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# THE ROLE OF LOCAL GROUPS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## A CASE STUDY



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AGRARIAN RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE

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THE ROLE OF LOCAL GROUPS  
IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- MAWEGAMA VILLAGE -

- A Case Study of a Village in the North Central Province -

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## FOREWORD

The study of the village of Mawegama (a pseudonym) is the second of a tripartite report undertaken by the Rural Sociology Unit of the Institute to identify and study in-depth social and institutional forms which enable people to participate in rural development. Mawegama, a typical purana (old) village in the North Central Province was considered to be representative of the wider ecological and socio-economic conditions of the area. The report examines the role and extent of people's participation in Government sponsored programmes for rural development in the selected study area. The study is based on data gathered in the field during the period December 1975 - June 1976.

Two case studies complement this report - the first, conducted in the village of Nigaruppe (a pseudonym), in the Class II Coconut Area entitled, "The Role of Local Groups in Rural Development - a case study of a village in the Class II Coconut area, Colombo District", was released in October 1977; the third study undertaken in the mid-country Wet Zone will be issued shortly.

It is hoped that this study will be of interest to those who are concerned with participatory growth and development at the rural level. The socio-economic parameters that influence participation and involvement or non-participation of local people in their development are brought out clearly in this as well as in other two related reports.

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## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### *Summary*

This study on Mawegama completes the three case studies on the role and extent of people's participation in rural development, especially through Government-sponsored programmes that seek to increase agricultural production and employment locally. For purposes of inquiry the study has identified three main groups and through them attempted to ascertain the role by which different forms of associative behaviour influenced the motivation, mobilisation and participation of different segments of the rural population in development activities, especially through rural institutions.

The three major groups in the community were identified largely on economic criteria which in turn were determined by the extent of paddy lands owned (both rainfed and irrigated) and all other sources of income (agricultural and non-agricultural). These three groups were divided into the landed, the intermediate and the poor. The poor group comprised 27% of the village population and 33% of the households and owned in totality only 5% of the paddy land in the village. Two-thirds of them were landless and relied either on *chena* cultivation or on hiring out their labour in agriculture. Correspondingly also their living conditions and education were of a lower standard than the other two groups, as was their participation in village-level institutions charged with rural development. In fact none of the people in this category had been office bearers of Cultivation Committees (CC).

The intermediate category was found to own 40% of the paddy land, while comprising 46% of village population and 48% of the village households. This category was correspondingly scored as in between the other two categories on a scale for quality of housing, movable property and education, though closer in scores to the landed group than to the poor in all instances. However, conspicuous differences were that this group displayed more signs of mobility, outside contact, affinity for education (especially the younger generation) and last but not least, a higher level of participation in village institutions than the other two groups. This was evinced by the fact that out of the seven office bearers of the CC, five were from this group. A plausible explanation for this could be along political lines as this was one notable feature that did not completely correspond to their economic standing and which afforded the intermediate

category with a lever that could raise their social and economic bargaining power and thus give them a prominent voice in the village-level institutions.

The landed group, which owned 54% of Mawegama's paddy land, though comprising only 18% of the households, consistently scored higher than the other two groups on a scale for housing quality, ownership of movable property, level of education and traditional leadership, especially in Government positions such as that of the *Vel Vidane*. However, as stated earlier, their leadership position in the rural institutions was gradually undermined by the advancement of the intermediate group which had aligned itself with the political forces in power. However, this proved to be of a temporary nature as the latter found that they could not maintain their position without the co-operation of the traditional leaders. Thus, recent trends display a swing in favour of the older leaders though reinforced by active young sympathisers from the intermediate camp.

### *Conclusions*

The Mawegama experience points out certain fundamental facts. While rural institutions at village-level have been established to enable people to participate actively in their own social and economic betterment, the motivation to do so will be lacking if certain segments of the people, as in this case the lowest income strata, does not perceive itself, firstly, as having the power to influence decisions and secondly, as sharing in development benefits. In Mawegama it was amply demonstrated that the existing inequalities of the power structure, especially by the local level resulted in the control and manipulation of rural institutions by the more powerful groups. It was also evident that this was to the detriment of agriculture as a whole as often decisions such as those regarding the timing of agricultural operations were influenced to suit the particular interests of the more powerful farmers. Thus, in conclusion, it can be justifiably claimed that rural development through rural institutions can hardly generate popular participation for the economic and social progress of the population as a whole unless there is effective representation and motivation of all categories of the rural population and the equitable distribution of the resultant benefits thereof.

### *Practical Lessons*

This study served mainly to underline the fact - if indeed this is necessary - that local institutions cannot function except as an integral part of the socio-political and economic environment of the village.



As will be discussed in the study, decisions on the areas to be cultivated and the timing for irrigation are decisively influenced by the individual interests of some farmers. Such decisions are often made at the expense not only of less influential farmers but also in disregard of technical considerations. In the end, yields may decrease to only a fraction of what they might have been even with the available water. One way to avoid such wastage would be the strengthening of the position of the CC by clarifying its legal basis for a full and unconditional backing by both the Agricultural Productivity Committee (APC) and Government agencies. A further step to minimise excessive partial influences of *Karna* decisions and to strengthen their technical viability could come through more binding advice from an experienced government officer.

A more fundamental approach to problems of paddy cultivation which result from land holding patterns would have to take into account economically viable parcels of land, a state of affairs to which the traditional distributive inheritance system does not contribute. Such a solution could envisage a floor size of holdings and other forms of employment for those who have to leave the land. An alternative policy could aim at a transformation of the present production structure through joint farming operations and the division of the harvest according to the land and the labour contributed by each household.

Given the crucial role of rural institutions in the implementation of national policies, the proper selection and guidance of personnel and membership is of central importance. It is essential that the entire farming community should be represented in these institutions.

The rights and duties of the CCC are not fully understood either by the Committee Members or by the rest of the farmers. Intensive training with periodic follow-up training is urgently required. Such training and information would also have to include all the farmers in the community as the CC is functioning on their behalf. Only when all the farmers fully know what the CC is expected to do, can they exert some control over its activities.

Work on drought relief schemes is provided when *chena* lands are being prepared and sown. Smaller families who depend fully on the relief commodity are discouraged from engaging in non-farming operations.

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## INTRODUCTION

This study is the final one of three case studies conducted by the Agrarian Research and Training Institute (ARTI), on the role of local groups in rural development.

Forms of associative behaviour in farming communities are investigated in order to understand their role in development and more specifically to examine the participation of different sectors of the rural community in the development process.

"Participation" is understood to mean, firstly, taking an active part in the development processes - i.e. in the formulation of plans or in the implementation of projects and; secondly, as benefitting from such activity. The inquiry examines how groups and individuals through them compete for resources like land, employment or financial assistance. It also examines the different aspects of power and influence in the community, and the role of groups in the exercise of this authority, thus providing a full understanding of how groups could be used best to further programmes of rural development.

This study which is based on data collected in nine weeks of intermitant field work between December 1975 and June 1976, was done by the Rural Sociology Unit of the ARTI.

## Chapter 1

### MAWEGAMA: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SETTING

#### 1. 1 General Features

Mewagama, (pseudonym), is a typical *purana* village in the North-Central Province, about twenty miles east of the town of Anuradhapura and four miles south of the trunk road from Anuradhapura<sup>a</sup> to Trincomalee (Map 1). The village comes under the Mihintale Divisional Revenue Officers Division (DRO) and covers an estimated area of 1,400 acres with its own tank, its field and living area and is clearly demarcated from the many surrounding hamlets.

#### 1. 2 Demographic Characteristics

The sixty households of the village have a total population of 325 individuals. 56.4% of the population are males indicating a sex ratio of 126 males to every 100 females (Table 1) which is high<sup>1</sup> compared to the national ratio of 108 males to 100 females. The average size of the household is 5.4 persons (Table 2) and the average size of a family including children is six. The population of the village is relatively young, with 60% being under 15 years of age. The median age of the population is 19.0 and the mean age is 22.9 (Table 1).

#### 1. 3 Settlement Pattern

The settlement area can be divided into three sectors: the Gangoda which is the original settlement area, where 42% of the houses are situated; the area on the southern side of the Gangoda

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<sup>1</sup> The population of the village in 1901 was 76 males and 79 females which had changed to 82 males and 60 females in 1911. This indicates the male ratio per 100 females has gone up from 96.2 to 136.7 during this period. The reason for this peculiar phenomenon which apparently continues up-to-date is not known to us.

