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**Government of Maharashtra
Tribal Development Department**

**A MONOGRAPH ON PRIMITIVE TRIBES,
WITH REFERENCE TO THE
CHENCHUS, SAHARIYAS & KATKARIS**



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P R E F A C E

A study of primitive tribes with special reference to Chenchus, Katkaris and Saharias was conducted by a Pune based voluntary organisation namely, Pan Asian Management and Rural Research Organisation, Pune. This study was conducted by carrying out field surveys and interviews with the concerned tribals and also with the Government and other functionaries working in the respective tribal areas. The main objectives of the study were to understand the economic and social status of these communities in the present day set up, and to assess and evaluate the various programmes of economic and social development of the tribals being undertaken in the tribal areas by Government and semi-Government organisations and to highlight the successful programmes among them and make a comparative analysis of these programmes and drawing inferences on the basis of such comparison. The research methodology adopted by this Institute was field visits, interviews with concerned Government officers and other experts, library work and evaluation of different Government material collected from time to time.

The report is important from the point of view of economic and educational status of Katkaris - the tribe prevalent in 5 districts of western Maharashtra. There are certain recommendations which are of immense importance for the allround development of this community in the State of Maharashtra. The study report has recommended that the cooperatives of Katkaris engaged in different professions and trades such as brick kiln, coal kiln should be formed so that the benefits accrued out of these trades can be distributed equitably to all the beneficiaries. This report also suggests the provision of consumption credit facilities for the tribals to enable them to free themselves from the yoke of the local moneylenders and big agriculturists. It was also recommended that a survey to identify the families below the poverty line should also be conducted to enable Government to formulate schemes beneficial to this class of Katkaris. From the social point of view the study report recommends the campaign to be started against Alcoholism and to enhance the educational facilities in the tribal

areas so that the level of literacy is increased among the tribal men and women. There are many such recommendations in this report which are of vital importance from the point of view of social, economical and educational development of the Katkaris. The concerned authorities and social organisations need to look into these problems so that the development can be brought about expeditiously in these areas.

Developmental research studies have pointed out that unless the human dimension is given due recognition and consideration in all the stages of planning and management, development projects, howsoever perfect technically, are not able to produce desired results. Experiences have shown that how well intention plans have led to results just the reverse of those intentions simply because the development - relevant socio-cultural variables were not given due attention they deserve. Aided by the research on people and their social system, social scientists are undoubtedly in a best position to advise on the inputs which development projects are required to be able to involve the people and help them in a truly meaningful way.

It was therefore decided that the report prepared by the aforesaid Institute be published as a monograph by Tribal Research and Training Institute, Pune, for wider circulation among the officers of the Tribal Development Department and also to the voluntary agencies working in these areas for their action.

I am sure the findings and recommendations reported in this monograph will be certainly be beneficial to the Tribal Development Department's Field Officers, Social Workers and Social Activists of Voluntary Organisations working for the development of socially and economically backward Katkari Tribe in the State of Maharashtra. Besides, its practical utility in planning and implementation of developmental programmes, this report will also be useful to research scholars in the faculty of Economic Planning, Anthropology, Sociology and Social Work.

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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

A study was conducted of primitive tribes in India in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan. The tribes covered in the study were : Chenchus, Katkaris and Sahariyas.

1.1 The main objectives of the study were :

- (a) To understand their anthropological position in contemporary India.
- (b) To assess the various programmes that are being implemented specially for the primitive tribes.
- (c) To highlight the successful programmes in the three different states by comparing the methods used in each state.

1.2 Methodology

In general, the methodology followed to study the three tribes can be stated as follows :

- (1) Field visits to tribal areas
- (2) Interviews with the concerned government officers and other experts.
- (3) Library research
- (4) Evaluation of material collected from Government.

Specific deviations from the general methodology were considered as and when required based on actual conditions. For example the Katkaris are not adequately researched in anthropology, hence a greater emphasis was placed in collecting anthropological evidence in field visits. However the Chenchus are a tribe which has been extensively researched by renowned scholars. In this latter case we could pay more attention to the effectiveness of reaching government programmes to them.

1.3 Structure of Report

This Report is a summary of our findings, observations and conclusions. The subsequent two Chapters are on each of the tribe we had surveyed, including our

observations on various aspects of tribal development. The highlights of our recommendations and conclusions appears in this, the first chapter.

1.4 Highlights of the Survey Findings

- (1) Uniformly, the problem of alcoholism amongst primitive tribes is a serious one. It is effecting their lives and livelihood
- (2) Uniformly, the incidence of TB and Malaria is very high. Though we had not conducted a census or a statistically valid survey to estimate disease, our rough estimate shows that one out of every three tribes men either have TB or Malaria.
- (3) Medicine delivery systems are either too weak or non-existent
- (4) Life expectancy averages somewhere between 30-35 years.
- (5) Uniformly, there is scant regard for education and its benefits.
- (6) Equally, there is very little motivation for regular and steady jobs, especially amongst the Katkaris in Maharashtra.
- (7) Many of the government programmes in our opinion are both ill-conceived and implemented half-heartedly. The houses constructed for the primitive tribes under the Indira Awas Yojana are a case in point.
- (8) The programmes of the State Governments, other than those of Andhra Pradesh, do not seem to have any relevance to the real needs of the primitive tribal groups.
- (9) The Government of Andhra Pradesh must be complimented for running a highly successful Chenchu Development Programme. From the top levels to the lowest level in the hierarchy of this Programme, there is a high degree of motivation and recognition that available budgets must be used for the best possible benefit of the Chenchus. The dedication of Mr Sidhartha Kumar, Project Officer, Chenchu, in particular is worthy of mention.
- (10) It will be worthwhile for other officers-in-charge of PTGs to spend some time at the Chenchu Project Office and study various aspects of how a successful PTG development effort can be mounted.

1.5 Highlights of Observations

(1) Overall issue of tribal development

Government expenditure on the development of PTGs is a drop in the ocean. Even assuming that the size of any single tribal group is small (usually around 30,000), the effort that is required to wean them from primitive and crude methods of existence to more modern ways requires large manpower and funds. Thumb rule calculations show that if 6000 families are to be encouraged to take up settled agriculture not less than Rs. 500 crores would be required in direct beneficiary expenditure, apart from the costs of administering such a programme either by government or non-government agencies. If we consider that the proportion of the 6000 families may prefer jobs, another proportion may prefer small enterprises, and so on, it is unlikely that any particular vocation-mix will make a major difference to the magnitude of the sum involved.

