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THE KATHODIS OF GUJARAT

(A Socio-economic survey and a Development Plan)

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TRIBAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE
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The Kathodis of Gujarat are a tribal group living in the state of Gujarat. They are a primitive and nomadic people who have been living in the Kathodi region for centuries. The Kathodis are a part of the larger tribal community of Gujarat and are known for their traditional way of life and their unique culture. The Kathodis are a small but significant part of the tribal population of Gujarat and their socio-economic conditions are a subject of great interest to the state government and the tribal community.

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FOREWORD

The Gujarat State has a sizeable tribal population. According to the 1981 census the tribal populations in the state is nearly 48 lakhs. Government of India had suggested all the Tribal Research and Training Institute to identify the tribal groups who are living at precarious economic level and to undertake a detailed study of each of them so that suitable development programmes can be chalked out for them.

The Tribal Research and Training Institute of Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad had prepared a monograph on the 'Kathodis' which is a primitive tribal group in the state.

This monograph was prepared by two research officers of the Institute, Shri Mustali Masavi and Shri Gaurish Pandya. In the course of their field work over a period of nearly two decades in the tribal areas of the state, they have contributed to other valuable monographs and reports on tribal life and problems also. They deserve commendation for their continuous hardwork and devotion in preparing this valuable monograph on the Kathodis.

It is hoped that this study will be welcomed by Anthropologists, Social workers and Administrators in meeting the challenges of tribal development.

Dated : 17th Feb, 1987
GUJARAT VIDYAPITH,
Ahmedabad-380 014.

Prof. Ramlal Parikh
Vice Chancellor

PREFACE

Gujarat ranks fifth amongst all the states in India in respect of the size of the Scheduled Tribes population. The Ministry of Home Affairs (Tribal Development) Government of India had asked all the Tribal Research and Training Institute in the country to identify the most backward tribal group 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 the kathodis are one such tribal group who still have a primitive type of existence. The Government of Gujarat has always been cautious keenly of raising the standard of living of all the tribals including that most of the economically backward tribal groups in the State. To develop them of good lines a first hand study of the group was necessary. Complying with the concerns of both central and state Government this ethnographic study of the kathodis was undertaken by our Institute. Intensive field work for the study was undertaken by the authors of this monograph in 22 villages of kathodi inhabitations in different areas of the state.

According to the 1971 census the population of the kathodis in the state was 2939. They are mainly concentrated in the Sabarkantha, Surat and Dangs Districts. The present monograph is based on data collected through a survey of 174 households.

Dr. T. B. Naik Director of our Institute has guided the study from the beginning to the end. He gave us guidance and inspiration for doing the work. We thank him for this and other good things he has been doing for us.

We are grateful to late Prof. I.P. Desai the then Director, Centre for Social studies Surat, Shri P. B. Buch, the then Director, Computer Centre, Government of Gujarat Gandhinagar for their

interest and valuable suggestion. we are also thankful to our colleagues Dr. Siddhraj Solanki, Deputy Director of the Institute, Shri R. B. Lal and Shri Rameshbhai Shoff, Prof. Social Anthropology Department of Gujarat Vidypith for their valuable help and guidance in preparing this study.

Last but not the least, we acknowledge the generosity of all the Kathodis informants but for whose active co-operation this study report would not have materialised.

Dated 17th Feb. 1987

Mustali Masavi
Gaurish Pandya

THE KATHODIS OF GUJARAT

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). The 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 the 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 fishermen, 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 and identification.

Stephen Fuchs calls 'Kathodi' a sub-section of Bhils.³ Haddon and Kene call them Dravidian.⁴ J. V. Ferreira opines 'the

1. 'The Katkaris' by A. N. Welling.
2. Bulletin of International Committee on Urgent Anthropological Research No. 3, Viena, 1960.
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.

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. The Kathodis are a minor group and have been culturally isolated from their own fellowmen leading settled life in Maharashtra. Their heavy concentration at present is found in the Kolaba, Thana and Khandesh districts of Maharashtra. The migrated members of this tribe in Gujarat are mostly from the bordering villages of the 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 Gujarat Athvasi, the present district of Surat. In Rajasthan they are found in the interior of Pholasiya, Kotra and Kherwara tehsils of Udaipur district." The term 'Katkari' seems to be derived from 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 occupation of the tribe being 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 Konkani 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.

5. Ibid.

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

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 lean season. In the rains they settle 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 districts. The description of Kathodis in the Nasik Gazetteer runs as follows: "Katkari, 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 Kathodis in Nadgaon was attacked by an epidemic. This they believe was a punishment for killing and eating the sacred Hanuman monkeys on Mahadeve Hill. Accordingly they fled from the country and are only now beginning to return in small numbers. Though the eating of beef is said to be 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 for a few catechu makers in the neighbouring States, they work as field labourers, or gather and sell fire-wood. Their gods are

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

TABLE 3

Districtwise and talukawise Kathodi Population

District/ Taluka	Population (1971)	Population (1961)	Percentage variations over decade.
Surat Dist.	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	—
Dang Dist.	689	285	141.7
Bharuch Dist.	431	314	37.3
(a) Sagbara	338	267	26.6
(b) Nadol	11	—	—
(c) Dediapada	46	12	283.3
(d) Valia	36	35	2.9
Sabarkantha Dist.	127	199	-36.2
(a) Vijaynagar	125	147	-14.9
(b) Bayad	2	—	—
(c) Modasa	—	152	—
Vadodara (U) Dist.	7	—	—
Panchmahal Dist.	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 the eastern districts of the State, particularly Surat, Dang and Bharuch and to some extent in the Sabarkantha district. In other districts their number is very small. The Kathodis are predominantly a 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 the 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 declined by 7 per cent. In the 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 Kathodi families to depart from their native place to seek fresh employment in the forest of Dang, Gandevi, and Chhota-Udepur. In the beginning only male members came to the site of contract and worked in the Khair forest. Mani Ghanchan of Vijaynagar Mahal also brought some Kathodi families for manufacturing Katha in the forest of Vijaynagar taluka of the Sabarkantha district.