Such a situation may have come about by more males migrating in or more females migrating out. But we have no evidence of any such movements. Another possibility is that female child mortality is higher due to differences in child rearing practices. Again we do not have evidence to come to such a conclusion. Thus, we cannot explain this peculiar phenomenon.

Source of national data: Department of Census and Statistics: Statistical Pocket Book 1973.

along the main road, with about 40% of the houses and the area on the northern side of the Gangoda also along the main road where the remaining 18% of the houses are situated (Map II). This division of the Gangoda started about thirty-five years ago after the widening of the present main road and with people moving out of the Gangoda. The village is now growing in both directions along the main road.

#### 1. 4 Housing and Property

Housing in Mawegama is typical of the North-Central *purana* village. 85% are of wattle and daub with straw roof, and the rest are of brick with a permanent roof of tile or tin. Forty-five percent of the houses have only one room while the rest have two or more. There are four houses with an improved design which are said to have been built in the early 1960s as part of a government scheme to introduce better housing standards. (Table 3).

Only the relatively richer families could afford household effects. Forty-eight percent had no furniture at all. A quarter of the households have radios, one-sixth sewing machines and a similar number own petromax lamps. One-third have push-bicycles. There are also twelve carts and fourteen shot guns in the village.

Very few houses have toilets and only five of them have their own well. The rest use three public wells to get their drinking water. For bathing most of the villagers use the village tank.

#### 1. 5 Education and Literacy

##### *Adult Literacy*

Though the village had no school until a few years ago, the rate of literacy is fairly high. Of those adults who are aged over 17 years, 80% are estimated to be fully literate.

Reading materials, however, is limited. Only two copies of the daily newspapers are regularly bought in the village, one of which is in a tea shop and is read by about twenty people. Radio is by far the popular news medium. Twenty-five percent of the households have radios.

Of the total population of 207 who are aged 14 or above, 19% had no schooling, and 12% have had 1-2 years. The majority (26%) have completed standard 3-5, 17% standard 6-8, 20% have either passed or read GCE(OL) while another 5% have proceeded above the (OL).

As can be expected, the level of education drops in the case of older persons, particularly women. The mean years of education

of those over 35 years of age is 4.3 for males and 1.6 for females. The corresponding rates for those between ages 17-25 are 5.7 for males and 6.5 for females. (Table 4). An appreciable increase over the older generation particularly for the females where average schooling has increased by 3.9 years.

### *Schooling*

The school at Mawegama, built by the Rural Development Society (RDS) and opened in 1972 has classes up to 5th Standard at present and is staffed by two trained teachers. The rate of school attendance particularly during peak periods of paddy and *chena* cultivation is poor. The average attendance is about thirty of the 50 enrolled. Children unable to afford books and clothes often drop out. Boys tend to drop out more than girls because they are needed for agricultural work.

A few primary class students of the fairly well-to-do families attend a *Maha Vidyalyaya* which is two miles away and only a few go to more distant schools. The *Maha Vidyalyaya* has classes up to GCE (AL) in Arts and Commerce streams and has a staff of twenty-three of which six posts were vacant at the time of the study. Almost all the staff are trained teachers. Though the school is not fully equipped to follow the new educational system, arrangements are proceeding satisfactorily and the pre-vocational training is conducted to suit local conditions.

### *Attitude of Formal Education*

The attitude of the villagers towards formal education has changed in recent times. Many parents, particularly the younger parents would like their children to get better education and white-collar jobs. There is also an observable tendency among the less rich people to seek more education. Education was traditionally the prerogative of the better-off families who now feel their position threatened by the extension of educational facilities. Their reaction was evident in the attempts to obstruct the opening of the village school.

### *1. 6 Health Facilities*

A Government hospital, established more than fifty years ago and two miles away from the village has a general and maternity ward which serves about twelve villages. The hospital manned by a Registered Medical Practitioner (RMP), a qualified nurse, a dispenser and six labourers treats out-patients and on the average about twenty-five in-patients. Malaria was the only major disease reported, but it is now kept under control through periodic Malathion spraying by the Anuradhapura Municipal Council (AMC).

Ayurvedic physicians are consulted for minor ailments.

### 1. 7 Employment

#### *Categories and Distribution of Employment*

Of the total population of Mawegama, 210 (65%) constitute the employment group or labour force. Among the different categories in this group (Table 5), 45% are gainfully employed, 41% non-gainfully employed and 14% not employed.

One out of every 3.6 persons in Mawegama is gainfully employed. This group of gainfully employed (Table 6), consists of 52% farmers and 31% agricultural labourers.<sup>1</sup> Eighty-three percent of the people in Mawegama make their living directly from agriculture. The rest work in the Government service (8%) or as traders and craftsmen (8%). Sixty-one percent of the income earners in Mawegama are self-employed (farmers, merchants, craftsmen), while 31% are hired labourers.

Of the Government servants, two are in the subordinate grade,<sup>2</sup> and six are minor grade workers.<sup>3</sup> There are fourteen who cultivate their own *chena* and paddy, while nine more have only their own *chena*.

In the non-gainfully employed groups (Table 7), there are three monks, fifty housewives and thirty-four family helpers (age 14 and above). The average man equivalents available to Mawegama households for agricultural work is 2.8 persons. In households engaged exclusively in agriculture (N = 47) the average is 3.2 man equivalents. Two-thirds of these households never hire out any of their labour. By themselves the households in this latter group command 3.7 man equivalents each. For their further need thirty agricultural labourers are available within Mawegama itself. At times of peak demand this labour force is augmented through the hiring of a few labourers from outside Mawegama. The hiring of outsiders does not affect the villages as it is done only when local labour is short. Hired labour is used to support family labour for paddy as well as *chena* cultivation. Agricultural operations like clearing of land, threshing, etc., are normally done with the help of agricultural labourers. There are a handful of seasonal

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<sup>1</sup>Employment classification based on major source of income.

<sup>2</sup>One clerk, one *Grama Sevaka*.

<sup>3</sup>Three Ceylon Transport Board conductors, one hospital attendant, one postal peon, one tractor driver.



labourers from outside who work for long periods for the larger farmers, usually at a rate of Rs.3.00 per day, plus full board. Casual labour in Mawegama is paid Rs.6.00 per day plus two meals, tea and betel or Rs.8.00 without meals and extras.

#### 1. 8 *Income and Wages*

The net average income per household in Mawegama is estimated to be Rs.9,312.00 per year or Rs.776.00 per month. In 1975/76 the actual figures dropped to Rs.2,573.00 and Rs.214.00 per month. These are, however, rough estimates (Table 8). Agricultural incomes are based on the estimates of land holdings, which vary considerably for both paddy and *chena* lands. On the average, holding of 5.3 acres irrigated land with a cropping intensity of 100% a minimum of 265 bushels of paddy can be expected annually, representing a gross earning of Rs.8,745.00.<sup>1</sup>

Those working as casual labourers in Mawegama are paid Rs.6.00 per day plus two meals, tea and betel or Rs.8.00 without meals and extras. The former is generally preferred. In most surrounding villages the rates are even as much as Rs.8.00 plus meals. A day's wage for work with the Territorial Civil Engineering Organisation (TCEO) is Rs.8.16.

#### 1. 9 *Land*

##### (a) *Paddy Lands*

There are about 450 acres of paddy in the village of which 288 acres are tank irrigated and the rest rainfed.

The rainfed land is *asweddimised* and held on Crown lease under the Land Development Ordinance of 1935. Sixty-two percent of the households have rainfed paddy lands varying in extents from less than one to ten acres. The average size of holding is 3.4 acres.

The irrigated paddy land can be divided into two - the "Old Field" and "New Field".

##### (i) *"Old Field"*

The "Old Field" consisting of 146 acres is the original field under the tank and has five sections, each section being owned

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<sup>1</sup>This is based on the actual local average yield of 50 bushels per acre and the current Paddy Marketing Board (Co-operative) price for paddy at Rs.33.00 per bushel.

traditionally by the same set of persons. The shares owned in each section are more or less the same making it easier to adjust the extents of land to be cultivated in terms of the water available in the tank.

The size of holdings in the "Old Field" ranges from less than one to over ten acres. With an average size of holding of 2.97 acres and number of parcels being 457 the average size of a parcel is .22 acres (Table 9), indicating an extremely high degree of fragmentation.

The ownership of land in the "Old Field" is prized by the villagers both for its economic and social value.