This sum will be sufficient for only one of the needs of one tribe. Thus the magnitude of primitive tribe development can well be imagined. The question that then arises is what kind of tribal development must take place. The best policy to follow is one of helping the tribals to help themselves.

Today a significant proportion of the PTGs are seriously interested in changing over from food gathering to food cultivation. This mood must be caught in the flow of the tide and the government must ensure that such tribals are given every encouragement to get into settled cultivation. They must be encouraged to generate their own incomes for sustenance and growth. The programme officers must make it clear to the tribesmen that subsidies & benefits given are not permanent and the weaning procedure must be made clear at the beginning itself.

(2) Target groups for beneficiary programme

Presently any one tribesman is treated as any other in so far as identification of beneficiaries is concerned. This in our opinion is wrong. A better policy would be to build in incentives for hard work in the implementation of the programme. There is very little chance that for the high levels of alcoholism that exists, many of the

tribesmen will work hard. Escapism has got confused with culture and the result is that drinking is an acceptable social practice, even if one is drinking right through the day and night.

It is difficult to ban liquor. However in every possible way the Government should emphasise that drinking is not necessarily socially acceptable. One of the ways of doing so is to provide an incentive for hard work which is the anti-thesis of drinking. The government may for instance organise labour camps involving e.g. land development. Those who display a capacity to work hard may be granted lands for agriculture and a training package. Similarly, those who have been allotted lands and other subsidies may be told that their subsidies will continue only if they achieve minimum productivity norms. Sufficient cognizance must be given to vagaries of nature and practical problems such as low quality seeds, etc. At the same time the dignity of standing on over a span of 4-5 years. Our experience with tribal groups shows that they actually expect the subsidies to be withdrawn and are surprised that they are continued beyond reasonable time periods.

The groups who may receive subsidies or other benefits should be worked out along these lines. In spite of objections that are likely to be received from voluntary organisations working in the field of PTG development, this in our opinion is the only sensible policy for Government to follow. The Government cannot hope to take upon itself to wholly finance the economic development of the PTGs. A good part of this must come through the motivation and labour of the PTGs themselves.

(3) Minimum Government Commitment to PTG Development

PTGs are in an abysmally dire straits of poverty, ignorance and ill-health. The Government's commitment to the welfare of its citizens must also have a component that accepts stark realities. Where life expectancy is around 35 years and every third person either has a terminal or a potentially terminal disease, the Government must sit up and act. Act on a war footing. Our survey of tribals has shown to us the pathetic state they are in, health-wise. It is an irony of governance that houses are being

constructed for families who cannot even hope to live past the middle age of an average Indian.

Many government programs are irrelevant to tribal development simply because the tribals can rarely benefit from them. Training the tribesmen in tailoring, dairy development, typing etc. on a mass-scale is a futile development expenditure. Most of the tribesmen do not know how to market their services subsequently and experience shows that neither the government nor the voluntary organisations can help them effectively. None of these three groups are market-smart and fail miserably when it comes to commercial exploitation in the services sector. It therefore tantamounts to a waste of good money.

The Indira Awas Yojana is another of the ill-conceived programmes. Our survey shows that tribesmen are proud to own brick-and-cement houses, that these houses leak more often than not, and that when they are questioned intensely admit such houses are not as important as other pressing needs such as economic development and certainty of income. Yet a whopping sum is spent under this programme.

It is necessary therefore that the Government re-think its policies on funding. The principles which suggest themselves are :

- (a) The government must wholly fund any desire on the part of the tribesmen to cultivate land.
- (b) All other economic activity funding may be stopped temporarily.
- (c) The funding of houses must also be stopped.
- (d) Surplus money generated through the above may be directed at health services, education and anti-alcoholism campaigns.
- (e) In agriculture, the funding may be undertaken only on such activities as land development, digging of wells, energising pumping, seeds, fertilisers and agricultural training.
- (f) Labour camps to be held regularly to wean away tribesmen from food gathering to cultivation.

(4) Effect of developmental activities on PTGs

PTGs as a rule have remained where they were from times immemorial. They can see no hope for development. In our survey we came across many pathetic instances of poverty and deprivation. We also came across, almost as a rule, their pathetic ignorance of governance. But their ignorance also opens one's eye to the truth. Why for instance must the Department of Revenue not accept what the Department of Forests has agreed, as in the case of Sahariyas, for transfer of forest land? Or why for instance lands transferred earlier be taken away from them under new laws, as in the case of Chenchus? These questions are simple. The answers however are a maze of bureaucratic explanations which offer no solutions. And no one in particular takes up these cases with a zeal that can be termed as effective. The Tribal Development departments of the state governments need to be told in no uncertain terms that it is their responsibility to take up tribal causes with other departments. Just as the Forest Department zealously guards the forest, so must the Tribal Department zealously guard the forest, so must the Tribal Departments zealously guard the interests of the tribals. This is not happening in most of the cases surveyed, except, as mentioned earlier, with the Chenchu Project Office.

At another level, and this is noticeable amongst the Chenchus, development has reached the grassroots. Particular mention must be made of Garipenta. Not only can the village be seen to be prospering, the lifestyles of the Chenchus, has undergone a sea change. One does not for instance find low life expectancy, TB, Malaria, alcoholism and many of the other social and individual problems one finds in other villages. Closer scrutiny has shown that the Project Office simply followed the first principles of effective governance. They first granted lands, then gave the Chenchus all that was required for agricultural development including seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, tube-wells, pumps, a tractor, bullocks and carts and by constantly visiting and meeting the villagers ensured that all grants were properly utilised. Today the village can boast of people who have become lakhpatis. If a model of development ever existed it is Garipenta. It is now however imperative that the Government of Andhra Pradesh devise systems of

withdrawal from the village, keeping in mind that any abrupt withdrawal or ill-conceived withdrawal will bring to nought all that has been achieved

(5) The Issue of Land

Probably the most important economic problem the tribals are facing is one of land ownership. Laws keep changing, records are not maintained and the ignorant tribesmen is the loser. In Shahabad, Rajasthan, we came across a peculiar case of the Forest department having no objection to tilling of forest land, and the Revenue department not transferring the land in the name of the beneficiaries. The issue seems so complex from the bureaucratic angle that even we did not comprehend it. The fact remains that land did not get transferred for years.

