

THE KATHODIS OF GUJARAT

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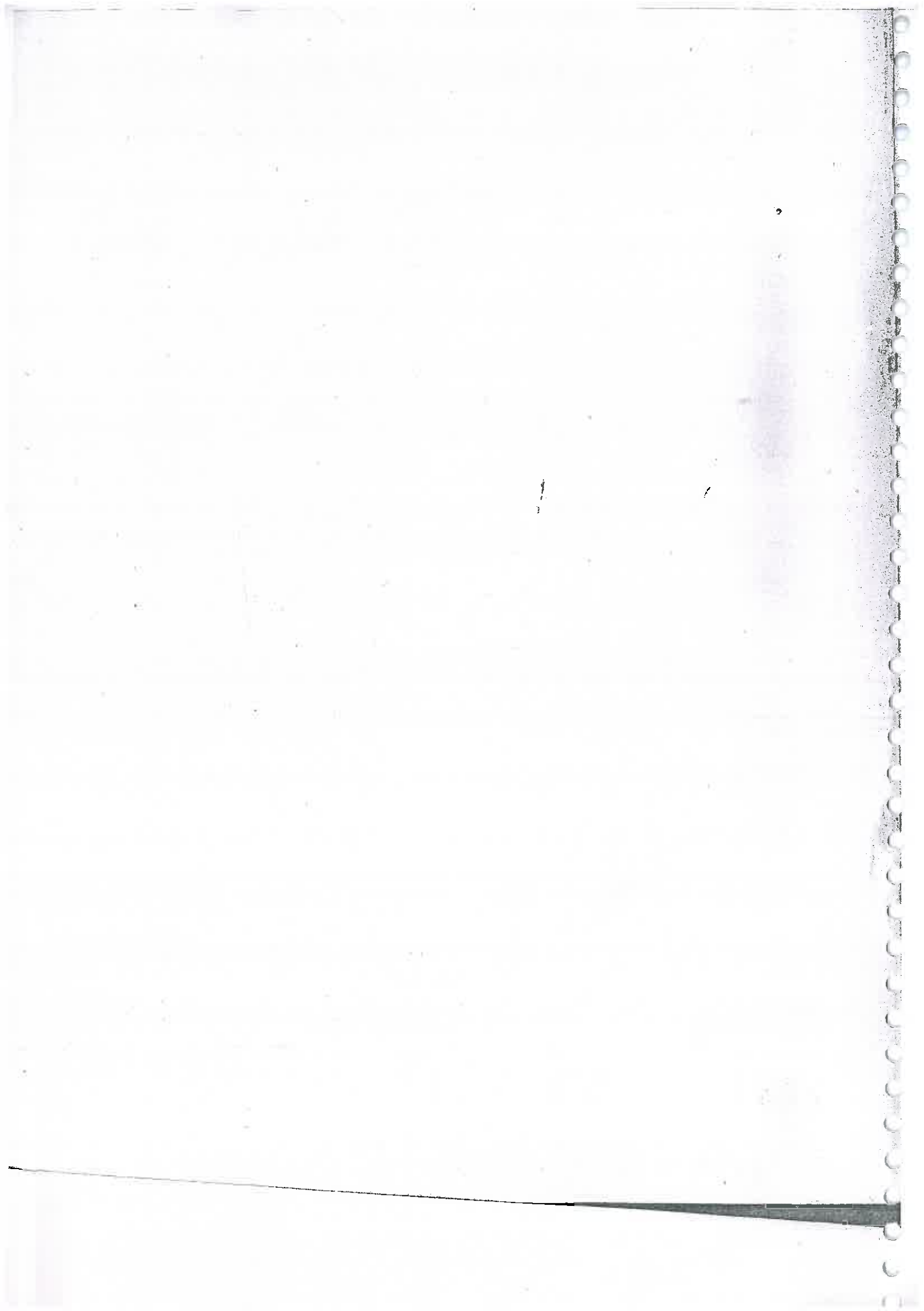
Mustali Masavi
Gaurishanker Pandya

EDITING

Rash Bihari Lal
Dr. Siddharaj Solanki



TRIBAL RESEARCH & TRAINING INSTITUTE, GUJARAT VIDYAPITH AHMEDABAD 380014.



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BY

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GUJARAT VIDYAPITH : AMDAVAD-380014**

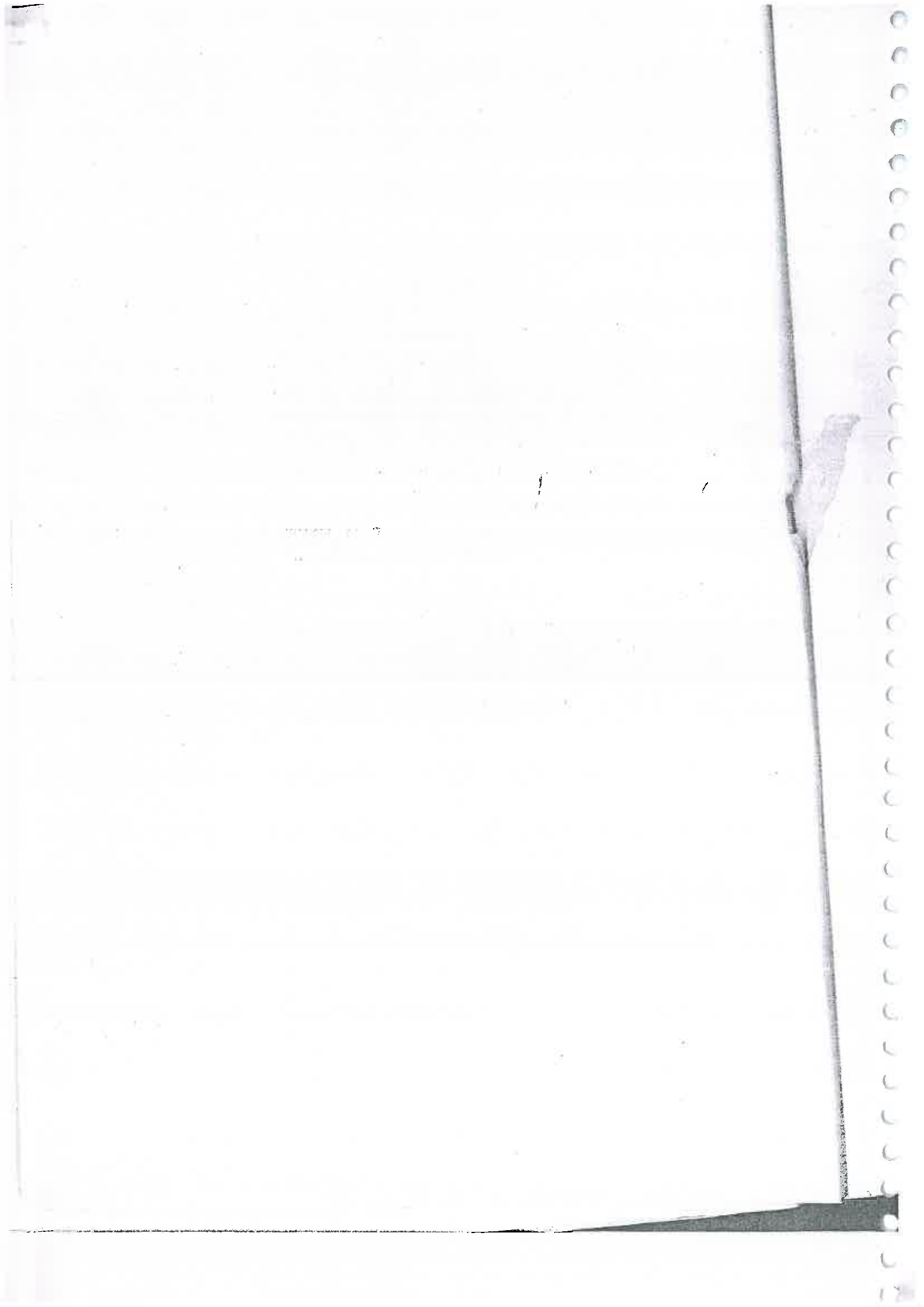
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FOREWORD

In order to acquaint those who are interested about the research works conducted at Tribal Research and Training Institute, this research report is being released in mimeographed form. If researchers, social workers, administrators, students and other scholars who are involved in tribal development works make certain suggestions after going through this report, this will help the Institute in its future works. I congratulate the researchers who have conducted this research work.

R. D. ADATIA
Mahamatra



PREFACE

Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India had urged upon all the Tribal Research Institutes in the country to locate the most backward tribal communities in their respective States and to undertake a detailed study of them for the purpose of chalking out special programmes for their development. In Gujarat State, Kathodis are one of such communities who still have a primitive type of existence. Lately the Government of Gujarat has also been deeply concerned for raising their standard of living. Complying with the concerns of both Central and State Governments this ethnographic study of the Kathodis was under^{taken} by this Institute. Field work for this study was carried out between November, 1975 and December, 1976 by the authors of this monograph in 22 villages of Kathodi inhabitations from different regions of the State.

The Institute was fortunate enough to get valuable suggestions from Prof. I.P. Desai, Director, Centre for Social studies, Surat and Shri P.B. Buch, Director, Computer Centre, Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar. The Institute owes gratitude to them for their kind interest in this study. The Institute also appreciates the interest shown by Shri Ramesh Shroff, Head of Social Anthropology Department, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad. Last but not the least, the Institute acknowledges the generosity of all the Kathodi informants but for whose active co-operation this monograph would not have been materialised.

Siddharaj Solanki
Acting Director

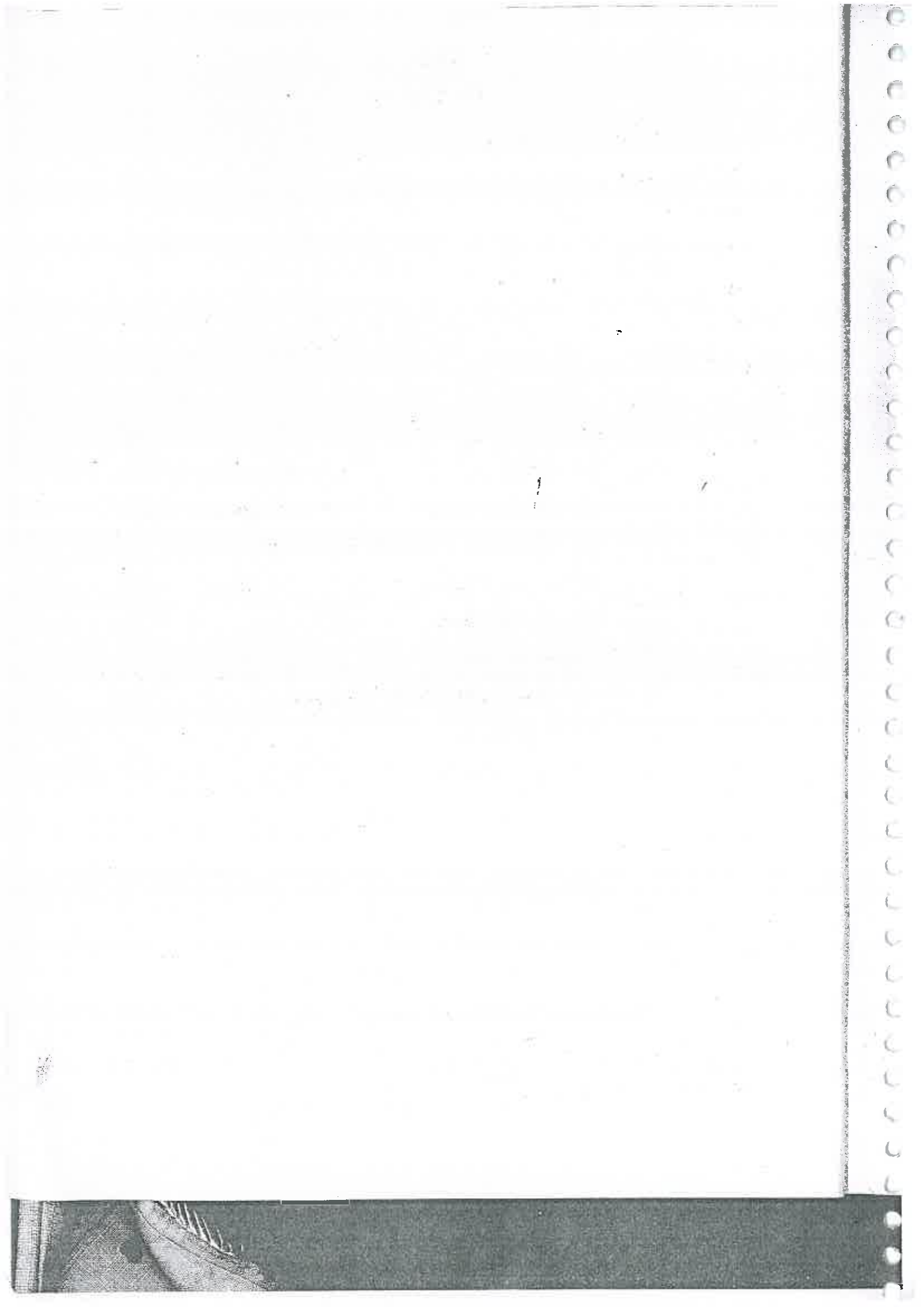
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CHAPTER I

THE PEOPLE

Kathodi tribe in Gujarat is also known as Katkari in the area outlying the Maharashtra region from where they are reported to have come. The term 'Kathodi' or 'Katkari' seems to have been derived from its name 'Kath' or catechu making. 'Katha' is a thickened juice extracted from the Khair (Acacia catechu). Kathodis numbering 2939 (1971 Census) in Gujarat State are a primitive group of people believed to have migrated from Thana and Kolaba districts of Maharashtra State. The original occupation of Kath making and selling is now rarely pursued by them because of the dwindling of the forest in recent years and the general liking of the consumers for the factory produced Katha.

Many earlier writers and British Officers describe Kathodis in almost similar ways. Welling says that 'the Katkaris are people of jungles who have no land of their own, no fixed sedentary profession'. They are hunters, coalmakers and gatherers and sellers of forest produce, fresh water fisherman, field labourers and agriculturists."¹

Robert Heine-Goldern lists the Kathodis among the primitive tribes of India which have not been studied.² This underlines the urgency of studying them before the process of acculturation transforms them beyond recognition

¹ 'The Katkaris' by A.N.Welling.

² Bulletin of International Committee on Urgent Anthropological Research No.3, Viena, 1960.

and identification.

Stephen Fuchs calls 'Kathodi' a sub-section of Bhils.³ Haddon and Kene call them Dravidian.⁴ J.V.Ferreira opines 'the Katkaris still retained the traces of ancient stock from which they originally stemmed but they seem to-day to indicate a considerable inter-mixture'.⁵

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The Kathodis are the people of the hills and low forests. They are habituated to lead an unsettled life. Kathodis are a minor group and have been culturally isolated from their own fellowmen leading a settled life in Maharashtra. Their heavy concentration at present is found in Kolaba, Thana and Khandesh districts of Maharashtra. The migrated members of this tribe in Gujarat are mostly from bordering villages of Khandesh district in Maharashtra.

According to Enthoven - "The Kathodis or Katkaris are a tribe of catechu makers. They are found chiefly in that part of the western ghats which run through Thana and Kolaba Districts. They are probably of Bhil origin and are believed to have come from the North and to have originally settled in the Gujarat Athvasi, the present district of Surat, they have division named Athavar to this day. In Rajasthan they are found in the interior of Phalasiya, Kotra and Kherwara tehsils of Udaipur District." The term 'Katkari' seems to be derived from

3. The Katkaris: An Evaluation of the available Material, By John V.Ferreira, Journal of Social Research, Vol.V, No.2, September, 1962, Ranchi.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

the Marathi 'Kat' or 'Kath', i.e. catechu, the thickened juice of Khair tree, and 'Karne', to make the whole meaning "makers of Catechu", the original occupations of the tribe still pursued by some of their members. The term 'Kathodi' is similarly derived from Kath (Catechu) and Vadi (a cake) which would give the meaning of (Sellers of) Cakes of Catechu. Kathodia is the Gujarati form of Kathodi and is in use only in Gujarat."⁶

Writing about Kathodi and Katkari' in Hindu Tribes and Castes, M.A.Sherring, describes Kathodi as "An aboriginal race of very diminutive men, infesting the hills and wilds of Northern Konkan and known as Maila Bheels. They are incorrigible robbers and highwaymen, pretending to sell fire-wood, forage charcoal and wild honey, and to be willing to labour. They are of a low caste and are not allowed to reside within any village. There is always great mortality among them whenever they become imprisoned." He further says that "Katkari inhabit the Attavessy and Northern Konkan. They are manufacturers of catechu, which is produced by the destructive distillation of the Khair tree. They also make charcoal, collect gums, and frequently take service as farm helpers, though in this they are inconstant, leaving their employment without reason, and some-times without wages. They are nomadic during the fine season. In the rains they settle

6. Hindu Tribes and Castes, Vol.I By M.A.Sherring, 1883, p.325.

down in small huts near villages, and cultivate gourds of many kinds, and some little rice. As soon as the crops are housed they resort to the jungle and make charcoal."⁷

According to earlier Gazetteer of India, Kathodis-Katkaris are one of the earliest aboriginal tribes. Their main concentration was in Thana, Nasik, Poona and Kolaba district. The description of Kathoris in Nasik Gazetteer runs as follows : "Katkaris originally immigrants from the Konkan, are a forest tribe, very small in number and seldom found beyond the limits of the Sahyadris. Squalid and sickly looking they are the lowest and poorest of Nasik forest tribes. Among some of the least poverty stricken the women draw a rugged shoulder cloth across the breast, but go naked to the waist. They speak a corrupt Marathi using now and then some Gujarati words. They live chiefly on roots and herbs and eat almost every kind of animal including rats, pigs and monkeys, not scrupling even to devour carcasses. Ten or fifteen years ago an immense encampment of Kathoris in Nadgaon was attacked by an epidemic. This they believe was a punishment for killing and eating the sacred Hanuman monkeys on Mahadeve Hill. They accordingly fled from the country and are only now beginning to return in small numbers. Though the using of beef is said to be

7. The Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Vol. II, /By R.E. Enthoven, 1922, pp. 170-182.

forbidden, one branch of this tribe called Dhor Katkaris eat beef, but are not for that reason treated as a separate sub-division. Forest conservancy has put a stop to their former craft of making catechu. Except a few catechu makers in the neighbouring States, they work as field labourers, or gather and sell fire-wood. Their gods are chaide and Mhasoba but ghosts and demons, bhuts and paishachs are their favourite objects of worship. They have no priests and themselves officiate at marriage ceremonies. Disputes are settled by council appointed for the purpose, but the decision must be approved by a mass meeting of tribesmen."⁸

According to Poona Gazetteer, "Katkaris or Catechu makers, are returned as numbering 1080 and are found in Haveli, Maval, Junar, Khed and Poona. They are not residents of the district, but came from the Konkan to dig ground-nuts, and serve as a labourers from October to May. They spend the rains in the Konkan. They are one of the rudest and poorest tribes in Western India."⁹

POPULATION:

According to 1961 Census Report the total population of Kathodi-Katkari in India was 1,44,260.

8. Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, Nasik, 1884, p.65.

9. Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, Poona, 1884, p.408.

TABLE - I

The State-wise break-up of their Population is as follows (1961).

1.	Maharashtra	1,40,672
2.	Gujarat	2,358
3.	Dadra Nagar Haveli	1,005
4.	Mysore	225
		<u>1,44,260</u>

The Statewise figures show that the largest concentration of the Kathodi-Katkari is in Maharashtra State. In Maharashtra they are mainly concentrated in Kolaba, Thane, Pune and Nashik districts. They are found in Rajasthan also, but the total number of Kathodis in Rajasthan is not available. "In Rajasthan at present the Kathodis are reported to dwell in Shahabad village of Kotah district and in some villages of Udaipur district. In Udaipur district they are reported to reside in Bodadar, Juda, Samija and Vas villages of Kotra tehsil. But in the beginning they were brought in Badli and Mahdi villages and from there they got scattered over a number of villages. " 10.