(ii) "New Field"

The "New Field" comprises 191 acres, 152 of which is free hold "acre land" (*Sinnakkara*) i.e. Crown land bought during 1900-1935 period and the balance 39 acres is Crown lease hold (*Badu*) i.e. Crown land granted on permanent lease under the Land Development Ordinance of 1935. Parcels of land in the "New Field" are considerably larger unlike the "Old Field" where there has been extensive fragmentation. The size of holding range from less than one to eleven acres. The average size of holding is 3.16 acres and the average size of parcel is .63 acres (Table 9). The "New Field" has no sub-sections and adjustments to variations in water supply are practically impossible. Five acres of temple land are also irrigated by a small temple tank.

The villagers prefer to cultivate the "New Field" because the parcels of land are larger and also a good number of plots in the "Old Field" are owned on a "*Thattumaru*" basis which makes the workings of these fields relatively difficult.

(b) Chena Cultivation

As mentioned earlier, 48 (80%) households practise *chena* cultivation and in Maha 1975/76, 101 acres were cultivated. The individual *chenas* range from 0.25 to 15.0 acres, with the average around 2.1 acres and the modal group between 1.1 and 2.0 acres. Nineteen percent of the *chena* farmers have a *chena* larger than 3.0 acres. In turn, extents cultivated are determined largely by the availability of labour. The labour employed is either family labour or hired labour and under such circumstances, large families are considered an asset.

### 1.10 Livestock

Livestock farming is not a major economic activity in Mawegama and is only a supplementary source of income. There are about 950 heads of cattle in the village, out of which about 700 are cows and the rest buffaloes. Forty percent of the household in the village have some cattle, half of them 1-20 heads and 13% of them having 90 heads or more.

Buffaloes are used by most of the owners for their own cultivation work and some are hired at Rs.2.50 per buffalo per day. Cows are an important source of quick cash. Cattle merchants visiting the village from nearby pay on the average Rs.200.00 to Rs.300.00 on receipt of an animal. Only a few cows are milked and that only for consumption. There are no local buyers and the area has no milk collecting centre.

Poultry is kept on a very small scale. Seventeen percent of the households have some chicken, almost all of them between 1-10 hens. Only a handful of households sell eggs to the village boutique, the others consume them.

### 1.11 Highland Sector

The uncertainty of rains and the attendant risks, prevented more intensive and permanent cultivation of the Dry Zone highlands. The risk factor could be considerably reduced by an extension to the insurance scheme to cover highland crops as well.<sup>1</sup>

Highland crops could also be cultivated in paddy fields that are fallow in certain seasons. This would also be a convenient way of familiarising farmers with the management of crops which could be extended successfully to the highlands.

The introduction of profitable highland cultivation in the Dry Zone will result in an increase in the value of this land and will be followed probably by attempts by the better-off farmers to bring more parts of it under their control. If viable highland cultivation is not to lead to a greater maldistribution of the means of production, the allocation of highlands will have to be more strictly regulated

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<sup>1</sup> Crop insurance for irrigated paddy which was introduced in 1975/76 *Maha* is compulsory for the acreage cultivated with government loans. However, as payment of compensation for crop damages involves a fairly complicated procedure, the farmers are not very enthusiastic about it.

to ensure that the entire farming community becomes beneficiaries of the arrangement.

#### 1.12 Availability of Labour

Attempts to expand highland cultivation would make further demands on labour during the peak seasons. Sufficient and cheap mechanical power could alleviate the problems to a large extent, but this may be too costly. A more feasible solution may be the deployment of large numbers of seasonal migrant workers from areas of labour surplus. A third alternative would be to improve cultivation methods and the management of tank water which will allow a more rational use of the existing resources. A few thoughts in this direction are given in the section on paddy cultivation below. In actual practice probably a mix of the three alternatives could be most advantageous.

#### 1.13 Paddy Sector

If irrigated paddy cultivation is not to suffer unduly from extended highland farming a planned expansion of the highland sector would have to be accompanied by optimum management of tank water. Decisions on the areas to be irrigated and when, are influenced by the interests of some farmers. One way to avoid this situation would be to strengthen the position of the CC by getting it the complete support of both the APC and the Governmental agencies plus the effective representation of all segments of the farming population within the CC.

The supply of tank water could become more flexible if the *bethma* system of cultivation could be extended over the entire irrigated paddy field of a village, including the *sinnakkara* and *badu* positions. This would involve a certain amount of re-allocation of land and could be done with the enforcement of a minimum paddy holding.

A solution to the problems resulting from the land holding patterns would involve working out economically cultivable parcels as against the traditional inheritance system which encourages fragmentations. The enforcement of a floor size of holdings and parcels would require the creation of alternative employment for those displaced. An alternative could be a joint farming operation where the harvest is divided according to the land and the labour contributed by each household.

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## Chapter 2

### GROUPS: BASES FOR AFFILIATION

The preceding chapter presented a general picture of the socio-economic situation in Mawegama against which one could view the more specific problems of this study, and identify the social forces at work within institutions charged with rural development.

In this chapter a close look will be taken at the social life of the Mawegama people and more particularly their association with one another and the basis of any sharing of interests and co-operation such as kinship, economic interests, geographic proximity, age, political affiliations and so on.

#### 2. 1 Varige (Kinship grouping)

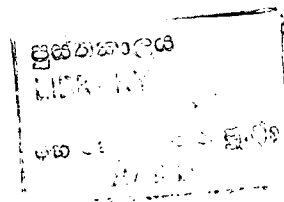
*Varige* is a mechanism which forms kinship groups in a village community. Mawegama is a village community which is of a single *varige* and therefore everybody is related to everybody else and groups based on criteria like caste, *varige* and kinship have little meaning. Further the principle of endogamy has fostered the *varige* not only as a kin-group but also as a land-holding quasi-corporate group.

The older villagers identify four major family groups as traditional kinship units within Mawegama. Today some of these groups are no longer clearly identifiable and new kin-groups have emerged through various re-alignments. At present there are three such major groups based on active kinship ties. Two of them centre around the two richest families of the village and the other one comprises the poorest families in Mawegama.

#### 2. 2 Age

Age commands prestige and influence with rural people. In terms of the youth, a large section of the frustrated young people supported the insurgent movement in 1971, which only resulted in their detention in camps for several years. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and *Janatha Viamukthi Peramuna* (JVP) were espoused by village youth both of the better off as well as the medium sections.

In 1974, a new CC was formed consisting exclusively of young persons. Manning this committee, meant that the young people became responsible for the co-ordination and management of the entire economic basis and structure of Mawegama. This proved to be a



difficult task and one with which the young and inexperienced people were unable to cope with. Criticised by the elders of the village most of the youth groups generally broke away and by mid-1976, a new CC was formed with a number of older farmers, thus vitiating the dominant position of the youth in rural institutions.

### 2. 3 Settlement Pattern

Social groupings arose also out of the settlement pattern. Two rather clear divisions on the basis of the layout of the village, could be observed, the Northern side of the Gangoda and the area on the outside of the Gangoda. The settlement outside the Gangoda was formed over the last thirty-five years or so mainly by those who had moved out of the Gangoda and also by the younger couples setting up new homes.

Fifty-four percent of the households remaining in the Gangoda own ten acres and more of paddy land and among them are also those owning more than 20 acres. These form the economic elite of Mawegama. Forty percent of the poor households of the village remain in the Gangoda, while 62% of the economically intermediate households now live outside the Gangoda.

The richer group is well established and secure in the Gangoda where they are able to extend their homesteads. The poorer families are unable to venture out to establish new homes. The intermediates moved out due to a number of factors such as the desire to get away from the congestion and the interpersonal conflicts in the Gangoda, and also as a result of pressures applied by the richer people to oust them.

### 2. 4 Economic Standing or Land Ownership

The economy of Mawegama is mainly agricultural. The organisation of agricultural production shows the distribution of resources and provides clues to the resultant system of social relationships. Since land is the major resource of a community whose economy is based on agriculture, a grouping of the community on the basis of the size of land holdings is quite natural.

We can identify three categories of groups on the basis of the ownership of paddy holdings as illustrated in the table that follows:

*Mawegama: Paddy Land Groups*

Acreage Paddy	No. of households	% of households
0 - 3	25	41.7
3.1 - 10	24	40.0
10.1 +	11	18.3
Total	60	100.0



However, there are persons with incomes other than from agriculture, such as government servants and one or two traders, who in terms of their paddy land would be grouped with the economically deprived. Thus, taking into account all sources of income, the overall economic grouping for Mawegama would be:

Mawegama: Economic Groups

Group	No. of households	Percentage Households	Percentage of village population	Percentage of paddy land held
P o o r	20	33.3	27.4	4.8
Intermediate	29	48.3	46.5	40.8
Landed	11	18.3	26.2	54.4
T o t a l	60	99.9	100.1	100.0

#### 2.4.1 The Poor

The group representing 27% of the village population and owning less than three acres of paddy land comprises 33% of the households. There are fifty-one males and thirty-eight females in this group which indicates a ratio of 134 males per 100 females. The average size of the family which is 3.5 is relatively small compared to the village average family (5.4). All of them together own 5% of the paddy land in the village.