Generally they were employed during the 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 a pretty long time proved to be inconvenient for the Kathodis. They expressed unwillingness to continue, leaving their families behind for such a long period. Seeing this, the contractors coaxed them to migrate with their families. The migrant families were assured that they would be provided with certain facilities. Upon such assurance Kathodis migrated from their native place along with their families 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.

At present in Gujarat State the Kathodis are found in several areas—the 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 the Sabarkantha district.

Demographic Pattern

For the present study six villages from the Dang district, four villages each from Mangrol and Uchhal talukas of the Surat district, Sagbara taluka of the Bharuch district and Vijaynagar taluka of the Sabarkantha district were chosen. Altogether 22 villages from different areas were selected. 279 families among the selected villages 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. All these 174 families have been covered in this study. The names of the selected villages and the total number of families contacted are given in table 4.

TABLE 4

Villagewise Number of contacted families

Area (Taluka)	Name of the village	Total No. of families	Total No. of contacted families
Mangrol	Nana Sutkhadka	10	3
	Chimi Patal	15	9
	Chokhwada	16	10
	Vadpada	15	11
		<u>56</u>	<u>33</u> (58.9)
Uchhal	Parchuli	5	2
	Bhadbhunja	6	3
	Jamne	10	8
	Thuruti	20	14
		<u>41</u>	<u>27</u> (65.8)
Sagbara	Ubharia	12	8
	Navagam (Javli)	15	9
	Patlamaon	5	2
	Sorapada	10	6
		<u>42</u>	<u>25</u> (59.8)

1	2	3	4
Vijaynagar	Vandhol	20	14
	Bhanbudi	10	7
	Badhna	20	17
	Antarsumba	9	3
		<u>59</u>	<u>41</u> (69.5)
Dang	Timberthava	15	11
	Jamala	7	3
	Nimbarpada	17	15
	Manmodi	10	6
	Mota Manuga	12	8
	Lahan Manuga	10	5
		<u>71</u>	<u>48</u> (67.6)
TOTAL		279	174 (62.3)

(The figures in brackets show percentages)

The areawise 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 5.

TABLE 5

Areawise 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
Uchhal	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 from 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 sexwise break up of the population of the surveyed households in different areas by broad age groups has been provided in table 6. An examination of these figures reveal that the 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 the 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 children as their wives could bear. However, a few enlightened Kathodis indicated a desire to limit their families and stated that it was better to have a small size family so that there would be less mouths to feed within their limited income.

In the 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 has described their physical characteristic thus: "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 the South Indian Tribes."¹³ According to

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

TABLE 6
Age-wise distribution of Population

Area (Taluka)	0 to 6 years		7 to 14 years		15 to 34 years		35 to 59 years		above 60 years		Total		
	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)	(19.4)	(29.6)	(26.1)	(31.5)	(34.0)	(19.1)	(17.4)	(2.4)	(3.1)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

The figures in brackets indicate percentages.

In view of the data presented in the Table 8 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 these 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 a matriculate. The figures indicate that literacy among the Kathodis is for the most part confined to school going groups other than persons of advanced age. The data collected regarding school going children in the local village school shows that out of the total 256 children of the school going age group only 62 (24.2 per cent) were attending school at the time of the survey. The classwise enrolment of the children is given in Table 9.

TABLE 9

Classwise 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 can be seen from table 9 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 classes I to V).

The educational performance was different in different areas. In Dang out of 40 children in the schoolgoing age 37 were attending school. In the Vijaynagar taluka, out of 36 children 20 were attending school and in Mangrol taluka only 4 children

were attending school. But in Uchhal and Sagbara taluka not a single household was sending any of its children to school.

An enquiry was made among the Kathodi households from different regions having children of school going age (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 when they went to work. Even if they admitted them to school they had to remove them when they set out for seasonal work outside. In some cases a few children had joined school for some time but gave up their studies for one reason or the other. The reasons for the discontinuation of studies were also enquired into. In one household a girl of 17 years discontinued her studies after passing the 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 discontinued her studies after passing the 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 discontinued his studies after passing the VIII standard and got employment as a Beatguard in the forest department. His brother who is also his guardian and works as a Forester in the Forest Department believes that 'his brother has better prospects in that employment.' He, like others, believes that formal education is not necessary for earning 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 for the type of education imparted in the village schools.

CHAPTER II

THE MATERIAL LIFE

Habitation 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 a 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 settlements 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 differentiation can also be proved 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 living all these tribal communities do not know any strain of mutual animosity in spite of their low hierarchical 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 left it as convenience dictated. Even to the present day, an epidemic or sickness occasionally forces the people of a Vadi to vacate it and settle elsewhere in the neighbourhood. Their settlements are known as Katavadi. Every Vadi has a headman called Naik who is the social head of the community and is assisted by a Karbhari or Pradhan"¹ Kathodi settlements are usually situated either on the forest-land or wasteland of the village. In the Vijaynagar taluka their settlements are found on the fringe of a forest. Sometimes they select a site near a rivulet or a river. Those having land, secured after

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

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, and prefer to stay in the 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, they maintain ties with their paternal villages. But as most of them do not own their own houses, they are many a time expelled by other communities.

