CENSUS OF INDIA 1961
VOLUME IX

MADRAS

PART VII-A
HANDICRAFTS AND ARTISANS OF MADRAS STATE
ii—PALM LEAF PRODUCTS

P. K. NAMBIAR
of the Indian Administrative Service
Superintendent of Census Operations, Madras
1964

Price: Rs. 5·00 or 11 sh. 8 d. or 1 $ 80 cents.
CENSUS OF INDIA, 1961

(Census Report—Vol. No. IX will relate to Madras only. Under this series will be issued the following publications)

Part I-A ... General Report (2 Volumes)
I-B ... Demography and Vital Statistics.
I-C ... Subsidiary Tables.

Part II-A ... General Population Tables.
II-B ... Economic Tables.
II-C ... Cultural and Migration Tables.

Part III ... Household Economic Tables.

Part IV-A ... Report on Housing and Establishments.
IV-B ... Housing and Establishment Tables.

Part V-A ... Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Report & Tables).
V-B ... Ethnographic notes on Scheduled Tribes.
V-C ... Todas.
V-D ... Ethnographic notes on Scheduled Castes.
V-E ... Ethnographic notes on denotified and nomadic tribes.

Part VI ... Village Survey Monographs (40 Nos. in 10 Volumes).

Part VII-A ... Crafts and Artisans. (9 Nos.)
VII-B ... Fairs and Festivals.

Part VIII-A ... Administration Report—Enumeration
VIII-B ... Administration Report—Tabulation

Part IX ... Atlas of the Madras State.

Part X ... Madras City (2 Volumes)
District Census Handbooks on twelve districts.

Part XI ... Reports on Special Studies.
A ... Handlooms in Madras State.
B ... Food Habits in Madras State.
C ... Slums of Madras City.
D ... Temples of Madras State (5 Volumes).
E ... Physically Handicapped of Madras State.
F ... Family Planning Attitudes: A Survey.

Part XII ... Languages of Madras State.
Field Study: ... ... R. JAGANNATHAN, M. A., Research Assistant.

Supervision and report: ... P. MURARI, I.A.S., Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations.

Editing: ... P. K. NAMBIAR, I.A.S., Superintendent of Census Operations.
CONTENTS

FOREWORD
PREFACE
CHAPTER I—Introduction
CHAPTER II—Palm-Leaf Products of Manapad
CHAPTER III—Palm-Leaf wares of Ramanathapuram
CHAPTER IV—Palm-Leaf wares of Nagore
CHAPTER V—Conclusion

TABLES
1. List of Rural Crafts and number of persons employed in production
2. Distribution of Artisan Communities
3. Distribution of articles of Rural Crafts by materials used
4. Designs
5. Consumption and Sale
6. Cost of Production, Sale Price and earnings
7. List of very skilled Craftsmen in each Community

MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS
1. Location of Centres in Madras State
2. Streets of Manapad Sandy yet firm
3. Francis Xavier’s grotto
4. Ye Old Portuguese Church overlooking the bay
5. Typical English residence at Manapad
6. A front view of Victorian Church
7. The other mid Victorian Church
8. The bay of Manapad
9. Splicing the palm-leaf to the required strip
10. , another view
11. Preparation of a fruit tray
12. ,, stage ii
13. Preparation of the ribbon
14. A Mango fruit basket
15. A fancy palm leaf garland
16. Hexagonal pattern of basketry work
17. A “ bat ” bag—a fancy article of Manapad
18. Making of the shopping basket
19. Articles of delicate workmanship in the show-room
20. Bat bag produced at Nagore
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Illustration Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knives and file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cutting the palm leaf to required size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Design of a marketing bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Shopping bag with lid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fancy Garland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fruit Basket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mango Tray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Supii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shopping bag without lid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Marketing bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Iron Die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Binding Fan leaves with wire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Hammer and Pliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Knives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Processing knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Screw Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Folding Fan: Splitting bamboo handles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Cutting bamboo pieces for fan handles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the major steps by means of which a developing economy seeks to sustain its growth is a rapid expansion of the internal market to absorb increases in production. A second step is to diversify the range of products that will yet restrain within manipulable limits the spiralling of rising expectations. One of the fields which demands immediate attention is traditional handicrafts. The glow of local and National pride of interest in one's own traditions and a variety of emotional attitudes and preferences are invoked in aid of these basic aims. Nor are the aids themselves, even though they make a virtue of necessity, to be scorned as adventitious. The products, mostly handmade and rooted in the traditions of a Nation's culture and economy, are often sources of the deepest satisfaction in everyday life. Apart from the question of its value as a social or ethical investment, opinion on which may differ, the resuscitation of these aids becomes all the more imperative in the preparatory stages of a developing economy (though not perhaps when these stages are traversed) on account of the fact that the tools employed are often timeworn and rudimentary, the pools of skill narrow, highly specialized and hereditary, being limited to certain communities or castes and not infrequently to a few families, and the capital labour ratio associated with these products is favourable to a large population base experiencing large absolute increments which build up large reservoirs of underemployed and therefore cheap labour. Further, the transformation of traditional skill to modern skill either encounters a series of insurmountable difficulties or demands a degree of capital outlay quite beyond the means of a developing Nation which has to concentrate more on goods that will produce goods rather than produce the goods themselves.

There are other objective imperatives, which demand a sustained programme of support and expansion of the handicraft sector in a developing economy. Agriculture is still the mainstay and labour far from the desirable degree of mobility. The inadequate transport and communication network discourages exchange of goods and imposes a pattern of self-sufficiency upon village communities. The pattern of capital-labour ratio obtaining in traditional agriculture imposes itself automatically upon the complementary world of handicrafts and by effectively shutting out rapid improvements in technique ensures the products against disastrous slumps or extinction. In such a situation and on account of the fact that the sector itself is labour intensive, contributes substantially to the National income and causes minimum problems of dislocation, the promotion of handicrafts and expansion of their markets acquires an important place in development plans.

One of the first steps to be taken by the First 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 limitations 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 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 February 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 Welfare, the Registrar of Co-operative 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 either 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 of 1961 were spent in organising and taking the census count, although several States even during 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, Darjeeling 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.

This and a review of the work of village surveys set the signal for the setting up of a Social Studies Division in September 1961 at the Registrar-General's Office, manned by qualified research and investigating officers, technical persons, photographers, artists, draughtsmen and other trained personnel, headed by Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Officer on Special Duty and assisted in an honorary capacity by Mrs. Ruth Reeves who had come by invitation from the All-India Handicrafts Board as early as 1960. Simultaneously State Census Superintendents were permitted to augment their staff according to their requirement.

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. In the meantime the Social Studies Division was able to organise and conduct a large number of central inquiries with the help of elaborately designed schedules, collect a considerable amount of research and library material with many thousands of cross classified index cards, a classified photographic library of about 15,000 accessions which grows daily, with similar complementary material in all State offices.
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. The aim was to hold up the mirror to hereditary skill 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 clienteles they catered for, the extent to which they operated on money, or barter or service, how specialised 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 customer's 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 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 customer's pursestrings.

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, mutually stimulated the Social Studies Division and 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 many States 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. Full statistics will be available in each District Census Handbook by each village of units of traditional and modern crafts and the number of workers engaged in each arranged according to the minor groups of the Standard Industrial Classification. 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

January 20, 1964

ASOK MITRA

Registrar-General, India
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."

Earlier in Harijan dated 18th August, 1940, he had written as follows:

"The whole rural reconstruction programme will be a structure on sand, if it is not built on the solid foundation of economic equality. Economic equality must not be supposed to be the possession of an equal amount of worldly goods by everyone. It does mean, however, that everyone will have a proper house to live and balanced food to eat and sufficient khadi to cover himself. It also means the cruel inequality that obtains today will be removed by purely non-violent means."