Kathodis are a minor tribal group in Gujarat. According to earlier census of Kath or Catechu makers, 498 are found in the States to the east and South-east of Surat. In their talk they mix Marathi with Gujarati

10. Kathodis : A Study in Planned Change, 'Tribe', Bulletin of the Tribal Research Institute, Udaipur, Vol.III, March 1967, No.2, p.37.

words and have a story that they originally came from the north Konkan."¹¹ Census of Baroda also recorded that "Kathodia numbering 522, are found in the Navsari District."¹²

TABLE II

Decadewise Kathodi-Katkaris Population in Gujarat.

Year	Numbers	Percentage variations over previous decade.
1901	498	
1911	522	4.8
1921	-	
1931	-	
1941	-	
1951	-	
1961	2,358	351.7
1971	2,939	24.6

It is regrettable that sufficient year-wise data is not available for Kathodi population in the State. It is difficult, therefore, to indicate the trend of their population. The figures of 1961 and 1971 are only comparable and it shows that during decade the population of Kathodis increased by 24.6 per cent. which means that the annual rate of growth has been two and half per cent.

11. Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, 1901, Vol. IX. Pt. I, P. 319.

12. Report on the Census of Baroda State, Chapt. XI, p. 298.

According to 1971 Census the population of Kathodis in the State is only 2939 which constitutes 0.08 per cent. of the total tribal population of the State. Figures regarding their population in the different talukas as well as districts of Gujarat, as enumerated at both 1961 and 1971 Census have been provided in table III.

TABLE III

District-wise and taluka-wise Kathodi Population.

District/ Taluka	Population (1971)	Population (1961)	Percentage variations over decade.
<u>Surat Dist.</u>	1,652	1,542	7.1
a) Mangrol	357	403	- 11.4
b) Songadh	151	137	10.2
c) Nizar	244	381	- 35.9
d) Uchhal	866	553	56.6
e) Mandvi	22	25	- 12.0
f) Bardoli	12	-	-
g) Umbergaon	--	43	-
<u>Dang Dist.</u>	689	285	141.7
<u>Bharuch Dist.</u>	431	314	37.3
a) Sagbara	338	267	26.6
b) Nadol	11	-	-
c) Dediapada	46	10	283.3
d) Valia	36	35	2.9

District/ Taluka	Population (1971)	Population (1961)	Percentage variations over decade.
<u>Sabarkantha Dist.</u>	127	199	- 36.2
a) Vijaynagar	125	147	- 14.9
b) Bayad	2	-	-
c) Modasa	-	152	-
<u>Vadodara(U)Dist.</u>	7	-	-
<u>Panchmahal Dist.</u>	6	18	- 66.7
a) Sehra	6	-	-
b) Godhra	-	18	-
Other Districts	27	-	-
Total:	2,939	2,358	24.6

The above figures show that they are mostly concentrated in eastern districts of State, particularly Surat, Dang and Bharuch and to some extent in Sabarkantha district. In other districts they are in very small number. The Kathodis are predominantly rural community as they are concentrated only in villages. It can be seen from the figures that the population of Kathodis has registered a moderate increase during the last decade. The population increased by 24.6 per cent. during 1961-1971 decade. Their number went up by 142 per cent. in Dang, by 37 per cent in Bharuch and by 7 per cent in Surat district. In Sabarkantha their population has

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declined by 7 per cent. In 1961 census the population of Kathodis was recorded in Modasa and Umbergaon talukas but in 1971 Census the Kathodis were not found in those talukas.

EARLY MIGRATION:

The Kathodis are reported to have been brought in Gujarat from Maharashtra by some Bohra contractors and traders, for employing them as forest labourers for making Katha from Khair trees. Ebu and Bhurji Sheth of Navapur village and Sarafali Sheth of Chhota-Udepur persuaded some Kathodis families to depart from their native place to seek fresh employment in the forest of Dang, Gandevi, and Chhota-Udepur. In beginning only males came to the site of contract and worked in Khair forest. Mani Ghanchan of Vijaynagar Mahal also brought some Kathodi families for manufacturing Katha in the forest of Vijaynagar taluka of Sabarkantha district.

Generally they were employed during Katha season which used to last for eight months in a year i.e. from October to May. They returned to their native place when the Katha-season was over. This seasonal migration for pretty long time proved to be inconvenient for the Kathodis. They expressed unwillingness to continue, leaving their family for such a long period. Seeing this, the contractors coaxed them to migrate with their family. The migrant families were assured

that they will be provided certain facilities. Upon such assurance Kathodis migrated from their native place along with their family and finally settled there. In the beginning they were employed in the forest of Dang, Gandevi, Songadh, Chhota-Udepur and Vijaynagar taluka, where they worked for meagre rations and poor wages.

For many years they lived in the vain hope that conditions would improve for them and their primitive living conditions would get better.

(2.02) At present in Gujarat State the Kathodis are found in several areas. In Mangrol and Uchhal talukas of Surat District, in some villages of Sagbara taluka of Bharuch district and in some villages of Dang district in South Gujarat. They are found in some villages of Vijaynagar taluka of Sabarkantha district.

DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERN:

For present study six villages from Dang district, four villages each from Mangrol and Uchhal talukas of Surat district, Sagbara taluka of Bharuch district and Vijaynagar taluka of Sabarkantha district were chosen.

Altogether 22 villages from different areas were selected. In the selected villages 279 families of Kathodis were found. Out of these only 174 families (62 per cent) could be contacted as 105 families had migrated temporarily to some other place at the time of investigation.

Area (Taluka)	Name of the village.	Total No. of families	Total No. of contacted families.
Dang	Timberthava	15	11
	Jamala	7	3
	Nimbarpada	17	15
	Manmodi	10	6
	Motamanuga	12	8
	Lahan Manuga	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>
		71	48 (67.6)
TOTAL:		279	174 (62.3)

(The figures in brackets show percentages).

The area-wise distribution of the number of households according to persons both males and females, together with their percentages to total population has been given in table V.

TABLE V

Area-wise Population

Area (Taluka)	No. of Households	Population			Size of family	Percentage to total population.
		Persons	Males	Females		
Mangrol	33	198	97	101	6.0	20.8
U chhal	27	144	82	62	5.3	15.1
Sagbara	25	119	66	53	5.5	12.5
Vijaynagar	41	228	117	111	4.8	23.9
Dang	48	263	137	126	5.4	27.7
Total:	174	952	499	453	5.5	100.0

The above figures show that the Kathodi population is unevenly distributed in different areas. Out of the 952 persons of these 174 families 27.7 per cent reside in Dang. 23.9 per cent reside in Vijaynagar, 20.8 per cent reside in Mangrol, 15.1 per cent reside in Uchhal and 12.5 per cent reside in Sagbara talukas.

The sex-wise break up of the population of surveyed households in different areas by broad age-groups has been provided in table VI. An examination of these figures reveal that largest proportion (46 per cent) of population is found in 0-14 age group. The next largest proportion is found in the age group of 15-34 years (32 per cent) and the lowest in the above 60 age group. Very old persons aged over 60 years form only 3 per cent of the total Kathodi's population perhaps owing to lower rate of survival amongst this community.

FAMILY PLANNING:

Generally speaking the Kathodis do not have any inhibition for having more children. During the present study many of them mentioned that they would like to have as many as children as their wives could bear. However, a few enlightened Kathodis indicated a desire to limit their family and expressed that it was better to have small size family so that there would be less mouths to feed within their limited poor income.

TABLE VI

Age-wise distribution of Population.

Area (Taluka)	9 to 6 years		7 to 14 years		15 to 34 years		35 to 59 years		above 60		Total		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Mangrol	19	25	24	22	33	33	18	19	3	2	97	101	198
Uchhal	14	8	20	16	32	23	15	14	1	1	82	62	144
Vijaynagar	27	36	40	30	32	28	16	14	2	3	117	111	228
Sagbara	12	10	23	12	19	22	11	6	1	3	66	53	119
Dang	15	9	41	38	41	48	35	26	5	5	137	126	263
Total:	87	88	148	118	157	154	95	79	12	14	499	453	952
	(17.4)		(29.6)		(31.5)		(19.1)		(2.4)		(400.0)		
	(19.4)		(26.1)		(34.)		(17.4)		(3.1)		(100.0)		

The figures in brackets indicate percentages.

In Dang and Vijaynagar taluka some persons had even undergone vasectomy operation. In certain areas, in some cases, informants were reluctant to furnish information due to the fear that they might be forced to undergo vasectomy operation which would certainly make them sexually impotent.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

Kathodis are dark-brown in colour. They are medium to full statured. Men are generally darker and slimmer. The women are generally stout looking but slim in appearance. The physique of women is strong and hardy, so that they can do hard work with ease. Stephen Fuchs have described about their physical characteristic that "They are slight in build and of medium height. Their complexion is brown to very dark, with deep-sunk eyes, a shallow nasal bridge and full lips. In both sexes the hair is often curly. Their physical appearance would link them rather with South Indian Tribes."¹³ According to Bombay Gazetteer "The Kathodis like the lowest of the early tribes, they are small, hard-featured and black. The men shave the head and grow a slight straggling beard. The women dress their hair after oiling it and braiding it in a long fillet."¹⁴

13 Aboriginal Tribes of India, by Stephen Fuchs, 1973, p.196-97.

14. Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, 1901 Vol.IX.Pt.I, p.319.

EDUCATION & LITERACY:

According to 1971 Census the percentage of literacy among the Kathodi is 2.8 per cent against 14.12 per cent among the Scheduled tribes in the State. If males and females are considered separately it is found that 4 per cent of the males and only 1.6 per cent of females are literates. The corresponding figures for Scheduled tribes of the State as a whole are 11.09 per cent and 3.03 per cent respectively. This would indicate how far the Kathodis are lagging behind in the field of education, particularly their women folk among whom not even two in one hundred is a literate. The talukawise literacy according to 1971 Census is given in Table VII. The details of literacy as reported in this study is presented in Table VIII.

TABLE VII
Talukawise Literacy by sex. (1971).

District	Population			Illiterate			Literate		
	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.
I Sabarkantha	127	74	53	126	73	53	1	1	-
a) Vijaynagar	125	72	53	125	72	53	-	-	-
b) Bayad	2	2	-	1	1	-	1	1	-
II Surat	1652	804	851	1611	777	834	41	24	17
a) Mangrol	357	185	172	345	173	172	12	12	-
b) Songadh	151	60	91	134	60	74	17	-	17
c) Nizar	244	122	122	240	118	122	4	4	-
d) Uchchhal	866	414	452	858	406	452	8	8	-
e) Mandvi	22	10	12	22	10	12	-	-	-
f) Bardoli	12	10	2	12	10	2	-	-	-
III Bharuch	431	218	213	424	211	213	7	7	-
a) Sagbara	338	173	165	334	169	165	4	4	-
b) Nandod	11	5	6	9	3	6	2	2	-
c) Dediapada	46	24	22	46	24	22	-	-	-
d) Valia	36	16	20	35	15	20	1	1	-
IV Dang	689	346	343	658	321	337	31	25	6
V Vadodara (Urban)	7	3	4	5	1	4	2	2	-
VI Panchmahal	6	5	1	6	5	1	-	-	-
a) Shehra	6	5	1	6	5	1	-	-	-

∴	2912	1447	1465	2830	1388	1442	82	59	23

Source: Census, Gujarat State, 1971.

Note: The literacy figures of 27 persons inhabited in other districts are not available so it has not been given in the table.

TABLE VIII

Literacy by sex (Field data)

Sr. No.	Educational standard	Total		
		Persons	Males	Females
1	Total population	952	499	453
2	Illiterates	860 (90.3)	430 (86.2)	430 (94.9)
3	Literates	92 (9.7)	69 (13.8)	23 (5.1)
4	Primary upto IV	16 (17.4)	13 (18.8)	3 (13.0)
5	Secondary upto X	13 (14.1)	10 (14.5)	3 (13.0)
6	Matriculate	1 (1.1)	1 (1.5)	-
7	School going children	62 (67.4)	45 (65.2)	17 (74.0)

Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

... ..

In view of the data presented in the Table VIII it is obvious that the majority of Kathodi population is illiterate. Out of 952 persons surveyed only 92 (9.7 per cent) have been reported as literates. Of which 24 were males, 6 adult females and 62 (45 boys and 17 girls) children. Only 13 males and 3 females could reach upto standard IV, 10 males and 3 females upto standard X and one male was matriculate. The figures indicate that literacy among Kathodi is for the most part confined to school going groups than persons of advanced age. The data collected regarding school going children in the

local village school shows that out of total 256 children of the school-going age group only 62 (24.2 per cent) were attending school at the time of survey. The class-wise enrolment of the children is given in Table IX.

TABLE IX

Class-wise enrolment of school-going children by sex.

Sr. No.	Class	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
1	I	12	10	22	35.6
2	II	11	3	14	22.6
3	III	6	3	9	14.5
4	IV	9	1	10	16.1
5	V	3	-	3	4.8
6	VI	1	-	1	1.6
7	VII	2	-	2	3.2
8	VIII	1	-	1	1.6
Total:		45	17	62	100.0

It is seen from table IX that out of total school-going children 72.5 per cent were boys and remaining were girls. Out of 62 total children, 58 (94 per cent) children were studying in primary classes (i.e. from I to V classes).

The educational performance was different in different areas. In Dang out of 40 children in school-going age 37 were attending the school. In Vijaynagar

taluka, out of 36 children 20 were attending the school and in Mangrol taluka only 4 children were attending the school. But in Uchhal and Sagbara taluka not a single household was sending any of their children to school.

An enquiry was made among the Kathodi households from different regions having children of school going area (7-14) about their attendance in the school, and the reasons for their non-attendance were investigated. Most of the households mentioned poverty as the main reason for not sending them to school. Among the Kathodis both husband and wife work to make both ends meet and as such they prefer their school-going children to look after the young ones left behind by the parents while going to work. Even they put them to the school they have to discontinue them when they set out for seasonal work outside. In some cases a few children had joined school for sometime but gave up their studies for one reason or other. The reasons for discontinuation of studies were also enquired into. In one household a girl of 17 years age discontinued her studies after passing X standard and got employment in an Ashram school. Her father stated that he was willing to give further education to his daughter but the latter did not take any interest in further studies. Similarly in another household a girl of 16 years age discontinued her studies after passing final examination and found employment as a teacher in

the local kindergarten (balwadi). She was compelled to discontinue her studies because her mother did not like to send her outside the village for further studies.

In another case a boy of 15 years of age discontinued his studies after passing VIII standard and got employment as a Beatguard in forest department. His brother who is also his guardian and working as a Forester in Forest Department believes that 'his brother has better prospects in that employment'. He, likewise others, believes that the formal education is not necessary for earning of a livelihood. It appears that Kathodis, in general, do not grasp the benefits of education and prefer to live the life which they think they are destined to lead. For them there is no practical utility of the type of education imparted in the village schools.

CHAPTER - IITHE MATERIAL LIFEHABITATION AND DWELLINGS:

During field investigation not a single village was found which was exclusively inhabited by Kathodis. They generally live in multi-caste mixed villages. Their settlements are generally located either on the outskirts or in one corner of the village. In some cases they reside in a separate hamlet of their own group which is referred to by the name of the 'Kathodivas'. In most of the villages Kathodis settlement are located on the outskirts of the village. The other tribal groups in the village feel superior to the Kathodis and keep minimum contact with them unless necessitated by circumstances because of living together in the village. This status differentiations is also supported by the separate settlement of the Kathodis. The Kathodis on account of their abject poverty take their low status for granted. But in day-to-day life all these tribal communities do not know any strain of mutual animosity inspite of their lower hierarchial position in the village.

"Formerly the Kathodis chose their settlements in the forest to suit their convenience by selecting a spot that promised good hunting or tillage, and leaving it as convenience dictated. Even to the

present day, an epidemic or sickness occasionally includes the people of a Vadi to vacate it and settle elsewhere in the neighbourhood. Their settlements are known as Katavadi. Every Vadi is having a headman called Naik who is the social head of the community and is assisted by a Karbhari or Pradhan¹ Kathodis settlements are usually situated either on forest-land or wasteland of the village. In Vijaynagar taluka their settlements are found on the fringe of forest. Sometimes they select a site near a rivulet or a river. Those having land, secured after working for a long term with the landlord, would raise their homestead in the field itself. But there are some Kathodis, who have a settled life, prefer to stay in village itself. Kathodi families who migrate to forest coupe or outside the region, raise a temporary hut and dismantle it when the work is over. The families then return to their original home. It needs to be stressed here that though the Kathodis lead mostly an unsettled life, maintain ties with their paternal villages. But as most of them do not own their own houses, they are many a times ejected by other communities.

A Kathodi settlement is compact. The huts are clustered together and not scattered. The Kathodi huts are of mud-dubbed walls (Karvi) with a peaked

1. Maharashtra State Gazetteer, Kolaba District, pp. 184-185.

roof thatched with palm leaves of grass. In some huts the roofs are supported by bamboo columns. Usually the hutment consists of one room approximately 15'x10' or 12'x8' which is used by the whole family for the purpose of living, sleeping, cooking and eating. There is only one door in the hut and there are no windows or ventilators. The doors are made out of bamboo splits. Usually the cattle sheds are attached to the huts and mostly the living room is used as cattle shed. In some cases, cattle sheds seemed to have been erected separately near their huts. In some areas such as in Dangs and Vijaynagar taluka a few Kathodi houses appeared to be well-built and of fairly larger size. Such houses are made of superior materials so much so that the Karvi walls and thatched roofs have been replaced by mud walls and tiled roof. The tiles are generally prepared by the local potters. Some Kathodi families are also reported to have made tiles at home. Thus, the bamboo, palm leaves and Karvi form the building material for the Kathodi huts which is collected from the forest with the permission of Forest Officers. Sometimes they bring these materials without obtaining any permission. All the members of the family, men, women and children participate in raising a hut and accomplish the task within a few days. The close kins

help each other while constructing their huts. A Kathodi house does not have a clean look. Inside the hut, the things are rarely well arranged and are found lying here and there. Generally, their dwellings speak of their poor and miserable living conditions.

While constructing the house the first rite they perform is to place a coconut and some grains of rice bound in a piece of white cloth at the top of the Central pillar to ward off the effect of evil eyes and it is not removed till the completion of the work. In Mota Malunga village in Dangs the houses for the tribal population are constructed under the Dang Cooperative Housing Scheme. Hereto every house has a spacious living room with a closed verandah and the walls are made of bamboo splits and plastered with mud, while the roofs are of Manglore tiles. Three Kathodi families in this village have such houses. The details of housing conditions of the surveyed household are given in Table X.

TABLE X

Details of Housing Conditions.

