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GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA

STUDY OF

ROPE MAKING IN MATANG, SCHEDULED CASTE

IN AHMEDNAGAR DISTRICT

By

Tribal Research and Training Institute,  
Maharashtra State, Pune.

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## Preface

The Tribal Research and Training Institute, Maharashtra State, Pune, at the instance of Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, undertook the study of "Rope Making" traditional occupation of the Matang, Scheduled Caste. The object of the study is to know the bottlenecks of the business and whether this is a profitable business to encourage it and to provide financial assistance to the people engaged in this activity.

The field study was conducted in Ahmednagar district, where the rope making is being practised on a large scale by the Matang, Scheduled Caste. The study is completed by Shri K.V.Bairagi, Research Officer, under the guidance of Shri M.B.Surana, Deputy Director. Shri S.M.Kulkarni, Research Assistant has assisted him in the field work.

It is hoped that the suggestions contained in the study will be useful to the Departments and the organisations engaged in the welfare of the Matang, Scheduled Caste.

Pune.

30-6-1985.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Introduction

The Matang community in Maharashtra State is the most backward amongst the Scheduled Castes. The traditional occupation of this community is 'rope making'. The Government through various financial institutions has so far supported this occupation by providing financial assistance to the community.

The Government of India in Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, during the conference of Directors of all Tribal Research Institutes in India held in May, 1984, suggested that the Tribal Research and Training Institute, Pune (Maharashtra State) should undertake the study of 'rope making' activities traditionally followed by Matang community. Accordingly, the study was conducted by the Tribal Research and Training Institute, Pune, during the year 1984-85 in one district.

#### 1.2 Objectives

The following were the objectives of the study:-

- 1) To find out the extent to which the Matangs are dependent on traditional occupation of rope making.
- 2) To find out bottlenecks, hindrance in the present occupation.
- 3) To find out lacunas in the present patterns of financial assistance followed by various agencies involved.

4) To find out the present status of rope making occupation in the industrial setting.

5) To find out the attitudes of the Matangs towards the development of the traditional occupation i.e. rope making.

6) To suggest remedial measures for the development of this occupation, if it is necessary and required.

### 1.3 Methodology

Ahmednagar district where the Matang community is in large number was selected for the study. In order to assess the views of the Matang families engaged in this occupation, it was decided to conduct field study on sample basis from this district. While conducting this information, it was also decided to take into consideration the view of various agencies involved in financing this industry at various level.

In order to carry out the present study, set questionnaires were designed to canvass and collect information from the beneficiaries and implementing agencies. The questionnaires were circulated to the agencies and their views were obtained. The family schedules were also canvassed in the families of the Matang community which are engaged or financially assisted by the Government or any other agencies.

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## Chapter II

### Socio-economic Profiles of the Matang Community

#### 2.1 Introduction

The population of the Scheduled Castes in the State of Maharashtra as per 1981 census is 44.80 lakhs, which constitute 7.13% of the State's total population. The castewise break-up of the 1981 census is not so far made available and hence the population of 1971 census is used wherever necessary.

The population of Scheduled Castes in the State as per 1971 census was 30.26 lakhs. The Mahar was the most predominant caste among the Scheduled Castes with a population of 10.71 lakhs i.e. 35.40%. The population of Matangs was 9.16 lakhs being the second predominant caste which constituted 30.25% of the total Scheduled Caste population. The estimated population of the Matangs in 1981 census comes to 11.50 lakhs.

#### 2.2 Cultural aspects of the Matang community

The caste is described in Sanskrit literature by the name Matang, of which Mang is a corrupt form. In the Kanarese district, the Madiga are often addressed as Mangs, and vice versa. Regarding the origin of Mangs, it is held by them that they are descended from Jamb Rishi, who had seven sons, one who named Karkamuni was offered by him to the earth. Karkamuni had two sons, Madarchanaya and Niluchandaya. The former was sentenced to be a Mahar by Shankar for having eaten his cow, and the

latter to be a Mang for having gone before Shankar with his body sprinkled with blood of the cow. Their dark complexion, features, and the fact that they are held impure, point to their being one of the aboriginal tribes whom the later settlers reduced to slavery.

The Mangs have two main territorial divisions: (1) The Maratha Mangs known as Mangs, and (2) The Kanarese Mangs or Madigs.

### Status

The Mangs rank lowest among Hindus. They live by themselves in a locality known as Mangvada, separate from the Mahars. The Mang Garudis or snake-charmers being a wandering class of jugglers, have no fixed dwellings and live under a stretched awning tied to pegs fixed in the ground. They keep dogs and use donkeys and buffaloes as pack animals. Being an impure caste, the Mangs were not allowed to draw water from the village well or enter the village temple. They have their own wells and temples.

