool	How manipulated	Who makes the Tool	Cost of the Tool	Place from where imported	Measurement of Tool
1	2	3	4 Rs. nP.	5	6 L x B x H
1. Manapalagai	The weaver sits on it and weaves the mat.	Carpenter	3 00	Manufactured in the Visvakarma Carpenter's Co-operative Society at Pattamadai.	4′ x 1′ x 6″
2. Mulaikambi	There will be four iron pegs for each loom, which helps to hold the loom.	Blacksmith	3 00	Pattamadai	½″ x ⅜″ x 2″
3. Suthupirimaram	It is placed behind the two iron pegs. The cotton warp thread will be attached to it.	Carpenter	1 50	Pattamadai	4′ x 3″ x 3″
4. Mun Dandu	The end beam over which the warp thread is looped.	Carpenter	0 75	Pattamadai	4′ x 3″ x 3″
5. Achu	This is the reed containing holes through which the warp thread passes.	Carpenter	5 00	Pattamadai	4′ x 6″ x 2″
6. Veludu Kambu	It is one of the most important tools which provide cross or Ani. One warp thread will be out and the other will pass through it.	Carpenter	1 25	Pattamadai	4½′ x ⅜″ x ½″

APPENDIX 3 (Contd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Mukkali	The movable tripod stand made of bamboos. On this hangs the Veludu kambu and the leg rest.	Carpenter	2 00	Pattamadai	4′ x 1½″ x 1″
8. Mithipattai	It helps to give Ani. The Pattai is rest on the warp thread while weaving and it is pressed with the help of one leg to create the cross.	,,	0 37	Pattamadai	4′ x 1½″ x ¾″
9. Anaikuzhal	It is placed inside the the warp thread. After passing the korai in the warp it will be released which will pave the way to give cross.	,,	0 75	Pattamadai	4′ x 2½″ x 1½″
10. Kuchaali	A hole will be made at the left side of Kuchaali from where the korai grass is inserted and taken inside the warp and with the help of the right hand it will be taken out and the grass will be left and the Achu will be pushed to tighten up the weft.	,,	0 62	Pattamadai	45″ x ¾″ x ½″
11. Ethikathai	It helps to rest the Kuchaali at the right side of the weaver.	,,	0 50	Pattamadai	40″ x 2½″ x 1″
12. Cotton Pad	It helps to rest the legs after pressing the Mithi-pattai	Tailor	0 25	Pattamadai	

APPENDIX 4

FANCY ARTICLES PRODUCED AT PATTAMADAI

	Counts			Name of the Article	Prices				
					Rs.	nP.		Rs.	nP.
1.	100	120	140	Purses	2	00	to	3	00
2.	100	120	140	Baby bags	2	50	to	3	75
3.	100	120	140	Documents case	12	00	to	16	00
4.	100	120	140	Suit case.	35	00	to	50	00
5.	40	50	...	Round table mats	6	50	to	8	00
6.	100	120	140	Ladies hand bags	5	00	to	7	00
7.	100	120	140	Trio bags	14	00	to	16	00
8.	100	120	140	Eye pattern bags	9	00	to	12	00
					16	00	to	19	00
9.	100	120	140	'O'Pattern bags	12	00	to	14	00
					15	00	to	17	00
10.	100	...	...	Rolling mats ($1\frac{1}{4}'$ x $6''$)	2	25	to	3	50
11.	100	...	...	Rolling mats ($1\frac{1}{2}'$ x $6''$)	4	00	to	5	00

APPENDIX 5

STATEMENT SHOWING THE TIME TAKEN FOR THE PROCESS OF EACH ITEM BY A SINGLE WEAVER.