Condition	No. of Household	Percentage of total household.
<u>Types of Walls:</u>		
Karvi or grass	104	59.7
Mud Wall	70	40.3
	<u>174</u>	<u>100.0</u>
<u>Types of Roofs:</u>		
Thatched roof	113	64.9
Country tiled roof	57	32.7
Mangalore tiled roof	4	2.4
	<u>174</u>	<u>100.0</u>
<u>Rooms Inside.</u>		
Single - all purpose room for both household members and cattle	166	95.4
Two rooms - One for members, another for cattle	8	4.6
	<u>174</u>	<u>100.0</u>
<u>Ventilation :</u>		
No Ventilation	170	95.6
Ventilated (one window inside)	4	4.4
	<u>174</u>	<u>100.0</u>

The above data reveals that the grass and bamboo split walls are found to be most common along with a good number of houses with mud walls. In regard to the types of roof, roof thatched with grass was most common; but the use of country tiled roof is also fairly wide.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS:

The Kathodis have very few belongings in their homes, e.g. few aluminium utensils and earthen wares, sleeping mats made of jute or date-palm leaves, bamboo cots, tin made lamp or lantern, grinding stone, fishing nets and one or two earthen grain bins. Most of the household do not possess cots, because mostly they sleep on the ground.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS:

The dress of Kathodi male is very simple. In past, Kathodi males used to wear a 'Langoti' (a square piece of cloth passed over the waist cord and drawn between the legs tightly and tucked behind). Nowadays they use dhoti which covers the waist down to thighs, leaving the rest of the body completely bare. Their women in past did not wear any cloth on their upper body. Gradually they began to wear clothes and now cover their upper body too. To day Kathodi males wear short dhoti and shirt, grown up children prefer to wear trousers and shirts. Kathodi women dress with the traditional 'Saree' in distinct style, very similar

to that of traditional Maharashtrian women. This piece of saree is called 'Phadki'. Even to day many Kathodi women do not put on a blouse. A few educated girls put on frocks or skirts and blouse. The children are mostly ill-clad. Children upto the age of six usually go about naked. Some children put on banyan and langoti. Use of foot-wear is rare. Only a few educated boys and girls wear rubber slippers. During investigation it was seen that most kathodis are not always found in clean dress. Poverty does not allow them to keep many sets of clothes or wash the clothes regularly. An average Kathodi male or female cannot buy more than one dhoti, one phadki or one shirt in a year.

The kathodi women are too poor to have any gold or silver ornaments. Glass bangles and bead necklaces are in common usage. Very few women wear metal bangles. The most common ornaments put on by Kathodi women are 'Sakli' (a chain of glass beads), 'Jumka' (earrings of brass), glass bangles and 'Kada' (anklet). Some ornaments like 'Kada' are going out of fashion and these days only elderly women are seen wearing them. The men-folk do not put on any ornament. Most of the ornaments are manufactured by the artisans in nearby towns and are purchased from them directly, or in the weekly markets from the itinerant traders. Tattooing on the various parts of the body is a way of decoration for the Kathodi males and females.

The Kathodi women get tattooed on hand, arm, foot, wrist, cheek and forehead. Men usually get the tattooing done on the forehead and arms. Some men have their own names tattooed on their forearms. Some old Kathodi women informed that the tattoo marks protect them from being punished by the accomplices of Yama, the Lord of Death. The tattooing work is done in the weekly market.

FOOD AND NOURISHMENT:

Most of the Kathodis do not get a square meal in a day. In fact it is not easy to define their staple food because it differs from season to season. Like most of the tribals the Kathodis are also non-vegetarians. According to Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, "They live chiefly on roots and herbs. Beside porridge and cakes of the coarse grains, they eat almost all animals. The horse, the ass, the cat and the dog they will not eat, and they refuse the flesh of an animals found dead."²

The staple food of Kathodi is Chappatis which may be prepared either from maize, or jowar, or nagli, or Banti. Sometimes they prepare a jowar gruel called "Bhadku" after boiling the jowar flour, when the quantity of jowar is less.

Kathodis hunt and fish in support of their main occupation and collect herbs and wild fruits and roots to supplement their diet. They are fond of meat, and eat flesh of animals, with the exception of cow and

² Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, 1901, Gujarat Population, Vol. IX, Part I, pp. 319-320.

the brown-faced monkey. They hunt and eat fish, hare, monkey, wild cocks, deer and a variety of birds, but this has now become difficult due to deforestation and the reservation of forests. From summer to the close of monsoon, they eat whatever is easily available in the forest. Fruits such as bor and guller, wild roots such as Kadva Kanda (wild onion) a kind of poisonous tuber, wild flowers and even grains of wild grass such as 'Sava'. To eat the Kadva Kanda they first cut it into circular pieces and put them in a basket. The basket is soaked in water for the whole night. Next morning it is washed and boiled with fresh water, the boiled stuff is eaten with no other ingredient except salt. In rainy season they also eat green leaves of 'Kardai' (*Carthamus tinctorius*) and 'Ambadi' (*Habiscus cannabinus*). But by and large most of the Kathodi families are passing days without sufficient and wholesome food. Most of the Kathodis do not use milk. They do not consume milk and any milk products. Cows are not milched for getting milk. Even small children are not given milk to drink. Use of tea is not common although many of them occasionally taste it when they visit the market place.

According to earlier writers, such as Sherring and Stephen Fuhs, the Kathodis are fond of drinking liquor. But during the field investigation they denied

that they were specially fond of liquor or addicted to the same. In fact, they don't appear to be liquor addicts. Since they are extremely poor, it is beyond their means to buy liquor off and on.

CHAPTER IIITHE ECONOMY OF KATHODIS

As stated earlier the Kathodis derive their name from traditional occupation of making Katha from Khair trees. But during the field investigation it came to light that the occupation of Catechu-making is no longer pursued as a means of regular livelihood.

The Kathodis now mainly depend on agricultural labour and forest labour. The major part of their income is derived from these two sources. Agriculture provides a subsidiary occupation. They supplement their economy by many activities like, hunting, fishing, cattle grazing and collecting forest produces. The mixture of multifarious ways of making livelihood show their restless hunt to cope up with the bare requirements for existence. In an earlier account, it has been reported that "many of them are employed as field labourers while other extract catechu from Khair tree, collect fuel and other jungle produce which they sell in the villages and markets. They also cut trees and make charcoal. The thinly forested hills do not yield sufficient food for them and thus they are often forced to supplement their livelihood by committing petty thefts in the fields and houses. But they no longer possess

the daring to commit serious robberies."¹

TRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS:

On being interviewed the Kathodis reported that they were brought to Gujarat in the early part of this century by some Bohra Forest Contractors for employing them as forest labourers to make Katha from the Khair trees. The Bohra contractors could persuade some families of Kathodis in Maharashtra to leave their native place to seek fresh employment in the forest of Dangs, Gandevi, Bansda and Chhota-Udepur which were having abundant Khair trees. In the beginning only male workers migrated who used to return to their native places after the Katha season was over. But later on they brought their families as the contractor assured them many other facilities. In the beginning they were employed in the forest areas of Dangs, Sagbara, Bansda, Chhota-Udepur and Vijaynagar talukas. The manufacturing process of Katha is described in the earlier Gazetteer of Baroda State as follows :

"The Kathodis who drew the Kath or Catechu, test whether the Khair tree (*Accacia catechu*) will pay to cut, by making a small notch in its heart-wood. Trees between 25 to 30 years old are best suited for the manufacture and are said to yield more or less Kath

¹ Aboriginal Tribes of India by Stephen Fuchs, 1973, p.196.

according to the number of thin white lines in the heart-wood. The men, after removing all the sapwood and little of a heart wood cut it into thin chips about a square inch in size. These chips are boiled in small earthen pots with water. When sufficiently charged with Kath the water is poured into two pots, and allowed to go on boiling. The infusion in the two pots is poured into a wooden trough, one yard long and eighteen inches broad, and a woman strains it through a piece of blanket about a foot square. Sitting on the ground she dips the blanket into the infusion, stir it about and holding it as high as she can, wrings it into a trough. This process goes on about two hours, after which the trough is covered with a lid of split bamboos and the sediment is allowed to subside. The water is then poured off and the Kath cut into small cakes and left to dry. The people employed in catechu-making are called Kathodis. The whole process is managed by their women. On account of the destruction caused to trees Kath manufacturer has lately been stopped in the Navsari forests."²

The conditions of the Kathodis deteriorated when the proportion of Khair tree started dwindling fast and these poor people were left at the end of

2. Gazetteer of Baroda State, Vol. I, General Information, by Rao Bahadur Govindbhai H. Desai & A. B. Clarke, 1923, p. 63.

their resources. According to the Annual Administration Report for the Dang's for 1944-46 "The Khair trees were in abundance in the Dang's but they came to be destroyed on a large scale on account of Kath manufacture. It is reported that in one year, as many as 75 catechu kilns were licenced at about Rs.10 per Kiln, resulting in wholesale destruction."³

At present catechu making has been given up by the private small manufacturers because, the two Kath factories were started at Rajpipla and Vyara. This has resulted in large scale unemployment for the Kathodi labourers engaged on Kath making, and they were compelled to take up any labour work if and when available in the area. Lack of alternative work of durable nature providing regular earning all the year round resulted in further impoverishment and near starvation conditions.

During the course of field investigation it came to light that certain Kathodis of older generation knew the technique of Katha-making but the persons of present generation have been found to have lost the knowledge of this technique.

WORKING FORCE:

The following table gives the break-up of the workers among Kathodis by sex as per 1961 census :

3 Gujarat State Gazetteer, Dang's District, by Dr. G.D.Patel, 1971, p.247.

TABLE XI

Working Population by sex as per 1961 Census.

<u>Population</u>			<u>Workers</u>		
<u>Persons</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Persons</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
2358	1183	1175	1364	713	651
(100.0)	(50.17)	(49.83)	(57.80)	(60.27)	(55.40)

(The figures in brackets show the percentages).

It can be seen from the above figures that out of 2358 persons, 1364, or in other words 57.8 per cent are workers. It is observed that when compared with workers among the scheduled tribe in the State as a whole (53.72 per cent) the percentage among the Kathodis is slightly more. As regards the sex-wise break-up of workers, 713 or 60.27 per cent of the total 1183 males and 651 or 55.40 per cent of the total 1175 females among the Kathodis are workers. Out of 1364 workers from the total population of 2358, 651 are females. The ratio of females to males in case of workers is 91:100, that is, there are 91 female workers to 100 male workers. It is evident that quite a large number of Kathodi women have to work along with their males.

Having discussed the sex ratio of the Kathodis earning population it will be useful to give some idea about the distribution of Kathodi workers engaged in different industrial categories as stated in the 1961 Census data (see table XII).

TABLE XIX

Industrial Classification of Workers among Kathodis (1961)

Industrial Classification	Males	Females	Total	Percentage		Total
				Males	Females	
Total Population	1,183	1,175	2,358	47.42	52.58	100.00
Total Workers	713	651	1,364	60.27	55.40	57.85
As cultivator	135	152	287	18.9	23.4	21.05
As Agricultural Labourer	341	351	692	47.9	53.9	50.73
In mining, quarrying, Live Stock, Forestry, Plantation, Orchards, and allied activities	175	116	291	24.5	17.8	21.33
At household industry	32	6	38	4.5	0.9	2.79
In manufacturing other than household industry	-	-	-	-	-	-
Construction	17	19	36	2.4	2.9	2.64
In trade and Commerce	1	-	1	0.1	-	0.07
In transport, storage and communication and other services	12	7	19	1.7	1.1	1.39

It can be seen from the table XII that the largest proportion or rather a sizeable bulk of their working population (72 per cent) is engaged as agricultural labourer and forest labourer, (21.33 per cent in forestry and allied activities and 50.73 per cent as agricultural labourers). The next category in order of numerical strength is cultivation which accounts for 21.04 per cent. The Kathodi workers are also engaged in the other four industrial categories but there, in comparison to the categories discussed above, their number is insignificant. One point which needs emphasis here is that the largest proportion of male as well as female workers are engaged as agricultural labourers. But the percentage of cultivators and agricultural labourers among the females is higher than that of the males.

WORKING POPULATION:

The distribution of workers by age as derived from households surveyed is given in table XIII.

TABLE XIII

Age-wise Working Population

Sr. No.	Age Category	Population			Percentage to the total
		Males	Females	Total	
1	0 - 14	72 (21.8)	54 (18.7)	126	20.3
2	15 - 34	154 (46.5)	152 (52.6)	306	49.4
3	35 - 59	98 (29.6)	78 (26.9)	176	28.4
4	60 & above	7 (2.1)	5 (1.8)	12	1.9
TOTAL:		331 (100.0)	289 (100.0)	620	100.0

According to our findings, 620 persons out of the total 942 were actively engaged in some economic activities or in other words out of 100, 60 persons were engaged in some kind of economic activities. Of these, 331 or 53.4 per cent were males while 289 or 46.6 per cent females. Out of 620 workers, 289 were females. The ratio of females to males in case of workers was 87:100 that is there were 87 females to 100 male workers. In some age group the percentage of working population was as high as 99 per cent.

DIVISION OF LABOUR:

Men and women are equal partners in economic activities, both agricultural and forest work. The women are thoroughly acquainted with all aspects of the forest life and help their husband in forest. In forest labour, the man plays a more important role than the woman. He cuts the bamboo, finishes it and levels it at both ends and binds it into a bundle. Women help their men in the forest labour by fetching bamboo down from the top of the hill where it is cut. Women look after their household duties, tend children, prepare food and purchase food material from the village shop. Women also grind maize, jowar and Nagli. Women and children go out for gathering forest produce and latter they wash, clean and dry it in order to make it suitable for sale.

ECONOMIC LIFE

A detailed study of economic life was conducted in two areas viz. Vijaynagar taluka in Sabarkantha District and Dangs District where the population of Kathodis is in good numbers. The households were interviewed with the help of a structured questionnaire which sought data on various variables relating to their socio-economic conditions. The households were asked to supply these data for 1974-75 agricultural year.

There are no big landholders in Kathodis. An average household owned just little over three acres of land. In fact there were only six households having more than 5 acres of land. Distribution of operational land holding by holding groups is given in table XIV.

TABLE XIV

Distribution of Operational Land Holding of Households by Holding Group.

Holding Group (acres)	No. of households.	Percentage of total households.	Owned land (acres)	Percentage of owned land.	Per household owned land.
Landless	42	46.6	-	-	-
0.01 - 2.5	19	21.1	27.35	18.7	1.13
2.51 - 5	23	25.5	83.17	56.8	3.25
Over 5	6	6.8	35.27	24.5	5.38
Total:	90	100.0	146.39	100.0	3.02

The figures in the above table show that nearly 50 per cent of households were landless. Of the total land holding households 21 per cent households owned 19 per cent of land as against 26 per cent who owned 57 per cent and 7 per cent households owning 1/4th of total land. It is also interesting to note that all the households in Vijaynagar taluka obtained land from Bhoomidan while households in other districts reported that lands were inherited from ancestors. There were only 6 households having more than 5 acres of land. The biggest land holding recorded is 16.21 acres. The smallest holding owned by a household is 0.24 acres. The average land holding for these 48 households comes to only 3.02 acres. It is obvious that none of the Kathodi household has enough land to support it from cultivation alone. That is why, as mentioned in the preceding pages, the Kathodi families supplement their agricultural income by pursuing several other occupations such as forest labour, agricultural labour, charcoal making and other casual labour which have been discussed later.

AGRICULTURE:

All the 22 villages under study have reported rocky land with only a thin layer of soil and this make cultivation very difficult. Irrigation facilities, too, are almost nil, and the land is not quite

hospitable to agriculture. It is therefore, not surprising that the yield is extremely low. In absence of irrigation facilities, cultivation is almost rain fed, and major portion of land is sown to Kharif crop during the rains. Kathodis usually grow inferior food-grains such as Nagli, Kodra and Banti. Maize and Jowar are grown in small area in Mangrol and Sagbara talukas and in some places in Vijaynagar taluka. The coarse variety of paddy and ground nut are grown in Dangs district and pulses like Tur, Udad are sown separately or as mixed crops. Most of the Kathodis do not cultivate rabi season crops. Some of those who raise crops in rabi season do not get sufficient yield because of poor texture of the soil and their primitive method of cultivation. Land is tilled by bullocks. But the type of plough is very inferior, bullocks are weak and ill fed and furrowing is not done intensively. After they prepare the land for cultivation they sow Nagli, Banti, Maize and Jowar by broadcasting seeds on land. They do not clean their land thoroughly before cultivation and weeding is not done intermittently until the harvest. Out of 48 land holding families, 19 families have bullocks, 11 have one pair of bullocks and 7 have one bullock. Those who have one bullock only,

seek the cooperation of their relatives or friends and borrow another bullock for the time being. They do not find any difficulty in such borrowing. The families without bullocks hire bullocks either from their non-Kathodi fellow agriculturists or from the other tribal neighbours in the village. A pair of bullock can be hired at the rate of Rs.7/- per day. It was seen that a few Kathodi families who had no bullock or ploughs, prepared land manually with the help of hoes. They are helped by their wives and children in hoe-cultivation.

Kathodi do not generally use manures but those having cattle use cowdung as manure. No one reported use of chemical fertilizers though some of them seem to be aware of its use. It seems beyond their means to buy chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

The Kathodis still use 'deshi' (local) seeds. No one has adopted improved variety of seeds such as hybrid maize and jowar. One of the reason for not using improved seeds is their incapability to buy them on cash payment from the village cooperative society. No irrigation facilities are available in the villages under investigation. In absence of these facilities, the average yield per acre is very low. Though agriculture is the secondary occupation of these people, they earn very little from this work, so they manifest very little interest in improving their agriculture.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY:

Some Kathodis keep cows, goats and sheep. Out of 90 families surveyed 52 were keeping domestic animals. During the survey investigation a census of cattle and poultry was undertaken and it was found that altogether the livestock numbered 159. The figures given in table XV shows that on an average each household has nearly 3 domestic livestock including chickens.

The figures in table XV reveals that 19 households owned 33 bullocks, 17 households owned 46 heads of cows and goats and 16 households owned 80 poultry birds. Though Kathodis own these dairy and poultry, practically no income is derived from these sources, and only in case of emergency some poultry or goat is sold to meet dire needs of cash money. Cows are kept with the explicit purpose of getting bullocks to be used in their farming.

TABLE XV

Ownership of Livestock and Poultry by holding groups.

Holding Groups (acres)	Household owning Bullocks		Household owning Cows & Goats		Household owning Poultry		Total Household	Total
	H.H.	No.	H.H.	No.	H.H.	No.		
Landless	1 (5.3)	2 (6.6)	2 (11.8)	2 (4.3)	5 (31.3)	24 (30.0)	8 (15.4)	28 (17.6)
0-1 - 2.5	4 (21.1)	7 (21.2)	2 (11.8)	3 (6.5)	1 (6.1)	2 (2.6)	7 (13.4)	12 (7.5)
2.5 - 5.0	8 (42.2)	15 (45.4)	8 (47.1)	22 (47.8)	5 (31.3)	25 (31.2)	21 (40.4)	62 (38.9)
Over 5	6 (31.4)	9 (26.8)	5 (29.3)	19 (41.4)	5 (31.3)	29 (36.2)	16 (30.8)	57 (36.0)
Total:	19 (100.0)	33 (100.0)	17 (100.0)	46 (100.0)	16 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	52 (100.0)	159 (100.0)

Note: The figures in brackets show percentages.

HH = Household.

FOREST ECONOMY:

As mentioned earlier, the Kathodis, by and large, depend on agriculture labour. Thus, it can be safely assumed that their primary occupation is agricultural labour work. They also find employment in forest coups where cutting or other operations are in progress.

Labour work in the forest is available to them for 4 months, from November to February. The forest labour cooperatives in the area undertake bamboo collection and charcoal manufacture on lease from the Government and give employment to the tribal labourers. Kathodis find work with the forest cooperatives in Vyara, Songadh, Mangrol and Gandevi talukas. Forest labour includes felling and fetching of bamboo and other timber trees, charcoal making and packing of bamboos. Thus, there are three types of forest labour.

1. Bamboo cutting
2. Trees felling, and
3. Charcoal making.

1. Bamboo Cutting:

A bamboo, after being cut from the root, is levelled at both ends with an axe and all such bamboos are tied into a bundle. Almost all the Kathodi

families live at the working place till the operation is over and make temporary residence in the forest. Their women and children also help them in this work. The average income per man from forest labour work is Rs.120/- to Rs.125/- per month. Thus, the income of the household depends upon the number of persons in the household. The Kathodis work in forest on labour contract basis, that is to say, that if they work more they earn more. They are not bound to work for the whole day. The rate of payment are per hundred bamboos and vary according to the size of the bamboo. If a Kathodi cuts 100 bamboos of 20-25 feet he gets Rs.30/- and for 100 bamboos of 15-20 feet he gets Rs.20/- and for 100 bamboo below 15 feet he gets Rs.15/-. These rates are fixed by the forest labour cooperative society. The person engaged in bamboo cutting works from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. and again from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. The capacity of work per man per day is 40 to 50 bamboos of all sizes. Thus a Kathodi earns Rs.6/- per day and his average income in a month is Rs.120/- as the average number of working days in a month is about 20. Their income is higher than that of those who are engaged in charcoal making.