### Occupation

The Mangs are hard-working, but somewhat dirty, unthrifty, passionate, revengeful and greatly feared as sorcerers. They make and sell leather ropes called nadas, thin cords or charats of Ambadi (*Hibiscus cannabinus*) or hemp and of kekti sweet pandanus, ropes, date brooms, shinkes or slings for hanging pots in, gophans or slings for throwing stones with, bamboo baskets, tent screens and ropes. They are musicians, songsters, scavengers, husbandmen, messengers, beggars, labourers, sellers of

cowdung cakes, grass and firewood, bricklayers, carpenters and hangmen. Several of them are village watchmen and guides. In some places, they have one-fourth share in every head of cattle that dies; while the Mahars have three-fourths and, besides, own the skins and horns. Dakalvars, who are the bards of Mangs, move from place to place begging from Mangs. They also tell fortunes and breed peacocks. Nadas are tanners and make hide and hemp ropes, brooms and bamboo baskets. Shivtes are cobblers, Vajantris are Mang musicians who play on the tabor and clarion. The Holar Mangs make shoes, slippers, whips, water-bags, saddles, harness and horse's grain bags. Garudis or sorcerers catch and pretend to have power over serpents, profess to know something of witchcraft, and earn their living by moving about the streets and performing to any audience they can find on the road. Under the pretence of cattle-dealing and begging they often lift cattle, sheep and goats, which they catch at night or kill while grazing during the day. All, except the Dakalvars, are hereditary robbers\*.

2.3 Divisionwise/districtwise Scheduled Caste of Matang population

The divisionwise/districtwise population of Scheduled Castes in general and the Matang population in particular as per 1971 census with their proportion in the State is placed below in Table No. 2.1.

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\* Tribes and Castes of Bombay. Vol.II. Enthoven R.E. Page No. 434, 441 and 442.



Table No. 2.1

Total Scheduled Casts population and total Matang population in Maharashtra State as per 1971 census

Sr. No.	District	Total population of Scheduled Castes (1971)	Population of the Matangs (1971)	Percentage of the Matang population with	
				District Scheduled Castes population	Total Matang population in the State
1	2	3	4	5	6
MAHARASHTRA STATE		30,25,761	9,15,518	30.26	100
1.	Greater Bombay	2,10,497	14,828	7.05	1.62
2.	Thane	36,170	1,624	4.49	0.18
3.	Raigad	15,401	560	3.64	0.06
4.	Ratnagiri	13,650	212	1.55	0.02
5.	Sindhudurg	29,336	25	0.09	0.01
Bombay Division		3,05,054	17,249	5.66	1.88
6.	Nasik	96,097	21,258	22.13	2.32
7.	Dhule	61,506	6,293	10.24	0.68
8.	Jalgaon	87,708	14,654	16.71	1.60
9.	Ahmednagar	2,11,443	65,920	31.18	7.20
Nasik Division		4,56,754	1,08,125	23.68	11.82
10.	Pune	1,75,402	72,611	41.40	7.92
11.	Satara	93,103	48,376	51.96	5.20
12.	Sa gli	1,50,687	47,981	31.85	5.24
13.	Solapur	3,20,319	84,400	26.35	9.22

1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Kolhapur	2,32,537	40,256	17.32	4.40
	Pune Division	9,72,048	2,93,624	30.21	32.07
15.	Aurangabad	66,122	29,779	45.03	3.25
16.	Jalna	52,463	30,372	57.89	3.32
17.	Parbhani	74,742	41,787	55.90	4.56
18.	Beed	1,61,174	56,810	35.25	6.20
19.	Nanded	1,27,170	80,721	63.48	8.82
20.	Osmanabad	1,39,651	27,042	19.36	2.95
21.	Latur	1,45,669	86,953	59.69	9.50
	Aurangabad Division	7,66,991	3,53,464	46.09	38.60
22.	Buldana	68,326	31,364	45.91	3.43
23.	Akola	71,571	37,531	52.44	4.10
24.	Amravati	65,447	23,030	35.19	2.52
25.	Yavatmal	55,894	20,906	37.41	2.28
	Amravati Division	2,61,238	1,12,831	43.20	12.33
26.	Wardha	23,570	9,741	41.33	1.06
27.	Nagpur	80,287	14,789	18.43	1.62
28.	Bhandara	82,965	2,625	3.17	0.29
29.	Chandrapur	45,772	2,868	6.27	0.32
30.	Gadchiroli	31,082	202	0.65	0.02
	Nagpur Division	2,63,676	30,225	11.47	3.30

The above table reveals that the Matang community is spread all over the State. They are found in large number in Aurangabad (38.60%) and Pune (32.07%) Divisions. The percentage of Matang population taken together of these two divisions constitutes 70% of the State's total Matang population.

In the districtwise distribution of Matang population, Latur District (9.50%) ranks first, followed by Solapur (9.22%), Nanded (9.82%), Pune (7.92%), Ahmednagar (7.20%), Beed (6.20%), Sangli (5.24%) and Satara (5.20%) districts.

On comparison of Matang population with total Scheduled Castes population of the respective district, it is observed that Matang population constitutes more than 50% population of Scheduled Castes in six districts viz. Nanded (63.48%), Latur (59.69%), Jalna (57.89%), Parbhani (55.90%), Satara (51.96%), and Akola (52.44%).

#### 2.4 Major tahsils having Matang population

Even though the Matang population is spread over throughout the State, there are 71 tahsils which have more than 5,000 Matang population. Out of them, 22 tahsils have more than 10,000 Matang population. (Table No.2.2).