A Kathodi settlement is compact. The huts are clustered together and not scattered. The Kathodi huts are of mud walls (Karvi) with a peaked roof thatched with palm leaves or grass. In some huts the roofs are supported by bamboo columns. Usually the hutment consists of one room approximately 15' x 10' or 12' x 8' 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 a cattle shed. In some cases, cattle sheds were known to have been erected separately near their huts. In some areas such as Dangs and Vijaynagar taluka a few Kathodi houses appeared to be well-built and of fairly large 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 roofs. 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 the 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 Co-operative Housing Scheme. Here too 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 Mangalore tiles. Three Kathodi families in this village have such houses. The details of housing conditions of the surveyed households are given in Table 10.

TABLE 10

Details of Housing Conditions

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

The above data reveal that the grass and bamboo split walls are found to be most common among a good number of houses with mud walls. With regard to the types of roofs, those thatched with grass were most common; but the use of country tiled roof was 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 households do not possess cots, because mostly they sleep on the ground.

Dress And Ornaments

The dress of the Kathodi male is very simple. In the 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 the dhoti which covers the waist down to thighs, leaving the rest of the body completely bare. In the past their women did not wear any cloth on their upper body. Gradually they began to wear clothes and now cover their upper body too. Today Kathodi males wear a short dhoti and shirt, grown-up children prefer to wear trousers and shirts. The Kathodi women dress with the traditional 'Saree' in a distinct style, very similar to that of the traditional Maharashtra women. This piece of saree is called 'Phadki'. Even today 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 footwear 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 use. 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 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 expressed that their tattoo marks protect them from being punished by the accomplices of Yama, the Lord of Death. 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 animal found dead."² The staple food of the 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.

The Kathodis hunt and fish as part of their main occupation and collect herbs and wild fruits and roots to supplement their

diet. They are fond of meat, and eat the flesh of animals, with the exception of the cow and 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 preservation 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 the rainy season they also eat the green leaves of 'Kardai' (*Carthamus tinctorius*) and 'Ambadi' (*Hibiscus cannabinus*). But by and large most of the Kathodi families go without sufficient and wholesome food. Most of the Kathodis do not use milk. They do not consume milk or any milk products. Cows are not milched for 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 Fuchs, 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.

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

CHAPTER III

THE ECONOMY OF KATHODIS

As stated earlier the Kathodis derive their name from the 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 multifarious ways of earning a livelihood show their restless hunt to cope up with the bare requirements of existence. In an earlier account, it has been reported that "many of them are employed as field labourers while others extract catechu from Khair trees, 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 forests of Dangs, Gandevi, Bansda and Chhota-Udepur which were

having abundant Khair trees. In the beginning only male workers migrated. They 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 draw 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 cutting and are said to yield more or less Kath according to the number of thin white lines in the heart-wood. The men, after removing all the sapwood and a little of heart wood cut it into thin chips about one 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 square foot square. Sitting on the ground she dips the blanket into the infusion, stirs 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 the 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 their resources. According to the Annual Administration Report for the Dangs district for 1944-46

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

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

"The Khair trees were in abundance in the Dangs but they came to be destroyed on a large scale on account of the 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, two Kath factories were started at Rajpipla and Vyara. This has resulted in large scale unemployment for the Kathodi labourers engaged in Kath making, and they were compelled to take up any labour work if and when available in the area. Lack of alternative work of a durable nature, providing a regular income 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 the older generation knew the technique of Katha-making but people of the 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 the 1961 census :

TABLE 11

Sexwise Working Population as per 1961 Census

Persons	Population		Workers		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
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 sexwise break-up of workers, 713 or 60.27 per cent of the total

3. Gujarat State Gazetteer, Dangs District by Dr. G. D. Patel, 1971, p. 247.

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 earning population of the Kathodis 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 12).

It can be seen from table 12 that the largest proportion or rather a sizeable bulk of their working population (72 per cent) is engaged as agricultural labour and forest labour (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 with 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 13.

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.

TABLE 12
Industrial Classification of Workers among Kathodis (1961)

Industrial Classification	Males	Females	Total	Percentage	
				Males	Total
Total Population	1,183	1,175	2,358	47.42	100.00
Total Workers	713	651	1,364	60.27	57.85
I As cultivator	135	152	287	18.9	23.4
II As agricultural Labourer	341	351	692	47.9	53.9
III In mining, quarrying, Live stock, Forestry, Plantation, Orchards, and allied activities	175	116	291	24.5	17.8
IV At household industry	32	6	38	4.5	0.9
V In manufacturing other than household industry	—	—	—	—	—
VI Construction	17	19	36	2.4	2.9
VII In trade and commerce	1	—	1	0.1	—
VIII In transport, storage and communication and other services	12	7	19	1.7	1.1
					1.39

TABLE 13

Agewise 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

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 forest life and help their husbands in the 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 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 to gather forest produce and later they wash, clean and dry it in order to make it suitable for sale.

Economic Life

A detailed study of the economic life was conducted in two areas viz. the Vijaynagar taluka in Sabarkantha District and Dangs District where the population of Kathodis is comparatively large. They 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 the 1974-75 agricultural year.

There are no big landholders among the Kathodis. An average household possessed 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-14.

TABLE 14

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 depend on 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 kinds of casual labour which have been discussed later.

Agriculture

All the 22 villages under study have rocky land with only a thin layer of soil and this makes 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 the absence of irrigation facilities, cultivation is almost rain fed, and the 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 a small area in Mangrol and Sagbara talukas and in some places in Vijaynagar taluka. The coarse variety of paddy and groundnut 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 crops. Some of those who raise crops in the rabi season do not get sufficient yield because of the 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 the 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 bullocks 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 were helped by their wives and children in hoe-cultivation.

The Kathodis 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 reasons for not using improved seeds is their inability to buy them on cash payment from the village co-operative society. No irrigation facilities are available in the villages under investigation. In the 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 kept 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 15 show that on an average each household has nearly 3 domestic livestock including chickens.