2. Tree Cutting:

The Kathodis are also engaged in cutting and sizing of wood of different trees. The rate of sizing per metre is fixed.

The rates vary according to the type of wood. If a Kathodi sizes one metre of Shisham wood (*Dalbergia latifolia*) he gets Rs.24-50 and for one metre of teak wood (*Tectonn grandis*) he gets Rs.19-95 and for one metre of Sal wood (*Aporosalind-leyana*) he gets only Rs.7-95. According to the information given by them one man with one helper can size one metre of Shisham or Teak wood in two days. Thus normally one man earns Rs.6/- per day. For Sal wood one man can do one metre in one day. Thus, he gets Rs.8/- per day. In this manner, one man with one helper earns Rs.200/-, one man with two helpers earns Rs.350/- and two men with two helpers earns Rs.500/- per month. But this sort of work is not available regularly.

3. Char Coal Making.

During field investigation it has been found that 5 families have been engaged in charcoal making. Kathodis are considered very expert in charcoal making. They do not get the work of charcoal making regularly as it is available only for two to three months. For charcoal making entire family has to make temporary residence at the work site. The Kathodi family lives at the site till the work is over. The persons engaged on charcoal making earn Rs.300 to Rs.500 in three months. The technique of charcoal making as described by them is as given below:

Generally the trees are felled after harvest and cut into logs of 3' to 4' in length and arranged in a pile. The pile may be small or big one. The actual work of charcoal making start 1 to 1 1/2 months after cutting the trees. They manufacture charcoal by closed burning technique. First, three big stones are kept on the ground touching one another, keeping an opening on one side like that of a chulah. The cut logs are then arranged vertically into kiln around these stones one after another in a slightly slanting position round and round, keeping the opening intact to facilitate kindling. After arranging the cut logs they are covered with hay at the top and also on all the sides, except at the opening which is at the bottom.

A thick layer of dry earth is then spread at the top and also along the sides of the kiln. The kiln is then kindled by inserting burning chips attached to a bamboo pole, from the opening at the bottom, and once the logs inside are found to have caught fire the bamboo is withdrawn and the opening is sealed by arranging logs against it and spreading hay and dry earth thereon. If smoke is found omitting from any part of the kiln while it is burning, it is sealed by spreading dry earth on the spot. The kiln is allowed to burn from one week to a fortnight, during which period a constant watch is necessary to see that no outside air is allowed

to get in and therefore to seal the holes from which smoke is found emitting. Thereafter, water is spread on live charcoal. The kiln is then dismantled and the charcoal is collected with the help of rake, and filled in gunny bags, ready for marketing.

FOREST PRODUCTS:

Another major source of income to Kathodi families is gathering and selling of minor forest produces. This work supports them in two ways; firstly, it gives them some scope for earning cash income and secondly it is a source to get subsidiary food by collecting edible leaves and wild roots. The Kathodis gather Gum, Honey, Karanjia; (Pomgania, glabra), mahuva, white musali, etc. which they sell to the local trader or in a nearby village. Gum is sold at Rs-3/- per Kg., honey at Rs-5/- per Kg., Pomagania glabra at Rs.0.75 per kg. and white musli at Rs.4/- per Kg. Young boys and girls and some times elderly persons go to the forest for collecting of the forest produces in the morning and they return in the evening. Some times they sell forest produces to get money or exchange the forest produce against food articles and other provisions. They also collect tendu (diospyros Tomentosa) leaves used in rolling bidi. In Vadpada village of Mangrol taluka a Bidi Contractor was giving them Rs.2/- for a bundle of one hundred

tendu leaves. The plucking of tendu leaves starts in May and continues till the rain sets in. In rainy season they consume, 'Kadva, kanda' a wild tuber. And also the tender parts of the stem of the palm tree are eaten by the Kathodis. Like most of the tribals the Kathodis are also non-vegetarian. Forest gives them opportunity to hunt and eat fish, hare, monkey, deer, wild pig, and a variety of birds. This has now become difficult due to deforestation and the reservation of forest. Forests provide the Kathodis with the timber to support roofs and walls of their houses, grass, karvi and leaves for thatching. Kathodis also bring loads of fire wood from the jungle. A head load of fire wood is sold at around Rs.00.75 to the village traders. Selling of fire wood has to be done very secretly as it is illegal to bring fire wood other than for one's own household use.

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR:

As mentioned earlier, a large portion of the working population among the Kathodi males is engaged in agricultural labour. There are two types of agricultural labourers: (i) the daily wage labourers and (ii) attached agricultural labourers. Majority of the Kathodis are daily wage labourers. They are usually engaged in some specific agricultural operations, viz. sowing, weeding or harvesting, and are paid in cash or kind. The wages as worked out in cash are

Rs. 1.50 to 2.00 per day for an adult man. The daily wages of women range from Re. 1 to Rs. 1.25 each, while children are paid Re. 1/- or Re. 0.75 paise each per day. Besides wages in cash, labourers are given the mid-day meal (only two Rotlas). Thus the average income per man per season from agricultural labour is around Rs. 70/-. Some times they are paid a wage of 1 to 1.5 kilos of food grains per day. They are required to work for 9 hours on such meagre wage. But many Kathodis stated that the practice of giving wage in kind is now being discouraged by the cultivators for the very reason that the prices of food grains are on increase day by day. The work of agricultural labour is seasonal and available during Kharif season only.

In Vijaynagar Taluka most of the young Kathodi girls were found to be working in the Kampas.⁴ Some time employment of Kathodi girls raise some social problem. Some of the unscrupulous employers, forest contractors and their henchmen take undue advantage of the economic distress prevailing among the tribals and consequently cases of using the young Kathodi women by their masters for sexual pleasure are not uncommon. There were 7 persons engaged as permanently

4 The word 'Kampa' is derived from the word 'Camp'. There are over 200 Kampas or Camps in this district. Modern tools and techniques are employed in these Kampas for increased agricultural production. The existence of 'Kampas' is the distinguishing feature of the agricultural economy of this district.

attached labourer. One from Dangs and two each from Sagbara, Mangrol and Vijaynagar Talukas. Under this system the labourer enters into a contract with the landowner for one year. The attached agricultural labourers in lieu of their services get Rs.100/- per annum, and he is provided with two meals and bidies daily by the employer. Besides, he gets one pair of clothes in a year. As there is a limited scope for employment in the village itself, many Kathodis have migrated to other areas. In Surat, Bulsar and Dangs districts, 3 males have gone to Valsad, 2 to Vapi, 3 to Ukai and 2 to Nasik. All of them are engaged as agricultural labourers in orchards of Mango, Chickoo and Orange. All of them have taken their families along with them.

CATTLE GRAZING:

During field investigation it has been found that there were two to three Kathodis in almost every surveyed villages who worked as cowherds. All of them depend entirely on this job throughout the year. The usual duties of a cowherd are to graze and watch cattle from morning to evening. The remuneration for this job varies from area to area. The general practice is to give one Rotla for every two cattles in the morning as well as in the evening. For one cattle only one Rotla is given in the morning. Besides Rotla some employers

give a small quantity of Dal or vegetables also. In certain areas the remuneration is given in cash. The rates are fixed for different types of cattle. One gets Re.1/- for each cow, Rs.1.50 for each buffalo and Rs.0.50 for each goat per month.

SERVICES:

During field investigation six persons have been found doing different salaried job. Two girls have been working as Teachers, one in Ashram Shala and one in a village panchayat school, one youth was working as a Forester, two as Beatguards and two as Surveyors in Forest Department. All these persons belonged to Dang area. Apart from Dang, not a single person has been found in any kind of salaried jobs in other areas.

From the survey of occupational data of the Kathodis it appears that though they have, to some extent, taken to agriculture and forest labour and some other occupations the transition has not been smooth or adequate. During earlier stage of transition many Kathodi found themselves unable to pick up new avenues of livelihood and as mentioned earlier, some took up a life of crime.

DIMENSION OF POVERTY:

In the case of Kathodis, a painful and grim reality of starvation emerges for nearly the entire community as all of them are far below the accepted poverty line. The nationally accepted minimum level of living postulates a monthly per capita consumer expenditure of Rs.20/- at 1960-61 prices which works out to about Rs.60/- per capita per month at 1974-75 prices. All the (100 per cent) Kathodis households are below the poverty line, including even those households which have more than 5 acres of land.

Nearly 90% of households covered in this study have reported period of starvation. Starvation reporting household is defined as a household members starved throughout the day (i.e. missed both the meals) for some days and in addition, missed one-meal-a-day for some more days during some other part of the year. 95% households of landless and small farmers each, 91% households of marginal farmers and 50% households with more than five acres of land reported periods of starvation. The details of starving households are given in table XVI.

TABLE XVI

Distribution of Households and Population below the poverty line by Holding Groups,

Holding Group (acres)	Total		Below Poverty Line		Reporting Starvation	
	Households	Population	Households	Population	Households	Population
Landless	42 (100.0)	219 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	219 (100.0)	40 (100.0)	207 (100.0)
0-1 to 2.5	19 (100.0)	98 (100.0)	19 (100.0)	98 (100.0)	18 (94.7)	89 (90.8)
2.5 to 5	23 (100.0)	139 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	139 (100.0)	20 (91.3)	109 (78.4)
Over 5	6 (100.0)	39 (100.0)	6 (100.0)	39 (100.0)	3 (50.0)	13 (33.3)
Total:	90 (100.0)	495 (100.0)	90 (100.0)	495 (100.0)	81 (90.0)	418 (84.4)

Note: Figures in brackets show the percentage of total households and total population.

TABLE XVII

Annual Household Income from various sources by operational holding. (Rs.)

Holding Groups (acres)	No. of families	Agricul- tural	Agri- Wages.	Forest produce	Forestry Wages	Other Wages	Service Income	Total net income
Landless	42	-	143.3 (27.5)	8.2 (1.5)	183.8 (35.3)	45.0 (8.6)	116.7 (22.4)	497.0 (95.3)
1.0 to 2.5	19	160.7 (31.5)	120.0 (23.5)	8.4 (1.6)	161.1 (35.6)	27.9 (5.5)	18.9 (3.7)	497.0 (97.4)
2.51 to 5.0	23	307.9 (51.3)	44.3 (7.4)	-	140.8 (23.5)	40.9 (6.8)	226.1 (37.6)	760.0 (126.6)
Over 5	6	424.8 (65.3)	71.6 (11.0)	-	181.6 (27.9)	-	750.0 (115.4)	1428.0 (219.6)
ALL GROUPS	90	140.9 (25.6)	108.3 (19.7)	5.5 (1.0)	167.8 (30.5)	37.3 (6.8)	166.2 (30.2)	626.0 (113.8)

Note: Figures in brackets are per capita annual net income.

TABLE XVIII

Annual Income by Operational Holding from Different Sources (percentage)

Holding Groups	No. of families	Annual Income Rs.	Agricultural Income.	Agricultural Labour.	Forest produce	Forest Wage.	Service	Other	Total
Landless	42	497.0	-	28.8	1.6	36.9	23.4	9.3	100.00
0-1 to 2.5	19	497.00	32.3	24.1	1.7	32.4	3.8	5.7	100.00
2.51 to 5.0	23	760.00	40.5	5.8	-	18.5	29.7	5.5	100.00
Over 5	6	1428.0	29.7	5.0	-	12.7	52.6	-	100.00
ALL GROUPS:	90	626.0	22.5	17.3	0.9	26.8	26.5	6.0	100.00

HOUSEHOLD INCOME PATTERN

It is obvious from the figures given in table XVI that of the income an average household earned, a large proportion (44.1 per cent) was obtained from agricultural and forest wages. Another 23 per cent was earned from cultivation, mainly in Kharif season. The share of earning from salaried job was also substantial (27 per cent) but the share from forest produce was very meagre (less than 5 per cent). Further, an average landless worker and a marginal farm worker earned as low as Rs.497/- per annum from participation in gainful activities. Against this, their fellow workers in the holding group of 2.51 to 5.00 acres land and over 5 acres earned Rs.760/- and Rs.1,428/- per annum respectively. Finally, annual per capita income was the least for landless and marginal farm households (Rs.96/-) followed by small farm families (Rs.126/-). (see table XVII).

QUALITY AND LEVEL OF CONSUMPTION

Consumption of all items, particularly food is pitifully low among the Kathodis. They eat whatever is readily available, from farm produced coarse grains to edible leaves when nothing else is available, and this is the norm rather than a departure during some parts of the year for a majority of households. The incidence of starvation is particularly high during summer and monsoon. When the larder is full Kathodis usually eat

thrice a day. Kathodis eat 'Rotlas' made of Magli (ragi) around mid noon and in the evening. Generally 'Rotlas' are eaten with 'Tur' or Udad dal and green chillies if available. If dal is not available, it is substituted by 'Chatni' - a chilli salt paste mixed with a leafy green plant called 'Asola'. Occasionally they also eat green plant 'Karadi' (carthamus - tinctorius) and 'Ambadi' (hibiscus Gannabinus). Those who have land are generally better fed. They consume maize, rice and a vegetable.

The pattern of consumption is examined in table XIX for individual items. The table reveals that foremost items for expenditure in the economic life of Kathodi is food. Of the total household expenditure nearly 76 per cent is spent on food. After food, the next important items is clothes on which a sizeable expenditure is incurred by an average Kathodi household. Consumption of food items varied from one category of household to another. The per capita annual expenditure on food has been Rs.74 among the households with holding upto 2.5 acres as against Rs.94 and Rs.161 respectively among household with holdings upto 5 acres of land and over 5 acres.

TABLE XIX

Annual Household Expenditure by Operational Holdings
(Per Capita Annual Expenditure : Rs.)

Sr. No.	Items	All Groups	Land less	0.1 to 2.5	2.51 to 5.00	Over 5
1	Cereal & Pulses	86.6	73.6	74.2	94.0	161.4
2	Vegetables	2.3	1.6	2.1	2.9	4.2
3	Fish, Meat, Eggs	2.1	1.6	1.9	2.4	4.1
4	Milk, Ghee, Oil	1.8	0.8	1.4	2.4	5.0
5	Salt, Spices, Sugar & Gur	3.3	2.5	3.2	4.6	3.5
6	Tobacco	1.9	1.7	2.0	2.1	2.6
7	Alcohol	2.5	2.1	2.8	2.7	3.6
8	Fuel (K.Oil)	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.8	1.0
9	Clothing	10.1	7.4	8.8	11.8	21.8
10	Education	0.5	-	0.2	0.6	3.4
11	Social ceremonies	0.9	1.0	0.6	1.3	2.6
12	Others	1.6	1.0	1.1	1.8	4.4
Total:		114.2	93.7	99.0	127.4	217.6

TABLE XX

(Per Household Annual Expenditure : Rs.)

Sr. No.	Items	All Groups	Land-less	0.1 to 2.5	2.5 to 5.0	Over 5
1	Cereal & Pulses	474.3	384.4	377.5	568.2	1049.4
2	Vegetables	12.3	8.2	10.1	18.0	27.4
3	Fish, Meat, Eggs	11.8	8.9	10.4	14.7	26.3
4	Salt, Spices, Sugar & Gur	18.5	13.1	16.7	28.2	23.3
5	Milk, Ghee, Oil	9.7	4.3	7.6	15.4	32.8
6	Tobacco	10.7	8.8	10.3	12.6	16.6
7	Alcohol	13.9	10.9	13.7	16.7	23.3
8	Fuel (K.Oil)	3.6	2.4	3.7	4.9	6.6
9	Clothing	55.4	38.7	45.2	71.7	141.7
10	Education	2.8	0.2	1.3	3.6	22.5
11	Social Ceremonies	5.2	2.9	3.2	7.8	16.6
12	Others	8.9	6.0	5.7	11.4	28.3
TOTAL...		627.1	488.8	505.4	773.2	1414.8

TABLE XXI

Distribution of Household Expenditure by Operational Holding.

Holding Groups (acres)	No. of Households	Per Household expenditure	Percentage share of Diff. sources.		
			Home Produce	Kind wages	Market purchases.
Landless	42	488.8	0.9	8.9	80.2
0-1 - 2.5	19	505.3	40.7	7.7	51.6
2.51 - 5.0	23	773.2	44.2	5.0	50.8
Over 5.00	6	1414.8	30.4	7.7	61.9
TOTAL:	90	627.1	27.5	11.3	61.2

In terms of money the annual expenditure of Kathedis on food was Rs.474 per household. In addition to food, a household spent annually on an average Rs.55 on clothing, Rs.5 on social ceremonies and Rs.3 on education. The share of expenditure on various items varied from one holding group to another (see table XX). The share of farm produce in this consumption was 27.5 per cent and that of other sources as follows : Wages in kind 11.3 per cent, and market purchases 61.2 per cent. The share of each of these sources varied from one holding group to another (see table XXI).

INDEBTEDNESSTABLE XXII

Per Household Annual Outstanding debt by operational holding.

Holding Group (acres)	No. of borrowing households	Average outstanding debt (Rs.) for all surveyed households.	Outstanding debt per indebted household.
Landless	4	12	126
0.1 - 2.5	4	23	109
2.51 - 5.0	8	36	104
Over 5.0	2	52	156
Total:	18	23	116

The figures show that out of total 90 households surveyed, 20 per cent or 18 families reported indebtedness. The average debt of surveyed households works out to Rs.23/-. Looking into the distribution of families of different land size groups and their corresponding range of debt it is found that the families of the lowest land holding group incurred lowest amount of debt. Again, the families having more than 2.5 acres land incurred more debt. All household incurred debt for the purpose of meeting household expenditure. The major borrowing was in kind and for household expenditure. Comparatively few Kathodis are reported

to suffer from indebtedness mainly because nobody likes to lend them money because of their poverty, uncertain employment and meagre tangible assets. Two cases of attached labour have been reported in Mangrol taluka. Two Kathodi youth have taken a loan of Rs.250/- two years ago from their landlord to solemnise their marriages. Since then they have been working there on a subsistence wage of Re.1/- per day.

CONCLUSION:

Economically, the Kathodis live an uncertain life. Most of them are not able to make both ends meet. The income of the Kathodis is so low that it is inadequate to sustain life unless supplemented by free goods in the shape of edible leaves and roots available free of cost from the forests. Incomes are not only low but are so fluctuating that they always reflect a large degree of uncertainty in their life. The Kathodis mainly spend on food and drink and nominally on clothes. In spite of working hard and after pooling their earnings from different sources they are unable to meet the basic minimum needs of their families.

CHAPTER IVSOCIAL ORGANISATION

The Kathodis living in Gujarat are scattered in five districts viz. Sabarkantha, Bharuch, Surat, Valsad and Dang. Their migration to all these areas did not occur at the same time and not only from Maharashtra alone. For instance, the Kathodis in Vijaynagar taluka in Sabarkantha district have come from Ambavi, Ambasa and Daiya villages of Rajasthan. Formerly, these people were not used to stay permanently at one place because the merchants and the contractors used to take them to different places for Katha extraction work. They used to move to the places having Khair trees from which they extracted Katha. Hence, it seems that they have settled in different areas of Gujarat at different times. Tracing the history of the settlement of 174 families in Gujarat, it was found that these families continued to come to Gujarat at different times as they were brought mainly by the contractors, who employed them to extract Katha in different forest areas. The following table shows the period of their migration in different parts of Gujarat.

TABLE XXIII

Distribution of household by length of residence in different areas.