The tahsils with concentrated Matang community are Pune City tahsil, District Pune (32,356); Udgir, District Latur (21,534); Biloli, District Nanded (18,203); Ahmedpur, District Latur (15,189); Kandhar, District Nanded (14,954); Greater Bombay (14,828); Washim, District Akola (14,237); Ambejogai, District Beed (14,151), Malshiras (13,548) and Barsi (12,567)\* tahsils from district Solapur

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\*Bracketed figures against tahsil are the population of Matang in the tahsil.

and Nilanga (12,495) from district Latur. A list of such tahsils is given in Annexure-I.

Table No.2.2

Districtwise tahsils having more than 5000 Matang population in Maharashtra State (1971 census)

Sr. No,	District	Number of tahsils having Matang population		MaTotal No. of tahsils
		Between 5000 to 10000	More than 10000	
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Greeter Bombay	-	1	1
2.	Ahmednagar	7	-	7
3.	Pune	3	1	4
4.	Satara	5	-	5
5.	Sangli	4	1	5
6.	Solapur	3	4	7
7.	Kolhapur	-	2	2
8.	Aurangabad	2	-	2
9.	Jalna	2	-	2
10.	Parbhani	5	-	5
11.	Beed	4	2	6
12.	Nanded	3	4	7
13.	Osmanabad	2	2	4
14.	Latur	2	3	5
15.	Buldana	1	1	2
16.	Akola	2	1	3
17.	Amravati	1	-	1
18.	Yavatmal	2	-	2
19.	Nagpur	1	-	1
Total		49	22	71

## 2.5 Rural/urban classification

It is observed that majority of the Matang people are the resident of rural area. Out of 9.16 lakhs Matangs, 7.49 lakhs reside in rural area, whereas only 1.67 lakhs are in urban area. The percentages of rural and urban population are 81.81% and 18.19% respectively.

## 2.6 Worker's classification

The classification of the working population in to various economic activities reveals that majority of the Matangs i.e. 94% are landless. (Table No.2.3).

Table No. 2.3

Worker's classification among the Matangs (1971)

Sr. No.	Economic activity	Population of workers		
		Rural	Urban	Total
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Cultivators	23,404 (7.16)	521 (0.96)	23,925 (6.28)
2.	Agricultural labourers	2,50,374 (76.57)	11,764 (21.77)	2,62,138 (68.80)
3.	Livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantations, orchard, and allied activities.	4,382 (1.34)	987 (1.83)	5,369 (1.41)
4.	Mining and quarrying	191 (0.06)	128 (0.24)	319 (0.08)
5.	Manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs.			
	(a) Household industry.	25,467 (7.79)	3,803 (7.04)	29,270 (7.68)
	(b) Other household industry.	5,113 (1.60)	7,925 (14.67)	13,378 (3.51)

1	2	3	4	5
6. Construction		2,753 (0.84)	3,349 (6.20)	6,102 (1.60)
7. Trade & Commerce		1,280 (0.39)	3,400 (6.29)	4,680 (1.23)
8. Transport, storage and communications.		1,268 (0.38)	6,412 (11.86)	7,680 (2.02)
9. Other services		12,415 (3.80)	15,745 (29.14)	28,160 (7.39)
10. Total workers		3,26,987 (43.65)	54,034 (32.45)	3,81,021 (41.60)
11. Non-workers		4,22,026 (56.35)	1,12,471 (67.55)	5,34,497 (58.40)
12. Total Matang population		7,49,013	1,66,505	9,15,518

Note:- The bracketed figure shows the percentage with respective totals.

Table 2.3 reveals that 42% Matangs in the State are engaged in various economic activities; whereas 58% are non-workers. Majority of the working population is engaged in agricultural labour. Under manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs only 11% are engaged and that too they are mostly engaged in rope making and making of brooms etc.

#### Classification of rural workers

The analysis of Matang population in rural areas shows that 44% are workers; while 56% are non-workers. Among total workers, majority i.e. 77% are agricultural labourers and 9% are engaged in manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs. The percentage of cultivators is only 6%.

Classification of urban workers

A comparison of the occupational pattern amongst urban and rural workers shows a varied picture. In urban areas about 33% are workers; while 67% are non-workers. The activitywise classification shows that 21.77% are agricultural labourers; while majority of urban workers i.e. 75% fall under the remaining categories viz., other services (29.1), manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs (21.71%), transport storage and communications (11.89%), trade and commerce (6.39%) and construction (6.21%).

2.7 Literacy percentage

The Matangs in the State are not only economically backward, but they are also most backward educationally. The State's general literacy percentage for total, male and female is 39.18%, 51.04%, and 26.43% respectively. The literacy percentage among Scheduled Castes to total male and female are 25.27 to 37.02% respectively. The respective percentages in the case of the Matangs are 16.90% and 6.56%. This indicates that literacy percentage among the Matangs in the State ranks even below the State's literacy percentage of Scheduled Castes. (Table No.2.4).