The figures in table 15 reveal that 19 households owned 33 bullocks, 17 households owned 46 heads of cows and goats and 16 households owned 80 poultry birds. Though the Kathodis own these dairy and poultry, practically no income is derived from these sources, and only in case of emergency some poultry or a goat is sold to meet the dire needs of cash. Cows are kept with the explicit purpose of getting bullocks to be used in their farming.

Forest Economy

As mentioned earlier, the Kathodis, by and large, depend on agricultural 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 co-operatives in the area undertake bamboo collection and charcoal manufacture on lease from the Government and give employment to the tribal labourers. The Kathodis find work with the forest co-operatives in Vyara, Songadh, Mangrol and Gandevi talukas. Forest labour includes felling and fetching of bamboo and other timber

TABLE 15
Ownership of Livestock and Poultry by holding groups

Holding Groups (acres)	Households owning Bullocks		Households owning Cows & Goats		Households owning Poultry		Total Households	Total
	HH	No.	HH	No.	HH	No.		
Landless	1	2	2	2	5	24	8	28
	(5.3)	(6.6)	(11.8)	(4.3)	(31.3)	(30.0)	(15.4)	(17.6)
0.1 - 2.5	4	7	2	3	1	2	7	12
	(21.1)	(21.2)	(11.8)	(6.5)	(6.1)	(2.6)	(13.4)	(7.5)
2.5 - 5.0	8	15	8	22	5	25	21	62
	(42.2)	(45.4)	(47.1)	(47.8)	(31.3)	(31.2)	(40.4)	(38.9)
Over 5	6	9	5	19	5	29	16	57
	(31.4)	(26.8)	(29.3)	(41.4)	(31.3)	(36.2)	(30.8)	(36.0)
Total :	19	33	17	46	16	80	52	159
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

Note : The figures in brackets show percentages.
HH=Household.

trees, charcoal making and packing of bamboos. Thus, there are three types of forest labour :

1. Bamboo cutting
2. Tree 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 rates 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 bamboos below 15 feet he gets Rs. 15/-. These rates are fixed by the forest labour co-operative 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 the 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 earn Rs. 500/- per month. But this sort of work is not available regularly.

3. Charcoal 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 the entire family has to make temporary residence at the site of the work. The Kathodi family lives at the site till the work is over. The persons engaged in 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 a small or big one. The actual work of charcoal making starts a month or a month and a half 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 logs cut are then arranged vertically into kiln around these stones one after another in a slightly slanting and circular position, keeping the opening intact to facilitate kindling. After arranging the 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 emitting 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 the holes from which smoke is found emitting are sealed. Thereafter, water is spread on the live charcoal. The kiln is then dismantled and the charcoal is collected with the help of a rake, and filled in gunny bags, ready for marketing.

Forest Products

Another major source of income for the Kathodi families is the gathering and selling of minor forest produces. This work supports them in two ways; firstly, it gives them some scope for earning cash and secondly it is a source of getting subsidiary food by collecting edible leaves and wild roots. The Kathodis gather Gum, Honey, Karanjia (*Pomagania glabra*), mahuva, white musli, 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 to collect 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 the Vadpada village of Mangrol taluka a Bidi Contractor gave 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 the rainy season they consume 'Kadva kanda' a wild tuber. The tender parts of the stem of the palm tree are also eaten by the Kathodis. Like most of the tribals the Kathodis are also non-vegetarian. The forest gives them an 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 timber to support the roofs and walls of their houses, grass, karvi and leaves for thatching. The 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 for purposes 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. The 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 the increase day by day. The work of an agricultural labour is seasonal and is available during the 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 raises some social problems. Some of the unscrupulous employers, forest contractors and their henchmen take undue advantage of the poor economic condition of 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 attached labourers. One from

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.

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 labourer in lieu of his services gets 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 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 village 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 cattle 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 Re. 0.50 for each goat per month.

Services

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

From the survey of the 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 the earlier stage of transition many Kathodis 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 picture of starvation emerges as practically 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/- as per the 1960-61 prices which works out to about Rs. 60/- per capita per month at 1974-75 prices. All the (100 per cent) Kathodi 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 16.

Household Income Pattern

It is obvious from the figures given in Table 16 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 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

TABLE 16

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)
2.51 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 17

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 18
Annual Income by Operational Holding from Different Sources (percentage)

Holding Groups	No. of families	Annual Income Rs.	Agricultural			Forest			Other	Total
			Income	Labour	produce	Wage	Service			
Landless	42	497.00	—	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	1428.00	29.7	5.0	—	12.7	52.6	—	100.00	
ALL GROUPS :	90	626.00	22.5	17.3	0.9	26.8	26.5	6.0	100.00	

least for landless and marginal farm households (Rs. 96/-) followed by small farm families (Rs. 126/-), (see Table 17).

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 the Kathodis usually eat thrice a day. The Kathodis eat 'Rotlas' made of Nagli (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' (carthamustinctorius) and 'Ambadi' (hibiscare Gannabinus). Those who have land are generally better fed. They consume maize, rice and a vegetable.

The pattern of consumption is examined in Table 19 for individual items. The Table reveals that the foremost items for expenditure in the economic life of the Kathodis are connected with food. Of the total household expenditure nearly 76 per cent is spent on food. After food, the next important item 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 households with holding upto 2.5 acres as against Rs. 94 and Rs. 161 respectively among households with holdings upto 5 acres of land and over 5 acres.

In terms of money the annual expenditure of the Kathodis 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 20). The share of farm produce in this consumption was 27.5 per cent and that of other sources as

TABLE 19

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 20

(Per Household Annual Expenditure : Rs.)

Sr. No.	Items	All Groups	Land-less	0.1 to 2.5	2.51 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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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 21

Distribution of Household Expenditure by Operational Holding

Holding Groups (acres)	No. of House-holds	Per House-hold 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

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 21).