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 Shri 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. It has two parts. Part I consists of individual handicrafts on some specialised and traditional handicrafts prevalent in Madras State. Part II consists of certain tables built up for the State district by district and taluk by taluk. It will also contain a village-wise list of crafts arranged in an alphabetical order. Brief notes on important handicrafts practised in the State will also be found. It is our hope that these two parts will give a proper idea of the village industries and handicrafts of Madras State.

In this volume, an attempt has been made to prepare monographs on selected industries noted for their artistic appeal. They include 3 types—(1) Fast dying out; (2) Traditional and thriving; and (3) New Industries or Crafts recently started. The detailed monographs on the following handicrafts will be published:

1. Silk weaving at Kancheepuram.
2. Palm leaf products of Manapad and Nagore.
3. Art Metal Plates of Thanjavur.
(4) Bronze icons of Swamimalai.
(5) Woollen druggets of Wallajapet.
(6) Glazed pottery of Karigiri and Red Pottery of Karakurichi.
(7) Mats of Pattamadai.
(8) Bell Metal and Brass Metal work of Nachiarkoil.
(9) Wood Carving of Madras.

This is the present programme. It is hoped that during the intercensal period, more monographs will be prepared on other handicrafts.

This survey was rendered possible by the sympathetic attitude adopted by the Government of Madras. In their Memorandum No. 49889-E3/-1, dated 2nd May, 1960, the Government 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 fullest co-operation to me in the proposed study. The agency of the Block Development and the Tahsildars was fully utilised for the collection of data.

This book presents a detailed study on Palm-Leaf Products. The survey was conducted by Sri R. Jagannathan, Research Assistant and the report was drafted by Sri P. Murari, I.A.S., Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations. I should place on record the commendable work done by both of them in collecting as much interesting data on the Palm-Leaf products of Manapd and Nagore. It is difficult to acknowledge individually the valuable assistance which we received from various individuals and institutions in the preparation of this monograph. Valuable suggestions were given by Shri A. Mitra, Registrar-General and Dr. Roy Burman, which have enriched the content of this volume.

P. K. NAMBIAR
Any visitor of Madras can see the common palm tree, cousin to the graceful coconut, dotting the landscape, sometimes standing as lone sentinel of the countryside but most often found in clusters. When a strong wind blows, the palm leaves set up a dry rustling, swaying to the direction of the breeze, a sound eerie in nature, matching the appearance of the tree. But many cannot associate these palm leaves with articles of utility and durability, of artistic grace and sophistication, for it requires the magic touch of deft fingers to convert these seemingly useless palm leaves into articles of fancy and utility. The manufactured articles produced especially in three important centres in Madras, viz., Manapad, Nagore and Ramanathapuram combine in them the simplicity and exquisite grace of folk art with all the elements of sophistication.

2. The products of palmyrah leaves are nothing new to rural Madras. The tender leaves of the palm tree have been used in the making of coarse mats which constitute the sole furniture in many a rural household. They have been used in the making of rough boxes and baskets to store grains and household requisites. Wherever palm trees have been found in abundance, people have always been using its leaves for basket-making and mat-making. It is our aim to study the exclusive palm-leaf wares of Manapad or Nagore or any other places where palm-leaf products are imparted a quality of art by local artisans. Before mentioning in detail the methods and economies of production relating to the manufacture of palm-leaf wares in Manapad, Nagore and Ramanathapuram, a general survey of such products in Madras State will be of interest to the reader.

3. Attractive articles are made of palm leaves in the districts of Ramanathapuram, Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli. This craft is very popular in the villages of Tirunelveli district where hundreds of families are engaged in this household industry. Fancy handbags, baskets, decorative handfans and mats are made out of palm leaves. Mats made of palm leaves are used in packing tamarind, chillies etc., for purposes of export.

4. Ornamental fans, artistically painted and decorated with gold foils and silk threads are made of palmyrah leaves in Tirunelveli district. Beautifully painted and attractive boxes in addition to ornamental fans are made by the women of Nagore in Tanjore district. Palmyrah boxes are made by Katasans, the chief community engaged in this craft.

5. In Tirunelveli district, Tiruchendur taluk is well-known for palm-leaf products. Manapad is the main centre for palm-leaf products in Tiruchendur where 72 households belonging to the Parava community are practising this craft. Boxes, suitcases, plates and other fancy articles are produced on a large scale. The raw material for this purpose is imported from Ramanathapuram district when material available locally is not enough to meet the requirements. There is an Industrial Co-operative Society for Women at Manapad and families are working under co-operation. The articles are produced for sale in open market as well as for domestic and ceremonial purposes. Palm leaf products are also exported to other districts and other States.

6. Ramanathapuram is another chief centre for palm-leaf products. At Ramanathapuram, this craft is practised in about six centres. 425 families comprising of 1,709 workers, mostly women, are engaged in producing various attractive palm-leaf articles. Articles such as muram, sitting mats, boxes, baskets, toys, fancy handfans, trays, winnowing fans, money purses, handbags, suitcases etc. are manufactured. The majority of the families engaged in this craft are independent workers working in their own houses or as employees in workshops set up by their employers.

7. In Kanyakumari district, Melkulam centre is noted for its production of palm-leaf products. There is a multi-purpose Co-operative Society which supplies raw materials as also finished products. A Training-cum-Service centre functions in Melkulam of Vilavancode taluk. In Derisanapuram, situated in Thovala taluk, some families are engaged in manufacturing toys out of palm leaves. Sanibavars, Nadars and Muslims are the main communities engaged in this craft. Palm-leaf products are also manufactured in Salem and South Arcot districts.

8. In Chingleput district, the people of Pudukkotai manufacture palm-leaf products and they are said to have exported these articles to Malaya, Singapore and Middle-East countries.

9. Since the palm-leaf products of Manapad, Nagore and Ramanathapuram are more famous than palm-leaf products of other places, we have attempted to explain in detail processes of manufacture relating to these centres.
Manapad is a coastal village on the eastern sea coast. It is 11 miles to the south of Tiruchendur and adjacent to the village of Kulasekarapattam which was a famous port in the olden days and which even though has been shorn of much of its ancient glory, still retains vestiges of that bygone glory, serving the hinterland to a limited extent. To reach Manapad, one has to take the road to Kulasei due south of Tiruchendur for a distance of 9 miles and then take a turning due south again and traverse 1\(\frac{1}{4}\) miles by metalled road to Manapad. The road to Manapad is very picturesque with the sea on the left and undulating sand dunes to the right. The road abruptly comes to an end two furlongs from the village and the motorist has to be extremely wary lest his car get bogged down in the sand. The less intrepid traveller prefers to park his car outside the village and walk through the sand into the village. But in spite of the fact that the village does not boast of any roads, the sandy streets, are firm enough to walk about without much difficulty.

2. The term Manapad may be a corruption of the Tamil word ‘munnarpadi’ meaning a sandy promontory and the place certainly conforms to this apt description. It is a sandy village, a little piece of land jutting into the sea. On the clune of sand stands the ancient lighthouse which guided the alien and native ships to the Kulasai harbour, centuries ago. Today there stands, adjacent to this old lighthouse, whose guiding flames have long since died out, the new modern lighthouse built in the year 1901, flashing its beam of light to guide ships that might care to come to Kulasai harbour. At the very nook of the jutting land-piece overlooking the Bay of Bengal is a grotto. It was once said to be the dwelling place of a Saivite Sanyasi, who chose this place for his arduous penance in peace, undisturbed by the madding crowd. Here, to this cave, came St. Francis Xavier, in the course of his travels. Finding this place peaceful and ideal for his meditations, he is said to have stayed and meditated here for many months and in the words on the tableau fixed to the entrance of this cave, he is said to have “sanctified the cave, once the dwelling place of the Saivite Sanyasi.”