Table No.2.4

Literacy percentage as per 1971 census

Sr. No.	Particulars	Literacy percentages		
		Total	Male	Female
1.	Maharashtra State	39.18	51.04	26.43
2.	Scheduled Castes	25.27	37.02	12.85
3.	Matangs	16.91	26.90	6.56

Districtwise literacy percentage in Matangs

2.8 The division/districtwise literacy percentage among Matangs are shown in Table No. 2.5.

Table No.2.5

Literacy percentage among Matangs (1971)

Sr. No.	District	Total	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5
	MAHARASHTRA STATE	16.91	26.90	6.56
1.	Greater Bombay	33.87	46.71	18.42
2.	Thane	27.03	38.98	12.06
3.	Raigad	29.47	41.08	16.35
4.	Ratnagiri	27.43	37.98	14.81
5.	Sindhudurg			
	Bombay Division	32.99	45.67	17.71
6.	Nasik	21.13	33.34	8.54
7.	Dhule	20.32	30.72	10.86
8.	Jalgaon	19.77	30.75	8.91
9.	Ahmednagar	20.83	31.70	9.70
	Nasik Division	20.72	31.85	9.44
10.	Pune	24.78	36.45	11.69
11.	Satara	23.75	38.33	9.19
12.	Sangli	21.46	33.94	8.17
13.	Solapur	16.22	26.32	5.57
14.	Kolhapur	19.86	32.33	7.01
	Pun Division	20.81	32.84	8.31



1	2	3	4	5
22.	Buldana	17.37	28.39	6.20
23.	Akola	19.34	30.54	8.06
24.	Amravati	19.68	30.48	9.04
25.	Yavatmal	18.56	28.87	7.74
Amravati Division		18.72	29.61	7.70
26.	Wardha	24.68	35.69	12.18
27.	Nagpur	25.30	37.42	13.66
28.	Bhandara	28.27	43.72	15.05
29.	Chandrapur	18.08	25.88	8.64
30.	Gadchiroli			
Nagpur Division		24.62	36.07	13.07

There are eight districts having total literacy percentage of the Matangs below the State's percentage (i.e. 16.91%). They are Solapur (16.22%), Aurangabad-Jalna (12.38%), Parbhani (10.09%), Beed (9.96%), Nanded (8.01%) and Osmanabad-Latur (11.73%).

The Matang male literacy percentage for the State is 26.90%. However, in respect of ten districts Solapur (26.32%), Aurangabad-Jalna (21.04%), Parbhani (16.58%), Beed (17.50%), Nanded (14.14%), Latur-Osmanabad (19.78%), and Chandrapur-Gadchiroli (25.88%), it is below the State's literacy percentage of the Matangs.

The literacy percentage among the Matang females show a very gloomy picture. About 7% of the females are literates; while 93% are illiterates. There are nine districts viz. Buldha (6.20%), Solapur (5.57%),

Aurangabad-Jalna (3.42%), Osmanabad-Latur (3.38%), Parbhani (3.33%), Beed (1.92%) and Nanded (1.67%)\* having female literacy even below 7%.

The "Jati Nirmulan Sanstha, Pune"\*\*\* during the year 1970 conducted a comprehensive socio-economic survey in eight tahsils viz. Morshi (Amravati), Ambejogai (Beed), Mahad (Raigad), Shahada (Dhule), Jamber (Jalgaon), Shirol (Kolhapur), Niphad (Nashik) and Koregaon (Statar). This survey comprised in all 4,475 families from 206 villages of the seven Scheduled Castes viz. Mahar, Matang, Chambhar, Dhor, Bhangi, Holar, New-Bhudhists (ex-Mahars); of which 703 families were from the Matang community.

The average size of the family among the Scheduled Castes was found to be 5.74 persons, larger than the family size (5.30) of the general population of Maharashtra. So far as individual caste, the average size of family was larger (6.03) among the Matangs.

The Matangs were found educationally backward than other Scheduled Castes. The literacy percentage among the Scheduled Castes was found to be 23%. This percentage was 14.45 among the families of the Matang. It was also revealed that the majority of literates in the Matangs (84%) were studied upto VIIth standard and of the remaining 14.20% were studied upto S.S.C. and 1.80% were S.S.C. and above. The female literacy percentage was only 3.17%.

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\*Bracketed figures are percentages of literacy.

\*\*Socio-economic Study of the Scheduled Castes in Rural Maharashtra. Dr.G.M.Gare, 1970.

The study also revealed that nearly 69% of the Matang families were dependent on agriculture and agricultural labour. Regarding change of occupation, study revealed that only one percent families were following their traditional occupation; 36% had discontinued it because of insufficient income; whereas 64% had left the occupation because of new awakening in the Scheduled Castes. On analysis of the data of the present occupational distribution and the change that has come over makes it evident that none of the surveyed family can be said to be entirely following its traditional occupation. It has also noticed that the occupations which are either unclean or polluting or require special skill, the change was significant. Another reason for the change was migration which had induced the occupational mobility among the Scheduled Castes. Education is another important factor in this process. The impact of the modern world and the new social awareness not only helped to change the traditional occupation, but it also induced improvement and refinement in the practice of traditional occupations, e.g. scavenging (the Bhangi), rope making (the Matang), shoe making (the Chambhar), tanning (the Dhor) etc.