It can be seen from Table 23 that 43 families have settled down 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 for more than 75 years. Looking to these figures, it becomes apparent that the Kathodis are not original inhabitants of this State but have migrated from the 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 the not much distant past, was just the same. But the methods of *Katha*-extraction by the Kathodis and the *Katkaris* 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 Bohra merchants who brought them here. In fact in the Baroda Census Report of 1921, their name had been referred to as "Kathodia" which implied a derogatory connotation. Their number is larger in Maharashtra than in Gujarat. Several references are available about the Kathodis staying in Maharashtra and it seems that they 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 to 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 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

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

other tribal groups. The Dhors are considered degraded as they have been reported eating carcasses. The two divisions do not inter-marry and interdine. 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 the Thana district and of Son Kathodis in the 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* houses and sacred shrines. The Dhors eat cows' flesh and like the *Mahars*, are held to be impure. *Athvars* are looked down upon 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

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 mainly they have migrated into Gujarat from Khandesh which has been the country of the 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* 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

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.

girl, after marriage, goes to stay at her husband's house). Among the Kathodis the 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 girl, she adopts the gotra of her husband after getting married.

In order to gain some insight into 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 24.

TABLE 24
Areawise Types 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 25 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 25

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 the following gotras have been found among the Kathodis of Gujarat. The clanwise distribution of households in different areas is given in Table 26.

TABLE 26

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
Kokni	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) Jadav and (5) Sindhi. Some of these gotras are also found today among the Kathodis of Gujarat. The names of these gotras resemble names in Marathi and the dialect which is spoken by the Kathodis in Gujarat also resembles Marathi.

Looking at the gotrawise 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 cultural contact during 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 has been observed. Thus, no particular gotra is higher or lower. Every gotra maintains marriage and Social relationship with the other gotras. Besides this, cross-cousin marriage is also practised by the Kathodis. 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 the other gotras, have started marrying 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 relationship exist among the Kathodis. The relationship based on blood (cognates) and the relationship based on 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 relationships arise due to marriage.

Kinship Terms

The dialect of the Kathodis living at different places in Gujarat is similar to the 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
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 elderly persons. The younger brothers pay respect to the elder brothers. They do not speak disrespectfully in the presence of the elderly people. An elder brother does not call the younger brother's wife by her name. It is a kind of taboo to call her by name. They believe that if she was called by her name her respect would not be maintained. The younger brother's wife does not address her husband's elder brother by name. She tries her best to pay respect to him in speech as well as in behaviour. Some sort of respectful avoidance is practised by her.

Like other tribes, joking relationships have been observed among the Kathodis. Such a relationship exists among friends of the same age group between young boys and girls, between sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, between brothers-in-law and the elder brother's wife, etc. We have 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 Kathodis live in multiethnic villages along with other tribal communities. In the villages surveyed for the purposes of the present study the important neighbouring communities of the 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 the 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 past "the other tribes keep 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

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

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

Our own observations also testify that the other tribes of Gujarat regard the Kathodis as inferior. The Kathodis have to leave their permanent place of habitation in a village to find work and during an off-season of agriculture they move to the forest for charcoal manufacturing or collecting 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 neighbouring tribes. These tribes treat them as untouchables 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 Kunbis do not permit them to enter their houses and touch their water-pots. If they want to give something to them or if they want to give them water, they do that without touching them. These days, the Kathodis can draw water from a public village well. In the past they did not seem to have free access to the 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 the Gamit tribe is known to have married a Kathodi woman.

Thus, in practice other tribes maintain social distance with the Kathodis so much so that even the educated Kathodis cannot sit together with the members of the 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 same social disabilities 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 the past they had a regular caste-council in Maharashtra. At present, they solve their disputes by mutual understanding. If any dispute arises, the elderly people 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 themselves. The people accept the verdict of the elders as final. Thus, through the irregular or non-formal caste-council, the 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 a divorce. The question then arises; why do persons from other tribal groups marry the Kathodis when they are considered to be 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 the farm or in the forest. Secondly, they might be singing and dancing together in the local fairs and festivals. Generally the Kathodis do not prefer or like such marriages and therefore they don't allow a Kathodi girl married outside the tribe to come near their hearth.

CHAPTER V

THE LIFE CYCLE

Menstruation

Among the Kathodis no special rites are performed on the occasion of the 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 woman during her menstruation period. A woman is not permitted to cook, carry water, touch the water-vessel, enter kitchen and touch the clothes. She is not even allowed to touch the musical instruments, such as 'tadpi', drum etc. Such a woman is restricted from sharing the 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 the final bath on the fifth day she resumes her domestic duties again. The Kathodis believe that if during the menstruation period 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 an orgasm simultaneously. Stoppage of menses accompanied by nausea as well as tendency for spitting frequently are indications of pregnancy. The Kathodis believe that mere sexual intercourse will not necessarily lead to conception. Unless a woman receives blessings from a 'Dev' she will not conceive.