3. Manapad is entirely populated by the Paravas or Bharathavas who are the fishermen community with a long tradition of history. According to the legend, they are said to be the descendants of King Bharatha (Parava is said to be a corruption of this name) of the lunar race and in support of this tradition they refer to their custom of displaying at their marriage feasts banners and emblems peculiar to the race to which they are said to belong. They make their first appearance in history as fishermen and divers of pearls, and as fishermen and pearl divers, they enjoyed a reputation even in olden times. Ptolemy alludes to the pearl fishery and in connection with it mentions the name of the town Sosokourai and Koilkheri. The old Tamil work Kaluvettu refers to the pearl fisheries in the following passage. “Vedanarayana Chetty and the Parava men who fishes pearls by paying tribute to Allaresani, daughter of the Pandya King of Madurai who went on a voyage experienced bad weather in the sea and were driven to the shore of Lunka”. The Madurai Kanchee speaks of Korkai as the chief town of the Paradavars and as the city of pearl fishery and describes the Paradavars as the most powerful people of the country (Ibid, p. 230).

4. Tradition thus points out unmistakably to the Paravas as having from time immemorial conducted the fisheries and in return for tribute paid from the produce of fisheries they obtained from successive rulers the protection of their industry and immunity from further taxation. In 1532 Paravas of the sea coast sent a delegation to Cochin asking for aid from Michael Vaz, the Vicar-General of the Bishop of Goa against the Moors. Michael Vaz sailed back with the Paravas and in consideration of their becoming Christians undertook with the aid of a number of Portuguese followers who accompanied him the chastisement of Moors who threatened the privileged position of the Paravas. Thereupon the Parava inmates became Christians and there was established the “Christianity of the fishery coast”. In 1542 the celebrated Francis Xavier, a member of the Society of Jesus, visited these settlements. Manapad was one of the first villages visited by this saint whose many miracles like the well in the grotto on the seaside face of the cliff from which pure drinking water was obtained are still related in the village. Even now, adjacent to the lighthouse, can be found the ancient Portuguese church constructed in the early 16th century.

5. And yet it was a fairly isolated village in those days. Lying about a mile away on the other side of the river Karumanian, it must have once been quite isolated from the social life of Kulasai. The bridge that connects the two places is but of recent origin and in the olden days ferrying across the river was quite a formidable task and therefore provided a measure of isolation to Manapad.
Streets of Manapad sandy yet firm. The Gothic Church provides a fine back drop.
Francis Xavier’s grotto once the dwelling place of a Saivite Sanyasi.
Ye old Portuguese Church overlooking the bay.
Typical English Residence at Manapad.
A front view of Victorian Church.
The other mid Victorian Church: Solid yet elegant.

The bay of Manapad—A glorious sight in the evening rays of the setting sun or when aurora heralds the morn.
6. A visitor now to Manapad can never find traces of the old Manapad. To-day the village presents an entirely different picture. A stately cathedral in the early Roman style welcomes the visitor to the place and just facing it stands another beautiful church in the Gothic style with stately spires and magnificent arches. Around the churches lie neat straight sandy roads flanked on either side by mansions conforming to the mid-Victorian style of architecture. In the distance, on the sandy promontory that forms the Southern arm of the harbour stands the lighthouse and a small church dating back to the days of Xavier. Actually, the mud walled church built at the time of Xavier was rebuilt in 1602, was subsequently abandoned and is now standing in ruins. According to Tirunelveli District Gazetteer, the Parava villages of the coast such as Manapad, Veerapandyanapatnam and Alantulur stand in a class by themselves and resemble rather small European towns than Indian villages. Manapad is one of the most picturesque villages of the district. The houses are largely copied from models of English residences in Ceylon, are strictly built of stone, are tiled and well ventilated.

7. This change has taken place during the last 50 years. The seclusion and isolation of the Paravas of Manapad was suddenly broken and many left their native homes to find a profitable living in Ceylon and money then began to flow into the village. In those days, nearly three lakhs of rupees flowed into Manapad from Ceylon, every month. The result of this sudden affluence is to be seen in their homes and furniture they maintain, in the exquisitely carved Italian marble altars and decorative pieces found in the churches, in the beautiful marble statues that mark the graves of the once prosperous sons of this village and in the delicately beautiful quartz glasses in daily use in the houses.

8. But the people have remained the same, shy and reticent lot with an attitude to life typical of a seafaring community. The richer members of the community are traders, brokers, contractors and boat-owners. Their usual method of trade is to migrate to Ceylon where they set up as importers of goods from the Indian mainland and as general dealers in all kinds of articles. The merchant leaves his family behind and after an absence of a year is relieved by another member of his family. They love comfort and as a class are shrewd men of business, intelligent and public spirited. The poor classes follow their traditional occupation of fishing. There are no cultivators among them. However, during the last decade, because of severe exchange restrictions and immigration laws imposed both by Ceylon and India, many have repatriated to their home-land, often coming back without money. Hence, many have fallen back on their old profession of fishing and pearl diving and those who had a little money of their own have since been functioning as brokers and boat owners. The present condition of the Paravas at Manapad is rather insecure. Only the external facade of their stately homes and their furniture remain as vestiges of their past glory.

9. Palm leaf wares have never been mentioned in any account of the Paravas. They have been manufactured only in surrounding places. The Muslims and Nadar households of the surrounding villages to this day are engaged in making a rough type of bag from palm leaves called the Onion Bag which is exported in plenty from Kulasei harbour. The Parava women have taken up this craft from the neighbouring Nadar and Muslim households. By nature Parava women are very dexterous and contact with Ceylon where fancy articles are in great demand and where any article can be turned into money has provided an incentive to introduce refinements in articles made out of palm leaves. The thrifty Parava women took to palm leaf basketry to make a little money of their own to augment the income of their families. With their native skill and dexterity, during the last 30 years they have perfected this art to such an extent that it has managed to secure a niche of its own,cornering the market to a large degree with the result that the palm leaf products of Manapad have become a byeword in all houses. The impetus for imitation itself came from different sources. Personal contact with fancy articles of foreign origin is but one. Merchants who used to collect these articles from Manapad to sell elsewhere are also said to have had a hand in introducing new designs. As in Ramannathapuram district, only women make palm leaf wares. It has only been a subsidiary source of income to the households, the main income accruing from fishing or from trade in Ceylon. Even at this time when money no longer flows in from Ceylon, a vast majority of the workers practise this craft only as a subsidiary occupation. It is said that there are about 72 families with a total of 130 workers in Manapad engaged in this craft. Of these, only about 20 women workers treat it as anything like a primary occupation.

Techniques of production

10. The tools and equipments required for this craft are indeed simple. A sharp thin bladed pen knife, a set of needles and coloured threads in case stitching has to be done, tender palm leaves and colours are all that are required for an artisan to practise this craft. The
palm leaf has to be tender as a more mature leaf cannot be spliced into thin strips. One major difficulty which this craft faces in Manapad and the surrounding places is that tender palm leaves are not easily available in spite of the plethora of palm trees in the surrounding areas. Prior to the introduction of prohibition, all the available palm trees were being utilised for tapping and since the cutting of tender leaves out of the trees effected output of toddy, the palm tree owners resented the cutting of such leaves and effectively prohibited it. Since the introduction of prohibition, tapping of trees has gone down considerably, yet the Shenans of this place take to extraction of neera and so tender palm leaves are scarce. Leaves of the required type and maturity have to be brought all the way from the adjacent district of Ramanathapuram. This raises the cost of the leaf to the craftsmen in Manapad which generally ranges from 3 to 4 annas for a full sized palm leaf. During our discussions with the Industries Department, we learnt that they were unable to set apart palm trees for the manufacture of palm-leaf products and perforce have to export the raw material from the adjacent districts. The colours used are generally red, blue, orange and green. The dyes used are obtained from the agents of the Imperial Chemical Industries and there is no household which attempts to use native indigenous dyes.