It is a well-known fact that indebtedness is common among all the poverty stricken classes in India and particularly in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Many are indeed born in debt and it evokes both admiration and regret to find how commonly and unquestioningly a son assumes responsibility for the debt of his father.

Out of 703 families of Matangs, about 32% families were indebted and nearly 46% families had borrowed money for meeting their basic needs. Out of 224 indebted families, 57% families have borrowed from private money lenders. The average loan per family was to the tune of Rs.643/-.

More than 95% of the Scheduled Caste families stay outside the village proper and very few like Chambar/Ramoshis etc. stay in the village proper. The locality where they use to stay are known by their caste names viz. Mang wada, Maharwada etc.

The housing conditions are generally unsatisfactory. The study revealed that more than 75% of the families were staying in kaccha houses which were no better than huts. Almost all the houses had bad ventilation and little sanitation. Moreover, those having cattle shade, the house space also with cattle, thus adding considerably to insanitary conditions. A sheltered bathing place is rare, most of the families bath in the open space. Soap was not usually used either for bathing, washing or for cleaning garments. Taking all these factors together it was not surprising that Malaria, Typhoid, Small Pox and Dysentery were recorded in every locality. Out of 571 Matang families, for which information regarding living conditions was available, of which about 93% were having owned houses and 7% were housed in rented houses. It was also revealed that about 51% families had kaccha thatched houses.

Chapter III

Pattern of Assistance for Rope Making

The following agencies are providing financial assistance to the Matang community for ropes and brooms making business:-

1. Maharashtra State Khadi and Village Industries Board.
2. Mahatma Phule Backward Class Development Corporation.
3. District Rural Development Agencies.
4. Maharashtra State Finance Corporation.
5. Western Maharashtra Development Corporation.
6. Cooperative Department (Government of Maharashtra)

I) Maharashtra Khadi and Village Industries Board

The assistance is provided from the following funds:-

1. Employment Guarantee Scheme.
2. Khadi and Village Industries Board.
3. Employment Promotion Programme.
4. Special Component Plan (since 1983-84).
5. Differential rate of interest.

This is a special scheme sponsored by the State Government, Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Reserve Bank of India and Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank. Under this scheme, "Block Level Artisans Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies" are formed at tahsil level which are registered with Cooperative Department

as "Balutedar Societies". This scheme is supposed to give guarantee of employment to the village artisans, who are the members of these societies.

The assistance provided to the society under this scheme is of the following nature:-

1. Share capital.
2. Working capital and clean cash credit through the District Central Cooperative Banks.
3. Assistance for service charges.

The total assistance under the share capital per member is Rs.100/-; out of which the loan component is Rs. 87.50 at 4% interest per annum.

There is also provision of working capital and clean cash credit to the Balutedar societies through the District Central Cooperative Banks depending upon the nature of industry and its activities. The service charges at the rate of 2% of the working capital to the individual society are taken by the Central Cooperative Bank. These charges are paid by the Khadi and Village Industries Board.

#### Funds of Khadi and Village Industries Board

This is the own fund of the Board. The assistance under "fibre" group for rope making is Rs.700/-, (Rs.100/- subsidy and Rs.600/- loan). The loan portion includes Rs.500/- for working capital and Rs.100/- for purchase of tools and equipments.

Besides financing to individual, the Board also assists for the promotion of the Cooperative Societies in the forms of share capital, and working capital,

which are similar to that provided under Employment Guarantee Scheme.

Employment Promotion Programme

Under this scheme, the Board only forwards the proposal to the banks. The seed money is provided by Regional Development Corporations at 4% interest per annum.

Special Component Plan

The proposals are also sanctioned under Special Component Plan meant for Scheduled Castes and neo-Buddhists wherein 50% subsidy; maximum to Rs. 5000/-, is granted.

Differential Rate of Interest

The assistance at the rate of 4% per annum under differential rate of interest is also provided to the Matang families those who are Below Poverty Line by the Nationalized Banks.

II) Mahatma Phule Backward Class Development Corporation

It is the agency established specially for the upliftment of the Backward Classes. The main object of this Corporation is to provide financial assistance to the needy people in the form of seed capital and to provide necessary inputs to increase their income. The Corporation is providing financial assistance for more than forty activities grouped under six major sectors. The assistance is given in the form of margin money and Special Central Assistance.

The Corporation provides margin money @ 25% of the project cost or Rs.12,000/- whichever is less.

Besides the margin money, special central assistance under 7th item of 20 Point Economic Programmes is provided in the following forms:-

- a) 50% subsidy schemes
- b) Share capital assistance
- c) Training schemes
- d) District Rural Development Agency Scheme under Tie Up arrangements.

The Corporation also forwards loan proposals under Employment Promotion Programme to the Regional Development Corporations for providing financial assistance to the needy people.

The Corporation also recommends the proposals under rope-making, broom making maximum upto Rs.3000/- with 50% subsidy. It also provides the loan for purchasing of the shares of cooperative societies.

### III) District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA)

The assistance for this scheme is provided through District Rural Development Agencies to the families which are below poverty line.