Two-thirds of them (22% of the total) are landless and rely mainly on *chena* cultivation for their livelihood. The majority of the gainfully employed in this landless group are agricultural labourers and comprise 59% of the total agricultural labour in the village. Their living conditions are poor. Eighty percent of the houses of the poor group falls into the lower 10% of the scale, while the houses of the landed group are all above this. Eighty-five percent in this group have no movable property at all while the landed group gets a mean score of 15.2. Eighty-four percent have no cattle while the others have up to twenty heads.

The educational level of this group is also low. Twenty-five percent of the household heads have had no schooling at all and 80% of them have had less than six years of schooling while in the other groups there is hardly a household head who has had no schooling. Of all adults (over 17 years of age), the mean years of education is 5.01 (Table 10), while the corresponding figure for the landed group is 6.3. Attendance at school is also below average as most of the children aged 14 years or above who still attend school are also from this group.

The villagers in this group have little social contact with outsiders. On a scale of scores for outside contact (Table 11), which ranges from 5 to 250,, all households in the poor group are in the lowest scale (6).

Participation in the activities of village level institutions is minimal. None of this group has ever been an office bearer in the CC. Moreover, the plight of the poor group has worsened over the past few years. The sale of land is mostly by members of this group (Table 12), while very few have enlarged their paddy land by purchase or by *aswedduwising* new lands (Table 13).

#### 2. 4.2 The Landed Group

This group comprises the households holding more than ten acres of paddy land, i.e. 18% of the village households, which together own 54% of Mawegama's paddy land. About a third of this group holds more than 20 acres of paddy land each, covering 21% of village lands.

Practically all of them cultivate large *chenas* (more than two acres), mostly by using hired labour. Most of the cattle (65%) in the village is also owned by the landed group. All but one have some cattle and 36% of them have ninety or more heads of cattle.

All the permanent houses of Mawegama (i.e. houses of brick wall and tile or tin roof) belong to this group. On the scale for quality of housing (Table 14), in which the mean village score is 31.1 the landed group gets a mean score of 58.2, whereas the poor group gets only 13.1. The landed group also has more movable property than the other groups. In this group all but one of the households score over 10 for movable property whereas of the poor group 55% of the households score below 5 (Table 15).

Of the twenty-two gainfully employed persons in this group 82% are farmer operators and there are two persons in government service.

The households are considerably larger (7.7 members), than the average for the village. Their ratio of males to females is relatively smaller (118 males per 100 females) as compared to the village as a whole.

The landed group has a high level of education. All the heads of households are literate and have some formal education, 50% of them having more than five years of schooling. The average years of education of those over seventeen years is 6.3 for the landed group whereas in the poor group it is 2.3 and in the intermediate group 5.5 years. Fifty two percent of the older children (13 + years) attending school are from this group and those children attending school outside of Mawegama are also mostly from this group. The landed people have many contacts outside the village. On a scale for outside contact (ranging from 5 to 250) where the village average score is 18.9, the poor group gets a mean score of 6.1 while the landed score gets a mean of 22. (Table 11).

The privileged traditional government positions like the *Badderalā, Gāmeralā, Vel Vidane*, etc., were almost exclusively held by this group which, therefore, provided the leadership in village activities: the village level organisations were manned also mainly by this group - for example, ten of the sixteen members who in the past held some office in the Cultivation Committee are from this group. Some of the more active members of this group provided the links for the regional and provincial politicians.

The socio-economic conditions of this group seem to have improved over the years. For example, none of the landed group has ever sold any land. In fact, all but one of them had bought or *aswedduṁsised* some land, while 67% of the present household heads had increased their acreage of paddy land by more than ten acres.

#### 2.4.3 The Intermediate Group

The Intermediate economic group, i.e. households owning paddy land between 3.1 and 10 acres and the five higher income earners i.e. those who do not necessarily own land/or land within this category, but earn wages outside agriculture, consist of 48% of the households of the village. Seventy-nine percent of these households have *chena* land and over a third of this group cultivate *chena* of more than 2 acres. For movable property, the group gets a mean score of 5.1 which is much higher than that of the poor groups (8.4) and lower than the landed group (15.2). On the scale for quality of housing the intermediate gets a mean score of 33.3 as against the corresponding ~~numbers~~ of 13.1 and 58.2 for the poor and the landed group respectively.

Fifty-four percent of the gainfully employed in this group are farmer operators and 24% are agricultural labourers. Four of the six traders and six of the eight government servants in the village belong to this group.

In terms of education the intermediate group is much closer to the landed group than to the poor group. Only 10% of the household heads have no schooling while 40% of them have six or more years of schooling. Thirteen of them are SSC qualified. The children of this group are taking to schooling more than the other groups. The adults of this group have 5.5 mean years of education. This group shows more signs of mobility than the heads of the other two groups. On the scale for outside contact the intermediate group scores a mean of 25.9 as against the poor and the landed score of 6.1 and 22 respectively. The intermediate also participate more in village institutions than the other two groups. Of the seven office bearers in the present cultivation committee for instance five are from this group.

## 2. 5 Political Affiliations

Political affiliations and ensuing influence seem to be the only considerations that do not completely correspond to economic standing. Political affiliation appears also to be the quickest means of increasing an individual's power in the village, as access to rural institutions is predominantly determined by an individual's political sympathies rather than by any other criteria... To this extent, emphasis must be given to this factor over and above all others in determining the basis for appointment to rural institutions.

Until the latter half of the 1960s political activity was confined to the influential landed group and before the general elections of 1970 almost all the voters of Mawegama supported the United National Party (UNP) and hence there was little scope for political party rivalry.

In the latter half of the 1960s however, a trader from the intermediate group came to power and prominence in the village. He subsequently became a Village Council member and won sympathisers from the poor and the intermediate groups by providing certain services to the village and by distributing favours in his capacity as a trader and later as the President of the Rural Development Society (RDS), and office bearer of the CC and finally as the Village Council member of the local ward.

Though originally from the intermediate group, he worked himself up within the established political system of the village. His activities in the village created a good deal of awareness among the hitherto not so active groups (the poor and the intermediate groups) and particularly among the younger people. This to some extent prepared the ground for new developments which took place on the eve of the 1970 general elections.

In this election some of the villagers aligned themselves with the SLFP. Seven of the thirteen active supporters of the new party came from the intermediate group and were youth. The victory of the SLFP in the elections at both the local and the national level resulted in the possibility of the traditionally strong people being replaced by the new party supporters in positions of power and influence in the village. But such a change did not take place immediately because many of the young SLFP party supporters were members of the JVP whose involvement in the activities of the insurgency movement in 1971 and their subsequent imprisonment prevented their involvement in village affairs for another couple of years.

The death of the VC member in 1972, left the UNP group

leaderless and created at the same time a power vacuum at the leadership level. The return of the politically active youth from the rehabilitation camps in the following year coincided with a new government policy of appointing politically responsible individuals as office bearers of some rural institutions. As a result, the SLFP supporters (the majority of them being youth) gained prominence in the village and by 1975 they appeared to be the most powerful figures in the village. This was evident for example in the CC an important statutory organisation in the village, and the RDS which was manned fully by these youth from the intermediate group.

## 2. 6 Possible grounds for Co-operation

A number of possible grounds for the people of Mawegama to associate with each other, have now been examined. Those of similar economic standing are, on these grounds alone, closer to each other than to people of a different economic status. The same holds true for kinship, age and political sympathies. The characteristics examined do not necessarily overlap nor can it be said *a priori* that variations in their strength correlate. Further, the sharing of such characteristics by a number of persons does not imply the existence of formalised structures among them.

However, actual contact and co-operation in Mawegama was activated on the basis of these criteria. Alliances and interest groups, some of great stability and long duration, were built on the sharing of these characteristics.

We shall now examine the "core elements" of these groups - i.e. those individuals or "interested parties" around whom the groups formed and who are the core and driving force behind them. The goals and objectives they pursue will also be examined.