Area	5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 20 years	21 to 30 years	31 to 50 years	51 to 75 years	Above 75 years	Total
Mangrol	2	4	9	6	12	-	-	33
Uchhal	-	1	-	2	13	11	-	27
Vijaynagar	2	-	4	1	12	22	-	41
Sagbara	4	4	2	1	13	1	-	25
Dang	1	-	-	-	33	11	3	48
Total:	9	9	15	10	83	45	3	174

It can be seen from table XXIII that 43 families have settled recently. While approximately 48 per cent of the total families have settled here during the last 30 to 50 years and 25 per cent have been staying here for two to three generations. Only three families have been staying here from more than 75 years. Looking to these figures, it becomes apparent that Kathodis are not original inhabitants of this State but have migrated from Maharashtra region and in course of time adopted the State as their homeland.

We find a reference of the Katkari with the Kathodis in the census reports, according to which the Kathodi and the Katkari both constitute one and

the same tribe. Their occupation too, in not much distant past, was just the same. But the methods of Katha-extraction by Kathodi and Katkari were different. According to the information given by the Kathodis staying at Mangrol, the Katkaris extracted black katha and they used big earthen vessel for the extraction process; while the Kathodis, used small earthen vessel and extracted white katha. But in Gujarat they had been given a new name i.e. Kathodis by the Bohras merchants who brought them here. In fact in Baroda census Report of 1921, their name had been referred to as "Kathodia" which implied a derogatory connotation. Their number is much more in Maharashtra than in Gujarat. Several references are available about the kathodis staying in Maharashtra and it seems that there might be having various groups. But we did not find any reference indicating that Kathodis and Katkaris are two separate groups. The references available are about the Katkaris whose profession is of Katha-extraction. They have come in Gujarat from the same area and therefore it seems that the Kathodi and the Katkari are the two names of one and the same group of people. According to Enthoven 'Kathodia is the Gujarati form of Kathodi and is in use only in Gujarat.'

1 The Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Vol. II, by R.E. Enthoven, 1922, pp. 170-182.

The Kathodis are divided into two main divisions, namely, the Maratha (Son) and Dhor. The Son or Maratha Kathodis do not eat beef and are allowed to enter into the houses of other tribal groups. The Dhors are considered degraded as they have been reported to eat carcasses. The two divisions do not inter-marry and inter-dine. According to Sherring "there are two divisions of the Kathodis, (i) Dhor Kathodis and (ii) Maratha (Son) Kathodis, and they are sub-divided into various clans, such as - 1. Helam, 2. Powar, 3. Gosavi, 4. Jadav, 5. Sindhi."² He has shown the settlement of the Dhor Kathodis in Thana district and of Son Kathodis in Kolaba district. Enthoven notes "there are five endogamous divisions of the Katkaris-Kathodis. (1) Athvar, (2) Dhed, (3) Dhor, (4) Son or Maratha and (5) Vasap. As the Son or Maratha Kathodis do not eat cows' flesh they are allowed to draw water at the village well and to enter Kunbi's houses and sacred shrines. The Dhors eat cows' flesh and like the Mahars, are held to be impure. Athvars are looked down as inferior by the Son Kathodis. Dhor is commonly supposed to mean cattle-eating and Son either golden red 'Sanskrit 'Shori' or foreign (Dravidian Son of Sona)³.

2 "Hindu Tribes and Castes" Vol.II by M.A.Sherring, 1883, p.203.

3 The Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Vol.II, by R.E. Enthoven, 1922, pp.170-182.

Both the earlier writers refer to the Son Kathodis and the Dhor Kathodis. But the group of Kathodis which we find in Gujarat is the group of Dhor Kathodis because these Kathodis are reported to eat the carcasses of cattle, and in main they have migrated into Gujarat from Khandesh which has been the country of Dhor Kathodis. During the field investigation in Dangs district, it was learnt that there have been two groups in the Kathodis, (1) the Katkari Kathodis and (2) the Bhil Kathodis. In Dangs it was reported that the Kathodis staying there were the Bhil Kathodis. But originally these Bhil Kathodis were the Dhor Kathodis. There they have been living in the Bhil's villages and as the Bhils have also been reported to eat the cattle-meat, they gradually got identified with the Bhils of Dangs and as a result they got the suffix 'Bhil' before their community name. In other areas of the State we find Dhor Kathodis only.

FAMILY AND KINSHIP:

Kathodis are patrilineal (i.e. lineage is traced through the father who is the virtual head of family) and patrilocal (i.e. the girl, after marriage, goes to stay at her husband's house). Among Kathodis eldest son inherits father's property. All the family members bear the surname of the father. If the head

of the family is of 'Pawar' gotra, all the women and all the family members of the family affix the word 'Pawar' at the end of their names. In case of the girls, they adopt the gotra of her husband after getting married.

In order to gain some insight in the matter of the size, type and nature of composition of the family among the Kathodis the relevant data have been collected from the surveyed households in different areas. The areawise type of households are given in table XXIV.

TABLE XXIV

Area-wise Type of Households.

Area	Total No. of Households	Joint	Nuclear	Total persons	Size of family.
Mangrol	33	21	12	188	5.7
Uchhal	27	18	9	144	5.3
Vijaynagar	41	36	5	228	5.5
Sagbara	25	21	4	119	4.8
Dang	48	30	18	263	5.4
Total:	174 (100.0)	126 (72.4)	48 (27.6)	942	5.5

Note: The figures in brackets show the percentages of total households.

It can be seen from the above table that out of total 174 households as many as 126 (72 per cent) families are of joint type while the nuclear families constitute 28 per cent of the total. The figures given in table XXIV

also indicate that the size of family varies from one area to another, the average size being 5.5 for Kathodis of all areas.

TABLE XXV

Distribution of Households according to size.

Area	Size of Households				Total
	Small 1-3	Medium 4-6	Large 7-9	Very large above 9	
Mangrol	5	16	10	2	33
Uchhal	6	15	5	1	27
Vijaynagar	7	18	16	-	41
Sagbara	6	14	5	-	25
Dang	12	21	13	2	48
Total:	36 (20.7)	84 (48.3)	49 (28.2)	5 (2.8)	174 (100.0)

Note: The figures in brackets show percentages to total households.

It is obvious from the above table that of the 174 households nearly half are composed of 4-6 members. Households having 1-3 members and 7-9 members form 20.7 and 28.2 per cent respectively. Families in the biggest size group with more than 9 members account for only 2.8 per cent.

Taking into consideration the nature of the composition of the families, the following types have been observed :

(1) Husband, wife and unmarried children, (2) Husband, wife and unmarried children and father-mother, (3) Brother-sister, father-mother, married and unmarried children, (4) Mother (widow), married persons, their sons and daughters (5) Father (Widower), married son, his wife and their children, (6) Widow and unmarried children, (7) Father-mother, unmarried children and Father's sister's children, (8) Father-mother, married daughter, her husband and their children.

CLAN ORGANISATION:

The Kathodis are sub-divided into several exogamous gotras or clans. During the course of field investigation following gotra have been found among the Kathodis of Gujarat. The clan-wise distribution of households in different areas are given in table

XVI

TABLE XVI

Distribution of households according to clan.

Clan	Area					Total
	Mangrol	Uchhal	Vijaynagar	Sagbara	Dang	
Nayak	12	4	-	6	-	22
Vagher	14	14	24	17	-	69
Gangada	3	-	3	-	-	6
Bhil	1	-	-	-	-	1
Kohni	1	-	-	-	-	1
Dhum	2	-	-	-	2	4
Pawar	-	8	-	-	13	21
Savra	-	1	-	2	12	15
Chavda	-	-	4	-	-	4
Mukanaya	-	-	-	-	10	10
Gavit	-	-	-	-	3	3
Deve	-	-	-	-	1	1
Mishal	-	-	-	-	3	3
Kaver	-	-	-	-	1	1
Lakhan	-	-	-	-	3	3
Not known	-	-	10	-	-	10
Total:	33	27	41	25	48	174

All the 174 families of Kathodis covered are divided into 15 exogamous gotras (patrilineages). These gotras are of exogamous character which means that as a rule a person cannot take a wife from the same gotra to which he belongs. Sherring, in the earlier account

has referred to the prevailing gotra system of the Kathodis during that period and records 5 gotras of Dhor Katkaris in Maharashtra, viz., (1) Helam, (2) Powar, (3) Gosavi, (4) Jaday and (5) Sindhi. Some of these gotras are also found today among the Kathodis of Gujarat. The names of these gotras sound Marathi and the dialect which is spoken by Kathodis in Gujarat resembles Marathi.

Looking at the gotra-wise families above, it seems that gotras like Nayak and Vagher are found everywhere except Dangs and the number of families belonging to these two gotras is quite large. The gotras which have been referred to by Sherring are also found here. It seems that the Kathodis might have adopted the gotras of the other neighbouring tribes due to the culture contact in the last 75 years. As for example, the Kathodis of Vijaynagar Mahal might have adopted the Chavda gotra from the neighbouring Garasia tribe of the Sabarkantha region. Similarly the Kathodis in Surat district seem to have adopted the gotras like Gavit, Dhum, Konkni, Naik and Bhil from their tribal neighbours in the area. Thus they might have continued to go on adding to their original list of gotras due to the process of acculturation.

Though there are many gotras among the Kathodis, no hierarchy based on the high and low status has been observed. Thus, no particular gotra is higher or lower. Every gotra maintains marriage and eating relationship with the other ones. Besides this, cross-cousin marriage is also practiced by Kathodis and accordingly marriage can take place between the children of mother's brother and father's sister. Some Kathodis, who belong to the same gotra and live for years together far away from the Kathodis of other gotras, have started to marry within the same groups although they do avoid blood relatives about whom conjugal relationship could be traced upto two or three generations. Sherring has also referred to this practice.

KINSHIP RELATIONS:

Mainly two types of relationships are seen among the Kathodis. The relationship based on the blood (cognates) and the relationship based on the marriage (affinal). Father-mother, son-daughter, brother-sister-uncle, uncle-grandfather - all these relations are in the category of blood-relations.

Mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, etc. - these relations are due to marriage.

KINSHIP TERMS:

The dialect of the Kathodis living at different places in Gujarat is similar to Marathi dialect. The kinship terms of address and reckoning of relations are as follows :-

Relation	Term of Reference	Term of Address
Father	Ba	Ba
Mother	Aaya	Aaya
Elder brother	Baba	Baba
Elder brother's wife	Vahani	Vahani
Younger brother's wife	Nadi	Nadi
Elder sister	Bhoyu	Bhoyu
Elder sister's husband	Bhavad	Bhavad
Younger sister	Bhoyu	Bhoyu
Father's father	Motobas	Motobas
Father's Mother	Mothas	Mothas
Father's elder brother	Motobas	Motobas
Father's elder brother's wife	Mothas	Mothas
Father's younger brother	Kaka	Kaka
Father's younger brother's wife	Kaki	Kaki
Father's sister	Fus	Fus
Father's sister's husband	Mamus	Mamus
Mother's brother	Mama	Mama
Mother's brother's wife	Fus	Fus
Mother's father	Motobas	Motobas

Relation	Term of Reference	Term of address
Mother's mother	Mothas	Mothas
Mother's sister	Jiji	Jiji
Mother's sister's husband	Kako	Kako
Wife's elder brother	Meo	Meo
Wife's elder brother's wife	Boyu	Boyu
Wife's elder sister	Vao	Vao
Wife's elder sister's husband	Baba	Baba
Wife's father	Mama	Mama
Wife's mother	Foi	Foi
Father's brother's son	Baba	Baba
Father's brother's daughter	Boyu	Boyu
Sister's son	Jawas	Jawas
Sister's daughter	Vahus	Vahus

RELATIONSHIP OF AVOIDANCE AND RESPECT

The Kathodis pay respect to the elderly persons. The younger brothers pay respect to the elder brothers. They do not speak haphazardly in the presence of the elderly people. An elder brother does not call younger brother's wife by her name. It is a kind of taboo to call her by name. They believe that due to calling her by name her respect cannot be maintained. Younger brother's wife does not address her husband's elder brother by name. She tries her best to pay respect

to him in speaking as well as in dealing. Some sort of respectful avoidance is practiced by her.

Like other tribes, joking relationship have been observed among the Kathodis. Such relationship exists among friends of the same age group between young boys and girls, between sister's in-law and brother's in-law between brother's in-law and elder brother's wife, etc. We also observed the intermediary relations among the Kathodis. They do not call their wives by their names and vice-versa. But if a husband wants to call his wife, he uses a daughter's name as an intermediary and if a wife wants to call her husband, she uses the name of a son as an intermediary.

INTER-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

As indicated earlier, the Kathodi live in multi-ethnic villages along with other tribal communities. In the villages surveyed for the purposes of the present study the important neighbouring communities of Kathodis are found to be Garasias, Gamits, Bhils, Kanbis and Vasavas. In most of the villages the dwelling units of the Kathodis have been observed on the outskirts or periphery of the villages. According to Baroda Census Report : "The Kathodis found in the State belong to the last class and are most degraded."¹ Stephen Fuchs stated that in the

¹ Report on the Census of Baroda State, Chapter XI, Caste, Tribe and Race, 1911, p.298.

past "the other tribes keep out a distance, not only because the Kathodi-Katkaris eat anything, however impure, and do not care for personal cleanliness, but especially because of their reputation as powerful sorcerers."²

Our own observations also testify that the other tribes of Gujarat regard the Kathodis as inferior to them. The Kathodis have to leave their permanent place of habitation in a village to find work and during the off-season of agriculture they move to the forest for charcoal manufacturing or to collect the minor forest produces. They are linked with other tribes due to farm-labour. As their economic condition is not good, they are wholly dependent on the other tribes where they stay. These tribes treat them as untouchable persons because of their food habits and insecure residence. For example, in Dangs, the Bhils and the Gamits do not touch these people. The Vasavas also keep them away from them. Besides this, the Garasias, the Vasavas, the Gamits, and the Kumbis do not permit them to enter into their houses and touch water-pots. If they want to give some thing to them or if they want to give them water, they do that without touching them. These days, Kathodis can draw water from a public village well. In the past they did not seem to have

2. Aboriginal Tribes of India, by Stephen Fuchs, 1973, p.196-197

free access to common village wells. A Kathodi man in Uchhal made a critical remark: "these people accept the liquor offered by us but they do not drink water touched by us".

In Dangs, if any cattle dies, the Kunbis inform the Kathodis and they carry away the carcass to the forest where they split the dead body into pieces and distribute the meat according to the number of households of Kathodis in the village.

Other tribes do hire them as labourers for farm-work. Though this tribe is considered mean and low, we find sometimes, some Adivasis and Non-Adivasis keeping sexual relations with their women. In Dangs, a man of Gamit tribe has married a Kathodi woman.

Thus, in practice other tribes maintain social distance with the Kathodis so much so that even the educated Kathodis also cannot sit together with the members of other tribes. It is very difficult to say how far, if at all, the Kathodis have been able to improve their status. During our field investigation however it was claimed by other neighbouring tribes as well as by Kathodis themselves that they no longer suffer from the social disabilities to the same extent as in the past.

CASTE-COUNCIL OR JATI PANCH

We have not come across regular and organised caste-councils among the Kathodis. But they claim that in past they had a regular caste-council in Maharashtra. At present, they solve their disputes by mutual understanding. If any dispute arises, the elderly persons of the village meet together and solve them. In cases of quarrels, divorce, illicit sex-relations, etc; the elders listen to both the parties and give their verdict after discussion among them. The people accept the verdict of the elders and act on it. Thus, through the irregular or non-formal caste council, Kathodis observe the norms of their society and thereby achieve their horizontal unity with their own fellowmen and as residents of the village they also try to have vertical unity with other castes and tribes in the village.

In Dangs, the colonies of the Kathodis are at two ends of the district, both sides touching the border of Maharashtra. At the northern end of Dangs, the Kathodis stay with the Gamits and at the southern end they stay with the Kunbis. In the former place three or four Kathodi women have married the Gamits. The caste-council of Kathodis in the village helped one of the women to get divorce.

The question then arises; why persons from other tribal groups marry Kathodis when they are considered as lower to them? Perhaps, there are many reasons for this. Firstly, they stay with each other as neighbours in the same village and sometimes they go for work together either in farm (Labour) or in the forest. Secondly, they might be singing and dancing together in the local fairs and festivals. Generally Kathodis don't prefer or like such marriages and therefore they don't allow a Kathodi girl married outside the tribe to come near their hearth.

CHAPTER VTHE LIFE CYCLEMENSTRUATION:

In Kathodis no special rites are performed on the occasion of first menstruation. The Kathodis of Dangs refer women in menstruation as "Doki Na Ana Ha". Amongst other tribal groups of that area, the same term for a menstruating woman is in vogue. In Uchhal taluka a woman in menstruation is referred to as a "Potdu Avvu". The Vasava in that area also use the same term. Certain restrictions are imposed on women during her menstruation period. Woman is not permitted to cook, carry water, touch water-vessel, enter kitchen and touch the clothes. She is not even allowed to touch the musical instruments, such as 'tadpi', drum. Such a woman is restricted from sharing bed with her husband during the menstruation period. She is also restricted from performing religious duties and is not allowed to enter places of sacred importance. Generally, she is to remain secluded for a period of four days and after final bath on the fifth day she resumes her domestic duties again. Kathodis believe that during the menstruation period if a woman has sexual intercourse with her husband and conception takes place, the new born child will be deformed. However no restrictions are imposed on social gatherings.

The Kathodis broadly understand the physiology of sex and reproduction. They believe that conception is the result of coitus, when both the partners reach orgasm simultaneously. Stoppage of mensus accompanied by nausea as well as tendency for spitting frequently are indicative of pregnancy. The Kathodis believe that mere sexual intercourse will not necessarily lead to conception. Unless there is some blessings of 'Dev' a woman will not conceive.

Birth of a child among Kathodis is an occasion of great rejoicing. The children are always welcomes. Though it is said that the children of both the sexes are equally welcomed, a son is always preferred to a daughter. They regard the birth of a child as a blessing of God and barrenness is a serious matter, a misfortune or a curse of deity. A barren woman is looked down upon in the society. Consequently, a barren woman suffers from a social stigma and has to bear many insults. If a woman fails to beget a child, a bhagat (who belongs either to their community or the other tribal community) is consulted to suggest a remedy for the unhappy situation. The bhagat generally prescribes the sacrifice of a goat or fowl to certain deities. Barrenness sometimes leads to disruption of family life. For instance, a husband may take another wife without deserting or divorcing the first one in case she proves to be barren. Sometimes, the barren wife herself suggests to her husband to take another wife.

BIRTH:

A pregnant woman is not treated specially among the Kathodis. The pregnant woman carries on her usual activities upto the time of delivery. She, however, avoids straneous work. The first delivery also takes place in the husband's house. The delivery takes place in one corner of the room. The Kathodis do not observe any special prenatal practices. No special diet is prescribed for her. Certain restrictions are imposed on pregnant women. A pregnant woman is not permitted to go to the river, well and tank. They believe that if a pregnant woman is allowed to go to such places the new born child would be deformed. During the delivery an expectant woman sometimes keeps a vow of "Bhavani Mata" so as to make the delivery of the child easy. After delivery the sacrifice of a fowl or goat is done. No trained midwife or dai is called to attend to the delivery of a child. At the time of child birth the Kathodi 'dai' is called to attend, and who is also assisted by elderly women of the family or the neighbourhood. She cuts the umbilical cord with either a knife or a sickle, and buries under the floor of the room itself. A stone is put for few days over the place where the umbilical cord is buried. She immediately informs the members of the family about the sex of the child. During this period gruel which is prepared from rice or maize is given as a special diet. It is believed that this

diet, apart from its nourishing value increases the capacity of the mother to produce more milk. The dai washes the whole body of the child. For her services, she gets a remuneration of Rs.5/- along with 2 kgs. of Nagli, or Maize or Jcwar and 1 Kg. of rice in case of a male child. While at the birth of a female child she gets a remuneration of Rs-3/- alongwith same amount of grains. It shows that among Kathodis the birth of a son finds more welcome than the daughter. It is reported that a male child is a permanent member of family who carries on the lineage, on the other hand a daughter is a property of others because she does not stay in the parent house after marriage.