11. The tender leaves are separated from the crks or the central core of the leaf and spliced into uniform strips of the required size. The width of the strips varies from \( \frac{1}{2} \) to \( \frac{1}{10} \). The cutting of the leaf into uniform strips of such width requires practice and skill. The skilled worker at Manapad adopts an ingenious device to splice the leaf into such uniform strips of the required width. A broad flat palm leaf A-A is folded into two halves at B-B. B-C is marked over the leaf equal to the width of the strips required (Please see sketch below). A small groove is cut at C so that the sharp edge of the knife may be placed in it. The leaf to be cut at D is placed between the folded palm leaf and pulled up slowly so that one edge of it is always pressed against the edge B-C of the folded leaf. The blade placed at C cuts the leaf into two pieces. The operation repeated a number of times provides strips of the uniform size, i.e., of the required width B-C.

12. The thin strips of palm leaves thus spliced are then dyed to the required colour. The dyeing operation is performed as follows: A spoonful of the dye of the required colour is mixed with water raised to boiling point and the thin strips of the leaf are soaked in it. The water containing the leaves is then allowed to cool down for half an hour. The leaves are removed and dried in the shade.

Patterns of weaving and basketry work

13. The dyed strips of leaves and undyed white strips are then utilised in the making of different palm leaf wares. The weaving and basketry work adopted in
Splicing the palm leaf to the required strip.
Another view of splicing raw material.
this place can be broadly grouped into three types, as
under. (1) Simple inter-weaving as in mat work, (2)
Basketry work with the use of erks and (3) Basketry
work without the use of erks.

Simple weaving

14. This process is akin to mat weaving and cloth
weaving. Warps and wefts of palm leaves are inter­
woven to conform to a set pattern according to the
design adopted by the artisan or according to certain
orders placed by customers. The pattern may conform
to any one of the following:

(a) check pattern—Every weft passes over and is
passed over by alternative warps (please see
design).

(b) Twill or trellis design—Each weft passes over
two successive warps and is then passed over by
two warps alternatively.

(c) Hexagonal design—In addition to warps and
wefts which are right-angled to each other,
there are two more strips at 45° to the warps
and wefts and at right angles to each other.

From these basic patterns any number of secondary
patterns can be derived and woven. This type of work
is mainly employed in the making of bags, small mats
etc. They are more widely prevalent in Nagore and
Ramanathapuram than in Manapad. In bags and
other fancy articles made for the common market, the
width of the leaf employed is slightly more than \(\frac{1}{4}\)".
In articles requiring a finer texture, strips of palm leaf
of a width of \(\frac{1}{4}\)" are employed; the smaller the width
of the palm leaf, the finer the texture of the weaving.
In such fine textures, however, a background of coarse
palm leaf is provided to support the texture and to
make the article stronger and thus utilitarian.

Basketry with the use of erks

15. This type of work is widely prevalent in the
palm leaf wares of the Chittarkottai area in Ramana­
thapuram district. Such articles are also manufac­
tured in Manapad but not on the scale obtainable in
Ramanathapuram. In this process, the strip of palm
leaf is used as a fastening hand over a framework of
erks. The erk is the central core of the palm leaf. The
final form resembles the trellis pattern as can be seen
from the sketch below.
In Chittarkottai of Ramanathapuram district, this type of basketry work is employed in the manufacture of baskets, bags, suitcases and a variety of other articles. The support provided by the erks makes the articles more durable and of utilitarian value.

**Basketry work without erks**

16. This process is peculiar to Manapad alone and deserves special mention. Thin strips of palm leaves are joined together by winding over them a running strip. This band is then furled like a ribbon and fastened together by a thin strip of leaf connecting the successive layers at fixed intervals yielding thereby a uniform and rhythmic pattern. The pattern is illustrated in the annexed sketch. This type of basketry work is employed in the manufacture of articles that are not only useful but are also artistic in appearance. The common types of articles are fruit trays, delicate baskets etc.

17. The above three types of processes concern only mat weaving and basket weaving. Besides these, there are other products manufactured out of palm leaf which do not fall into any of the three categories described above. These relate to the delicate and beautiful imitation flowers, the making of garlands, bouquets, wreaths and bunches. In the manufacture of these, personal skill of the artisan plays a most important part as they have to be fashioned completely out of hand, though with the same tools used in the manufacture of other palm leaf products.

18. Palm leaf trays of different designs, are the specialities of Manapad. Mats, baskets and boxes are made in Ramanathapuram and Nagore as well, though their production at Manapad reaches a refinement and taste not captured elsewhere, as is evident from the subdued colour and simple and elegant make up. But the trays of Manapad stand out for their artistic conception and delicacy of texture not found in any other centre of production. Therefore, detailed treatment has to be given to the manufacture of such trays.

19. The techniques adopted in the manufacture of baskets are followed in the manufacture of these trays. The process of basketry work itself is quite simple. The tender palm leaf is spliced into thin rushes, generally about 1/6" in width and wherever necessary, they are coloured in orange, blue and green tints with the help of colour dyes. Simultaneously with the preparation of the leaves, the ribs are also prepared. Every tray has four distinct parts, the soft central circle, the hard outer circle, the border and the rim or edge.

20. The soft central circle is basketry work without the use of palm leaf ribs. Cut strips of the required width 1/6" are joined together two or three at a time and rolled up like a ribbon. The successive circles are fastened together by thin strips of leaf connecting each other at fixed intervals yielding at the same time a uniform pattern. The pattern is illustrated in the sketch.

21. The hard outer circle is a continuation of the soft central circle. The central circle is not generally more than 2" in diameter. After the preparation of this central core, the basketry work is continued as before, but tender ribs or erks are included in the ribbon. The inclusion of ribs at this stage gives the much needed firmness to the article.

22. The borders come just before the edge or the rim. Two or three lines of basketry work may separate the border from the rim. The border is generally some crescent or trellis pattern produced with coloured erks.
Preparation of the ribbon described in para. 20 of the report. These are used as the motif pieces in the mango fruit tray etc.
Stage II of manufacture of trays: Making of the soft central circle described in pcra. 20 of the report.
Fruit tray: Preparation of the borders. Video para. 22 of the report.
Making of a fruit tray. After the preparation of the hard outer circle tender arks are included in the ribbon. (para. 21 of the report)
A fruit basket, the speciality of Manapad.
A mango fruit basket—A product of exquisite workmanship seen at Manapad.
A fancy palm leaf garland.
Hexagonal pattern of basketry work. Another choice design of fruit tray.
23. The rim is the most solid part of the tray. It is made by the use of tender bamboo stalks or by bunching together a set of uniformly thick erks and binding them together with strips of palm leaf. This is then worked into the tray.

Variety of products

24. The following articles are made out of palm leaves. Only a few of them can be used from the point of utility, while others are meant only for decoration:—Suitcases, bags, shopping handbags, boxes, garlands, flower bouquets, toys, screens or thatties, sitting mats, glass holders, vases, plates, trays etc.

Economies of production

25. During our survey we estimated that 130 workers belonging to 72 households were currently engaged in this craft. It is, however, difficult to ensure the accuracy of these figures, there being no regularity in the practice of this craft. The figures available to us from a survey of the industry conducted by us revealed that there are nearly 450 persons employed in this craft, but they belong to the surrounding villages and are engaged in the manufacture of various articles like mats, baskets, suitcases etc., and exclude the workers engaged in Manapad village. Many are skilled in the craft, but do not practise it as a primary or even a subsidiary occupation. Others take to it in sporadic bursts depending on their personal inclination and the leisure time available. The regular production and sale is being effected through the Cooperative Society set up in Manapad village and the 88 members who have been contributing in various ways to the saleable stock of palm-leaf products in the Cooperative Society and 25 other members who are outside the pale of the Society may be taken to be the actual working class in this craft.