The problems with being assigned the right to till the land and not own it are all too obvious when we see the case of the Chenchus. Village after village that we studied, the elders came to us with tears in their eyes asking for the right to till land which they considered their own. Land which was theirs for cultivation under a 1942 order of the Nizam Government was taken away by subsequent changes in the enactments concerned with forest and wild life protection. Subsequently they were forced into subsisting on minor forest produce. With the consequent growth of thorny shrubs and top soil degradation, much of this land (called chenchu reserves) became non-cultivable. Today, they are back to square one. Even with a tribal-friendly Project Office, they are not in a position to cultivate. Firstly because the process of transfer of land rights back to the Chenchus is being obstructed by the Forest Department. Secondly, where original lands have been transferred, a very high cost of land development is involved.

The Central Government needs to take up matters related to tribal development, especially granting of ownership of land expeditiously. It must be recognised in all laws, whether the Forest Conservation Act or the Wildlife Sanctuary Act, or any other act in force, that first and foremost people are more important than either trees or animals. It must be recognised that protecting tigers, figuratively speaking, cannot be at the cost of a life expectancy of 35 years. It must be recognised

that man is an essential part of the environment and that environmental protection does not mean that man pays with his life for the sake of the lives of animals.

The Central Government, and more particularly, the Ministry of Welfare must take up this case vigourously. It must ensure that the thinking of environmental protection in all the concerned decision making bodies of the Government is changed towards this end

To begin with inter-ministerial committees may be appointed with the Ministries of Forests, Wildlife, Environment, Revenue and Welfare to study indepth all areas where conflict of man with nature in the eyes of the Forest department & Revenue time-bound program. This issue involves millions of tribesmen, which include the non-PTG tribes also. The issue is at the very foundation of the violent agitations of tribes in the country and the spread of militancy. It will be in the interests of the Government to have a high-powered committee, possibly chaired by the Prime Minister, so that the recommendations of the Committee are effective

(6) Anthropological notes

It is of course not possible to detail the anthropology of a tribe in a survey that is limited by both funds and time. Of the tribes surveyed by us, the Chenchus are the most researched. The Sahariyas are not adequately researched, but we came across a social worker, (whose son we met), Mr. Verma, who has set up his base in Shahabad. With a litateur's bent of mind he has compiled many Sahariya stories and has penned his own impressions. The Katkaris are the least documented of the three. However our short study allows us to make some observations.

All three primitive tribe groups display in their societies a very high regard for individualism. Around puberty, the tribesmen are expected to begin fending for themselves and set up a separate home. They also marry around that time. This is one case where we have first hand evidence to suggest that the Census of India is wrong. The Census we find has recorded very few child marriages. In fact the contrary is true. Almost everybody marries around the age of puberty.

This has a few important significances. Most important, marriage at puberty and the need to take care of oneself from then on, are the reasons for children not pursuing education. Customs that determine lifestyle and the principles of living can rarely be replaced by forcing children to go to school. Only in the schools run by Mr Verma at Shahabad, Rajasthan did we find a high degree of enthusiasm. But even there children rarely complete school. In Andhra Pradesh, where a highly successful rice-and-dal scheme for Chenchu children admitted to school is being implemented, the drop out rate after the 4th & 5th standards is alarmingly high.

Equally important to note is the fact that because of the high degree of individualism, all government programmes aimed at beneficiaries must note that new families, new clusters of families and new villages too, are being constantly formed. One family member in his lifetime does not necessarily support one of his own, even if he happens to be his son or brother. A constantly changing demographic profile poses great many problems to the administrator.

Further, individualism clubbed with alcoholism presents quite a different set of problems. We were witness to a number of drunken brawls between people of the same village over extra-marital affairs. Teachers, particularly in the Prakasam and Kurnool districts, described many instances of brother killing brother over a suspected affair with his wife. We even came of a gory incident of one brother killing another and displaying the slashed head in the school premises simply because he dreamt that his brother had an affair with his wife.

New tribal settlements also get created by this method. After having had a quarrel, the agitated boy very often walks out of his village. In fact the Chenchu village presents a mud-and-stone evidence of this. Most villages, of say non-tribals, are a cluster of houses with the farm lands away from the village. The Chenchu village consists of a number of clusters of houses and farm lands interspersed in-between. This phenomena is mostly because of primitive lust and suspicions.

(7) Comparisons of development programmes for the three tribal groups studied

On paper one cannot see much of a difference between the three cases studied. However in the effectiveness there is a great deal of difference.

Without doubt, the Chenchu Project Office is doing very good work. Short of manpower as they are, and constrained by funds and various bureaucratic procedures, they are yet very effective. The Project Office consists of motivated people and even the lowest ranked personnel have a fairly good idea of the work they are doing and the reasons thereof. The teachers particularly must be complimented for working under the most adverse working conditions and at the same time not losing sight of the purpose they are entrusted with.

The Chenchu Project Office can take justifiable pride in their efforts at Garipenta. They can also take pride in their on-going efforts at Minampalligudam. Most importantly they can take pride in the fact that they are responsive to the needs of the people, are able to identify them correctly and focus all effort at making their work a success.

The same cannot be said of the Sahariya Project Office. The Project Officer there has a high rank - Additional Collector - and he belongs to the senior IAS Cadre. However the Project Officer has no powers worth the mention. The Project Office situated at Shahabad merely acts as a post office transmitting apparent needs to the various departments. They have a Sahariya Vikas Samiti which is hardly representative of the Sahariyas, though there are 21 members in the Samiti. The Project Officer himself is frequently transferred giving very little scope for sustained developmental effort.

The less said about the developmental efforts for the Katkaris, the better it is. First of all, the Katkaris do not have a Project Office. It was observed that the staff in that Project Office pay very little attention to the problems of Katkaris. In fact if it was not for the very active assistance we received from a local NGO, Mrs Nancy Gaikwad, our work on Katkaris may have remained incomplete.

It is probably important to consider the type of qualifications that are necessary in the appointment of a Project Officer. The Project Officer at Shahabad was too senior a post and possibly tribal development is adversely effected. The Project Officer at Pen, Raigad district, Maharashtra is too junior a post adversely effecting the development of tribes. The Andhra Pradesh Government has probably struck a right balance by having a person of the rank of Assistant Director. This is a senior posting for the middle-level bureaucrat at the State Government and is rarely seen as a punishment. Though even in Andhra Pradesh, we feel that the post may be required to be upgraded to that of a director or at least a deputy director. This will give additional power to the most important post in the development of PTGs. As a rule posting of IAS officers to PTG offices may be avoided.