## 2. 7 Factions and Groups

In the last forty years there have been two family groups who shall be called "Appuhamy" and "Bandara". They are the largest land owners in the village and compete with each other for the control of the land in the village *yaya*. The struggle between these two families over the years has been the single most important factor determining the various stages and forms of intergroup relations in Mawegama. In the course of this struggle, Bandara had to take second place to Appuhamy, and the former has tried ever since to enlist other supporters from Mawegama in his continuing struggle against Appuhamy. In this process, the intermediate group was slowly mobilised by the Bandara camp, but after some time and with

the emergence of an alternative political party (SLFP), this group once again split.

The split into four groups i.e. (Appuhamy, Bandara, Intermediate-Conservative, Intermediate-Progressive), still more or less holds today though it was seriously challenged once in 1970/71 when the youth from both the landed and the intermediate groups joined in an attempt to radically change the existing order.

The youth were then involved in the 1971 insurrection and their subsequent imprisonment created a lull in their involvement in factional politics. Later (1973/74) as part of the Government's resolution to rehabilitate these youth, the latter were vested with responsibilities in the rural institutions. Today (1976), the youth have lost much of this prominence in the village and the traditional conflict between the Appuhamy and Bandara camps has re-emerged as the basis of co-operation and competition.

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## Chapter 3

### LOCAL INSTITUTIONS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

We have so far attempted to analyse the social and economic criteria that contribute to different forms of associative behaviour in Mawegama. This chapter now attempts to show that though these criteria (such as ownership of land, age, etc.,) are relevant to a social and economic context, they are not necessarily important nor perpetuated within the village-level institutions charged with rural development, which are, on the contrary, controlled and manipulated by those who are in a position to exert political power. These sympathizers of the dominant political party moreover cut across and challenge the original cleavages based on kinship, age, land ownership, etc., so that we find certain curious contradictions manifested within the community. It is important to study these to the extent that the rural institutions serve eventually as the principle nexus between the government and the implementation of development programmes.

In Mawegama the local institutions primarily concerned with rural development are the Cultivation Committee and the Agricultural Productivity Committee. The Rural Development Society, though not directly concerned with agricultural matters, has also played a vital role in village matters.

#### 3.1 *The Cultivation Committee*

##### 3.1.1 *Background*

The first CC of Mawegama was set up in 1963 under the Paddy Lands Act of 1958. The majority of the Committee members came from the Landed Group and the rest from the Intermediate Group. Most of the persons elected to the first CC continued in office through several terms up to 1974.

With the Agricultural Lands Law of 1975 the role of the CC changed markedly in that it became the local agent of the APCC whose members were appointed by the Minister of Agriculture on the recommendations of the member of the National State Assembly.

The Landed Group of the village made an attempt to retain its previous position on the new Cultivation Committee, but this failed in the face of strong objections by politically influential members of the Intermediate Group who submitted a list of their nominees

representing the younger generation of the village. This list was accepted and in January 1975 letters of appointment issued by the Minister was handed over by the Member of Parliament to the new Cultivation Committee Members. One new member was affiliated to the UNP but he resigned after some time.

Consequent to the crop failures in the *Maha* 1975/76, four members resigned in mid-year and new Committee Members were selected representing both the older generation of farmers and also supporters of both national parties. The Cultivation Committee now represented the farmers of Mawegama and of the adjoining small village of Veddas.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.1.2 Duties and Functions

The Cultivation Committee of Mawegama is mainly concerned with the co-ordination of irrigated paddy cultivation and the management of irrigation water. In addition the Committee as an agent of the APC, handles agricultural inputs like credit and crop insurance applications. It is also charged with the preparation of land registers and the collection of the acreage tax. The Paddy Lands Register in Mawegama is prepared by copying the previous one including the few changes and transfers that have occurred. It is doubtful if the land measurements in the register correspond closely to the situation in reality, but the absence of any alternative makes the register the only official document for this all-important resource. Routine matters, however, are apparently carried out with reasonable efficiency.

As other Cultivation Committees in the area do, credit applications are viewed liberally as it is felt that government funds should benefit as many people as possible. Crop Insurance had been newly introduced in 1975/76 and neither the Cultivation Committee nor the APC seemed to have been fully aware yet of all its rules and implications.

However, it is really the management of paddy cultivation under the tank which is the Committee's foremost task. The following paragraphs will examine more closely some relevant aspects of this central activity with data from the *Maha* season 1975/76.

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<sup>1</sup>The village has about 20 households with close to 45 acres of irrigated paddy land and an additional 35 acres of rainfed paddy.

### 3.1.3 Paddy Cultivation and Water Management

The proper distribution of the available tank water requires close co-operation among the cultivators. The CC calls the *Kanna Sabha*, a meeting of all the farmers, well before the cultivation season starts, where a cultivation schedule as well as all matters relating to paddy cultivation are discussed and decisions taken.

Other measures at the disposal of the CC to enforce the *Kanna* schedule are appeals to the APC, the GA, the Police, or the courts. As long as there is sufficient water available, the *Kanna* schedule is properly observed. However, when there is a shortage of water, attempts are often made to alter the agreed schedule by appealing to the APC or to Government authorities.

#### *The Maha Season 1975/76*

In September 1975 the GA Anuradhapura instructed that wherever possible both the Old and New Fields should be cultivated in order to get a maximum harvest. However, as the promised inputs (tractors, seed paddy, fertiliser) did not become available, cultivation was done according to the customary pattern.

On 28 November 1975, at the *Kanna Sabha* it was decided to cultivate the "New Field" because most of the farmers present were inclined to farm their more promising "New Field" plots and the CC Chairman also lobbied strongly for this option. Some of the persons who owned only parcels in the "Old Field" received oral permission to take water into their fields.

During December the sluices were fully open and tank water ran over the fields. There was also some rain during this month. As the water situation for the irrigated fields looked rather secure, most farmers decided to continue to work in their *ohenas* and in their rainfed paddy before turning to the irrigated fields. Nevertheless, by the end of December the majority of farmers, having prepared their fields, were in the process of sowing and by early February all the fields were sown.

However, as there had not been any rains during January, the Committee began to get concerned about the water situation. On 23 January, the Cultivation Committee decided to take action against the unauthorised use of water. On 6 February, The Cultivation Committee nominated several Committee members and other farmers to ensure that strict enforcement of proper water use in different parts of the "New Field". On 23 February, the cases of three such farmers were discussed and referred through the APC to the GA. By that time, still no rain had come and tension in the village began to mount as the tank water was being depleted. The *Maha* crop was seriously threatened. The CC adhered strictly to the original *Kanna* decision.

When it had become obvious that the water situation would be difficult, rumours began to circulate that the CC had made the (by now obviously) risky decision to irrigate the "New Field" only to accommodate the Bandara group. The young CC members who went around to ensure the most economic use of the diminishing water met with increasing resistance from the farmers. Some of the members let themselves be convinced by others that the Chairman was only helping the Bandara group, and they began to stay away from Committee meetings.

Many farmers tried to get as much water as possible to their fields while it was still available and they did not mind breaking the channels and removing the distributors. The APC member and its Chairman, and also the police came to inspect several such complaints. During March, several more incidents among villagers erupted into major clashes and the police called a number of times. By the middle of March, the tank was practically empty but only a small area of the paddy fields was beyond the flowering stage. There were some frantic attempts to use the last few gallons by pumping the water out but this lasted only one or two days.

By this time about half of the CC members had openly disassociated themselves from the Chairman. About 85% of the field would have dried up if not for a few short showers by the end of March which (at least partially) saved an additional 50% of the crop. The rest was sown too late and had to be given up as lost.

As four Committee members had resigned by April, a new CC was formed during May and appointed in June. Nominated by a senior member of the Landed Group (who was not only close to Bandara but also a former CC Chairman and a prominent supporter of the UNP) the four new members were all experienced farmers, some of them well-known political conservatives and some also directly representing the Appuhamy camp.

The role of the Chairman of the CC is relevant to an understanding of the events. He is from a well respected family of the intermediate group, and had earlier been one of the young followers of the VC member but had then turned into a vociferous supporter of the *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)* in the 1970 elections and was subsequently a leading figure in the district during the events of 1971. He had also married one of Bandara's daughters. He was strongly against the domination of the village by a few large farmers and saw himself mainly as a champion of the intermediate and small farmers in Mawegama. Protecting their rights and chances was, according to him, the major objective of his work in the CC.

If the *Maha* season 1975/76 was a normal one, the image of the Chairman would have most likely been strengthened. However, as it turned out, the fields of Appuhamy as well as many others did not come to full maturity whereas Bandara harvested a successful crop. The Chairman's decisive part in the adoption of the cultivation schedule and his strict adherence to it throughout seemed to compromise his position.