The birth of a child among the Kathodis is an occasion of great rejoicing. The children are always welcome. Though it is said that the children of both the sexes are equally accepted, 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 the deity. A barren woman is looked down upon in the society. Consequently, a barren woman suffers 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 given special treatment among the Kathodis. The pregnant woman carries on her usual activities upto the time of delivery. However she avoids strenuous work. The first delivery also takes place in the husband's house. The delivery takes place in a 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 or tank. They believe that if a pregnant woman is allowed to go to such places the new born child would be deformed. An expectant woman sometimes takes a vow in the name of "Bhavani Mata" for an easy delivery. After delivery the sacrifice of a fowl or goat is performed. No trained midwife or dai is called at the time of the delivery of a child. At the time of child birth the Kathodi 'dai' is called to attend, who is assisted by elderly women of the family or the neighbourhood. She cuts the umbilical cord with either a knife or a sickle, and buries it under the floor of the room itself. A stone is put for a 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 Jowar 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/- along with the same amount of grains. It shows that among the 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 the property of others because she does not stay in the parents' 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 cook also. The child is also given a bath on that day and after the bath on the twelfth day it can be handled by any one 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

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

On this day the 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 place where the umbilical cord is buried. After the rituals, cooked rice is given to the small children of the family. Everybody present 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 the namkaran ceremony is performed by the Brahmin on the basis of the constellation or the stars of the child. After the name giving ceremony relatives and friends make a gift of 10, 15 or 25 paise to the child. The status of Fus (child's father's sister) is important on this day. 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 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 in the home itself. On this occasion also, 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 for his services. Before that the Fus cuts some locks of the hair of the child and the sheared locks of the hair along with a coconut are disposed of in the river. When the ceremony is over and at the time of departure the sister of the father of the child receives some cash usually from 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 pre-marital sex relations. There is no institution among the Kathodis which can be a source of information on sexual matters for the nubile girls and boys. The adolescent girls learn about 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 field study we recorded that only two cases of pre-marital relationships were brought to the notice of the village Patel. In one case a Kathodi girl was involved with a Gamit youth, and in another case with a nontribal 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 is tolerated among the Kathodis.

Generally, extra-marital relations are not tolerated by 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.

Marriage

Marriage is considered to be essential among the Kathodi tribe because a person who does not marry has a lower social status. It is also believed 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 the Kathodis. Out of the 174 families covered, only among 10 families were polygamous marriages found, and even among these most of the marriages were of the bigamous type. Only in case of one family a bhagat (saint) had 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 polygamous marriages are rare among Kathodis. The main reason for the 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, many 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 can have more than one wife. In some cases bigamous marriages are undertaken out of necessity also, e.g. in case where the earlier wife could not bear any children. In a few cases two wives happened to be sisters also. According to the views of elder people, marriages in former homes were cheaper as the dowry demanded was 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. Grown-up persons who do not have enough money to get married do not take the traditional type of marriage. As the traditional type of marriages are comparatively costly, the following types of marriages have become common these days.

Love Marriages

Young boys and girls have to work together in the forest for collecting wood, making charcoal etc. Further the Kathodis are limited in 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 in love marriages. Although in some cases these marriages take place against the desire of the parents, mostly parents accept them. Instances are available like the one in Dangs, where an educated Kathodi girl being unable to find a match in her community married a Gamit youth

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

in a village. In such cases 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 a marriage. In this system a sister is exchanged for a bride.

Ghar Jamai System: Khandad (Marriage by Service)

The practice of 'Khandad' (Ghar Jamai) prevails among the Kathodis. The root cause of this system of marriage also is 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 against the services he has rendered. The system of levirate and sororate also prevails 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 the daughter of a brother can inter-marry. During the field investigation four cases of such marriages were recorded. But marriages between the 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 27

Distribution of population according to 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 the past according to the Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, 1901, both boys and girls commonly used to marry at the age

of about fifteen but in recent times the age of marriage has gone up gradually. At present the girls are generally married when they are between 13-18 years old while the boys between 16-22 years.

During the course of field investigation data in respect of their age at marriage were collected. Sexwise break-up of first marriage is given in Table 28.

TABLE 28
Sexwise Age at First Marriage

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 occurred below the age of 15 in case of boys and above the age of 19 in case of girls.

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

Because of this they have no other choice but to marry with a person of the same village or from the nearest village. Those Kathodis who stay in Dangs or Uchhal area have marriage relations with the Kathodis staying in Maharashtra State as these two areas are on the border of the Maharashtra State. Similarly the Kathodis staying in Vijaynagar Mahal (Sabarkantha District) get married with the Kathodis of Rajasthan, as it is situated very near to the Rajasthan border. The Table 29 shows the distance upto which they go to contract marriage.

TABLE 29

Distance within which marriages were 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 the 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 the original village. It is also possible that some persons, while migrating from Maharashtra or Rajasthan States, might have brought brides from those States.

Because the 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 have taken place within the same clan (gotra). However they claimed that they avoid a 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 exogamous. But in view of the compulsion of living in small numbers in particular areas, the exogamic character of the clans is being relaxed these days.

The figures given in Table 30 clearly indicate that the Kathodis do marry within the same clan. Out of the total 209 married men, 111 were 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 30).

TABLE 30
Clanwise Marriages of married men

Clan	Mishal	Warli	Savra	Vagher	Mukanya	Pawar	Kavar	Lakhan	Vaghmare	Bhend	Bhoye	Vad	Jadav	Dhum	Deshmukh	Naik	Katara	Machhi	Gangod	Other tribal	Garnit	Total
Mukanya	3	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
Pawar	2	1	6	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	18
Savra	2	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12
Gavit	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Deve	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mishal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
Dhum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
Kavar	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lakhan	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5
Vagher	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	26
Naik	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	24
Gargod	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Bhil	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kokri	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total :	8	1	14	27	4	13	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	25	1	1	4	1	1	111

Arranged Marriages

The cases covered under the study revealed that most of the marriages are arranged marriages. When the children reach the marriageable age, their parents select a marriage partner for them, of course with the consent of the boy or girl. Marriage negotiations are undertaken by an intermediary who is generally known as 'Hathio'. This intermediary generally knows both the families. The intermediary suggests a girl to the father of a boy. 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 the term of marriage 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 should be earning. While in case of the girl she should be industrious and expert in household duties. She should also have a good physique. As said earlier, they take the consent of the boy as well as of girl. If they agree, they decide on 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 at the time of negotiation as to whether the bride-price will be paid immediately or in instalments. The bride-price can be paid after marriage also. In case the bride-price is not paid even 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 fixed 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 the 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 are paid to the bride's father as an advance towards the bride's-price. In the presence of 3 to 4 elders it is also decided as to when and how the balance of instalments of the bride-price will be paid.