Sl. No.	Particulars	Size	100 Counts		120 Counts		140 Counts	
			Days	Hours	Days	Hours	Days	Hours
1	Yarn preparation	30" x 72"	1	2	1	4	2	...
2	Drying the korai grass in the sun: work for one hour daily for 30 days.	,,	3	6	3	6	3	6
3	Tied korai soaking in water for 7 to 10 days at 15 minutes per day	,,	1	2	1	6	2	3
4	Korai splitting	,,	3	...	4	...	5	...
5	Korai dyeing.	,,	...	4	...	4	...	4
6	Weaving.	,,	12	...	16	...	18	...
7	Tightening the weft.	,,	3	...	4	...	5	...
8	Binding	,,	1	...	1	6	2	...
9	Polishing.	,,	...	2	...	3	...	6
		Total	26	...	34	...	40	...

8 hours = 1 day.

APPENDIX 6

COST OF PRODUCTION OF VARIOUS COUNTS

COUNTS	Size	Price of Korai grass	Charges for splitting	Price of cotton yarn	Charges for Twisting	Cost of dyes	Charges for Dyeing	Charges for weaving	Charges for Pushing.	Charges binding & tying the fringes	Charges for Polishing.	Charges for tying the weft	Charges for Knotting	Total	Sale price	Profit	No. of workers.	Days
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
40	11″x17″	0-10	0-12	0-06	0-03	0-10	0-06	0-12	0-12	0-06	0-03	0-03	0-03	0-86	0-98	0-12	1	2 Hour
	18″x24″	0-25	0-19	0-12	0-06	0-19	0-12	0-19	0-19	0-06	0-03	0-06	0-06	1-52	1-69	0-17	1	4 ,,
	30″x72″	0-75	0-75	0-25	0-12	0-50	0-19	0-75	0-75	0-06	0-06	0-25	0-12	4-55	5-07	0-52	3	2 days
	36″x72″	1-25	1-25	0-31	0-19	0-75	0-25	1-25	1-25	0-19	0-12	0-19	0-12	7-12	8-12	1-00	3	3 ,,
	39″x72″	1-25	1-25	0-31	0-19	0-75	0-37	1-50	1-50	0-25	0-12	0-25	0-12	7-86	9-00	1-14	3	4 ,,
50	11″x17″	0-15	0-12	0-06	0-03	0-12	0-06	0-12	0-12	0-06	0-03	0-03	0-03	0-93	1-12	0-19	1	3 Hrs
	18″x24″	0-31	0-37	0-12	0-06	0-19	0-12	0-37	0-37	0-06	0-06	0-03	0-03	2-09	2-44	0-35	1	6 Hrs
	30″x72″	1-00	1-00	0-37	0-25	0-62	0-37	1-00	1-00	0-19	0-12	0-12	0-06	6-10	8-49	2-39	3	3 days
	36″x72″	1-50	1-25	0-50	0-25	0-72	0-50	1-25	1-25	0-25	0-19	0-12	0-12	7-90	10-50	2-60	4	3 days
	39″x72″	1-50	1-50	0-50	0-25	1-00	0-50	1-50	1-50	0-25	0-19	0-12	0-12	8-93	11-75	2-82	4	4 days
100	11″x17″	0-37	0-37	0-19	0-06	0-25	0-12	0-44	0-44	0-06	0-03	0-06	0-03	2-42	2-87	0-45	4	1½ days
	24″x50″	1-50	3-50	0-75	0-37	0-75	0-50	3-50	3.50	0-50	0-19	0-25	0-19	15-50	19-62	4-12	2	8 days
	30″x72″	2-00	3-50	0-75	0-45	1-50	0.75	3-50	3-50	0-50	0-25	0-37	0-19	17-26	20-62	3-36	2	10 days
120	11″x17″	0-37	0-50	0-19	0-12	0-25	0-19	0-50	0-50	0-12	0-06	0-12	0-06	2-98	2-81	0-83	2	2½ ,,
	30″x72″	2-00	4-00	0-75	0-50	1-75	0-75	4-00	4-00	0-75	0-37	0-50	0-25	19-62	26-50	6-88	2	15 ,,
140	11″x17″	0-37	0-75	0-25	0-12	0-31	0-25	0-75	0-75	0-19	0-06	0-12	0-06	3-98	6-18	2-20	2	2 days
	30″x72″	3-00	6-00	1-00	0-62	2-00	1-00	6-00	6-00	1-00	0-50	1:00	0-37	28-49	39-12	10-63	2	20 days