26. The cost of the raw material is low compared to other raw materials used in the manufacture of articles belonging to the category of handicrafts. This craft is labour consuming as manpower can at no stage be substituted by machine power and the process of knitting palm leaves together calls for skill and application. It is also time consuming. The finer the texture, the more time consuming is the process of manufacture. In one sq. ft. of knit work where the width of the palm leaf employed is \( \frac{1}{2} \)", there will be 24 warps and 24 wefts. Consequently there will be 576 intersections. Where the width of the leaf employed is \( \frac{1}{4} \)", there will be 48 warps and 48 wefts having 2304 intersections. Thus the knitting has to be repeated more often and consumes more time and labour. The reward, however, is not commensurate to the labour and time which goes into production. This reward varies between item to item. A sample of 20 households was taken up for the purpose of this study to ascertain the value of sales on two week days with an interval of 3 days. The information was collected by visiting the household on Wednesday and Friday. Members within the cooperative fold as well as outside the cooperative fold were contacted. Sales refer to the value of sales to the Cooperative Society and the income figures refer to the income of the household and not per capita income. This enquiry revealed that the income of a household ranged from 5\(^\text{1/2}\) Annas to Rs. 1-14-0 per day. It also revealed that many workers could get between Annas 12 to Rs. 2 per day if they worked throughout the day for 10 hours. But this reward was not uniform in all cases, for all items of work. It varied with the type of the work, the demand for the article and the quality of the product. This varied between worker and worker.

27. An estimation of the total annual production in this place presented us with some difficulties. But since nearly 90% of the production is channelised through the Cooperative Society for women workers, the figures from the registers of the Cooperative Society was taken as the basis to work out total production. The following
are the figures as available from the Society's registers for the last three years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1957-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. nP.</td>
<td>Rs. nP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles—those which are fancy articles...</td>
<td>291.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles which are artistic as well as utilitarian</td>
<td>1,879.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2,171.06 9,779.55 18,289.58

28. Figures for earlier years are not available as the Society was formed in 1957. We have assumed, based on our enquiries, that nearly 90% of the production is sold through the Cooperative Society. On this basis, the total value of articles produced and sold in Manapad would be in the region of Rs. 20,000 in the year 1959-60. In the early stages of the setting up of the Cooperative Society, a portion of the total production was sold to private merchants and the Cooperative Society was not utilised to maximum advantage and, therefore, the figures relating to 1957-58 may not present a correct picture of the total production during that year in the village. Subsequently the Cooperative Society had achieved a fair measure of success in not only increasing membership but also channelising their sales through the Society. This is evident from the fact that the production figures increased nearly five times between 1957-58 and 1958-59 and again doubled itself before 1960.

29. The pattern of sales is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) In the local markets through the Society</th>
<th>1957-58</th>
<th>1958-59</th>
<th>1959-60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rs. nP.</td>
<td>977.13</td>
<td>3,960.96</td>
<td>3,007.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) In the State through agency</td>
<td>532.84</td>
<td>8,069.46</td>
<td>10,029.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Outside the State but within India</td>
<td>104.85</td>
<td>946.69</td>
<td>2,359.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Overseas markets</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>4,692.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above figures, it is apparent that the pattern of sales has varied considerably during the last three years. In the year 1957-58, the local markets have been the main source of demand and very little was sold outside India. In 1958-59 the sales in the local markets increased considerably and the amount of sales within the State increased by nearly 15 times. The sales within India and outside the State also increased 7 times. But there was no overseas sales. In 1959-60 whereas the demand in the local market decreased to a certain extent there was a spurt in the sales within the State and the sales outside the States also increased by 2½ times. Due to the popularity of the articles, foreign markets accounted for 20% of the total sales in that year. The orders are placed direct with the Cooperative Society and sometimes through the Industries and Cooperative Department to the Society.

30. The producers themselves never take the produced goods to the bazaars or fairs for marketing. Before the setting up of this Cooperative Society in 1957, merchants used to collect these articles from workers who are outside the Cooperative fold, but the price they pay is low and as the Cooperative Society pays its members more for the same articles much of the production is channelised through the Cooperative Society.
A fancy article of Manapad. A 'bat' bag.
Making of the shopping basket. These are more well known in Ramanathapuram than in Manapad and are not a speciality of the latter.
Articles of delicate craftsmanship and of an endless variety in the show-room
Bat bag produced at Nagore
Palm leaf box of Nagore
Varieties of baskets on display at Nagore
Bags and baskets produced at Nagore
Raw material: Bundles of palm leaf used at Nagore
CHAPTER III

PALM-LEAF WARES OF RAMANATHAPURAM

Palm-leaf wares are made in Ramanathapuram district at Chittarkottai, Ramanathapuram, Devipatnam, Rameswaram, Kilakkarai and Thiruppullani. While every centre produces most of the articles available at Manapad like mats, bags, suitcases, trays etc., the production of certain articles is the speciality of each centre. Thus Chittarkottai specialises in the production of hats and purses. Hats and purses produced at this centre is by far superior to similar articles manufactured at other centres. Ramanathapuram is noted for its winnows, sieves, trays and toys. Devipatnam specialises in handfans and square mats, while Rameswaram is noted for its production of square boxes.

2. The abundance of palm leaves, the basic raw material for this craft, is the main reason for the localisation of the industry in this part of Ramanathapuram district. Another reason is in the demand caused by the almost continuous stream of pilgrim population visiting Ramanathapuram, Devipatnam, Rameswaram, Kilakkarai and Thiruppullani. In Chittarkottai and Kilakkarai, this craft is largely practised by Muslim women. They have regular contacts with Muslim families of Nagore and so the fineness noticed in the finished wares of Chittarkottai can be attributed to the contact with the Muslim women of Nagore noted for their artistic skill in the production of palm leaf wares. It is said that palm leaf weaving was earlier established in Nagore than in Ramanathapuram and it may be that the contacts between Muslim families of Nagore and Ramanathapuram may have something to do with the origin of this craft in the centres of Ramanathapuram district.

3. In all the six centres of production, the craft is exclusively practised by women workers as a handicraft. There are no intermediaries at the stage of supply of raw materials or the final stage of production, and therefore, there are no intermediaries who undertake production by employing workers on wage basis. At the stage of marketing, however, the intermediaries have an important role to play. This is entirely due to the remoteness of the markets in Ramanathapuram district and the seasonal nature of the demand for these products. An ordinary worker of Chittarkottai or Kilakkarai does not have the facilities to market his wares at Ramanathapuram or Rameswaram which are the main marketing centres and further, demand is not uniform throughout the year. It is at its maximum during February and March when pilgrims flow in large
numbers to the holy shrines of this area. This necessarily provides opportunities to middlemen who can stock these wares and later on transport them to remote marketing centres. The Statistical Department of the Government of Madras which conducted a survey in 1956 estimated the total number of merchants in all the six centres as 27 and the total number of families engaged in the production of palm leaf wares as 405. The following Table furnishes the consumption of raw materials per family per annum engaged in the manufacture of palm leaf products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Nos.</th>
<th>Cost per unit</th>
<th>Total cost</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Palm tender leaves ...</td>
<td>1,682</td>
<td>0 0 6</td>
<td>52 1 0</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Palm green leaves ...</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>0 0 3</td>
<td>11 2 0</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Palm leaf stems ...</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>0 0 3</td>
<td>11 2 0</td>
<td>14.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Palm tender ribs ...</td>
<td>775 lbs.</td>
<td>0 10 0</td>
<td>25 1 0</td>
<td>19.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Palm coir ...</td>
<td>765 Nos.</td>
<td>0 10 0</td>
<td>5 1 0</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Date ribs ...</td>
<td>550 Nos.</td>
<td>0 4 0</td>
<td>1 1 0</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Colours (dyes)</td>
<td>3.1 tolas</td>
<td>0 8 0</td>
<td>15 1 0</td>
<td>12.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Turmeric ...</td>
<td>26 palams</td>
<td>1 4 0</td>
<td>0 1 0</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Coloured cloth ...</td>
<td>22/11 yards</td>
<td>0 10 0</td>
<td>1 1 0</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Thread ...</td>
<td>74 reels</td>
<td>1 2 0</td>
<td>8 0 0</td>
<td>6.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Of the above, the cost of palm leaf and other palm leaf accessories formed 79.2% of the total value of the consumption of raw materials. These raw materials are available locally as the area abounds in palm trees. In fact palm leaves are exported to the adjoining district of Tirunelveli and to Manapad in vast quantities as raw material for the manufacture of their products. An average sized palm tree supplies about 10 new leaves every year out of which about 5-6 leaves are cut. The cost of the leaf is only about half anna which is considerably cheaper than the 3 to 4 annas paid at Manapad, as the latter price includes the cost of transport. The colours such as red and green are obtained from the local agents of the Imperial Chemical Industry. For colouring the leaves yellow, turmeric is used.