Usually the period of confinement is limited to twelve days after delivery. During her confinement, the mother is allowed to eat whatever she likes. The members of the family have no particular food prohibition during this period. On the twelfth day (Barwa) the mother takes a bath. Thereafter, she is free to move in the premises of the house. She is permitted to fetch water and do cooking also. The child is also given a bath on that day and after bath on twelfth day can be handled by anyone without any fear of pollution. The performance of 'Barwa' ceremony on the 12th day marks the expiry of the pollution period. On this day the entire house is cleaned and the floor is smeared with cow dung.

PANCHURO

The usual Kathodi custom is to observe the name giving ceremony between the third (in case of female child) and fifth day (in case of male child). According to an earlier report 'Among the Kathodis' the first rite is on the sixth day after a birth. On that day female relatives are called, the goddess Chhathi is worshipped and some rice figures of the goddess are set on the ground with a lamp near them. The father or mother names the child and the guests are fed thick cakes and liquor.¹ On the day of name giving ceremony, child's father's sister is invited. The Dai is called to perform this ceremony. Friends and relatives of the family are also invited. A simple ceremony is performed in which the mother worships 'Mari Mata' and the child is given a bath. The Dai performs this ceremony near the buried place of umbilical cord. After the rituals, cooked rice is given to the small children of the family. Everybody present there is also given some jaggery. The Dai then gives a name to the child which usually is the name of one of the ancestors or the name of the day on which the child was born such as 'Soma' born on Somvar i.e. Monday, Mangalia born on Mangalwar i.e. Tuesday, Sukri born on Sukkarwar i.e. Friday and Ravli born on Raviwar, i.e. Sunday. In Dangs area some well-to-do families invite a Brahmin and namkaran ceremony is performed by the Brahmin on the basis of

¹ Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Gujarat Population, Vol. IX, Part I, 1901, pp. 319-320.

constellation or stars of the child. After name giving ceremony relatives and friends gathered there make a gift of 10, 15 or 25 paisa to the child. The presence of Fus (child's father's sister) is important in the name giving. She is given some clothes and a little money ranging from Rs.2 to Rs.5, depending on the economic condition of the father.

MUNDAN:

The Mundan ceremony among the Kathodis is generally performed usually after the child attains the age of one year. The mundan ceremony is not a universal affair among the Kathodis. Some families do observe this ceremony. Generally, the ceremony takes place at home itself. On this occasion too, the father's sister (Fus) is called. The shaving of the head of the child is done by the village barber who customarily receives Re.1/- in return of his services. Before that the Fus will cut some locks of the hair of the child and the sheared locks of hair along with a coconut are disposed off in the river. When the ceremony is over, at the time of departure, the sister of the father of the child receives some cash usually between Rs.1 to 3 (depending on the economic condition of the family) for performing the ritual.

SEX TABOOS AND MARRIAGE:

Although the Kathodis claim that they do not tolerate extra marital or pre-marital sex relations, it has been reported that some of the girls and boys of the community do have a pre-marital sex relations. There is no institution among Kathodis which can be a source of information on sexual matters to the nubile girls and boys. The adolescent girls learn about the sex from their elder friends and so do the boys, who often take vile pleasure in obscene and vulgar talks and jokes about the sex organs and sex relations. During the field study we recorded that only two cases of pre-marital relationships were brought to the notice of village Patel. In one case a Kathodi girl was involved with a Gamit youth, in another case with a non-tribal teacher of the village school.

If a Kathodi boy and girl enter into some sort of sex relationship they elope and finally marry each other. The above cases, thus, lead us to infer that pre-marital sex relations is tolerated among Kathodis.

Generally, extra-marital relations are not tolerated in the society. In case of deviation from this rule, the offenders are punished or ex-communicated by the caste. The indulgence of a Kathodi boy with the girl of another community is, however, not taken seriously.

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MARRIAGE:

Marriage is considered to be essential among Kathodi tribe because a person who does not marry has a lower social status. It is also a belief that a person who does not marry becomes a ghost after death. The word marriage is known as 'Pen' amongst the Kathodis.

Monogamy is popular among Kathodis. Out of the 174 families covered, only in 10 families polygamous marriages were found, even in these most of the marriage were of bigamous type. Only in case of one family a bhagat (saint) was having three wives (all of them were alive) and also the children. According to the report on Census of Baroda State, "Polygamy and widow marriage were allowed and practised among Kathodis"². But nowadays a polygamous marriages are rare among Kathodis. The main reason for absence of many polygamous marriages is purely economic. Economically the Kathodis are very poor and therefore it becomes difficult for them to collect dowry which now ranges between Rs.60 and Rs.125/-. Besides dowry, lot of other expenses are involved in marriages. The expenses for jewellery, costumes, wine, reception, etc. cost about Rs.500/-. But those who can afford such expenses may have more than one wife. In some cases bigamous marriages are done out of necessity also e.g. in case where the earlier wife

² Report on the Census of Baroda State, Chapter XI, Caste, Tribe or Race, 1911, p.298.

could not bear any child. In a few cases two wives happened to be sisters also. According to the views of older people, formerly marriages were cheaper as the dowry was very meagre. Some times by offering a couple of bottles of wine to the father of the girl, it was possible to get the daughter as bride.

The system of selecting a marriage partner has undergone various changes. This is mainly due to the system of 'Marriage by purchase' (A system where the father of a bride sells her in exchange of money). Paying price for a bride is a socially accepted traditional custom in any type of marriage. The grown up persons who do not have enough money to get married do not prefer traditional type of marriage. As the traditional type of marriages are comparatively costly, the following other types of marriages have become common these days.

LOVE MARRIAGES:

The youths have to work together in the forest for collecting woods, making charcoals etc. Further the Kathodis are staying in limited number in a few villages only and therefore they happen to remain in close and intimate touch with each other. In such a situation the young ones have more opportunities to develop intimacy which finally results into love marriages. Although in some cases these marriages

take place against the desire of the parents, mostly parents accept them. Instance is available in Dang, where an educated Kathodi girl being unable to find a match in her community married a Gamit youth in a village. In such types of marriages also the bridegroom's father has to pay the bride-price.

BARTER SYSTEM OF MARRIAGE:

This type of exchange marriages is contracted by those who cannot afford to bear the expenses of marriages. In this system a sister is exchanged for a bride.

GHAR JAMAI SYSTEM :- Khandad (Marriage by Service): There is a practice of 'Khandad' (Ghar Jamai) among Kathodis. The root cause of this system of marriage is also economic. A person who is unable to pay the bride price stays for about 4 to 5 years with the bride's father. He serves him during this period and the payment of bride-price is waived by compensating against the services he has rendered. The system of levirate and sororate also exist among the Kathodis

Marriage by capture does not receive sanction by the Kathodis. But in such cases the boy has to pay twice the bride price. Consanguineous marriages are not totally banned and certain types of such

marriages are permitted. The children of a brother and a sister, particularly the son of a sister and a daughter of a brother can inter-marry. During the field investigation four cases of such marriages have been recorded. But marriage between children of two brothers or of two sisters are prohibited.

The survey of 174 families shows the following details of married men and women.

TABLE XXVII

Distribution of population by Marital status.

Marital Status	Male	Female	Total
Married	201 (50.1)	200 (49.9)	401 (100.0)
Unmarried	290 (55.2)	235 (44.8)	525 (100.0)
Widow/Widower	8 (30.1)	18 (69.9)	26 (100.0)
TOTAL :	499 (52.4)	453 (47.6)	952 (100.0)

(The figures in brackets show the percentages).

MARRIAGEABLE AGE:

In past according to Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, 1901, both boys and girls commonly used to marry at the age of about fifteen years but in recent times the age of marriage has gone up gradually. At present the girls are generally married at the ages between 13-18 years, while the boys between the ages 16-22 years.

During the course of field investigation data in respect of their age at marriage were collected. Their sexwise break-up with respect to age at first marriage is given in table XXVIII.

TABLE XXVIII
Sex-wise Age of First Marriages

Age Group	Male	Female
13-15 years	20 (09.5)	102 (46.8)
16-18 years	85 (40.7)	98 (44.9)
19-22 years	104 (49.8)	18 (08.3)
	209 (100.0)	218 (100.0)

(The figures in brackets show the percentages).

These figures show that most of the girls get married in the age group of 13-15. Out of 218 married women, 102 i.e. about 46.8 per cent got married at the age below 15 years and among the men 104 out of the 209 married ones (49.8 per cent) got married when they were in the age group of 19-22. In other words very few marriages occur below the age of 15 in case of boys and above 19 years in case of girls.

In Gujarat, the Kathodis are mainly spread over in five areas. They reside in a very limited number of 10 to 15 households in each of the villages of the particular area. Because of the smallness of number the range of getting spouses becomes limited.

Due to this they have no other choice than to marry with a person of the same village or from the nearest village. Those Kathodis who stay in Dangas or Uchhal area have marriage relations with the Kathodis staying in Maharashtra State as these two areas are on the boarder of the Maharashtra State. Similarly Kathodis staying in Vijaynagar Mahal (Sabarkantha District) get married with the Kathodi people of Rajasthan, as it is situated very near to the Rajasthan boarder. The table XXIX shows the distance upto which they go for marriage.

TABLE XXIX

Distance in which marriages contracted.

Sr. No.		Numbers	Percentage
1	Within the village	93	44.5
2	Within 5 Kms.	37	17.7
3	6 to 10 Kms.	29	13.9
4	11 to 20 Kms.	20	9.6
5	Over 20 Kms.	30	14.3
	Total:	209	100.0

It is clear from the above table that most of the Kathodis marry in their own villages. Out of 209 married males 39.7 per cent married in their own villages. Getting a spouse from outside Gujarat i.e. Maharashtra and Rajasthan was also recorded in case

of 44 persons. But it should be kept in mind that physical boundaries of States do not matter to them. Even in cases of marriages outside the State most of the villages were found to be quite near to their own village of this State. It is also possible that some persons, while migrating from Maharashtra or Rajasthan States, might have brought brides from those States.

Because Kathodis live in small pockets in different districts, the scope of finding a marriage partner becomes limited and therefore many of the marriages were found to take place within the same clan (gotra). However they claimed that they avoid marriage within the same clan as far as possible. In fact this is a surprising aspect of their social organisation as the clans have been strictly endogamous. But in view of the compulsion of living in small number in particular areas, the endogamic character of the clans is being loosened these days.

The figures given in table XXX clearly indicate that Kathodis do marry within the same clan. Out of total 209 married men, 111 have been able to give information about the clan in which they got married. Out of 111 men in case of 47 men (42.1 per cent) the spouse belonged to the same kul or gotra (see table XXX).

TABLE XXX
 Clan-wise Marriages of married men.

Clan	Mishal	Varli	Savra	Vagher	Mukanya	Pawar	Kavar	Lakhan	Vaghmare	Bhend	Bhoye	Varde	Jadav	Dhum	Desh- mukh	Naik	Katara	Machhi	Gangod	Other tribal	Gamit	Total
Mukanya	3	1	5	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	
Pawar	2	-	6	-	2	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	18	
Savra	2	-	-	1	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	12	
Gavit	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
Deve	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Mishal	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	
Thum	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
Kavar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Lakhar	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	
Vagher	-	-	1	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	4	-	26	
Naik	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	-	-	-	-	24	
Gangod	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
Bhil	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Kokni	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Total:	8	1	14	27	4	13	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	25	1	1	4	1	111	

ARRANGED MARRIAGES:

The cases covered under the study revealed that most of the marriages are arranged marriages. On the children reaching the marriageable age, their parents select marriage partner for them, of course with the consent of the boy or girl. The marriage negotiations are undertaken by an intermediary who is generally known as 'Hathio'. This intermediary generally knows both the families. The intermediary suggests to the father of a boy about the girl. The father alongwith the son then visits the girl's place on an appropriate day. The 'Hathio' also is invited to remain present. Through the intermediary the boy's father discusses with the father of the girl. They give an offer, for engagement which is known as 'Sodula'. After seeing the girl, the father of the girl is asked whether he is prepared to give his daughter or not. While selecting boys or girls, the parents take into consideration a number of factors. In case of the boy, he should be healthy, young and earning. While in case of the girl she should be industrious and expert in household duties. She should also have a good body. As said earlier, they take the consent of the boy and as well as of girl also. If they are agreeable, they decide for the quantum of bride-price which ranges at present from Rs.60 to Rs.200/-. The boy's father has to pay this bride price in cash.

They have to decide all these things at the time of negotiation as to whether the bride-price will be paid immediately or in instalments, which can be paid after marriage also. In case the bride price is not even paid after marriage, the girl's father takes away his daughter. Thus they come to a decision which is known as 'bol-pen' - 'Bol' means promise and 'Pen' means marriage. When the engagement is settled, the boy's father returns to the village and declares that the date is fixed for pen. This is called 'Bol-Pen'.

'NANI-PEN'

About 15 to 20 persons from the boy's side go to the girl's house along with the intermediary. They carry liquor with them. All the formalities of engagement are performed at the bride's place.

At the time of engagement the bride and the bridegroom are made to sit on mortar on which a piece of cloth is spread. Small bundles of jowar and rice are put near them. The engagement ceremony is performed by a professional man in the presence of family members of both the sides. Marriage songs accompanied with dances are sung. From the boy's side wine and jaggery are offered to all. At this time about Rs.30 to Rs.40 is paid to the bride's father as an advance towards

the bride'-price. In the presence of 3 to 4 elders it is also decided as to when and how shall the balance instalments of the bride-price will be paid.

After the engagement ceremony is over, the persons from the girl's side offer jowar or Nagli's rotla to the boy's party. Those who are economically well to do, offer either chicken or goat and also liquor. In the evening the boy's party return to their own village.

It is not possible to break the engagement once it is performed. If the girl's father wants to break the engagement, then the boy's father recovers double the amount of bride-price from the girl's father. However, if the boy's father breaks the engagement, he has to forego the bride-price and has also to pay penalty.

Marriage takes place after either a few days or a month from the engagement. Marriage is known as 'Moti Pen' - moti means big.

MOTI PEN

Singing sessions of marriage songs start taking place two days before the marriage day. Pandal is erected on the day prior to marriage. The marriage procession starts from the boy's house in the morning which consists of about 30 to 40 people including men and women. They go in bullock-carts if it is possible, otherwise they just go on foot. They carry with them one time meal.

While in the procession, they go on dancing and singing songs. The groom too has to dance. They also carry a basket containing the clothes for the bride and some jewellery to be given as gift. For the father of the girl they take 'fenta' or a turban and for the mother 'Fadki' (Sari). The basket containing all these things is carried by a woman on her head. When they approach the house of the bride they are welcomed by the people from girl's side. They camp under a tree which is generally situated at some distance from the bride's house.

Marriage ceremonies are performed in the pendal at the girl's place in the late evening or during night. The bride and the groom are made to sit opposite each other on a piece of cloth and the ceremonies are performed by an experienced person. They light a lamp in a dish in which they put the bride-price also. Thereafter the 'Chhedachhedi' ceremony in which Knot of one of the ends of bride's sari and bridegroom's shirt is tied, is performed. They offer prayers to Singladev and Asitara trees. While praying they offer rice, jowar, agarbatti to the God Singla. After the prayer is performed both go to the house and take bath.

An entertainment party entertains the people gathered in the marriage, by doing mimicry or telling jokes.

Boys and girls go on dancing and singing songs for the entire night.

After the marriage ceremonies are over, the bride is taken to the boy's house. But if any relative of the boy is staying in the village or if the girl's father wants to keep them for a day more, he may ask them but he will have to offer meals for the day. On return about 10-15 friends of the girl join the bridal procession. The girl stays for 5 days at the bridegroom's house. During this period the couple do not sleep together nor can they have any sexual relation mainly because of the presence of the guests. On the sixth day the girl is brought by her friends to her parental home. On the ninth day the groom accompanied by 2 or 3 friends goes to the bride's place and brings back the bride at his home. After this they start living as husband and wife.

There is a slight difference between 'pen' and marriage. Due to bad economic condition a person may not be able to incur the expenditure involved in a marriage. In such a situation he brings the bride by paying pen. This is called 'pen bharala'. This is less expensive than the marriage because pendals are not erected and also the bride and groom are not anointed with fragrant yellow paste of turmeric mixed with oil.

The actual marriage ceremony may be performed when they are financially capable to incur expenditure, which in many cases takes place even after many children are born to the couple. Due to poor economic conditions, several of the couples never find themselves in a position to perform the marriage ceremonies at all.

DIVORCE:

Divorce is easy among the Kathodis. Both the wife and the husband have the same right of asking for divorce. He or she approaches the 'Panch' and advocates his or her case for divorce and obtains divorce. Divorces occur more during the period of first 3 to 4 years of marriage. Divorces are rare after the birth of 2 to 3 children. Number of reasons are responsible for a divorce. Divorce is permitted due to any of the following reasons:

- (1) When there is no mental harmony between husband and wife.
- (2) When the husband beats his wife.
- (3) When the wife is being harassed by her in-laws.
- (4) When either of the two is unable to establish sexual relationship (i.e. husband being impotent or wife frigid).
- (5) When they remain sick for a longer period or they become permanently disabled.

- (6) In case of doubt having made sexual relations with other person.
- (7) Due to poverty of the husband he is not able to maintain his wife.
- (8) When the wife is barren for a long time.

Most of the divorces occur due to causes mentioned at 1,2,6 and 8 above. Though among Kathodis of Gujarat, the number of organised 'panch' is very small, the places where the number of Kathodis is sizeable, they do have 'panch' comprised of the senior people. They hear both the parties in a divorce case and decide. If the husband wants a divorce then he has to forego his bride-price. But if the wife wants it she has to repay the bride price to the extent of double the amount to her husband. Of course, when she remarries she has got right to recover the amount from her new husband and repay the same to her ex-husband. The decision given by the panch is final and binding upon the couple. The members of the panch should be entertained with liquor by the party in whose favour the decision is taken.

There was not a single instance in the study of 174 families of divorce through a court. All cases were decided by the community panch only. The Panch normally decides the cases pertaining to their own tribes only but there was an instance where case of other tribal group was decided by this panch in consultation with

the Mukhi or Patel of that village.

In one case one Kathodi girl married a Gamit youth of a village after falling in love with him. But after sometimes the husband began to ill-treat her. The wife then went to her parents, who did not send her back to live with her husband. Kathodi Panch obtained divorce after consulting the Patel of the village who belonged to the Gamit Community.

WIDOW REMARRIAGE:

The Kathodis allow their widows to re-marry. In case there is an unmarried younger brother of suitable age of the deceased, the widow is expected to marry him, but this is by no means compulsory on her part. If there is no suitable younger brother of the deceased, the widow is free to marry any other person belonging to the same community. No compensation is required to be paid to the deceased's household if widow marries outside her kin group but every effort is made that she marries deceased husband's younger brother. In widow marriage no elaborate rites are performed. A widow generally marries a widower or a divorced man. A widower preferably marries his deceased wife's sister, if she is of suitable age and unmarried. One case of widow marriage came to light during the field investigation. In Vadpada village of Mangrol taluka a Kathodi woman having two sons and one daughter

became a widow. She married a widower having one son from his former wife. The widow kept two sons with her brothers and took a small baby with her to her new husband's house.

DEATH:

The Kathodis believe in the physiological explanation of death, which is regarded as the will of God or destiny. The Kathodi generally dispose the dead bodies by burial and in some cases by cremation too. Those who can afford the expenses of firewood, go for cremation. As a rule the dead bodies of infants and children, as well as those adult who die as a result of certain epidemic diseases, much as small pox, cholera or due to bite or are killed by wild animal are burried and never cremated.