*It is the work of more than one weaver or the work turned out by a single family (Two elders and one child)

APPENDIX 7

TABLE FOR VARIOUS COUNTS OF LOOMS

Name of the village	Name of the craft	No. of weavers	Looms		Various counts in loom				
			Idle	Working	40	50	100	120	140
Pattamadai	Fine mats	173	48	102	35	14	37	6	10

APPENDIX 8

AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME AND DEBT OF THE WEAVERS AS WELL AS THE AVERAGE VALUE OF MAT

Name of the village	Name of the crafts	Monthly income (in rupees)	Debts (in rupees)	Mats (in rupees)
1	2	3	4	5
Pattamadai	Fine mats	13·48	183·53	9·83

APPENDIX 9

DISTRIBUTION OF ARTISAN COMMUNITIES

Name of caste or Community	No. of villages surveyed	Approximate No. of families	Total number of Adult Workers				No. of families working under co-operation	No. of families working in own house or in workshop set up by their employees
			Persons	Males	Females	Children		
Muslim (Lubbais)	One	61	173	69	78	26	61	61

APPENDIX 10

THE PATTAMADAI FINE MAT WEAVERS CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD. O. 1773
SALES DURING FOUR YEARS

1. THE VICTORIA TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS

1959-60	Rs. 7516-27
1960-61	Rs. 5773-25
1961-62	Rs. 7963-19
1962-63	Rs. 1667-74
	Rs. 22,920-45

2. COTTAGE INDUSTRIES SALES EMPORIUM, MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS

1959-60	Rs. 865-59
1960-61	Rs. 786-11
1961-62	Rs. 1936-02
1962-63	Rs. 552-50
	Rs. 4,140-22

3. HANDICRAFTS EMPORIUM, MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS

1959-60	Rs. 796-63
1960-61	Rs. 733-70
1961-62	Rs. 686-73
1962-63	Rs. 410-83
	Rs. 2,627-89

4. KHADI GRAMODYOG BHAVAN, MADRAS

1961-62	Rs. 623-95

5. KHADI GRAMODYOG BHAVAN, CALCUTTA

1959-60	Rs. 1404-08

6. CENTRAL COTTAGE INDUSTRIES EMPORIUM, NEW DELHI-1

1959-60	Rs. 442-66
1960-61	Rs. 411-07
1961-62	Rs. 1310-42
1962-63	Rs. 1189-43
	Rs. 3,353-58

7. MADRAS STATE EMPORIUM, NEW DELHI

1962-63	Rs. 3,367-08

8. COTTAGE AND SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES SALES DEPOT, BOMBAY

1959-60	Rs. 1047-25
1960-61	Rs. 367-89
1961-62	Rs. 305-12
1962-63	Rs. 307-00
	Rs. 2,027-26

9. KHADI GRAMODYOG BHAVAN BOMBAY

1959-60	Rs. 1506-94
1960-61	Rs. 2844-68
1961-62	Rs. 1964-46
1962-63	Rs. 575-67
	Rs. 6,891-75

10. SALES CUM PROCUREMENT DEPOT, TIRUNELVELI

1959-60	Rs. 3183-66
1960-61	Rs. 8480-36
1961-62	Rs. 8797-15
1962-63	Rs. 2318-93
	Rs. 22,780-10

APPENDIX 11

Some of the very important personalities who were presented with Pattamadai Fine mats.