Apart from the organisation of the machinery to deliver tribal development programmes, the problems in tribal development remain the same in every case. The Project Office at Srisaïlam differs to the extent that they have been able to put up within the Chenchu Project Area a few examples of outstanding administration. But they have reached out to only a small proportion of Chenchus in this manner. All project offices are constrained by funds and by manpower. As a result the issues in tribal development remain where they were for decades.

CHAPTER - II

KATKARIS : A TRIBE SEEKING AN IDENTITY

By

NANCY GAIKWAD

Today, the Katkaris are struggling for an identity in the mainstream culture. Their own cultural roots are being looked down upon from within by both the old and the youth as well as by the men and women of this tribe. Their aspiration is to be recognised as Marathas (One of the Kshatriya castes) as most of the Katkaris hamlets are just outside the villages of Marathas or the Agris. They feel that to live a decent life is to live like a Maratha or an Agri i e to emulate their customs and norms. Even the elders amongst the tribe express that it is no longer fitting to follow the customs or laws of the Katkari. Some of the Katkari elders went to the extent of even saying "we are capable of living like the Marathas but we do not have the opportunities." This statement clearly states that the Katkaris have internalised that to live like a Katkari is to discredit oneself, not having any social standing. When one tried to present the positive aspect of the Katkari culture the same was encountered by a another matter of fact expression." That is all true but what the Katkaris believed and followed is not of much value in the society of contemporary times."

2.1 SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE KATKARIS

Family System

The Katkaris follow a nuclear family system. Within six months to a year, the newly wedded couple begin to shift from the parent's abode, to a home of their own or else settle down to an independent kitchen under the same roof. For example in one household we found that a small room of bricks measuring 10 x 10 had 3 independent kitchens --- one for the old parents and their 3 unmarried children, and two for their married sons. Among the Katkaris it is noticed that the men usually prefer settling in

the villages of their wives either due to scarcity of land in their own villages or due to the demands of their wives as well as an assurance of some economic security by the father-in-laws.

The nuclear family system does give rise to the problem of the aged and one can see old women carrying pots of water from long distances or an old man fetching firewood from the distant forests. The son concept is also upheld by the Katkaris as the one who lights the pyre after the death of one's parents and carry the pot of ashes. They seemed very much convinced about this fact. Yet there were a few elders who did express that they did not find much of a difference between a son and a daughter.

The relation between a husband and a wife are more in the nature of companionship. They fish together, work together, go to the market together, and run the home together. Cases of extramarital and premarital nature are dealt within the village or hamlet itself. 2 to 3 elders question the woman on whether or not she is interested in continuing with her husband. If the man is interested in marrying another wife and there are several instances of this kind, he is allowed to do so, provided he continues to look after his first wife and children. The first wife does throw up a tantrum for a month or two when she goes off in a huff to her mother's place but then resigns to the situation and returns back to live with the co-wife and husband. Among the Katkaris there are no instances of suicide or prostitution by women. Women actively participate in village meetings or informal sittings.

In spite of these positive features, alcoholism among Katkari women is an issue which is ruining the family stability of Katkaris. Child rearing too is affected. The tendency of both husband and wife returning from work totally drunk is a common feature among Katkaris. Yet today's Katkaris youth (though isolated as instances) are questioning this tendency and special efforts are being made by them to put an end to this social menace.

Marriage System

The Katkaris prefer to marry within their own community. Marrying outside one's community is considered to be defying the societal norms, the penalty being that

the couple is not allowed to participate in the community sittings. Inter-community marriage is a rare phenomenon in the Katkari community.

When a boy attains 14 to 16 years, his father and a few relatives go to the prospective bride's home there both the boy and the girl express their intention. Once the relatives know of the consent of both the boy and the girl, the engagement is completed by the breaking of the betel nut. After a few days the marriage ceremony follows, which is heralded by the breaking of the coconut.

Previously the marriage ceremony used to be very simple and the same was consecrated by five elders of the Katkari Community. There was not much of pomp and splendor, though song and dance was always there. But now the priests from either the Brahmin community or a representative from the Maratha or Agri Community are invited to chant the prayers in Sanskrit consecrating the marriage. When asked why the previous custom declined. An old man asked, "Not to bring a person from the upper castes, not to have a good dress for the couple and not to spend for the wedding feast, is not appreciated today. To spend heavily for a marriage is considered necessary for a good social status.

There is also a change in the dishes served at the wedding ceremonies. Traditionally, fish and rice was relished and was considered very cheap. Today only rice, dal and a dry vegetable much like the dominant Hindu castes of equal economic strength do. Hence one can conclude that the Katkaris in general have totally embraced the Hindu culture including norms and customs. A few exceptions can be found in the internal jungle area where the marriages are still blessed by the Katkari leaders.

There was a time when Katkaris marriages used to cost nearly Rs.500 to Rs.1000. Today no one spends in this range of magnitude. The budgeting itself is in the range of Rs.5,000 to Rs.10,000. "If you can do it we can also do it," seems the dominant tendency. This is another expression of their struggle for some social standing. The positive feature in the marriages is that even today the Katkari community has not started the dowry system. Instead a bridal price is in vogue. The

bridegroom gives the bride's father Rs.100 to Rs.200 and 20 kgs of rice and his villagers are given Rs.500 to Rs.600 for the ceremony.

Birth Ceremony

Here too money has come to play an important role. The naming ceremony as the local Marathas or rather as per the Hindu cultural norms i.e. laying the child in the cradle on the 5th day by the midwife or the father's sister has come to be in vogue. Initially this was a small affair but today one is expected to incur about Rs.500 to Rs.1000. The naming ceremony is conducted on the 12th day where there is all night drinking and dancing. As stated earlier there is a tendency to spend more for such a ceremony if it is a boy and less if it is a girl. In this ceremony every woman in the village is given 1/4 piece of a dry piece of coconut. Some families have also begun organising a video show and keeping awake the whole night.

Death rites

This too is as per the Hindu rites. Though traditionally the Katkaris buried the dead, yet today one observes that they prefer burning the dead body, except where firewood is extremely difficult to procure, one resorts to burying the dead body.

The Katkaris identify a point outside the village called Jeevkhada (the stone of life). The dead body is taken outside the village. In the case of the husband's death rite, the wife breaks her bangles on a stone, under which some coir is kept. If it is a death rite for a female, her husband or son or father have to shave their heads.

On the 13th day dinner is served to all the near and dear ones the cost of which comes to about Rs.1000. This ceremony is also along the lines of Hindu ceremonies, except for the absence of a Brahmin priest.