5. The following Table indicates the tools and equipment used by each family with its approximate cost:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Nos.</th>
<th>Initial cost</th>
<th>Repair cost</th>
<th>Present market value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Small knives</td>
<td>2.2 0 14 9</td>
<td>0 15 0</td>
<td>0 8 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Big knives</td>
<td>0.8 0 15 4</td>
<td>0 15 7</td>
<td>0 11 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Grinding stones</td>
<td>0.2 0 8 0</td>
<td>0 10 2</td>
<td>0 7 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Needles</td>
<td>1.1 0 0 9</td>
<td>0 9 0</td>
<td>0 0 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Scissors</td>
<td>0.2 0 6 6</td>
<td>0 6 6</td>
<td>0 2 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hammers</td>
<td>0.1 0 2 8</td>
<td>0 2 8</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Most of the tools and equipment used are not elaborate and are very rudimentary and its initial cost is so cheap viz., Rs. 3 that it is possible for an average family to replace equipment from time to time when they are no longer serviceable.

6. The following Table furnishes the output per family per annum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Output numbers</th>
<th>Price per unit</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percentage to total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Main products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Fancy baskets</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>0 1 9</td>
<td>163 0 3</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Winnows</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>0 3 0</td>
<td>120 8 3</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Square fancy mats</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>0 2 3</td>
<td>68 2 3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fancy hats</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>0 3 0</td>
<td>47 14 9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fancy hand bags</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>0 5 6</td>
<td>43 7 0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Set of boxes</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>0 3 6</td>
<td>23 8 3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Fancy trunk boxes</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0 10 0</td>
<td>21 12 6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hand fans</td>
<td>2,204</td>
<td>0 0 4</td>
<td>45 13 3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5,418</td>
<td>534 2 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. By-products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm ribs</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0 0 6</td>
<td>3 0 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The average estimated production per family unit is 5,418 articles valued at Rs. 534.15 which excludes the 96 units of bye-products valued at Rs. 3. The average production per adult worker per annum is 2,007 articles, valued at Rs. 97.81.

7. The figures furnished above refer to the average estimated production which does not necessarily connote that every household manufactures all the items mentioned in the Table. We have already stated that every centre specialises in the manufacture of certain articles. It is further found that on an average about 36.4 households out of every 100 concentrate on the production of only one variety, 39.4% of the households produce two varieties, 18.2% produce three varieties and 6.2% produce four varieties.

8. From the survey it was calculated that every worker works for 298 days in a year. The estimated production in Ramanathapuram on the basis of the ascertained value of production per average simple household is that Rs. 2,16,300 worth of main products and Rs. 1,200 of ancillary products are manufactured per annum. Production is higher during February-March owing to the rush of pilgrims to Rameswaram and Thirupullani during these months.

9. We have already stated that at the stage of supply of raw materials and production of the palm-leaf products, no intermediaries are present and, therefore, they do not organise production. So no wages in the accepted sense of the term are paid to the workers. The difference between the sale price and the cost of production constitutes the remuneration of the workers. The Sample Survey estimates the annual income of the family to be Rs. 397 working out to an average of Rs. 33 per month.

Cost of production

The cost of production per average family unit which yields the residuary income is furnished below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of cost</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Percentage to total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Raw materials</td>
<td>130 1 0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Fuel</td>
<td>4 0 0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Rent (estimated)</td>
<td>7 0 9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Repair (estimated)</td>
<td>2 0 9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Maintenance of tools and machinery</td>
<td>0 6 4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Depreciation value of tools and machinery</td>
<td>0 10 2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Wages payable</td>
<td>396 15 6</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>541 2 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sale value of the product

| (a) Main product                      | 534 2 6    |
| (b) Bye-products                      | 3 0 0      |
| (c) Waste                             | 4 0 0      |
|                                         | 541 2 6    |

Raw materials and fuel constitute 24.7% of the total cost of production and wages or rather remuneration to workers forms 73.4% of the total cost which shows that the actual cost price is not in any way commensurate with the final sale price.
Introduction

The origin of the palm leaf industry here is definitely not cloaked by the mist of antiquity. The refinement of the craft are of fairly recent origin, say about 20 years and it has thrived well following the impetus given to it by the Second World War. But the origin of the craft cannot be traced with any degree of precision. Our informants stated that the craft had been in existence in this place for a long period. The original mat and basket weaving must have been in existence for more than a decade, but the finer refinements, especially the folding fan which has earned an enviable reputation, must have been of recent origin. Even now a comparison of some of other articles like mats, suitcases, baskets and trays produced at Nagore with those of Manapad would reveal the technical excellence of the latter. The craft here must have developed from a small beginning of making useful household articles into one of making fancy articles of smooth texture and delicacy of finish. Before the II World War, the craft is said to have been confined to a few selected Muslim families, about 15 to 20 in number. The Muslim merchants of Nagore had business connections in Malaya, Singapore and Burma before the turn of the century and, therefore, the families here being top notchers in business have gradually established overseas contacts. With the beginning of the II World War, there was an interruption in the flow of money from the overseas centres to the households in Nagore. This craft was taken up by many families in order to tide over the crisis created by the war. At the end of the war in 1945, normal relations with overseas branches of the business concerns were resumed, but the craft had been so well organised during the interregnum that it came to be well established. These overseas contacts also served as a channel for marketing the wares produced at Nagore. In fact the designs for the excellent folding fans with Japanese and Burmese motifs have been imported from Malaya, Singapore and Burma.

Since the palm leaf folding fan of Nagore is the Speciality here, we have attempted to describe the transformation of an ordinary palm leaf into a folding fan ablaze with a riot of colours through its various stages.

Its source of origin is Japan. It is, therefore, not indigenous. It has come to Nagore from Japan, and Malaya via businessmen who sojourn at Malaya, Singa-
The screw press: It is used to cut the blades from the palm leaf.
Cutting of bamboo handles for making ornamental fans at Nagore
Splicing bamboo for preparing fan handles (Nagore)
Preparing the handles for the fans: Nagore
Dyeing the fan handles a deep purple (Nagore)
Cutting of the Copper wire to bind the fan blades: Nagore
The screw press yields fan blades of the required size. These are collected and arranged according to the size of the fan, tied and sent for binding with Copper Wire.
The iron die is cast to conform to the shape of a palm leaf blade which forms the integral part of the fan. Its lower edges are sharp and the upper edges are blunt. This die is to be fixed into the screw press. The screw press is formed with the help of two planks of wood. The lower plank is fixed to an immovable board and the upper plank connected to the handle with threads on which it can be raised or lowered by a rotary motion. The iron die is attached to the upper plank by fixing it to an upper aperture.