### IV) Maharashtra State Financial Corporation

The Corporation under "Composite Loan Scheme" provides assistance for rope making industry. The maximum amount of loan for fixed assets and working capital is Rs.25,000. The preference is given to the applications received from the cluster villages.



V) Western Maharashtra Development Corporation and other Regional Development Corporations

These Corporations provides assistance in the forms of : (a) Employment Promotion Programme, and (b) Package Scheme of Incentives.

Under Employment Promotion Programme, the Corporation provides the assistances in the form of seed money. If the project cost is upto Rs.10,000/- and if the income of the family is below Rs.4,800/-, the Corporation grants @ 22.5% seed money at 4% interest per annum. If the annual income of the family is more than Rs.4,800/- it provides seed money @ 20% of the project cost.

There is a provision of providing seed money for joint ventures of educated unemployed also.

Under the package scheme of incentives, various concessions like sales tax, octroi etc. are provided for establishing industries in the backward areas.

VI) Cooperative Department

The Cooperative Department of the State Government provides assistance to societies for rope and broom making. The flow of assistance is in the following forms:-

- i) Institutional Finance
- ii) Individual Finance

The institutional finance is provided to cooperative societies for the following purposes:-

- i) Share Capital Assistance.
- ii) Management Subsidy.

iii) Assistance for purchase of tools and equipments.

So far as financing to individual is concerned, it provides assistance only for purchase of share capital.

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Chapter IV

Observations

4.1 The Khadi and Village Industries Board plays a pivotal role in financing various village industries. The Block Level Artisans' Multipurpose Cooperative Societies are formed at tahsil level that provide membership to artisans under various village industries. In Ahmednagar district there are thirteen such societies with 6,075 members (as on 31st March, 1984). The activitywise classification of the members reveals that fibre is the predominant village based industry covering about 29% of the total members.

Table No.4.1

Membership of Block Level Artisans Multipurpose Cooperative Societies in Ahmednagar District

(As on 31st March, 84)

Sr. No.	Name of the Taluka	Block Level Artisans Multipurpose Cooperative Societies			
		Number of members in Tribal Societies	Number of members in Fibre Societies	Percentage of members with total of societies	Percentage of members with Fibre societies
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Ahmednagar	426	184	43.19	10.46
2.	Shevgaon	491	122	24.85	6.94
3.	Pathardi	512	152	29.69	8.64
4.	Jammed	399	133	33.33	7.56
5.	Karjat	0	194	34.64	11.03

1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Shrigonda	410	168	40.97	9.55
7.	Parner	329	75	22.80	4.26
8.	Akola	433	62	14.32	3.52
9.	Newasa	495	185	37.37	10.52
10.	Rahuri	464	167	35.99	9.49
11.	Sangamner	525	95	18.10	5.40
12.	Kopargaon	475	77	16.21	4.38
13.	Shrirampur	556	145	26.08	8.25
Total		6075	1759	28.96	100.00

The Fibre Industry is being practiced throughout the district, but it is followed on large scale in Ahmednagar, Karjat, Shrigonda, Newasa and Rahuri tahsils.

Cooperative Societies

4.2 There were six cooperative societies engaged in rope making in Ahmednagar district. The Cooperative Department has provided financial assistance to them in the form of share capital, tools and equipments as stated below.

Sr. No.	Item	Particulars (as on 31st March, 1984)
1.	Number of societies registered	6
2.	Number of members	121
3.	Share capital (Rs.)	19,265
4.	Working capital (Rs.)	26,559
5.	Outstanding from societies	7,925
6.	Number of working societies	3
7.	Number of non-working societies	3

Out of six societies registered, only three were found to be in working condition; while the remaining three were not functioning at all; two had closed their activities, whereas one society was newly registered.

The Cooperative Society registered in the year 1981-82 at Ahmednagar was visited during the study tour. This society was provided assistance of Rs.2000/- against share capital by the Cooperative Department. The purpose of the society was to produce and provide ropes and brooms, but it was noticed that due to the wages to the labourers at higher rates and shortage of working capital, the functioning of the said society could not get any momentum as was expected.

Marketing of "Ambadi"/"Chaypat"

4.3 Ahmednagar is the main market and collection centre for Ambadi/Chaypat in the State. Discussions were held with traders and representatives of the manufacturers engaged in this business. During the discussion, it was revealed that Ambadi is purchased in weekly markets at various centres in Ahmednagar, Pune, Beed, Sholapur and Satara districts.

Sr. No.	District	Number of centres	Name of the collection centre
1	2	3	4

- |    |            |   |                      |
|----|------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Ahmednagar | 8 | 1. Pathardi          |
|    |            |   | 2. Jamkhed           |
|    |            |   | 3. Takali Dhokeshwar |
|    |            |   | 4. Belvandi          |
|    |            |   | 5. Shrigonda         |

1	2	3	4
			6. Rashin
			7. Karjat
			8. Mirajgaon
2.	Beed	2	1. Neknur
			2. Kada
3.	Sholapur	4	1. Akluj
			2. Mohol
			3. Barshi
			4. Pandharpur
4.	Satara	6	1. Dahiwadi
			2. Mahaswad
			3. Lonand
			4. Satara
			5. Koregaon
			6. Pusegaon
5.	Pune	1	1. Baramati
Total		21	

The representatives of rope manufacturers make purchases of Ambadi at the rate of Rs.400/- to 600/- per quintal, (depending on the variety). On purchase of Ambadi from the above centres, grading is done and bales of 150 kgs. to 170 kgs. are prepared. These bales are usually despatched to their works at Calcutta and Jalna. The ropes prepared from Ambadi are mainly used in shipping and transport business.