After the engagement ceremony is over, members 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 returns to its own village.

It is not possible to break the engagement once it has taken place. 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 a few days or a month after the engagement. Marriage is known as 'Moti Pen' moti means big.

Moti pen

The singing sessions of marriage songs start two days before the marriage day. A pandal is erected on the day prior to the marriage day. 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 meal. The procession moves on amidst dancing and singing of songs. The groom too has to dance. They also carry a basket containing 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 the 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 Pandal at the girl's place late in the evening or at 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 is performed. One of the ends of the bride's sari is tied to the bridegroom's shirt. This is known as chhedachhedi. They offer prayers to the Singladev and the Asitara trees. While praying they offer rice, jowar, agarbatti to the God Singla. After the prayers are offered both go to the house and take a bath.

An entertainment party entertains the people gathered for the marriage, with mimicry and 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 to his home. After this they start living as husband and wife.

There is a slight difference between 'pen' and marriage. Due to his poor 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 pandals 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 of incurring expenditure, which in many cases takes place even after many children are born to the couple. Due to their 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 a divorce. He or she approaches the 'Panch' and advocates his or her case for a divorce and obtains divorce. Divorces occur more during the first 3 to 4 years of marriage. Divorces are rare after the birth of 2 to 3 children. A 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 long period or they become permanently disabled.
- (6) In case of doubt of adultery by other partner.
- (7) If due to poverty the husband is not able to maintain his wife.
- (8) If the wife has remained barren for a long time.

Most of the divorces occur due to causes mentioned in 1, 2, 6 and 8 above. Though among the Kathodis of Gujarat, the number of organised 'Panch' is very small, the places where the number of Kathodis is sizeable, they do have a 'Panch' comprised of senior people. They hear both the parties in a divorce case and pronounce a judgment thereafter. If the husband wants a divorce then he has to forego his bride-price. But if the wife wants it she has to repay double the bride-price. Of course, when she remarries she has got a 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 are supposed to 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 a case of another 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 some time 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. The Kathodi Panch obtained a 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 husband's household if the widow marries outside her kin group but every effort is made so that she marries the deceased husband's younger brother. When a widow remarries 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 single and of a suitable age. One case of widow marriage came to light during the field investigation. In the Vadpada village of Mangrol taluka a Kathodi woman having two sons and one daughter became a widow. She married a widower having one son by 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 philosophical explanation of death, which is regarded as the will of God or destiny. The

Kathodis generally dispose of 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 adults who die as a result of certain epidemic diseases, such as small pox, cholera or due to bite or are killed by wild animals are buried.

The funeral rites of the Kathodis are not elaborate. When it is certain that the person will not survive and death is imminent, the relatives and friends in the village gather around him. After death, the gatherers mourn the death by crying over the loss. The Kathodis believe that before disposal, the dead body should be 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 draped in new clothes. If the deceased is a 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 for a long time and wait only for 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 taken out in the morning. Different customs are followed in different areas. In the Vijaynagar taluka a hammock is prepared and the corpse is kept in it. In case the deceased is a male the hammock is prepared of white cloth and in case of a female the hammock is prepared of red cloth. In the 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 halts for a moment and the women take a last glimpse of the deceased 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 into the grave, all those who are present pour some drops of wine in the mouth of dead person as their last offering. Along with the dead body, clothes, ornaments and other articles loved by the dead, are also buried in 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 taking 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 are subjected to certain restrictions. The chief mourner does not touch any household articles. The kinswomen, of the deceased such as sisters, daughters, aunt remove their marriage necklace. After two or three months they are allowed to wear a necklace again. On the 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 cleaning the house by sprinkling a mixture of cowdung and water, a feast is given to the relatives and neighbours which marks the end of the pollution period.

The Kathodis believe in the 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 rebirth. Accordingly on the night of the day on which the death occurs, the female members of the household collect some flour and spread it in the 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 an 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.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGIOUS LIFE

As has been mentioned elsewhere in this report, the Kathodis living in the Gujarat State have come from Maharashtra. They reside in different districts of Gujarat. These different areas are inhabited by different tribal groups. Every group has its particular way of religious life. It is important to point out that there is considerable impact of Hinduism on the tribal population living in Gujarat. In spite of the impact of the 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. Two main elements are observable 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. The Kathodis work mostly in forests as labourers and stay together in the vicinity of the forest. They have always been living in group howsoever small it may be. Due to this, the Kathodis have a strong group feeling and therefore have preserved the traditions of the past.

In comparison with other tribal groups Kathodis are more dependent on nature. So they live amidst all sorts of fears and are dependent on the mercy of nature.

Although due to the impact of the Hindu religion they have started worshipping Hanumanji, Lord Rama, etc. their main traditional deities are Dungaldev, Vaghdev, 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 religion of the Kathodis are Ancestor-worship, Sorcery and witchcraft.

Gods & Godlings**(a) Dungardev (The God of the Hills)**

The place of Dungardev 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 cattle remain healthy and that there will be no illness, or disease or calamity in the house and all the members of the family will remain hale and hearty with no worries at all. The exorcists go to the place of worship and perform 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 the forest; 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 it. The length and breadth of such a 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 (referred to earlier). Then they offer the sacrifice of a hen to Vaghdev and also offer liquor. There is a custom of offering a goat 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 the blessings of that god and pray for their well-being as well as the well-being of their cattle. A feast is held

and they all enjoy eating rice and poultry meat. The expenses for this type of celebration are contributed 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 a plant, which is found in the forest. The Kathodis also use these leaves as vegetables, but they never use them without first offering this leaf-vegetable to Vaghdev. So in the month of Jeth all the people go to the Vaghdev and offer this leaf-vegetable along with the meat of hen and wine. Only after performing this ritual can they use this leaf-vegetable for themselves.