Dance, song, religion & festivals

The Katkari's Khatmiri dance has become extinct in most Katkari hamlets except in those areas which are in the jungle belt. Some Katkaris say that they have given up because the dance, get togethers used to also invite a lot of drunkenness and along with it, strife and wrath. Hence song and dance has gone out of the life of Katkaris.

The story telling form from the Puranas has also become extinct though a few hamlets do have one person narrating the incidents from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. In fact bringing the Katkaris into mainstream Hindu ways began with the starting of Vishwa Hindu Parishad Schools in Katkari hamlets. Gradually visits from the VHP volunteers and the introduction of Bhajans and Kirtan and the promise of a better future, has led to abstinence from alcohol and on-vegetarian food. Many Katkaris also decided to put a string of brown wooden beads round the neck due to these influences. Soon a wave swept the Katkaris hamlets and many a couple gave up alcohol, fish and meat. The new way of life was being looked upon with esteem.

Religious practices are not very popular amongst the Katkaris, though burning of incense sticks once in a while or keeping the photographs of Ram or Hanuman is in vogue. Most of the katkaris do not practice any faith on a daily basis. Religion symbolises ceremonies to them. The concept of God is not a very strong belief with the Katkaris youth, yet the festival of Lord Ganpathi and incurring an expense of nearly Rs.500 to Rs.1000 has become a matter of social standing for many Katkari families.

The Katkaris follow the God or Goddess worshiped by the entire village, as for example "Manik Shor" of Kadav village or "Mari Arice" of Bhadual village. In some areas the village temple is named after the village God. In some areas the village God is represented by a stone which is located outside the village. Like all other villagers the Katkaris also go to the village God at the beginning of the agricultural season or along with the newly married couple and break a coconut and distribute it as prasad.

In a number of Katkari villages there are shamans called Bhagat or Bhagtin diviners & interpreters of supernatural phenomena. They are believed to possess supernatural powers. They have particular days when they are available for consultation, usually Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. On any of these days those seeking healing from afflictions number about 5 to 6 persons.

We came across Devkabai, a Bhagtin. She was afflicted by an ailment which had affected her lower limbs. In spite of all medical help, she was not relieved of the

pain. She could not walk a step, her father spent more than a thousand rupees. Finally a Bhagtin from Kharav village (Kholapur Tehsil) was brought. She was followed by "Pangla Devi". She asked for a saree, blouse and a silver coin. Clothes were provided to the old lady but the silver coin could not be afforded. The Bhagtin (an old woman) expired. Devkabai states to have not recovered completely because her father and husband fell short in making a silver coin. Even since she has given up non-vegetarian food and she has begun worshipping Mandav devi. She has her teacher locally known as Guru "Kisan Sarli" who accompanies her every year to Vahi Satara where the temple of goddess Mandav is situated. For this she has to invest Rs 500 to Rs 600 every year. She now claims to have cured patients with fever, diarrhoea, and infertility. She also says that she has proved to be a good psychiatrist. Her clientele are not only the Katkaris but include Thakurs and Marathas too.

The Katkaris celebrate the Holi Festival (they call it Shimga) for nearly 5 days. But they are more emotionally attached to the festival of "Pittar Amashya" --- a day for the souls of the elders of the home. On this day the couple cook the favorite dishes of both their parents and serve the dishes and keep on the roofs. After that they invite one from every village household to eat from a common plate at least one morsel. A spirit of sharing is experienced. This is practiced even today.

2.2 ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE KATKARI LIFE

Predominantly the Katkaris represent the unorganised labour force in Raigad District. The labour on the brick kilns, coal kilns, agriculture and sand quarries are all Katkaris. In spite of putting in nearly 12 to 14 hours of work everyday their standard of living has not improved over the years. They are on a hand to mouth existence. Both at the brick kilns and the coal kilns the Katkaris involve their wives and children. On the sand quarries the males are involved. The Katkaris are not very happy with the income. They say whatever they earn is just enough to have meals. In both Raigad and Ratnagiri we heard cases of Katkari labourers having been burnt alive in the coal kiln furnace due to differences or refusal to comply with the master's expectations. There are also cases of Katkari labourers having taken advances from their employers

and subsequently breaking the agreement, only to be forced back under the authority of the Police. The general attitude is that a Katkari needs a harsh and yet tactical taskmaster, if one has to get work done. But the Katkari response to this is that if this was really the case, the non-Katkari masters and their supervisors wouldn't employ them. The Katkaris contend that they are made to work like donkeys without adequate returns and hence they run away when they feel they are being exploited too much.

Katkari Indebtedness

The Katkaris lose much because they take advances from their employers. If one has to go to work on a brick kiln in September, they take the wages partially in advance in the month of June, because the period from June to September (till their subsistence farming output is available) they have nothing to survive on. The advances for the agricultural work for the period of June to August is taken as an advance in the month of March, April and May. This vicious cycle of the struggle for survival makes it impossible for the Katkaris to live a decent moderate life.

In this agony of survival from day to day opportunities, education naturally takes a back seat, because most Katkaris go with their children to the work site. Most female labourers deliver their babies on the work-site with none to fend for them. Neither educational nor health nor worker's welfare opportunities exist at the place of work. This situation speaks for the backwardness in which the Katkaris find themselves in.

Occupations of the Katkaris

Fishing : Katkaris are skilled in river fishing. The women's sarees serve as a net. Sometimes they put a bund in the middle of the river. This bund is built with the help of bamboo and stone in which the fish get caught. One family or a few families fish jointly. They are good crab hunters which need special skills otherwise one's finger can get bitten. During monsoon fishing continues in the agricultural fields itself. Ever since the Gram Panchayats took over the ownership of the village ponds free fishing in the village ponds was stopped. This meant an important source of income

amounting to Rs 10 to Rs 15 per head, accruing to the Katkari families, was stopped. The example of Kadav village of Karjat Tehsil is a good example. All the ponds within the village precincts were given to rich villagers who give a rent from Rs 1000 to 2000 to the local Gram Panchayat. These bodies have infact introduced pesiculture. The new method of production of fish seems to fetch good returns. For example the Kadav fishing pond produces fish worth Rs 500 per day. The demand is also very high. This catch caters to 15 villages. Today the Katkaris who are capable of inland fishing are totally alienated from an occupation in which they have a mastery. At the time of the survey a major dispute was going on in the village. The Government's Tribal Development Department was not even aware of the case nor about the problem of Katkaris loosing their source of livelihood in general.

Brick Kilns : In Raigad and Thane districts owners of brick kilns are predominantly Agris or Muslims. Most kilns begin their work soon after Diwali i.e. in mid November and end the work by 1st week of June, before the monsoons.