The funeral rites of the Kathodis are not elaborate. When it is certain that the persons will not survive and death is imminent, the relatives and friends in the village gather round him. After death, the gatherers mourn the death by crying over the loss. The Kathodis believe that before disposal, the dead body should be properly treated with due respect, otherwise the soul of the dead person is likely to be transformed into a ghost. After death the corpse is bathed with turmeric and water and attired in new clothes. In case the deceased is male, his body is wrapped in a white

cloth whereas the corpse of a female is wrapped in a red sheet. They do not keep the body lying for a long time and wait only upto 5-6 hours for the relatives and friends to come and have a last glimpse of the face of the deceased. If death occurs in the evening the corpse is kept for the night and carried out in the morning. Different customs are followed in different areas. In Vijaynagar taluka a hammock is prepared and the corpse is kept in it. In case the deceased is male the hammock is prepared of white cloth and in case the deceased is female the hammock is prepared of red cloth. In Dangs, Sagbara and Mangrol talukas the corpse is placed on a cot. After the corpse is placed in a hammock or on a cot, it is carried out of the house on the shoulders of four persons, who are generally close relatives of the deceased. The other relatives follow the bier. Weeping and wailing women trail behind the males. When the procession reaches the outskirts of the cremation or burial ground, the bier is halted for a moment and the women take the last glimpses of the deceased there as they are not allowed to enter the cremation or burial ground. They then return to their respective houses after taking a bath in a river or a well or a stream or rivulet. The chief mourner who may be the eldest son, brother or husband of the deceased lights the pyre. In case of burial, a grave is dug by the mourners themselves and the corpse is laid to rest

with the head pointing towards the north. Before setting fire to the pyre or putting the dead body inside the grave, all those who are present pour some drops of wine in the mouth of dead person as their last offering. Alongwith the dead body, clothes, ornaments and other articles loved by the dead, are also kept inside the grave. After the grave is filled, a heavy stone is put on the grave. After the fire of the pyre gets extinguished or the grave is completely filled, all the persons who accompanied the procession leave the ground and return home after having taken a bath in the nearby stream, river or rivulet.

The pollution period after death is observed for seven days. During this period the household and the chief mourner in particular is considered polluted and subjected to certain restrictions. The chief mourner does not touch any household articles. The deceased's near kinswomen, such as sisters, daughters, aunt remove their marriage necklace. After two or three months they are allowed to wear necklace. On seventh day the chief mourner and other male members of the household get their head, chin and moustache shaved. Later they take a bath. On the 12th day, after cleansing the houses by sprinkling a mixture of cow dung and water, a feast is given to the relatives and neighbours which marks the end of the pollution period.

n The Kathodis believe in transmigration of the soul and life after death. According to them a dead person takes a rebirth, which may be in the shape of a man or animal or a scorpion. They perform certain rites to get an idea about the form in which the deceased has taken a rebirth. Accordingly on the night of the day on which death occurs, the female members of the household collect some flour and spread in a corner of a room and cover it with a basket. The next morning the members of the household remove the basket and try to perceive some kind of **prints** or impressions on the flour and interpret them according to their imagination. According to them if there is impression on flour then it is presumed that the deceased person has taken re-birth in the form of a man. If there is no impression at all, it is presumed that the deceased has become a **ghost**.

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CHAPTER VIRELIGIOUS LIFE

As has been mentioned elsewhere in this report, the Kathodis living in Gujarat State have come from Maharashtra. They reside in different districts of Gujarat. These different areas are inhabited by different tribal group. Every group has its particular way of religious life. It is important to point out here that there is considerable impact of the Hinduism on the tribal population living in Gujarat. In spite of impact of religion of the dominant tribal group the Kathodis go on worshipping their traditional gods and goddesses and also celebrate their traditional festivals in their own traditional way. There are two main elements in the religious practices of Kathodis.

1. The impact of the religion of the dominant tribal group (including the impact of the Hindu religion) and
2. their own traditional forms of religious beliefs and practices.

Religion has a very important place in the life of the Kathodis. Kathodis are mostly working in forest as labourers and stay together in the vicinity of forest. They have always been living in group howsoever small it may be. Due to this, Kathodis have strong group feeling and therefore have preserved traditions of the past.

In comparison with other tribal group, Kathodis are more dependent on nature. So they live amidst all sorts of fears and are dependent on the mercy of nature. Their intercourse with nature has inducted a very strong religious faith in their life.

Although due to impact of Hindu religion they have started worshipping Hanumanji, Lord Rama, etc. their main traditional deities are Dunganardev, Vagndev, Gamdev, Marimata, Kansari Devi, etc. Diwali, Holi and Akhatrij are their main festivals. Besides all these gods and goddesses and the festivals, the other main elements prevalent in the Kathodis religion are Ancestor worship, Sorcery and witch craft.

GODS & GODLINGS:

(a) Dunganardev(The God of the Hills).

The place of Dunganardev is believed to be among the hills. This God is worshipped by the Kathodis as well as by the local tribal people. The worship is performed both in groups and also personally. On the occasion of Diwali the rites of worshipping are performed and sacrifice is also offered to him. Their belief is that by the grace of this God bumper crops grow, all the cattles remain well, and there will be no illness, or disease or calamity in the house and all the members of the family remain hale and hearty with no worries at all. The exorcists go to the place

of worship and perform there all the rituals and rites, including the offering of a goat or a hen as sacrifice to that god. In the same manner, personally if a person has any kind of doubt, or suffers from illness, he or any member of his family pledges before God to offer a sacrifice if his desire is fulfilled or the illness is cured.

(b) Vaghdev:

The Kathodis are deeply associated with forest and so they worship this God for their security. Vaghdev is worshipped by all the Kathodis living in Gujarat. On the outskirts of the village, a large stone slab containing the engravings of the figure of Vaghdev is installed. The figures of Moon and Cobra are also engraved along with. The length and breadth of such stone slab is approximately 2' x 3' or 2' x 4'.

The day of worshipping Vaghdev is called "Vaghbaras". On this day all the village people and herdsmen go to the forest. There, they portray the figure of Vaghdev and Cobra on a small stone with milk and then place this small stone near the big one (as referred earlier). Then they offer the sacrifice of a hen to Vaghdev and also offer liquor so that the tiredness may be overcome. There is the custom of offering a goat on every fifth year. Thereafter they cook rice and celebrate the occasion. Then they set fire to a heap of grass and herdsmen run one by one

and cross that fire. Thereafter they ask for blessings of that god and pray for their well-being as well as the well-being of their cattle. A festival is held and they all enjoy eating rice and poultry. The expenses for this type of celebration is covered by all the households of the village.

(c) Worshipping of Tera:

In this religious celebration also, Vaghdev is worshipped. Tera is the name of the leaves of which is found in the forest. The Kathodis eat these leaves as vegetables, but they never use them as their first offering this leaf-vegetable to Vaghdev. In the month of Jeth all the people go to the Vaghdev temple and offer this leaf-vegetable along with the meat of hen. Only after performing this ritual they can use the leaf-vegetable for themselves.

(d) Hanumanji.

Though Hanuman is considered to be one of the Hindus, the Kathodis also worship this god. Another tribal group of Dang district worship Hanumanji with a strong devotion and so the Kathodis also worship him. As a ritual they offer him water, incense sticks, etc. Hanumanji is believed to be pure and so they never offer him either goat or hen. (There are two gods of the Kathodis - (1) the gods and goddesses and (2) the gods and goddesses. The gods and goddesses are offered sacrificial meat and wine are known as 'Mudra' and 'Mudra' is offered to the gods and goddesses.)

impure and (2) those who are not offered the same but incense sticks and coconut are known as pure).

(e) Kansari Devi:

This goddess is believed to be a fertility goddesses. In order to get more crops and to ensure that these may be preserved, they worship this goddess. Kansari Devi is worshipped by the tribal people of South Gujarat, hence worshipped also by the Kathodis of this area. The worship place of this Devi is raised in the house itself. The place where the cereal is stored bears a basket and in that basket they place the idol of Kansari Devi (which is electroplated with silver) with rice and red tumeric powder. The place of this Devi is supposed to be in all the houses, but even those who have not installed this Devi in their houses, worship this goddess after the harvest of the Kharif crops.

(f) The Prayer Ceremony after a new Crop:

All the Kathodis are not employed in the agricultural activities. But those who possess some land perform this ceremony, after the harvest of each new crop. The tribal people in the district of Sabarkantha offer corn-cobs to the goddess. The young people (both boys and girls) go to the goddess and offer maize and make meriments by dancing and singing. So the Kathodis living in these parts also perform such ceremony after a new crop.

(g) Worshipping of Gamdev:

The Kathodis also worship the God known as 'Gamdev'. A human form carved out of a wooden block or stone is worshipped as Gamdev and is believed to be the protector of the whole village. All the villagers (including every sect) go to the spot which they believe to be the place of this God (or in other words where they install this God) and there they offer him poultry meat, coconut, red lead powder, incense.

(h) Worshipping of Marimata:

All the Kathodis have strong faith in this goddess. The seat of Marimata is not to be found in everybody's house, but only in the house of the priest. The priest alone is allowed to have this privilege. He is called the "Exorcist of Marimata".

In a small basket, iron idols of small size, coconut, feather of peacock and some chains are placed and then this basket is placed on a high place in the house. Except the priest none is allowed to touch this basket. This goddess is worshipped at the time of 'Navratri' festival. Continuously for nine days the exorcist invokes the goddess by performing a number of rituals. On the last day all get together and the exorcist again invokes the goddess. All the people state their different diseases, troubles and problems before the goddess and in her turn the goddess through the mouth of priest asks for different things which she

likes most. The required article is produced at the demand of the priest and in the same condition he goes to the river bank and throws that article into (whip) the water. For example, if she asks for 'Satko', the 'Satko' is produced and all the people go to the river bank and it is thrown into the water. Whatever she asks for, they have to give that at any cost. Once the article is thrown into the water they never try to get it back. On completion of Navratri rituals, a goat is sacrificed and its meat is cooked and distributed there. The expenses for this goat is contributed by all Kathodis in the equal proportion.

FESTIVALS:

Besides the worship of these deities, the Kathodis celebrate many other festivals with much enthusiasm, main among them being Holi, Diwali, Navratri, Akhatrij, etc. At the time of Navratri festival they worship the Marimata. On the ninth day the priest invokes the goddess and then the people offer their pledged things and many pledge new things (for offering to goddess).

DIWALI:

Among Hindu castes Diwali is celebrated on the no. moon day of the Asho "Asovad Amavasya". But in Dang, Diwali is not celebrated in this manner. Each tribal group decides a certain day and on that day they all celebrate Diwali. After

they have taken the crops of nagli, pulses and have brought the same to their houses, the important persons of the village such as Patil, Karbhari, Jagalia (Talati's Peon) and elder persons of different tribal group sit together to decide a day for celebrating this festival.

At the time of Diwali they cook rice and also the meat of hen. They also perform the "Shradh ceremony" of their dead ancestors. They call their names one by one and the handful cooked food is put inside the "Choolas". Wine is also offered to them.

HOLY:

On this festival the dead ancestors are worshipped with a view that they may not harass them but on the contrary be of help to them. First they invoke their dead ancestors and offer them wine and meat of hen and ask for the blessings.

For ten days before the actual day of Holi, children and youth assemble in the night at the place where holi is to be lighted and go on dancing and singing while beating drums and playing 'tadpud'. Both boys and girls dance and sing together. On the day of setting fire to holi, they bring the logs of "Teemerwa" tree and taking the leaves from it they prepare garland of the leaves which they tie near the place of Holi. On that day all the men, women and children put on best clothes. Each family brings a coconut and they offer that to Holi mata alongwith Paddy.

Then they cook rice on the same spot and distribute it to all children. After this the Kathodis gathered there select a leader from amongst themselves. The leader asks them to sit around Holi in a circle and then instructs them to bow their head down before the Holi fire. While performing this rite, they ask the blessings for their well-being and happiness and also pray for the well-being of their children.

After the second day of Holi, the boys get together and roam in the whole village asking for the "Faag" of Holi. Out of collected grains and money, they enjoy a feast which include liquor also.

AKHATRIJ:

On this day the Kathodis put off doing any work and do not undertake any sort of economic activity. However, on this day they go to the river for fishing and they prepare delicacies from fish. The God of cyclone or storm is worshipped on this day. The cooked delicacies are first offered to the deity.

SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS:

Another aspect of the Kathodis religion is their belief in ghosts and witches (i.e. evil spirits). They occupy an important place in the religion of the Kathodi people. Because the Kathodis believe in spirits, they worship their dead ancestors in order to avoid the evil influences and harassment of ghosts. In order to keep

them pleased they offer them sacrifices also. And with a view to get rid of them, they take the help of exorcist (Bhagat). The Kathodis are much afraid of the witch. The Kathodis believe the witch to be a living woman. The witch is supposed to know all kinds of magic and sorcery. A witch is believed to wander during nights particularly on river banks in the deserted places in the villages. She is also supposed to take anybody she likes for her prey. Because they are much afraid of the witch, they don't reveal the secret even if they know the woman who is a witch. They believe that if they expose the secret and if the witch comes to know this, she won't spare them in any case. Witch cannot be controlled by anyone but the exorcist only. And that too, for this type of purpose there are very special types of exorcist. Such exorcist is very powerful in magic and witchcraft. Only this exorcist can keep the witch in control and demolish her evil powers.

It is believed that the witch gives her heritage to anybody she likes. If she prefers a woman for the same, she selects a woman and then teaches her own magic and other arts. But according to a belief the person who learns the magic from the witch, after the completion of her training she has to offer her favourite thing (as a sacrifice) to the witch. Unless she offers the sacrifice to the witch, her education (or rather training) is believed not to be completed. And if a person trained by

the witch does not offer the sacrifice, she becomes a lunatic. She has to give the sacrifice of a favourite person and that favourite person can be the husband, a son or any other dear ones. After this offering she is entitled to get the place of a 'Perfect witch'. It is believed that if this witch catches the spirit of somebody's body, he or she immediately dies.

Only that person who is well-conversant with the art of magic can control the witch. He can easily find out the woman who is a witch and the evil doings of that witch. He goes to the exorcist and with other people they go to the dwellings of the so-called witch and catch hold of her. They carry the witch to a river bank and there they perform certain acts so that that woman remains no more a witch. The ritual is performed in this way. They make the supposed witch stand amidst the water and then they give her the urine of horse and the green leaves of "tandul" and tell her to chew it. This activity is forced upon her until the blood starts oozing out from her mouth. No sooner does the blood come, the ceremony is believed to be performed.

The exorcists are also employed in this ceremony and they are offered the meat of either a hen or a goat. Rice is also cooked. Whatever expenditure is involved in this, is collected forcibly from the supposed witch.

It is believed that the exorcists detect the witch by their magical power. In order to do the same the exorcists perform a ritual which is like this. They take a small pot filled with water and also the small beans of the "dal of Adad". Then they drop the beans one by one into the pot taking the names of all doubtful women, and the person on whose name the bean does not sink to the bottom, is the woman supposed to be the witch, and is got hold of.

Apart from this, if somebody is harassed by a ghost, the exorcist is approached in order to identify the ghost and neutralize its evil influences.

By performing a ritual they drive away the ghost from the body of that man. If the ghost is ordinary they offer him the meat of a hen and if the ghost is something very troublesome they offer him the meat of a goat. This ritual of driving away the ghost is performed in the forest. On the same spot they offer cooked meat, rice and sprinkle some wine. Then they celebrate a feast.

Both the exorcist and the priest occupy an important place in the religion of the Kathodis. In the sphere of religion the priest plays an important role. He is not only esteemed as the religious leader but apart from this he is very helpful in several other matters - i.e. in performing the worship ceremony of the gods and goddesses, in getting rid of the ghost and apparitions

and the witches , in eliminating the diseases of both men and cattles, etc. The Bhagat cures the diseases with their exorcism as well as with the help of certain peculiar herbs (these priests do not tell the name of those herbs to others). Whenever there is a snake-bite or scorpion bite, then the exorcists help the victim with their jantra-mantra (magic) and certain herbs. In the curing of diseases, the faith of the sufferer counts much, but sometimes the herbs also work effectively. So the Kathodis give very high esteem both to the priest and the exorcists. And so whenever there is any trouble like this they contact the priest and with all his resources he tries to cure the same, and people get satisfaction that they are cured. One such true story runs like this :

In 'Vadpada' village there lived a Kathodi who was severely ill since last six months. He went to the Bhagat and by telling him his problem got a "dora" as a cure and surprisingly enough he felt comfortable after some time. This man was suffering from the trouble of severe pain in his back. He was much troubled with this. As a cure to this the Bhagat put some cuts on both the sides of his back and then he put a hollow pipe on these cuts and sucked out the bad blood. And then gradually he recovered from his hellish pain. They also apply such methods in order to cure some other diseases.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION:

During the field investigation most of the Kathodis were found to have an ambiguous attitude towards the diseases and their treatment. By and large they believe that most of the diseases are due to the wrath of evil spirits and deities. The Bhagat is spiritual priest of Kathodi. They believe that most of the minor diseases such as stomachache, fever and bodyache are due to disorders in the functioning of the body. For such diseases the Kathodi believe that local herbs and spices are more effective by local application on the affected part or oral intake of the same. The disease like small-pox, tetanus, typhoid, pneumonia are specifically attributed to the wrath of some deity. Mari Mata is worshipped for relief. The articles of offerings are generally coconut, flag, cooked food to deities like Mari Mata. Sacrifice of poultry is also offered. In case of serious illness they also consult local doctor and even rush to hospital for treatment.

CHAPTER VIITOWARDS MAKING KATHODI'S FUTURE A BETTER ONE

Looking clearly to the life of the Kathodis, one will find a small people caught by poverty and economic exploitations, by discrimination and unequal treatment, by unemployment and underemployment, by poor health and extremely poor living conditions. One can not help but notice that the Kathodis are living in shocking and terrible conditions. Every where they share the minority status with the other tribal groups but are socially more isolated from the dominant tribal society. Economically they are by far the most disadvantaged. The median annual income per Kathodi household from all sources probably stood near Rs.626/- at 1974-75 prices. The unemployment and underemployment rate is extra-ordinarily high. Their world is almost closed to outsiders, because it is threatened, but it has been threatened throughout their existence. Their social and economic system is marginal to the dominant tribal society and protected by the marginality. Marginality means non-participation in government schemes, a rejection of assimilation devices and acceptance of economic poverty for the sake of being left alone - surely a grim price to pay and with no guarantee that the strategy will succeed. The acceptance of poverty is an adaptive measure to insure cultural survival, for we found that despite living in shocking

inhuman conditions they still represent a separate, continuing cultural system. We found the hidden Kathodi world, the continuing independent cultural system operating within alien structure of the dominant tribal society. Behind the squalor of contemporary Kathodi life, we saw the hidden face of the wholeness and the splendour and different despairs of another time.

In this alien structure it is impossible for the Kathodis to receive desperately needed financial and moral support. Some alternatives should be found that would not only grant better protection to Kathodis but also improve their conditions substantially and certainly.

From socio-economic analysis of Kathodis one can spot out three main distinct problems viz. the poverty, illiteracy and ignorance. There can not be two opinion that the poverty is the greatest problem of Kathodis who live under starving and shocking conditions. On account of abject poverty, the Kathodis are undernourished and suffered from malnutrition. The extreme form of poverty among Kathodis has not been merely reflected in paucity of their material possessions and low standard of living but also in the fact that for many days in a year, they have to go even without food. During the course of field work one of the informants exclaimed that "the Government should shoot us down and finish us at a time". This indicated the utter dejection prevalent in this tribal group.