The situation made the Chairman an easy target for the Appuhamy camp which played on everybody's frustration regarding the failure of the crop and which pointed to the CC and the Chairman as the cause of Bandara's success and - as it was implied - everybody else's failure.

The situation arising from the water scarcity in *Maha* 1975/76 was thus particularly responsible for the collapse of the intermediate group in the CC. Its membership was now more representative of the farmers of Mawegama and included the older, more experienced and also the more conservative farmers. Most importantly, it also represented both the major factions in the village, Appuhamy and Bandara groups.

### 3.2 Agricultural Productivity Committee

The APC is charged with the duty of co-ordinating and developing agriculture within its area. The Mawegama APC has nine members, but it is the Chairman who is the dominant figure. The Chairman also holds a number of other positions including that of Chairman, Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society (MPCS) and VC member. He thus is politically powerful in the district and does not always have to abide by the decisions of the Divisional Officer.

Relations between the CC Chairman and the APC Chairman are excellent, mainly because of similar political views as well as mutual interest. The APC attends to all the requests made by the *Mawegama* Cultivation Committee which mostly concern water disputes. Similarly, the APC member responsible for Mawegama (who resides in a neighbouring village) regularly visits the village, signs the CC meeting minutes and has generally very close contacts with the CC Chairman.

However, the APC remains peripheral to agricultural activity in *Mawegama*. Although it performs most of the services such as providing seed paddy, settling of disputes and so on, it is inactive in development matters and has little impact on the wider socio-economic life of the village community as a whole.

### 3.3 Rural Development Society (RDS)

The RDS is a rural institution engaged in community development. In keeping with the principle of community development -

i.e. helping people to help themselves - the RDS is expected to identify and mobilise local resources towards the development of the community on a self-help basis. It is concerned with the improvement of general living conditions, which may include aspects of health and sanitation e.g. providing preventive health facilities, sanitation, housing, drinking water, etc., and certain aspects of infrastructural improvement, e.g. roads, culverts, public buildings, vocational and leadership education and recreational facilities.

### 3.3.1 History of the RDS

The first Rural Development Society of Mawegama which is now nearly thirty years old, has gone through several phases of development. The first society in 1947, represented several other surrounding villages besides Mawegama, but after some years the villages formed its own Society. But for several years to come the Society has had neither the necessary active leadership nor the popular participation. The office bearers of the village and the *Grama Sevaka* also have shown some interest. The activities at the time were confined to short-term work like building a temporary meeting hall, repairing some roads, etc.

In 1963, with the emergence of a popular leader in the person of the VC member from the intermediate group, the RDS of Mawegama entered a new phase of increased activity. The VC member as President of the Society carried out a number of projects in the areas of education, health, recreation, general infrastructure, etc., so that the village was even selected as a "Model Development Village" in 1970. Among the items of the impressive list of accomplishments by the RDS during this period are the following:

### 3.3.2 Infrastructure

Five roads leading to other villages were constructed on a *shramadana* basis and the village roads were widened and are well maintained. The Society was also instrumental in paving the main road to the market centre and later in getting a bus service.

### Education

The Society's greatest achievement is probably in the field of education. There have been several training programmes on vocational activities (sewing, carpentry, barbering), rural development and leadership aspects. The Society also took a decision that all children of school-going age should attend school and set up a pre-school in the village. The present village school was built by the RDS with departmental aid and handed to the government in 1971.



### Health

The three large public wells constructed by the Society now provide drinking water for the majority of the villagers. Toilets for fifty households were constructed with government aid but very few of them are being used.

### Recreation

In 1973 a community centre was formed with a permanent building and the village now has a Volley Ball team.

#### 3.3.3 Other Activities

The Society has shown interest in a number of other activities, such as, dispute solving, a mass marriage ceremony organised in 1967, to legalise the marriage of 27 couples and which is considered a landmark in the history of the village. The Society has also made attempts to form a Women's Organisation.

An attempt was also made to grow cash crops on a co-operative basis in 1972. The society was also instrumental in obtaining a consumer co-operative store for the village in 1972.

With the death of its dynamic leader in 1972, the activities of the RDS of Mawegama came to a virtual standstill. In 1973, the youth of the village took charge of the Society. The plan of work drawn up in 1975, which includes the introduction of a variety of cottage industries with local raw material, is impressive, but no tangible work has yet been done. The only noteworthy activity by the new society was an attempt to get a new building for the village co-operative stores, work on which commenced in June 1976.

#### 3.3.4 General Frame

The history of the RDS of Mawegama provides some interesting insights into the functioning of rural institutions.

During the period from 1947 to 1962, the RDS was in the hands of the richer group of the village who neither expected much from the institution nor did they want any other group of the village to achieve anything through it. But from 1963 onwards the Society was increasingly activated by an individual from the intermediate group who used this institution as a spring board for his ambitions.

Being a person without much status in the village he wanted to establish himself as a benefactor and leader in the village in order to achieve his political and other ambitions. He started his

public career with small projects for the village as the President of the RDS and gradually became a very popular VC member and an important political figure in the village and the area. During the peak of his career he had several useful connections: the Rural Development Society, the Local Government apparatus, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the Government Officials concerned with rural development. He made use of all these in the name of the Rural Development Society.

In the new Committee, formed in 1973, the youth occupied all the posts of office bearers. A youth of the UNP was the Chairman but the RDS has not been used as an instrument for action or promotion of local interests.

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## Chapter 4

### INSTITUTIONS, FACTIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

This section presents an historical overview of the village in the last fifty years and simultaneously presents a picture of the factions and groups in the village and their interaction with each other.

#### Period I: 1930 to late 1940s

In the 1930s and 1940s influence was based on the ownership of paddy land and the important events in the village were determined by the competition between the two largest land owning families, the Appuhamy and Bandara families. There is no evidence that the Intermediate or the Poor Groups played any decisive role. The period ended when Appuhamy won a court case against Bandara and thereby gained a decisive edge over him.

#### Period II: 1950 to 1969

Bandara now reacts against the victorious Appuhamy and enlarges his own base of influence through activity in the RDS. In the process he mobilises the majority of the Intermediate Group by drawing them into the Society. With this clientele his standing in relation to Appuhamy again improves. The now more activated Society in turn provides the Village Council member with a platform for his ambitious activities. Without previous inclusion of his (Intermediate) Group into this forum this would have been very difficult. But he also mobilises an additional sector, the young people coming from different economic backgrounds. Once the VC member has gained political office on the strength of the RDS and youth popularity, he becomes a threat to the two landed factions, firstly to Bandara, who had sponsored him earlier and who did not want to lose his standing in the RDS. But he is even a greater threat to Appuhamy whose group unsuccessfully on three occasions tried to contest the VC seat against him. While these several established forces competed with each other, a new group came to the forefront.

#### Period III: 1969 to 1972

The youth who so far were practically excluded from participation in decision-making took the opportunity to organise them-

selves against any outside challenge. On the eve of the elections a new political party was making its appearance in Mawagama. The youth together with some others from the Intermediate Group supported it strongly in the hope thereby of coming into prominence in the village. This of course weakened the previously unchallenged position of the VC member-cum-RDS President-cum-UNP Chairman. However, this challenge to the entire "established" order evaporated quickly when the youth got involved in the insurgency and were held in detention camps. The old order seems to have been re-established once again. But when the General Elections had brought a party into power to which the VC member did not belong and when the local Member of Parliament (MP) had turned in their favour, the VC member was left with less support and standing than previously. The VC member, with his clientele, of Intermediate and Poor people was again pitted against the "real" established interests in the village. The VC member met with his death in 1972. The Intermediate-Progressive group, though economically of the same status as the VC member opposed him bitterly on political grounds and may have also participated in the vendetta which led to his death.

#### Period IV: 1972 to 1974

The VC member's death spells the end of the UNP/VC member/Rural Development Society prominence. Bandara was without a competitor except for Appuhamy. All the power returned to the Landed Group, while the Intermediate and the Poor groups were excluded. But the scene changed once again with the return of the village youth.

#### Period V: 1974 to 1976

The return of the youth to the village brought new strength to the SLFP. The dominant national role of their party and the party's objective to make use of their young people, gave them unprecedented prominence. They manned the entire CC. All the established groups (except Bandara) were practically without influence in the Committee. The CC Chairman was the kingpin holding together the CC, the SLFP group and the Bandara group. But again, this dominant position brought about new forces which felt threatened by the rise of this new group. In this case, it was the older farmers of all economic and political shades who resisted being directed in their agricultural operations by a few inexperienced young people. The crop failure during the *Maha* season 1975/76 brought this feeling to a crisis.