Process of production : In any brick kiln there is one group of labourers for preparing bricks, another group which does the burning of the bricks, while a third group transports them. Most of the Katkaris are employed in the group which actually prepares the bricks. The mud and water are prepared at the work site itself.

As soon as the Katkaris report for work in October/November they clear up the place for laying the bricks in rows. Then they prepare a pit to soak mud. Each such preparation makes about 1200 bricks. Water is poured into the pit and the combination of mud and water is soaked overnight. The next morning the labourers have to begin work at 7 am and start molding the soaked mud standing in the pit. After 1200 bricks are prepared the remaining mud is removed and new mud is put in and the process is repeated to produce the next lot of bricks.

In one pit 4 adults work. One to remove the soaked mud, another to put the mud into the brick plates and two to put them up for drying. At one time 6 pits

are usually prepared. In each pit 4 labourers i.e. 24 labourers work at the same time in one brick kiln. 4 persons produce 50,000 bricks in 10 days time. From the period 5th December to 20th February the 4 brick kilns we observed, the production was nearly 4 lakh bricks in 2 1/2 months. Upto June another 6 to 7 lakh bricks are usually made. However, where there is shortage of water the kiln closes down by the mid or end of April. In our opinion, the wage earnings of the Katkaris in this venture are not commensurate with their efforts, the occupational hazards, and the total earnings of the kiln owner. It is necessary for the Government to effectively monitor the conditions of work and the wage income of the Katkaris, especially since they have been designated as a primitive tribe group.

Wages : The agreements between the labourers and the owner usually states that 4 labourers (since 4 work in one pit) will get Rs.50 for 100 bricks. By the time they start their work in November each family seems to have taken Rs.600 as an advance from their employer. Once they actually begin work they are charged Rs.150 per couple. Their work record and the amount of bricks produced by them is maintained by the employers. The labourers are illiterate and know nothing of how much they have produced. One of them for instance, stated that in 10 days a group of 4 produce 10,000 bricks. However even taking the official calculation into consideration, each labourer gets only Rs.12.50 as the wage per day which is far behind the legal minimum wages. To aggravate the problem when the masters prepare the final wage reports they usually show advances on the Katkaris leading to non-payment to the Katkaris. Hence just before leaving the Katkaris are forced to take advances again for the next season so as to survive for the next 3 months.

Health needs : All the labourers complain of immense back pain and severe joint pains due to work on the brick kilns. This work is extremely difficult in the cold season when one has to stand in the water filled pit the whole day long. There are also

cases of skin eruptions because of standing for long period in mud and water. The employers do not provide any kind of health services for these labourers.

Conclusions : A big chunk of the Katkaris labour force is working in the brick industry. But on close investigations this occupation really does not seem to be giving adequate returns inspite of one working from 7 am to 8 pm. Child labour is also involved though not accounted for in the labour contract. This occupation also results in migration, which implies that their homes are vacant for nearly 6 to 8 months. At the sites they put in temporary structures made up of 4 bamboo sticks, cloth and tin. In it they cook their meals and sleep in the open. Many women deliver their babies in these conditions and their life goes on. The Katkaris do not complain of these difficulties, they just accept it as their fate.

Sand Quarry Works: The Katkaris of Tornath are engaged in the sand quarry works on the Ulhas River for nearly 15 years. These Katkaris have been constantly working with the same employer. They are predominantly male labourers. The season is soon after harvest season in mid-November till the month of May.

Nature of work : There are two types of work. One digging the sand and sifting it. The second being lifting it and dumping the sand on the truck to be transported wherever required. At that site the sand is dumped and the labourers return to the quarry site. If the site is close by one can accomplish 2 to 3 trips. If it is at a distance a labourer can make only one trip. The labourers for both the type of works are different for every foot of sand to be dug there are labourers. In every truck there are six labourers. They have to report to duty at 8 am and return in the evening between 6 to 8 pm.

Wages : The wages are given on the basis of number of trucks of sand transported to the sites. Those who dig and sift are given Rs 125 between 4 of them for 1 truck of sifted sand. Those who transport get Rs 150 between 6 of them. If there is regular work at the end of the week when the payment is made a labourer may get Rs 150. The labourers say that this has become a very rare phenomenon. Most of the time they end up with Rs 50 - Rs 80 for

the whole week. Very often they have to report to the site and just keep waiting because their work depends on the orders for sand and in the last 2 years the recession in the construction industry has adversely affected their income. While the earnings of the employer have gone up considerably due to an escalation of the price of building materials, the labourers's wages have remained the same.

Problems discussed and suggestions made by the labourers. We had discussions with the labourers so as to get their point of view. Their most common complaint was that they suffered a lot from body ache, fever, weakness and skin ailments. They further complained that no medical help was provided. They are not granted any paid leave either. They have no record of their work input, which was maintained by the employer. They felt that there was always a possibility of manipulation of accounts by the employer.

The labourers expressed that this line of business was fairly simple and had adequate returns. Instead of serving another master, they suggested that they could be assisted to form a cooperative, so as to carry on the work themselves. They would then not be in such dire economic conditions as they live in today. This suggestion of theirs has a validity which may be considered for action.

Grass-cutting : Soon after the harvest, some Katkaris take up the grass cutting work in their vicinity. They cut and tie the grass into bundles. Some Katkaris migrate for a few months, for example, Katkaris from Kholapur Tehsil migrate into Panvel Tehsil. The Katkaris do this work only one half of a day, since not much work is available of this nature. This is usually taken up when no other work is available.

Wages : This job fetches Rs 15 for 100 kgs of grass. In a day a couple can cut grass and get a wage of Rs 25 to Rs 30 per person. The Katkaris feel that this is a good job but their job is seasonal.

Problems : Sometimes contractors take the labourers and make them stay on the site in another tehsil and there is not enough work initially. As this work is based on the number of kgs of grass cut, going and staying at the site becomes

an uneconomic proposition. At the same time the advances for consumption of labourers continues. Sometimes the labourers run away from the site without informing their employers especially if the earnings do not satisfy their minimum needs.

Working in Farmhouse : All over Raigad District especially in Karjat, Kholapur, Panvel and Pen, week-end cottages of the urban elite have come up. At these farms most of the labour hands looking after the gardens are Katkaris. They are not caretakers. They are appointed as daily wage labourers at Rs.15 per day. Usually female labourers and sometimes a few male workers find employment on a monthly basis of Rs.700/- per month for 8 hours of work a day. By this exposure the Katkaris are also picking up urban cultural traits. Some of the farm house owners have also picked up one or two children for schooling in Bombay. This is projected as humanitarian work but has several negative connotations.