Family Survey

4.4 In order to assess the aptitude of the Matang people in the traditional rope making occupation and to know their inclination towards it, 50 families from Ahmednagar (5), Pathardi (27), and Shevgaon (18) tahsils were surveyed. Of these 50 families, 14 were having land upto 2 hectares and the remaining 36 families were landless. It is also revealed in the survey that all of the surveyed families were below the poverty line. Amongst these families, 19 were having annual income below Rs.2000/- and 26 were in the income range of Rs.2000/- to Rs.3500/-. The annual income of 5 families living in urban areas was in the range of Rs.3501/- to Rs.4500/-. The average annual income of 45 families in rural areas was Rs.2288/-, whereas in the case of 5 urban families the average income was Rs. 4270/-. Thus, all the families of Matang community were very poor economically.

4.5 In the traditional caste system, where the "Balutedar system" was in existence, the agriculturists were dependent on the ropes prepared by the Matang community. The Matangs traditionally used to prepare and sell thin cords or charats of Ambada (Hibiscus cannabinus) or hemp and Kekti, sweet Pandanus, ropes, date brooms, shinkas or slings for hanging pots in gorpahns or slings for throwing stones with. These ropes were also used for fetching water and for use of bullock carts and bullock pairs. On rendering the Baluta service, they used to get foodgrains and other items of daily consumption. But now due to economic transformation and passage of time,

the traditional batuta system is not being practised in every village. Therefore, the ropes prepared by the Matangs are not in demand. The importance of this item has lost its economic base in village community. The traditional and old methods of agriculture are being changed and replaced by modern techniques. The use of bullock and bullock carts have been substituted by tractors. The implementation of Rural Electrification Programme on large scale has replaced the use of motes for fetching water by electric motor pumps. In an unelectrified areas, oil engines are used. The number of agriculturists using 'motes' for fetching water has gone down largely. The people have also changed their ideas, the use of ropes for shinkes or alings for hanging pots. In short, there is no large demand for ropes prepared by the Matangs in rural areas during these days.

#### Availability of Raw Material and Processing of Hemp

4.6 The majority of the Matangs are landless. They cannot grow the hemp/agave. Therefore, the Matangs have to depend on others for raw material.

The processing of hemp and extracting of Ambadi/ropes etc. and sale of finished products involves waiting period of 10 to 15 days. It also requires elaborate processing, capital investment and manpower. The raw hemp is required to be immersed in water for seven to eight days. This period varies from season to season. As already mentioned, majority of families are landless, they have to depend on others for processing, who do not allow them to process the hemp in their farms. There is a



shortage of stream water. Due to uncertainty of rainfall, the suitable spots for immersing hemp are not available to the people within easy reach.

The Matang community is not fully dependent on rope making occupation. Those who are staying at Ahmednagar are found to be engaged in trading of Ambadi, instead of preparing ropes. They purchase Ambadi in small quantity in local market and sale it to the representatives of the private companies. The purchase price varies from Rs.400/- to Rs.650/- per quintal and sale price varies from Rs.550/- to 800/- per quintal depending on variety.

It is noticed that though Matangs were processing hemp and preparing Ambadi in rural area previously, very few of them are now engaged in preparing ropes. They prefer quick disposal of Ambadi in order to meet their urgent needs. The demand for ropes is also limited as such they prefer trading of Ambadi instead of preparing ropes. It was noticed during the survey that this occupation does not provide full employment to the Matangs. In most of the places it is a seasonable job to some of the members of the family. Therefore, they have to work on field as agricultural labourer and also in allied services.

The cost of processing of 1000 kg. hemp is worked out as under.

Sr. No.	Particulars	Amount (Rs.)
1.	Purchase price of 1000 kg.of hemp (green) (approximately)	100-00
2.	Transportation charges	30-00
3.	Labour charges of 3 family members for one day @ Rs.10/- per member.	30-00
4.	Other expenses like hamali/luggage for sale of finished products.	30-00
Total cost		190-00
Profit margin		50-00
5.	Sale of finished products (60 kg.)	240-00

The cost of processing of 1000 kg.of hemp for 8 to 10 days a family gets a net profit of Rs.50/- per week.

#### Effect of Nylon Ropes

4.7 The expansion of market economy and industrialisation led to the development of nylon industry. The introduction of nylon ropes has adversely affected the market of ropes prepared from hemp/Ambadi by the Matangs. The nylon ropes are more durable. They are marketed on large scale. The nylon ropes have dominated the markets and given set-back to the traditional occupation of rope making industry of the Matang community.