#### Period VI: 1976

Several youth had already left the CC during the disastrous season but in the end an entirely new Committee was being established. At this stage older, poorer and politically divergent persons found themselves together on this Committee. This signalled once again the slow rise of the UNP and its supporters.

Table 1      MAWEGAMA: POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

<u>Age</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
0 - 4	20	16	36
5 - 9	29	17	46
10 - 14	24	21	45
15 - 19	18	20	38
20 - 24	17	17	34
25 - 29	20	14	34
30 - 34	8	9	17
35 - 39	6	6	12
40 - 44	4	7	11
45 - 49	9	10	19
50 - 54	10	2	12
55 - 59	3	1	4
60 - 64	4	1	5
65 - 69	4	1	5
70 - 74	3	1	4
75 - 79	-	-	-
80 - 84	1	-	1
85 - 89	1	-	1
90 - +	-	1	1
Total	181	144	325

Mean Age:    ..    ..    ..    ..    22.89

Median Age:    ..    ..    ..    ..    19.0

Sex ratio:    100 females to 126 males

Source: Food Controller's List  
Interview Data.

Table 2      MAWEGAMA: DISTRIBUTION OF SIZE OF HOUSEHOLDS

<u>Members in Households</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
1 - 2	8	13.4
3 - 6	31	51.6
6 - +	21	35.0
Total	60	100.0

Average Size of Household    ..    ..    5.42

Average number of children    .    ..    3.9

(of families with children)

Source: Food Controller's List and Interviews

Table 3    MAWEGAMA: HOUSING QUALITY SCORE\*

<u>Score</u>	<u>No. of house- holds</u>	<u>%</u>
0 - 10	12	19.9
11 - 20	15	24.9
21 - 30	4	6.6
31 - 40	15	24.9
41 - 50	4	6.6
50 - +	10	16.6
	<u>60</u>	<u>100.0</u>

\* The score is arrived by the computing values for the quality and make of the house, its size and state of repairs as well as the presence of well and toilet.

Source:    Observations

Table 4    MAWEGAMA: AVERAGE YEARS OF SCHOOLING BY AGE GROUPS

<u>Age Groups (years)</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
17 - 25	5.71	6.53	6.18
26 - 35	7.23	4.30	5.73
36 - +	4.32	1.64	3.35
Total	<u>5.42</u>	<u>4.51</u>	<u>5.02</u>

Source:    Interview Data

Table 5    MAWEGAMA: DISTRIBUTION OF LABOUR FORCE

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Gainfully employed	94	44.7
Non-gainfully employed	87	41.4
Not employed	29	13.8
Total	<u>210</u>	<u>99.9</u>

Source:    Interview Data

Table 6 MAWEGAMA: DISTRIBUTION OF GAINFULLY EMPLOYED

	No.	%
Farmers *	49	52.1
Merchants *	6	6.4
Craftsmen *	2	2.1
Government Service	8	8.5
Agricultural labourers	29	30.8
Total:	94	99.9

\* Self-employed categories

Source: Interview Data

Table 7 MAWEGAMA: DISTRIBUTION OF NON-GAINFULLY EMPLOYED

	No.	%
Housewives	50*	57.5
Monks	3	3.4
Family Helpers	34	39.1
Total	87	100.0

Source: Interview Data

\* There is an apparent discrepancy between the number of 60 households in Mawegama and 50 housewives listed here. The twelve "missing" housewives can be accounted for in the following way:

- (a) in one household the wife is fully employed (Government clerk);
- (b) in five cases husbands have died and wives have taken over as heads of households. Two of these women earn their living by means of trading, one each by farming and hired labour, one is retired;
- (c) the household of the temple priest is by definition without a housewife;
- (d) in three cases the wives have died and the husbands remained widowers.

Table 8. MAWEGAMA: ESTIMATED NET AVERAGE INCOMES OF GAINFULLY EMPLOYED

				<u>Annual</u> Rs.	<u>Monthly</u> Rs.
Farmer (potential)	..	..	..	15,935	1,328
Farmer (1975/1976)	..	..	..	3,008	250
Merchants (average)	..	..	..	2,400	200
Craftsmen	..	..	..	1,800	150
Government Employees:					
Minor Grade	..	..	..	3,000	250
Subordinate grade	..	..	..	4,200	350
Labourer (casual)	..	..	..	1,728	144
Mawegama - All households:					
Weighted * average income:					
Potential	..	..	..	9,312	776
1975/1976	..	..	..	2,573	214

\* Weighted by number of persons employed in each category

Source: Interview Data

Table 9. MAWEGAMA: PADDY LAND HELD BY MAWEGAMA RESIDENTS

	<u>Irrigated Land</u>			Rainfed	Total Irrigated & Rainfed
	<u>"Old Field"</u>	<u>"New Field"</u>	<u>Total</u>		
Total acreage	100.97	123.37	224.34	125.83	350.17
No. of farmers	34	39	42	37	47
Average size of holdings (acres)	2.97	3.16	5.34	3.40	7.45
No. of parcels	457	196	653	57	710
Average size of parcels (acres)	0.22	0.63	0.34	2.21	0.49
Range of size (acres)	0.06-15.00	0.25-11.22		1.00-10.50	

Source: Paddy Lands Register



Table 10

MAWEGAMA: SCHOOLING BY ECONOMIC GROUPS. (OVER 17 YEARS OF AGE)

Economic Groups/ Schooling Years:		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total	Mean years of Education
Poor	..	20	4	4	4	6	8	4	1	2	0	9	2	0	0	0	0	64	3.85
Intermediate	..	13	4	8	4	11	6	3	1	5	0	12	2	1	0	0	1	71	4.54
Landed	..	4	0	4	2	4	4	6	2	3	1	16	2	2	0	0	0	50	6.78
Total	..	37	8	16	10	21	18	13	4	10	1	37	6	3	0	0	1	185	5.01

Source: Interview Data

Table 11

MAWEGAMA: OUTSIDE CONTACT SCORES BY ECONOMIC GROUPS

Economic Groups/ Scores	0-5	6-15	16-30	31-60	61-120	120 +	Total	Mean Scores
Poor	14	4	..	..	..	..	18	6.10
Intermediate	8	13	..	7	..	1	29	25.90
Landed	..	7	..	3	..	..	10	22.00
A l l	22	24	..	10	..	1	57	18.94
%	38.6	42.1		17.5		1.8	100	

Source: Interview Data

Table 12

MAWEGAMA: EXTENT OF PADDY LAND SOLD BY ECONOMIC GROUPS

Economic Groups/ Land Sold (acres)			0	0.1-1.0	1.1-2.0	2.1-3.0	3.1--+	Total	%
Poor	...	..	16	2	2	-	-	20	33.3
Intermediate	..	..	27	-	2	-	-	29	48.3
Landed	...	..	11	-	-	-	-	11	18.3
All	...	..	54	2	4	-	-	60	100.0
%	...	..	90.0	3.3	6.7	-	-	100.0	

Source: Interview Data

Table 13

MAWEGAMA: EXTENT OF PADDY LAND BOUGHT OR ASWEDDUMISED BY ECONOMIC GROUPS

Economic Group/Land Bought/ Asweddumised (acres)			0	0.1-1.0	1.1-2.0	2.1-3.0	3.1 +	Total	%
Poor	..	..	14	6	-	-	-	20	33.3
Intermediate	..	..	8	11	9	1	-	29	48.3
Landed	..	..	1	1	3	6	-	11	18.3
All	..	..	23	18	12	7	-	60	100.0
%	..	..	38.3	30.0	20.0	11.7	-	100.0	

Source: Interview Data

Table 14      MAWEGAMA: HOUSING QUALITY SCORES      BY ECONOMIC GROUPS

Economic Groups/ Scores			0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	50--+	Total	Mean Scores
Poor	..	..	11	5	--	4	--	--	20	13.1
Intermediate	..	..	1	9	3	9	2	5	29	33.3
Landed	..	..	--	1	1	2	2	5	11	58.2
A l l	..	..	12	15	4	15	4	10	60	31.1
%	..	..	20.00	25.00	6.67	25.00	6.67	16.67	100.00	