Agricultural labourers : The major agricultural labour force amongst the Katkaris is in Karjat Tehsil. A number of them work on a salary basis at Rs.300 and two meals. A number of them are already bonded because they have taken advances for certain festivities. Hence they tend to lose on the actual rates, which is Rs.25 to Rs.30 for transplanting and harvesting. Our survey shows that whenever the Katkaris take advances, they lose on an average 50% of their daily wage. During the agricultural season they find it extremely difficult to work with the masters from whom an advance was taken on a daily basis and therefore work on alternate days. Their question of daily survival becomes crucial and hence on other days they work with masters who give cash.

Child labourers : A number of Katkaris commit their children to their age old masters against the advances/loans taken in the past, not having a capacity to repay. These child labourers serve as shepherds and domestic hands. They have to be satisfied with 2 bare meals. One of dal and rice and the other of some bhakris and some chillie paste.

Sale of firewood : A number of Katkaris, especially the old fetch firewood from the jungles and sell a small bundle for Rs.8 and a big bundle for Rs.15 to Rs.20. They sell in the villages where Marathas, Agris and Muslims dwell. They are able to sell only one bundle per day.

Employment in the Government and the private sector : If one goes through nearly 25 hamlets one may find 2 or 3 railway employees or a primary school teacher or a few in the nearby companies as unskilled temporary workers or contract labourers. A Katkari as permanent employee anywhere is a rare phenomenon.

Collection and sale of minor forest produce : The Katkari women sell raw mangoes, black berries, jamuns and vegetable from the local forests in the local Karjat market or on the Karjat railway platform. This occupation begins in early March and goes on till the last week of June. They manage to get Rs.15 to Rs.20 per day during peak MFP season.

2.3 LANDHOLDING OF THE KATKARIS

Most of the Katkaris in Raigad District have the right to Dalhi land which is categorised under the Forest Department. This has not been regularised in the name of the katkaris as yet. The tenants to this land are a collective and most of the Dalhi land is on the hills where cultivation is made impossible due to the grazing of the cattle of the uppeer castes and sometimes the wild boar. Hence to the Katkaris youth the Dalhi land issue does not hold much attraction. But the struggle regularise it is on.

On the whole the Katkaris as a tribe do not own much land in the District. The Government Resolution to regularise the Dalhi land in the name of the tribals, if implemented, would mean that the Katkaris will own land overnight. The extraordinary delay in doing so is perplexing. Along with the transfer all loopholes which allow Katkaris to sell this land, should be closed. Efforts should be made to make it possible for the Katkaris to make hill-farming a productive venture. Today the forests on Dalhi land becomes a village property as the authority is collective. Consequently the encroachment onto Katkari land by big farmers, the Government and

Gram Panchayat continues. Borders too are not clearly defined, hence shifting encroaching becomes a regular feature.

Conclusions

Assessing the economic conditions and the skills of the Katkaris one can conclude stating that if the Government wants to bring about a transformation amongst the Katkaris, schemes should be so designed that the Katkari labour force is utilised to the maximum. Today the productive capacity of the Katkaris is not utilised to the maximum. Efforts should be made, for example, to tap their inland fishing capabilities and make available Government resources, including the right to fish in village ponds, near dams, etc., on a priority basis to the Katkaris.

2.4 VIEWPOINTS OF KATKARI LEADERS

The traditional Katkari head in a village is called a Khot or Patil. In the world of party politics that is widely prevalent these days, the traditional head has become a mere name sake. Most of them are economically weak and old. They have neither been able to adapt themselves to changing circumstances nor have they been assimilated by the new systems of leadership. Yet no village functions by itself and in times of stress someone comes forward to shoulder the responsibility on behalf of the villagers, whose decisions seems positive & constructive. People generally observe for themselves whether the person would be able to shoulder risk and is able to work for the justifiable causes of the villagers. People also look to the person's capacity of presenting a case ably, to solve a dispute, providing a moral frame work for the people and the manner in which he forges a relationship with the leaders of the uppercastes. A person with these capabilities is accepted very soon.

In the light of this background some leaders have emerged among the Katkaris. We interviewed 4 such leaders about what development had done for them and the obstacles in their path to development. We also enquired as to the state of discrimination today and the suggestions they have for the governance. Below we present their view points.

Impact of Development

Most of the leaders stated that except for the Housing programme, which was all because of "Indira Gandhi's goodwill", Katkaris have not got any benefits from the Government. They stated that as the Katkari life is one of struggle for survival, migration to nearby tehsils and districts is an inevitable circumstance for them. In fact during the period of the Survey many Katkaris had actually migrated to other places. Because they migrate they fail to get a BPL (Below Poverty Line) certificate, and are hence deprived of benefiting from any of the schemes.

They also stated that the chickens or goats that were supplied by the government did not survive in the conditions of Raigad district. The Katkari leaders did not recall ever having received any other assistance from the Government.

Problems encountered by Katkaris

They said that most Katkaris have dalhi lands but these are fallow land patches. These are located in the hills where the cattle of the middle and big farmers come to graze and in the process destroy the crops cultivated by the Katkaris. The concerned authorities normally do not take action on complaints by the Katkaris, and neither are the Katkaris compensated. Hence dalhi lands are not of much use to them.

The Katkaris are not listed as residents in many villages by the local gram panchayats, which makes it easy for the establishments to make them vacate the area whenever required.

The local law and order machinery, particularly the Police look upon Katkaris suspiciously as if they were criminals. The Katkari youth particularly suffer at the hands of the police. Everytime there is a robbery the Katkari youth in the vicinity are picked up and locked up. They are also beaten up severely. This has become a serious problem which has made the Katkari youth bitter about the society around them.

They said that due to illiteracy among Katkaris, Government employment has become an impossibility. Hence they stated some special ways of assimilating the Katkaris into the mainstream should be considered.

Further it was mentioned that while the Katkaris work for Rs.20 as wages for 4 persons during the transplanting and harvesting season, on the other days they have to work for only Rs.5, which is terrible exploitation.

They also stated that drunkenness among the Katkaris is a major obstacle to their development. This is especially so with women also drinking. This latter problem has made the family very instable. They accepted that giving up non-vegetarian food and alcohol in the name of religion has helped to stabilise many Katkari families.