1. Sir Archibald Nye,
   Last English Governor of Madras.
2. Queen Elizabeth II of England.
3. Mr. Khrushchev.
4. Marshal Tito.
5. Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama.
6. King Ibn-Saud.
7. General Eisenhower.
8. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.
9. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike.

APPENDIX 12

NAME OF THE SKILLED ARTISANS

1. P. Shahul Hameed Lubbai.
2. P. Fakir Mohideen Lubbai.
3. M. Sulaiman Lubbai.
4. P. S. Mohideen Lubbai.
5. S. H. Mohamad Ibrahim Lubbai.
6. M. Syed Sulaiman Lubbai.
7. S. Syed Peer Mohamad Lubbai.
8. K. Ramathullah Lubbai.
9. P. Abdul Salam Lubbai.
10. Mohideen Meeran Lubbai.

SOME OF THE IMPORTANT (INSTITUTIONS) IN THE VILLAGE OF PATTAMADAI

1.	High School (Private Management)	1	Pattamadai.
2.	Higher Elementary School (Panchayat Union)	1	Cheranmahadevi.
3.	Elementary School (Private Management)	4	Pattamadai
	Panchayat Union.		,,
4.	Primary Health Centre (Madras Government)	1	Pattamadai
5.	Post Office (Central Government)	1	,,
6.	Weavers Co-operative Society (Handloom)	1	,,
7.	Weavers Carpentry .Co-operative Society.	1	,,
8.	Fine mat weavers ,,	1	,,
9.	Mosque.	2	,,
10.	Big temples	2	,,
11.	Small Temples	25	,,

Heads of lubbai Households engaged in mat-weaving in Pattamadai

1. M. Syed Sulaiman.
2. P. Fakir Mohamad.
3. M. Ahmad Mohideen (Fancy articles)
4. K. Syed Peer Mohamed.
5. A. S. Peer Mohamad.
6. Syed Mohamad Yousuf.
7. P. Shahul Hameed (Fancy articles)
8. Ismail Beevi.
9. M. Abdul Salam.
10. M. Nagore Lubbai.
11. A. Hassan Bava.
12. K. Rahamatullah (two families)
13. A. Mohideen Lubbai.
14. M. Madar Beevi.
15. M. A. S. Peer Mohamad
16. M. Abdul Khadar.
17. A. S. P. Shahul Hameed (two families)
18. M. S. S. Peer (M. D. Mohideen L) (two families)
19. M. Shahul Hameed.
20. S. Fatima Beevi.
21. P. Mohideen Fatimal Beevi.
22. S. M. Peer Mohamad.
23. M. Syed Sulaiman Lubbai (two families)
24. M. Syed Sulaiman (two families)
25. M. Syed Sirajuddin.
26. Abdul Rahman Labbai (three families)
27. K. Moheeden Fatima Bee.
28. A. Mohideen Fatima Beevi.
29. P. S. Kalifa Meeran.
30. S. H. Mohamad Ibrahim.

31. A. A. Syed Peer Mohamad Lubbai.
32. K. H. Mohamad Kasim.
33. P. Syed Mohideen.
34. K. Ibrahim Beevi.
35. U. S. Syed Sirajuddin.
36. V. S. Syed Jamaluddin.
37. M. Abdul Khader Lubbai.
38. M. Syed Ibuna Masoodu Lubbai (three families)
39. K. Syed Sulaiman.
40. M. A. Mohamad Kasim.
41. S. Peer Mohamad.
42. A. P. Mohamad Ibrahim.
43. S. Mohamad Ibrahim.
44. V. S. Mohamad Mohideen.
45. Suna Syed Peer Mohamad.
46. S. N. Kalifa Meeran.
47. M. Syed Fakir Mohideen Lubbai (two families)
48. K. Syed Mohideen Lubbai.
49. U. Khan Mohamed Lubbai.
50. P. Syed Mohamad Pasi Lubbai.
51. K. S. Abdul Khadar.

Note : In some houses two or three families are grouped in a single house. Thus the total number of families is 61.