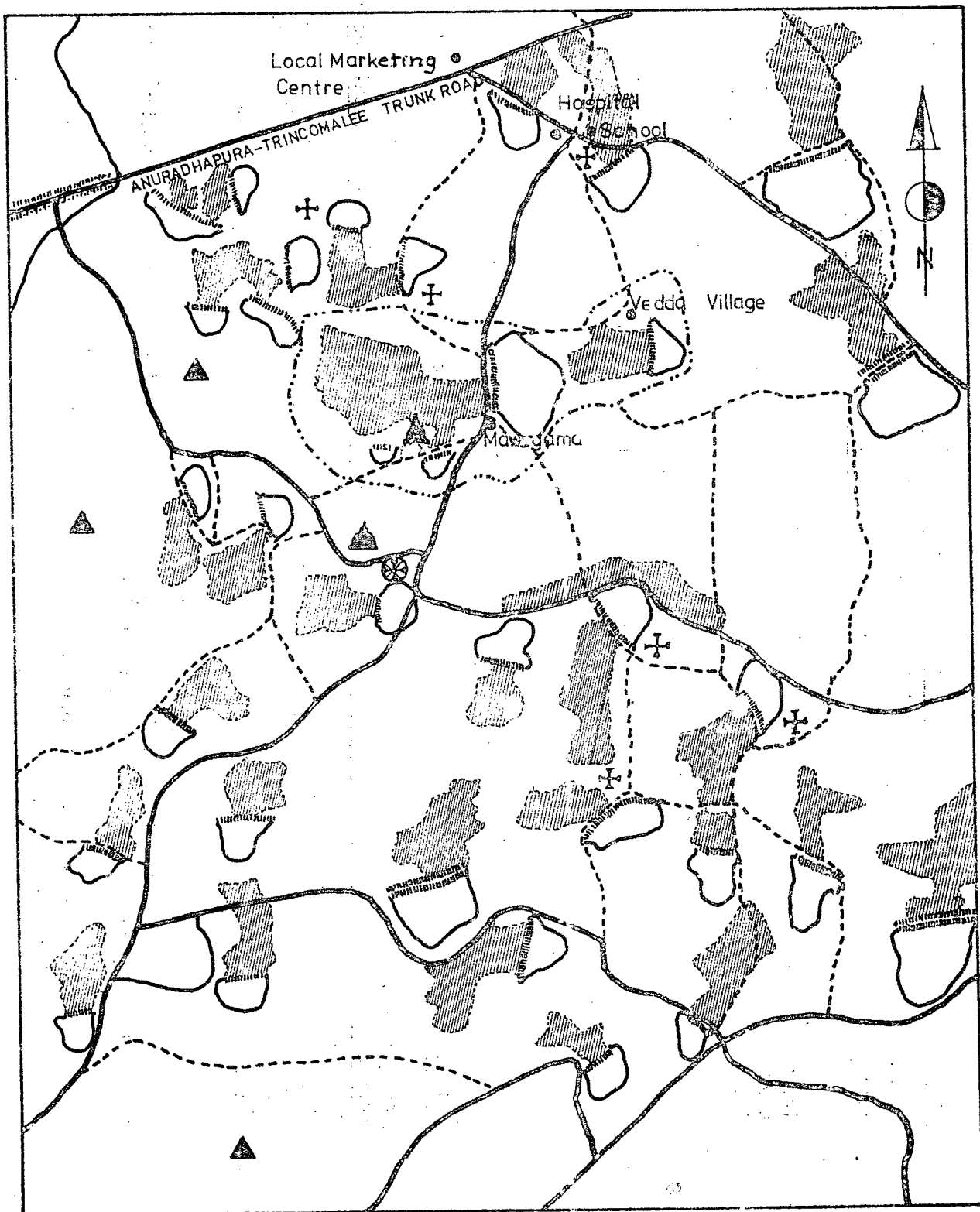
Source: Observation

Table 15      MAWEGAMA: MOBILE PROPERTY SCORES \* BY ECONOMIC GROUPS

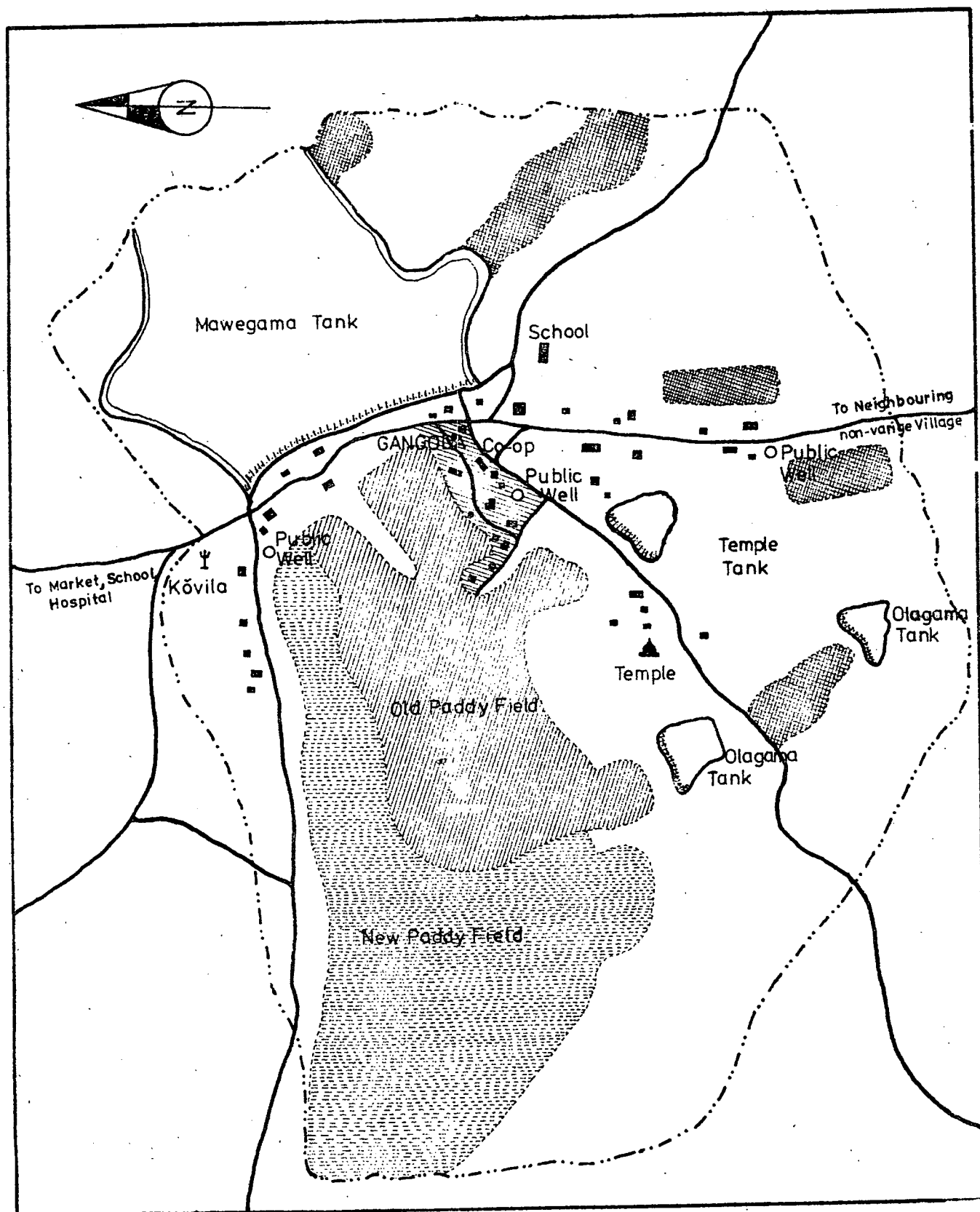
Economic Groups/ Scores			0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20 - +	Total	Mean Scores
Poor	..	..	17	3	--	--	--	--	20	0.40
Intermediate	..	..	9	9	6	4	1	--	29	5.13
Landed	..	..	--	--	2	5	1	3	11	15.20
A l l	..	..	26	12	8	9	2	3	60	5.40

\* This score consists of addition of weighted individual scores for the standard items like Petromax, cart, shot-guns, tables, chairs, etc.

Source: Observation


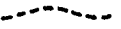


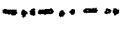







Environs of Mawegama



Map II Mawegama

LEGEND

-  = Trunk Road
-  = Other Roads
-  = Tank
-  = Paddy Fields
-  = Cultivation Committee Boundary
-  = Hill
-  = Maha Varige Village
-  = Neighbouring Village of Different Varige
-  = Rainfed Paddy
-  = Temple