Discrimination of Katkaris among the Government functionaries, except when dealing with the police, is reduced

Recommendations made by the Katkari leaders

- a) Below the poverty line survey should be done in the month of July/August when Katkaris are back in their homes.
- b) Government should create employment opportunities for the Katkaris taking into account their skills and capacities.
- c) Village ponds should be made available to the Katkaris for fishing, since the Katkaris are skilled fishermen.
- d) Dalhi lands should be regularised and each household should be given patta in their names.
- e) Katkaris wherever possible should be organised into co-operatives. These co-operatives should undertake activities that are based on the skills that Katkaris possess, the resources that are available in the areas they live in and the occupations they are already engaged in. Some examples are labour co-operatives, sand quarry co-operatives, fish co-operatives, etc.
- f) Housing program may be continued with some modifications and some kind monitoring systems. The design of the house should be in line with the local housing patterns and not as designed by the modern architectural requirements alone.

- g) Schools should be started only in Katkari hamlets where people don't migrate

Conclusions : The Katkari leaders elected to the local Gram Panchayats find themselves in a minority amongst other castes. Moreover, these leaders have not yet been able to achieve the status of being the spokesmen on behalf of the Katkari community, because most of these leaders are being pushed by the politically powerful and are not seen as true representatives of the Katkaris.

In spite of their ignorance on many matters and their general weakness in a society dominated by other castes one can see that the perceptions and analytical ability of the leaders shows that they are quite sensitive to the conditions of their tribe in the present context. They have also made suggestions which are of direct relevance to their needs.

Yet it needs to be emphasised here that the grievances voiced display the state of backwardness the Katkaris find themselves in. The Government must act to develop regular channels of communication from amongst the Katkaris so as to develop programs and schemes which are of use to them. And for this the leaders amongst the Katkaris must be encouraged and formed into groups. They also need to be further sensitised and equipped for being able to identify avenues for the integrated development of their community.

2.5 GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND KATKARIS

Nearly two decades have been spent on the development of tribes. As the development policies were not reaching or having any impact on the most backward of tribes, an effort was made to further classify the most backward as "Primitive Tribes". The Katkaris are one such tribe in Maharashtra. Findings and observations show that the Government effort has created very little real benefit for the Katkaris.

When asked about the benefits gained from Government schemes the typical reaction from the Katkari is an outburst, "Oh Gosh you are talking of the dead goats and the collapsing house ?" Hence one tried to dig into what they genuinely felt about some of the schemes they were beneficiaries of

Goat-Unit : This scheme is given to the villagers through the Gram Sevak. In a series of 5 villages people expressed that only five to six persons were allotted goats. We asked the Katkaris what they felt about the scheme. The routine answer was that they were given five goats and that the goats were from Pune district. As a result they could not acclimatise themselves at Raigad and thus three fell sick. One was killed by the tiger, and rearing one was not an economic proposition and thus they cut that one. They state that goat rearing was not economic for them. As one person in a family of five to six persons has to be totally employed for rearing five goats is not an economically viable proposition, especially since the returns are not immediate. The need is for daily income not for economic activities whose gestation period they are unable to bear. Hence this scheme is not very popular. When natural hazards occur the situation goes out of control and one feels it is not worth going in for such a scheme. Hence this scheme was laughed at in every village. They said we had not asked for any goats. "The Patil asked us to apply, we applied" and it was easily forgotten.

Housing Schemes : This scheme seems very popular. They knew that the budget for this scheme is Rs.10,000 per household. But they had printed suggestions to make which we feel are excellent, valid and worth operationalising :

- a) Housing Scheme should not be implemented through contractors. A Committee could be appointed to supervise and monitor the construction.
- b) The Housing design should be as per the local housing patterns. A bit of the local bamboo utilised can also give strong houses. Their suggestion was partial brick walls and partial bamboo. The binding material could be cement and sand for the bricks and mud, cowdung and ash for the bamboo wall. The house should consist of one room of 12 feet x 12 feet and a small kitchen with an opening in the front and a small opening at the back for poultry and cattle.
- c) They said that today the people are not very happy with the way the construction is done. The contractor to save money has not used cement. Wood and labour in any case comes free to the contractors. Hence his margin

of profit is large. If the people themselves are involved in the planning there will be a genuine sense of ownership.

d) During their absence, as the Katkaris are a wandering tribe, others rob the tiles or bricks and when they return they cannot afford to replace or undertake repairs.

e) But one could see that where migration is minimum the houses have survived all kinds of destructive forces

Integrated Child Development Project : In recent times an Anganwadi was started in a Katkari hamlet. Through this the basis, immunisation and nutritional schemes are provided. This provision however does not seem to be of much benefit. It is looked upon as a place for some snacks and a recreational centre for the children.

Community Vessels : Rs. 1500 was given through the Gram Panchayats. They could use these for their own marriage functions or give the same on hire to others. This assistance was a productive contribution as looked upon by the Katkaris and they are using the scheme productively.

100 Kg of rice scheme to students : Any Katkari student who gets an aggregate of 50% marks and is residing in the Ashram School, is awarded 100 kgs of rice per year as a contribution to his family. This scheme is known, but very few can actually take advantage of it because of migration.

After the primary school age one can't put the child in the Ashram School because the child is not able to meet his toilet needs of washing his or her clothes. Subsequently the child gets habituated totally to the Katkari way of life and does not have any attraction to go and settle in an Ashram School. Today the percentage of Katkaris is very small in the Ashram Schools. In a group of 35 students, one may find one or two Katkari children. Moreover the child is economically productive to the parents, i.e. the child does his or her equal share of work both at the brick kilns or in the coal kilns or at the home front

Hence one can see that there are practical reasons for the Katkari children to not avail of this scheme. The Government may have to consider a scheme in which

the Katkari children are compensated more than their contribution to family income if they are to come to school. Reference may be made to the principles of devising such schemes from the Chenchu Project in Andhra Pradesh.

Other Schemes : All other schemes under the IRDP are also offered to the Katkaris. In most of the schemes the Katkaris are offered 80% of subsidy except in the case of land development or agricultural implements where there is a 100% subsidy. Except for the schemes listed above, the Katkaris stated very strongly, "We do not want any kind of schemes from the Government which would make us beggars. Give us something which will help us to come out of the poverty we are in." They are particularly concerned about taking loans from banks for schemes which are not economically viable. This survey has shown to us that the Katkaris are able to analyse their situations, know what is good for them and could see through some of the ad hoc schemes of the government. The quotation in this paragraph is a true statement of a Katkari and it represents the thinking of the entire tribe. The statement is both a gist of what they are, as well as a commentary on the efforts of the Government to reach out to them.