The different stages of manufacture of the fan are as follows:

1. Preparation of the blade.
2. Preparation of the handle.
3. Preparation of the fan, and
4. Decoration.

Stage I

As in the making of other palm leaf wares, the leaf used in making the blades of the fan should be tender. The ribs are removed from the leaves which are then gently dried in the shade. The average length of the blade may be 4-5", the width of each blade at the centre being about $\frac{1}{2}$" to $\frac{3}{4}$". It is rounded at one end and gradually tapers at the other end. For convenience, these two ends will be henceforth called the upper and lower ends. The upper end is smoothly rounded off, the lower end retaining its flat edge.

The blades are cut into uniform size; a 10" fan has about 56 blades and an 8" fan about 37 blades. To ensure uniformity in size, the blades are cut with the help of the iron die. The die of the required size is fitted to the aperture of the upper plank of wood in
the screw press. A bundle of palm leaves are folded in an orderly fashion upon the lower plank of wood and the die is placed on it and gently pressed down by screwing down the movable board. The sharp edge of the die cuts the leaf and yields blades of the uniform size.

Stage II

The length of the handle varies according to the size of the fan, being 7" for a 8" fan and 8-9" for a 10" fan. The handle is prepared from bamboo by splicing it into thin, narrow strips $\frac{3}{16}$" in width. The handles are invariably coloured purple. The dyeing of the handles is performed in the following manner. Water is boiled in an iron vat and at boiling point, the dye, at the rate of one large spoonful for a gallon of water, is mixed into it. Bundles of bamboo sticks, split to the required size, are thrown into the water and are allowed to remain there for 10-15 minutes. They are then removed and allowed to dry in shade.

Stage III

The blades are arranged together and with the help of a sharp needle, a hole is drilled through the blades at the lower end. Handles are attached one on either side and holes are drilled through them to correspond to the hole in the blades. A thin copper wire is passed through the holes of the blades, with the help of a needle and is fastened together. The blades are then loosely sewn together in such a fashion that the blades can spread out like a fan. This stitching is cunningly done, so that it is not visible when the fan is unfolded.

Stage IV

The fan is now handed over to the artists, armed with colours, paints and brushes. They deftly paint scenery and flower motifs on both sides of the fan. This lends colour and enchantment to the fan. After the paint has dried, the fans are refolded and tied together and are now ready for sale.

At present there are 1,500 households in Nagore and its environs, i.e., in the surrounding villages of Thirupperithi, Thiruthucheri and Alliyur engaged in the production of palm leaf wares. This work is mostly done by the Muslim gosha women in their houses. But we found that there was a number of non-Muslim households especially the Katasans and the Vellalars who are engaged in the manufacture of palm leaf articles. The craft was originally the monopoly of Muslims, but this monopoly has been gradually broken and the Hindu Vellalars have also become adepts in the art.

At the stage of supply of raw materials and production, there is no need for intermediaries. The raw materials for this craft being tender leaves and ribs of the palmyrah tree abounding in the neighbourhood of Nagore, they are available at cheap cost, $\frac{1}{5}$ to 1 anna for a full grown leaf. The households themselves purchase the raw materials and undertake production on a household scale.

But the marketing of wares involves risks which are beyond the capacity of an average producer. The local market is not very promising, the demand being low and the competitors many, who saturate the town with a flood of palm leaf articles. If the product is to be sold at reasonable prices, it has to be taken to distant markets which implies a capacity to stock these articles and organise sales on a wholesale and retail basis. There are not many merchants in Nagore who deal in palm leaf wares. Messrs. Nagutha Lateef & Co. is the only firm who deal in these wares on a large scale. They do not themselves organise production except the manufacture of palm leaf fancy fans for which they have a market. This firm was started in the year 1950 with a small capital of Rs. 1,000. But during the last
twelve years, the concern has expanded by leaps and bounds and today it is exporting palm leaf products to various overseas markets as well as to emporia all over India to the tune of Rs. 50,000. Their various departments are housed in six buildings. As already stated, they enjoy a monopoly in the manufacture of palm leaf articles. They have permanent arrangements with companies in London such as Eastern Impex Co., "Indian Craft" and "Singhala Overseas" to flood England with these palm leaf wares, particularly the shopping bags, dinner mats and the folding fans. These folding fans, because of their attractive designs have caught the eye of connoisseurs in the West and form the major item of sale for this Company. The sale figures for 1956-60 of this concern are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>90,376.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>95,871.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>1,01,958.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>1,18,166.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The firm has its own Research Department which has suggested a number of reforms to simplify methods of production and to enhance the beauty of the designs. The firm has also been negotiating with a Tokyo firm for mechanising the process of stitching of the folding fans and spraying colours on the palm leaves instead of painting by the artisan as is being done now. There are four or five other shops of medium size who purchase the articles manufactured in the households in Nagore and in the neighbouring villages for local sales and for export to distant markets, but their volume of sales is not even 25% of what is effected by Messrs. Naguthe Lateef & Co. The collection of these articles is organised through special agents in every village. When products are brought from various sources, there is bound to be lack of uniformity in size and fall in the quality of production. There is no uniform reward for labour either. Every effort is, however, made to ensure uniformity in size by distributing size specifications and production is guided at periodical intervals, into new channels to cater to changes in taste which these firms are able to ascertain through some rough and ready reckoner of sales statistics. Mostly, the main period of sales activity is during the celebrations of the famed Durgah of the Nagore Andavar situated in this place at which shrine both Hindus and Muslims, without distinction of caste and religion, congregate and worship. The corridors of the Durgah then become a huge sales emporium where palm leaf products of different varieties are stocked by all the firms and brisk sales are effected throughout the entire period of the festival. Afterwards there is a lull in local produce except where firms execute orders placed with them for overseas export and to other markets throughout India.
CHAPTER V

This craft is riddled with a few problems peculiar to it and faces competition from other sources. Even though korai grass products are different in texture and quality, yet they are more durable than palm leaf products and so mats, baskets, purses and bags made out of korai grass appear to be more popular than those manufactured with palm leaves. Within the various centres, there is large divergence in the quality of the products. The articles of Manapad distinguish themselves from others, except of course the folding fans and hats of Nagore, in fineness of texture and delicacy of finish which suit the discriminating taste of the connoisseurs. Nevertheless, the extravagance of colour, the size and durability of the Ramanathapuram articles, although tending to be gaudy still attract the overseas buyer who prefers them to the more delicate Manapad wares. There is another aspect also. The manufacturers of palm leaf wares in Nagore and in Ramanathapuram district have the advantage of getting their raw materials at cheaper rates whereas at Manapad the cost of materials is much higher and the number of workers employed in it are correspondingly smaller. Palm leaf products themselves cannot be stored for a long time anticipating future demand because palm leaves thus stored up lose their freshness and sheen. The wares after some time become less firm and change their colour to yellow. The raw material thus becomes useless for production unless they are fresh and finished products become unsaleable if stored for a long time.

The Government have done their best to promote this craft at Manapad. The women workers' Cooperative Society was inaugurated in 1957. It has 88 members on its roll whereas 60 others are active sympathisers. Financial grants to the tune of Rs. 2,500 and loans to the extent of Rs. 15,000 have been given to the Society since its inception. The Society buys the products of its members at prices fixed by the Board of Directors and sells it to different emporia and merchants in and outside the State. It procures raw materials and supplies them to its members at cost price from time to time. After analysing its own sales statistics, it encourages the production of particular items. Only now the Society has been able to show a profit, thanks to its interest and enthusiasm of the members.

A short training course was organised in 1957 and training was imparted for three months to 20 young members drawn from Manapad and the surrounding villages, with the assistance of a skilled instructor. As a result of this training, the finish of the products has improved and certain new items such as palm leaf garlands and flower sprays have been newly introduced.