#### Respador Machine

4.8 The traditional method of extracting Ambadi has some draw-backs:-

- 1) The processing is time consuming. In order

to extract Ambadi, the mature leaves of agave/hemp are required to be immersed in water for eight to ten days.

2) Keeping of leaves under water decays the fleshy layer, so the quality of fibre is affected. The further process of beating also affects the quality.

3) The processing on hemp can only be carried out at places where sufficient water is available.

In order to overcome these difficulties and to save the time and improve the quality of products, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission has introduced a hand operated Respador machine. The Small Industries Development Institute, Pune, has developed a power operated Respador machine.

#### Preparation of decorative articles and other items

4.9 The hemp is not only used for preparation of ropes, nadas, etc., but also for attractive bags, wall hangings, decorative articles, carpets, matting etc. It is also used for preparation of roofing sheets and mud bricks. These items have a good market potentiality. However, the preparation of these items requires skill.

#### Sisla Fibre/Manila Fibre

4.10 The quality of Ambadi from Sisla fibre and Manila fibre is more superior than traditional hemp and hence they are costly than the local varieties.

To sum up, it can be said that due to introduction of nylon ropes, the ropes prepared by the Matangs have a very limited market. The Matangs are also not totally dependent on this occupation. The hemp is not only used for preparation of ropes but also in jute/fibre industry, and textiles and insome artistic articles.

Chapter V

Suggestions

The Matang community is not totally dependent on the traditional occupation of rope making. This is because of introduction of new nylon ropes and changing of Baluta system in villages. Nowadays, the hemp/Ambadi is not only used for preparation of ropes, but also used for raw material in some industries and for preparation of attractive bags, wall hangings, mattings, carpets, wall roofs, etc.

1) To meet the requirement of raw material, it is suggested that the plantation of hemp should be taken up on large scale under the Social Forestry, Employment Guarantee Scheme on forest lands as well as on private lands. The road side plantation, canal side plantation needs to be encouraged. The farmers should be encouraged for planting of hemp and they should be provided suitable incentives. The suitable locations on which hemp can be planted on large scale and the land which is not suitable for any other cultivation should be taken up under hemp plantation programme. The landless Matangs should be allotted Government waste land for hemp plantation so that they can produce raw material for their local industry.

2) The hemp plantation has number of advantages and hence needs encouragement. They are as under:-

- a) It requires very little water.
- b) It grows on any land i.e. no special soil is required.
- c) Life of the plant is 10 to 15 years. It gives income for at least 10 years.
- d) It prevents soil erosion.
- e) The cattle do not eat the leaves of hemp.

3) The quality of Ambadi prepared from "Sisla Fibre" and "Manila Fibre" is much superior than any other variety of hemp. The plantation of this variety should be replaced on wider scale.

4) The Matang workers may be imparted practical training in acquiring new skills and art of preparing fibre articles like wall pieces, wall hangings, purses, carpets, wall roofs etc. The short duration courses should be arranged at taluka level to develop skill and to create a self confidence for self-employment.

5) The use of "Respador" machine for extracting Ambadi is an urgent need and requirement of the people since there is minimum waiting period to get finished products. Moreover, no water is required for processing. It is, therefore, suggested that Respador machines should be supplied to the rope making centres and the cooperative societies.

6) In order to meet the daily requirements, the Matang workers prefer quick disposal of their product even at lower rates. In order to get reasonable return from hemp or Ambadi, it should be supported by organised market and sale of finished product.

7) The products like attractive bags, wall hangings, carpets, matting etc. have good market potential. Few handicraft centres may be started on the pilot basis at some taluka places.

8) On the line of the Research Centre at Bamra (Bihar), Sambalpur (Orissa) and Chorhatti (Madhya Pradesh), one research centre for hemp/Ambadi may be opened in Maharashtra State.

9) The cooperative societies for fibre work should be encouraged. These societies should not only be financially supported, but also be provided with other basic infrastructural requirements viz., land, building, tools, Respador machines, market etc.

10) The loan amount provided under the various schemes to fibre work is insufficient to meet requirement of the beneficiaries. The loan amount may be suitably increased.

11) A bulk of hemp/Ambadi is presently exported to Calcutta for processing and manufacturing of ropes etc. It is therefore suggested that small rope manufacturing units may be established at suitable places. These units may be allotted to cooperative societies.

12) The preference should be given to the local Matang people in auction/sale of hemp by Forest Department/Social Forestry Department.

13) The functioning of the proposed Matang Development Corporation should be started at the earliest, so that Matang people may get financial assistance under various schemes of the Corporation.

14) The traditional occupations like rope making etc. have limited scope in the present changing world. Therefore, the Matangs should be encouraged to follow other occupations that are economically viable viz. rearing of milch animals, poultry breeding, small industries and cottage industries, etc.

15) Among Scheduled Castes the Matangs are the most backward people. To overcome their socio-economic backwardness, education is the only solution in the modern world. The Matang children should be attracted towards educational facilities and they should be provided with special scholarships, stipends etc. The children should be attracted towards the technical education and the courses of Industrial Training Institute, Polytechnics etc.

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