Sakaria Chima of Manmodi village also uttered some such kind of sentiments, even though he could not speak properly because of his old age. He said, "we, the Kathodis are still living the life of mongrel, while our bretheren elsewhere have become "men". God knows when we may have the chance of progress." This realisation has dawned upon them because of cultural contacts with people of other tribal groups. This realisation about their backwardness seems to be a happy augury that the tribe may shake off all its dejection and isolation and strive to improve its lot. What did Sakaria Chima meant by saying that members of other tribal group have become 'men' while they still remained like dogs? He probably meant that "the members of other groups have achieved economically comfortable position and were occupying a secure and honourable place in the society. They were also improving economically because they got more food to eat now-a-days. They have started putting on good clothes and have a variety of articles and utensils in their houses". In short, Sakaria Chima felt that the Kathodis should be enabled to get good jobs, their land should be made to produce more food crops so that they might get at least one square meal a day and they should have public health and medical facilities for the cure of their diseases and ailments.

Peeping into their past life, it is very apparent that the Kathodis were, once upon a time, primitive hunters and food gatherers. As such they may be regarded as a representative example of a former hunting tribe in process of integration into the system of the dominant tribal population of the region where they live. They have been hunters, fishermen and experts in 'Kaath' making and in recent times have become skilled Charcoal makers. Many of them nowadays may be described as neglected agricultural labourers of the well-to-do agriculturists from the other tribal groups of the region. However, until not long ago, the Kathodis were a free hunting tribe whose tribal organisation disintegrated as a result of the expanding economy of the neighbouring communities. Circumstances forced them to live a precarious, symbiotic existence under the dominant agricultural tribal communities. They had no alternative other than to accept the position at the lowest level in their region. But they could not get integrated to the dominant tribal societies, and they accepted a temporary loose association with their neighbours. Although theirs was essentially a hunters' and collectors' economy, agriculture was not entirely unknown to them. We found in Dangs and Sabarkantha that the Kathodis owned small plots of agricultural

land but in any case their economy can not be termed as agricultural economy. In Bharuch and Surat districts they are hired as cattle gazers and mainly dependent upon the dominant tribal group for their livelihood.

In whatever economic situation they have been found nowadays, their long and traditional association with hunting and food gathering in the forest is very much apparent. The adaptive traits of the tribe are in evidence in their occupations such as agriculture, agricultural labour, cowherds, charcoal makers, etc. As such, the most sensible thing to improve their economic life will be to devise programmes of developing their expressed skills. Their skills in collection of minor forest produce such as honey, gums, wax and incense and other forest products. The Kathodis should be given scope to gather these forest produces but they have to sell it at a throw-away price to local traders. If some suitable organised marketing organisation is established for their benefit, backed and supported financially to market and process on intensive as well as extensive scale, it will certainly go a long way in freeing them from the sordid clutches of poverty. There is a good and lucrative market for products made out of such herbal plants, and there is great potentiality of this activity in the forests of this State. The Kathodis can be involved in collection of these herbs. We know

from the past history of the Kathodis, that the Bohras, a trading muslim community, successfully exploited the skills of Kathodis for making 'Kaththa' from Khair tree. There is a good market for Katha. It should be possible to work up a scheme of manufacture of Katha by the Kathodis. Such a scheme is feasible if some imaginative and concrete planning is done in this direction. In any of such venture, the marketing aspect is of vital importance.

If the Kathodis are left to the mercy of the petty traders, things will not work to their benefits. Marketing aspects are important not only in respect of forest based industry but even when we plan animal husbandry programmes, poultry development programmes, etc. for this community, the marketing aspect must be taken care of completely. Only then the Kathodis can be freed from the vicious circle of economic degradation and exploitation.

The economy of Kathodi comprises of different activities like forest labour, hunting, fishing, agriculture, animal husbandry, poultry, etc. However, this is not available all the time to them. The hunting and fishing too, are not a regular source of food supply. They possess little land and that land is also less fertile, undulating type and mostly unirrigated. The agriculture produce therefore is hardly sufficient for a family even for two-three months in the year. These various occupations do not increase their family income or for that matter

hardly bring any stability in their earning. But to keep themselves alive, any sort of occupation is received by them with great interest and passable level of skills developed therein. The forest plays an important role in the economy of Kathodis. The ever increasing restrictions and withdrawal of concessions of forest have led to many hardships to them.

For Kathodis all attention should be directed first to their problems of poverty and illiteracy. Special schemes based on local conditions and occupation can be taken up for their economic and educational development. The following suggestions are offered with a view to improving the economic and social conditions of the Kathodis of this State.

AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

The basic objective of the economic plan should be to ensure a minimum threshold income to the Kathodis. Based on our information they are divided into three groups. The first group consists of landless. They constitute nearly 47 per cent of the total surveyed households. None of them has any asset base. The land which a few of them own provides meagre income and employment. This group should be provided with a wage-paid employment in poultry keeping or in full-time non-agricultural operations. Employment in forest and

forest based activities will form an important source of income to this group. If possible, land should be allotted to landless Kathodis. After allotment of land to them and for safeguarding the ownership of land already in their possession it is necessary that the land in their possession should not in any case get transferred to non-tribals or the people of other advance tribal group. During the course of field investigation, it has been found that in Sabarkantha region many plots of Kathodis land are under the control of Garasias, a dominant tribal group in that area. The land is taken against the recovery of debts. If the surplus land is not available in the village itself, the forest land being released for cultivation should be allotted to landless Kathodis. Besides land, the bullocks and agricultural implements should also be given to them. If it is possible the new wells should be dug out for them for irrigation.

The second group consisted of households with one to five acres of land. They also constitute nearly 47 per cent of the total surveyed households. Some of the households of this group have been given land under Ehodan, but the condition of the land in possession of Kathodis is not upto the level. The land has not been reclaimed properly and fully. Moreover, they are unable to produce enough in absence of irrigation and other facilities. Besides land, they possess live-stock.

This base can be strengthened. The productivity of the cultivable land owned by this group should be increased to such an extent that they can get a substantial amount of threshold income from agriculture itself. They should also be encouraged and given facilities to take up such complimentary occupations which will pay them as much as they will earn from wage paid employment. On a prior ground it appears that it should be profitable to encourage households owning 1 to 2.5 acres of land to go for poultry raising on a sufficiently big scale. Farmers with more than 2.5 acres but less than 5 acres may be encouraged and given facilities to take up dairy and animal husbandry enterprises.

Households owning from 5 to 10 acres of land formed the third group. They constitute nearly 7 per cent of the total surveyed households. For them the strategy should be to assist development of their agriculture in such a way that they get the threshold income right from their farms alone.

The three major constraints inhibiting their agricultural development has been : (1) infertile and rocky soil, (2) absence of irrigation and (3) lack of resources, such as plough, etc. The removal of these constraints is necessary not only to step up the pace of development but also to offer increasingly

employment and income opportunities to poor Kathodis. If steps are not taken for land development, the productivity capacity of the land owned by the Kathodis will be depleted beyond redemption. Irrigation facilities are bound to benefit the land owning cultivators. Without irrigation it will be difficult to promote growth of agriculture. Considering the extreme poverty of Kathodis, it will be necessary to provide them enough subsidy for their agricultural development.

The basic strategy in formulating the development programmes for agriculture and animal husbandry should aim at increasing productivity in order to raise the consumption level of the Kathodis. With the strategy in mind, we will propose the following development programmes.

Whatever land they possess is of poor quality and in the absence of limited irrigation facilities at their disposal, the scope for introducing a new cropping pattern and intensive improved cultivation practices is limited. A programme to survey the lands owned by Kathodis and to work out detailed land development schemes should have first priority. The programmes of reclamation, bunding, leveling and terracing will not only improve the quality of their lands but can be a useful source of providing immediate wage paid employment. The programme of land development should be followed by

schemes to replace the local varieties of nagli, vari, kodra and banti by high yielding varieties, and high yielding varieties of seeds should be supplied to them free of cost. Potentiality of providing irrigation facilities should next be explored and if feasible a new cropping pattern might be considered.

One more area we will propose to be taken up for organised efforts, is cultivation of vegetables at the household level i.e. kitchen gardening. Kitchen gardening will raise not only the income level, but also the nutrition level of malnourished Kathodis. Some of the Kathodis do grow vegetables now, but on a marginal scale and in an unorganised manner without much care of the variety and yield. Vegetables like Pumpkin, Musk, Melon, Vetches, Gourd, bringal, Lady's fingers, cucumber, chillies, coriander, garlic and tumeric could be grown in the kitchen garden. By introducing and popularising kitchen gardening the consumption of vegetables will be substantially increased among Kathodis. Similarly, fruit trees such as mango and papaya can also be grown. It is therefore proposed that each household be supplied with a good variety of seeds of vegetables and seedlings of fruit tree free of costs.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY:

In fact very few Kathodi households has some cattle while poultry is found quite universal among them. The cattle are of indigenous breeds, small in size. Livestock products therefore have no place in their economy. In certain areas (Sagbara and Mangrol talukas) some Kathodi households mainly depend on cattle grazing occupations though they themselves hardly own any cattle. As a strategy we propose distribution of suitable improved breed of milch cattle and improved breed of poultry birds to each household to raise the productivity as well as to improve the existing number of livestock. Beside this, to meet the expenses of rearing poultry birds and milch cattle each household should be given certain amount of cash as feed cost for atleast two years. From the third year onwards the household will be able to finance the annual cost from their own resources. Consumption of milk among Kathodis is almost nil. The consumption of milk can be met by giving one milch cow to almost every household. Similarly, the consumption of meat and eggs can also be substantially raised by encouraging and assisting the Kathodi households to take to poultry.

FORESTS

Forest played an important role in the economy of Kathodis. Quite a good number of Kathodi households mainly subsist on forest work. The ever increasingly restrictions and withdrawal of concessions of forest have led to many hardships to them. At present, the forest department with the assistance of the forest labourers' cooperatives have been undertaking two main activities. These are felling of trees and afforestation in the forests. In addition it is undertaking several other activities such as road construction in forests, and collection of minor forest products such as grass, mahua fruits and flowers. Most of the Kathodis are found to be engaged in these economic activities. In many areas the Kathodis have been found to gather forest product such as honey, gums and musli, but they have to sell it on a throw away price to local traders. In certain areas they have been collecting fire-wood but they have to sell at Re.1/- or 1 Kg. of Banti or nagli to local traders. They are also expert in charcoal making. Their expertise in charcoal making also can be developed. We will propose the following suggestions for forest work which may give them direct employment.

- (1) A suitable marketing organisation should be developed for gathering forest products on intensive as well as extensive scale.

- (2) In certain areas such as (i) Vijaynagar taluka and in Dangs, government should set up special forest labourers cooperative society of Kathodis which may undertake the forest work, i.e. felling of trees, laying of nurseries, plantation, gathering of forest produce and charcoal making. The government should do away with contract system and give these works to the cooperatives on monopoly basis.
- (3) Introduction of few forest based industries such as bidi making, mahua oil extracting or reviving their age-old industry of 'Katha making'. Many of the Kathodi families still have the skill of Katha making. All these forest activities will require a large number of workers and needed to employ simple technology. These activities will give them maximum possible wage employment. It should also generate sufficient income to bring them upto or above the threshold level.
- (4) Kathodis have been quite experts in charcoal making. A few small forest coups should be earmarked for the Kathodis for the purpose of preparing charcoal.
- (5) In Uchhal taluka Kathodis have been inhabiting in such villages which are quite near the Ukai Dam. They have been catching fishes on a

marginal scale. In this particular area a special Fish Cooperative Societies for Kathodis should be set up to provide them opportunities to earn additional income. At present in this area Fish Cooperative Society has been started for other tribal groups. In the existing society the Kathodis have not been included due to one or other reasons, though they have been living with other tribal groups in that area.

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT;

The appalling illiteracy prevailing among Kathodis is an enormous problem. Most of the men and women are illiterate. Among the educated too, most of them have not studied beyond the middle stage of education. There is only one matriculate in the total sample. The literacy rate is 3.36 per cent. Among females the problem of illiteracy is even more serious. Only 1.22 per cent of females are literate. Only one girl in Dang area has studied upto S.S.C. and has been working as a teacher in the Ashram School. But on the whole the general standard of education among Kathodis is as low as ever. The number of school-going children is also very small. During the course of field investigation it has been found that there is gradual awareness among Kathodis of the benefits of education, but the most serious problem is that they will lose a part of their income by sending

the children to school as they have been earning or helping hands to the parents. It is really absurd to imagine that a community whose members have to struggle hard for bare existence, will ever feel like sending their children to school. Their chief complaint regarding education is that their educated children are not well provided for. They also grudge that their children are refused employment because they are poor. They also complain that the facilities are not sufficient and the expenses are prohibitive. Thus, in order to popularise education among them, in each village Kathodi households should be given some sort of financial support or incentive to induce them to send their children to schools.

In certain areas such as in southern part of Dangs or in Vijaynagar taluka a separate Ashram Shala for Kathodi should be started. It is true that compared with other primary schools the per student cost of education is higher in Ashram Shala because of free boarding and lodging. But if such facilities can make the poor Kathodi to send their children for schooling and if such schooling kept children better fed, the cost incurred will be a social investment.

Moreover, the Kathodi young men and women with requisite qualification should be given top preference in jobs of Peon, Driver, Forester or Beatguard and Teachers.

HOUSING:

Adequate housing is essential to the welfare and happiness of a Kathodi family, the very basis of social life. The condition under which many Kathodis have been living is generally much worse. For building a house all sorts of materials and assistance should be provided to them free of cost. Along with houses, in a Kathodi hamlet a separate well for drinking water should also be constructed.

HEALTH:

The isolation of Kathodi communities which impedes their social education and inadequate housing further lower the standard of Kathodis health. Malaria, tuberculosis, fever, respiratory diseases, dysentery, diarrhoea, scabies, rickets and skin diseases are found among the Kathodis. Kathodis have not been at par in accepting the medical treatment partly because of inadequate awareness and partly because of poor economic condition. Also in addition to the health work that is carried out by Doctors and Nurses of the Primary Health Centres, Kathodi welfare workers should be appointed to assist these people in tackling problems arising from poor housing and hygienic conditions and in ensuring adequate coverage of protective measures such as small pox vaccination, triple vaccination, B.C.G. vaccination, etc.

On discussion with them regarding tribal development and programmes, it has been found that the Kathodis do not know much of the contents of tribal development programme. This is partly because they have not been associated with various institutions at village level, through which the programmes are being implemented. Block Development Officials seldom approach them for their socio-economic development as has been done in case of other tribal communities. So the internal conditions of Kathodis has not been understood and their problems have remained unidentified. In order that the Kathodis may be actively associated with village level institutions, special efforts should be made by village leaders and other officials serving in the village. Only then the Kathodis will be in a better position to take benefits of various tribal development schemes. The functionaries too, should not leave the Kathodis alone and they should rather increase their contact, mainly for constructive purposes. This will help the functionaries in the identification of real felt needs of the Kathodis.

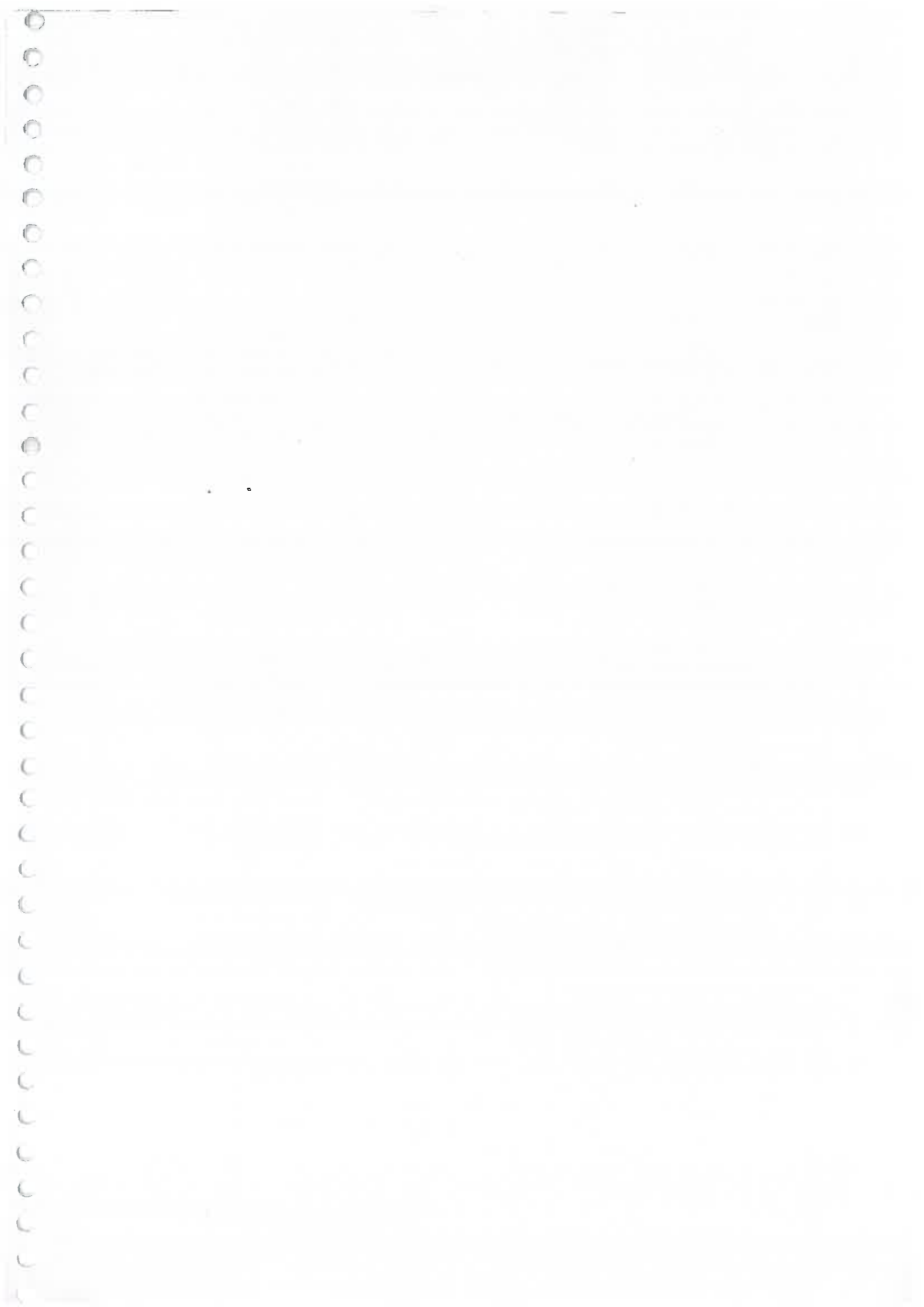
The other tribal groups with whom they have been living consider Kathodis as untouchables. They occupy lowest position in their social life and are economically the poorest. These factors also limit their mobility and contact with outsiders, including the development workers.

So they are still lagging behind than the rest of the others. The cultural lag caused between the Kathodis and the rest of the village population creates a new socio-psychological problem among them. They are found to have been suffering from inferiority complex as the circumstances and surroundings have made them more conscious of their present position and treatment. They feel they have no spokesman of their own who can look after their interest and welfare. This is leading them to their loss of nerves.

To sum up, the Kathodis have been passing through great stress and strain. The main problem of Kathodis is poverty. In order that the Kathodis may restore interest in life and may not suffer from loss of nerve, their economic life is to be immediately revitalised and strengthened. The paramount task of the State Government and Social Workers is to break up their vicious circle. Once this is done, the rest will be easy for Kathodis.

In short, development of Kathodis should be taken as a serious issue which should not be cloaked in debate over tables. There is important work to be done in achieving some sort of understanding how fruitful changes should be brought to this poor community. We should stop playing "sophisticated games with live people". While planning development

programmes for them it will be worthwhile to involve a Social Scientist who will take care of the socio-cultural constraints in the viability of any programme meant for their development. The Kathodis and other minority tribal groups who are living a precarious and primitive condition, should be considered as a trust of the State Government on behalf of the best traditions of mankind.



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