One wonders what further scope this craft has for expansion and improvement. At the outset, we must emphasise that articles made out of palm leaves are more of artistic than of utilitarian value. Articles such as shopping bags, baskets and suitcases can be used for day to day chores, but their utility is limited as they cannot bear heavy weights and in rural parts, the more durable the article, the more is its demand. At the most, they can be used as decorative pieces by sophisticated urban folk. Further, they do not last long as the colour fades and the articles become soggy after sometime. Thus, even as decorative pieces, their lifespan is short. In view of this they cannot command high prices. At higher prices, articles made out of cane, bamboo or wood compete successfully with palm leaf wares, not only for their artistic work, but also for their superior durability and being time consuming the rewards derived out of the manufacture of palm leaf wares cannot exceed what it is at present. Its scope is limited in its employment potential. The income which a household can derive is very low. It has no roots in the culture and antiquity of the southern Madras. It has thrived by the enthusiasm of the merchant class, the cheapness of the raw material and availability of cheap labour.
Once the copper wire is inserted into the fan blades it is screwed down so that on unfolding the blades open out like a fan.
Colouring the fan of Nagore
With his paint brush an artist works miracles on a pale yellow palm leaf fan. When he is done with it the unfolded fan competes with the peacock’s tail.
Artist painting a shopping bag at Nagore
Weaving an ordinary table mat at Nagore
Folding Fan
Folding Fan.
# TABLE I

## LIST OF RURAL CRAFTS AND NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN PRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Craft</th>
<th>Number of Villages</th>
<th>Number of persons employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm leaf ware</td>
<td>Manapad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nagore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chettiarkottai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ramanathapuram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Devipatnam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rameswaram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kiliakkarai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thiruppolleni</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# TABLE II

## DISTRIBUTION OF ARTISAN COMMUNITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Caste and Community</th>
<th>Number of villages surveyed</th>
<th>Approximate number of families</th>
<th>Total number of adult workers</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No. of families working under Co-operation</th>
<th>Number of families working in own houses or in workshop set up by the employers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paravas</td>
<td>1 Manapad</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>All in own houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>Nagore (Nagore, Thiruppanthi, Thiruttucheri, Aliyur) (approx.) Chittiarkottai, Kilakarai</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>All in own houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>Ramanathapuram (approx.)</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>All in own houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Devipatnam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rameswaram</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE III

**DISTRIBUTION OF ARTICLES OF RURAL CRAFTS BY MATERIALS USED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Article</th>
<th>Name of Material</th>
<th>Number of villages engaged in manufacture</th>
<th>Name of Material</th>
<th>Number of villages engaged in manufacture</th>
<th>Place from which imported</th>
<th>Number of villages engaged in manufacture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palm leaf wares</td>
<td>Palmyra leaf</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Colours</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Name of the raw materials imported</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palmyra leaf</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Bamboo</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Colours obtained from ICI dyes. Palm leaves obtained from the neighbourhood</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE IV

**DESIGNS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of articles</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Self-designed</th>
<th>Middlemen</th>
<th>Design Centres</th>
<th>Co-operative Sales Societies</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>No. of villages engaged in it</th>
<th>Colour used</th>
<th>No. of villages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palm leaf wares</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ramanathapuram designs are mainly traditional and partly self-designed. Middlemen always supply new designs to workers. In Manapad, Co-operative Sales Society helps the weavers with new designs. In Nagore middlemen obtain designs from overseas markets and design centres and commission their production.

- Trays: All Centres, Bright Red
- Baskets: Manapad, Yellow
- Garlands: Manapad, Bright Blue
- Suit Cases: All Centres, Bright Green
- Toys, Tables & Chairs: Manapad & Nagore, Orange...
- Folding fans: Nagore, Mild red & green & mild
- Fans: Nagore, yellow

Ramanathapuram Centres and Nagore
Palm Leaf Products

Table V

Consumption & Sale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Article</th>
<th>Number of villages which entirely produce for use</th>
<th>No. of villages producing for personal use and sale</th>
<th>No. of villages which produce for sale in open market</th>
<th>No. of villages where there are Co-operative Sale Societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palm leaf wares</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>Ceremonial</td>
<td>Order of midmen</td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>All villages produce for sale. Some of the articles are for domestic use; some for pure fancy</td>
<td>All centres produce for sale in the open market</td>
<td>Manapad Ramanathapuram</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VI

Cost of Production, Sale Price and Earnings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of article</th>
<th>No. of villages surveyed</th>
<th>Cost per L.B. per village of raw material</th>
<th>Cost per L.B. per village of concession into finished</th>
<th>Average sale price of finished goods</th>
<th>Average earning per worker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palm leaf ware</td>
<td>Manapad</td>
<td>Rs. 2-4-0 per L.B.*</td>
<td>About 51 women-hours (†)</td>
<td>Rs. 12-8-0 per L.B.‡</td>
<td>Rs. 10-4-0 per L.B.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About 3-6 per hour

Foot Note:

The figures above need some explanation. In the first place many of them are highly approximate.

* Cost per L.B. of raw material is worked out as follows:

The annexed table gives the detailed cost of production of about 10 different items. The total consumption of leaves is about 10 leaves for these 10 specimens. In addition many ribs have been used. A leaf may weigh roughly about 3 ounces. When it is dried after colouring the weight may be less, but due to the use of large quantity of ribs, we may take the weight to be around 3 ounces for a full grown leaf. It may be more but every part of the leaf is never generally used. The end portions are eliminated. The assumption of the weight of 3 ounces per leaf would be a near approximation. On this basis nearly 31! ounces of leaves have been employed in the manufacture of the 10 specified items from which the cost of raw materials per L.B. is calculated, making due allowances for colours and fuel costs.

† As previously said, no machinery is used in the process of conversion. The entire work is done by hand with the use of ordinary knife and needles. There is no monetary cost in conversion. The sole cost is the expenditure on labour which is shown in terms of woman hours. The labour includes possible allowances for such stages in the craft as the splicing of the leaf into required sizes, the colouring of the rushes with dyes etc.

‡ Average sale price of finished goods is also calculated from the annexed table. The sale price of each item refers to the price at which the worker disposes of the article not the price to the customer, which may include a profit margin to the Co-operative Society or middle man-merchant. The price per L.B. is calculated from compounding together the sale price of the 10 specimens and making it up for 16 ounces.

§ There are no wages. The residuary proceeds from the sale of the items after meeting the cost form the wages of the workers. Wage per day of 8 hours is calculated on this basis. The assumption being proved that they have work for 8 hours daily the remuneration will be within the given range. But there is obviously a good deal of difference between the actual, as given elsewhere in the report, and the possible as given here.

This difference between the actual and the possible is seen in more ways than one. Assuming that every worker works for 8 hours a day and the full employment level is 290 days of work per annum, the total number of work-hours would be of the order of 243,600 woman hours per year. And on the basis of the annexed table where 92 woman-hours of labour yield a production of total value Rs. 24-1-6 the value of full employment level of production should be about Rs. 64,157 per year at the current price level. As against this the present production is only to the tune of Rs. 18,289,58 (in 1959-60), almost at the current price level. It is evident therefore that the actual production is far below the full employment production and consequently the actual rewards must be far below the full employment rewards.
## TABLE VII

### LIST OF VERY SKILLED CRAFTSMEN IN EACH COMMUNITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of village</th>
<th>Name of craft</th>
<th>Name of community</th>
<th>Names of skilled craftsmen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manapad</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Palm leaf ware</td>
<td>Manapad Women Workers' Co-operative Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramanathapuram</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Palm leaf ware</td>
<td>Ramanathapuram Palm Leaf Workers' Co-operative Society, Ramanathapuram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagore</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Palm leaf ware</td>
<td>Nagutia Lateef and Company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>