(d) Hanumanji

Though Hanuman is considered to be one of the Gods of the Hindus, the Kathodis also worship this God. The other tribal groups of Dang district worship Hanumanji with devotion and so the Kathodis also worship him. As a ritual they offer him water, incense sticks, coconuts, etc. Hanumanji is believed to be pure and so they don't offer him either goat or hen. [There are two species of the gods of the Kathodis (1) the gods and goddesses who are offered sacrificial meat and wine are known as 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 goddess. 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 place of worship of this Devi is kept in the house itself. A basket is kept near the place where the cereal is stored and in that basket they place the idol of Kansari Devi (which is electroplated with silver) with rice and red turmeric powder. Such a place is supposed to be reserved for this Devi 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 dance and sing. So the Kathodis living in these parts also perform such a 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 no one 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. People put before the goddess their troubles and problems to make known to her the diseases they suffer and in her turn the goddess through the mouth of the 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 the water. For example, if she asks for 'Satko' (whip), the 'Satko' is produced and all the people go to the river bank and it is thrown into the

water. Whatever she asks for, has to be offered to her. Once the article is thrown into the water they never try to get it back. On completion of the 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 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 the things they have pledged and many pledge new things (as offering to the goddess).

Diwali

Among the Hindus Diwali is celebrated on the new moon day of the Asho "Aso Vad Amavasya". But in Dangs, Diwali is celebrated in a different 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, important members of the village such as the Patil, Karbhari, Jagalia (Talati's Peon) and the elders of different tribal groups 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 a handful of cooked food is put inside the "Choolas". Wine is also offered to them.

Holi

On this festival the dead ancestors are worshipped with the hope 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 young people 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 lighting the holi, they bring logs of the "Teemerwa" tree and taking the leaves from it they prepare garlands of the leaves which they keep 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 the Holimata along with paddy. Then they cook rice on the same spot and distribute it to the children. After this those who have gathered there select a leader from amongst themselves. The leader asks them to sit around the Holi in a circle and then instructs them to bow their head down before the Holi fire. While performing this rite, they ask the blessing 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. With the grains and money, they enjoy a feast which includes liquor also.

Akhatrji

On this day the Kathodis do not do any work and do not undertake any 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 religion of the Kathodis 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 an exorcist (Bhagat). The Kathodis are much afraid of witches. The Kathodis believe the witch to be a living woman. A witch is supposed to know all kinds of magic and sorcery. A witch is believed to wander during nights particularly on river banks and in the deserted places of the villages. She is also supposed

to take anybody she likes as her prey. They believe that if they expose the secret and if the witch comes to know this, she won't spare them in any case. A witch cannot be controlled by anyone but the exorcist. And that too, for this purpose, there are very special types of exorcists. Such an exorcist is very powerful in magic and witchcraft. Only this exorcist can keep the witch in control and destroy her evil powers.

It is believed that the witch can pass on her magic powers 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 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 to be incomplete. And if a person trained by the witch does not offer the sacrifice, she becomes a lunatic. She has to offer as sacrifice a person who is dear to her whether husband, her son or any other dear one. After this offering she is entitled to get the place of a 'Perfect Witch'.

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 her evil doings. 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 victim stand amidst 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 blood starts oozing out from her mouth. As soon as the blood comes, the ceremony is believed to be completed.

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 that the exorcists perform a ritual.

They take a small pot filled with water and also 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 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 of the gods and goddesses, in getting rid of ghost and apparitions and witches, in eliminating the diseases of both men and cattle, etc. The Bhagat cures the diseases with his magic powers 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 pay a very high esteem both to the priest and the exorcist. 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 the satisfaction that they are cured. A true story runs like this:

In 'Vadpada' village there lived a Kathodi who was severely ill for about six months. He went to the Bhagat and by telling him his problem got a "dora" as a cure and surprisingly enough he felt relieved after some time. This man suffered from severe pain in his back. As a cure the Bhagat put some cuts on both

and ignorance. There cannot be two opinions that the poverty is the greatest problem of Kathodis who live under starving and shocking conditions. On account of their abject poverty, the Kathodis are undernourished and suffer from malnutrition. The extreme form of poverty among the Kathodis has not only been reflected in the paucity of their material possessions and low standard of living but also in the fact that for many days in a year, they have each to go 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 Chimna 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 brethren elsewhere have become "men". God knows when we will 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 for the tribe may shake off all its dejection and isolation and strive to improve its lot. What did Sakaria Chimna mean by saying that members of other tribal groups have become "men" while they still remained like dogs? He probably meant that "the members of other groups had achieved economically comfortable position and were occupying a secure and honourable place in society. They were also improving economically because they got more food to eat now-a-days. They had started putting on good clothes and had a variety of articles and utensils in their houses." In short, Sakaria Chimna felt that the Kathodis should be able 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 clear 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 with 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 cannot be termed 'agricultural'. In Bharuch and Surat districts they are hired as cattle grazers and are 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, cattle grazing, charcoal making, etc. As such, the most sensible thing to be done in order to improve their economic life is to devise programmes that encourage developing their expressed skills. They are experts 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, on an 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 lucrative market for products made out of such herbal plants, and there is great potentiality for 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 the Kathodis for making 'Kaththa' from Khair tree. There is a good market for Katha. It should be possible to work up a scheme for the manufacture of Katha by the Kathodis. Such a scheme is feasible if some imaginative and concrete planning is done in this direction. In any such venture, the marketing aspect is of vital importance. If the Kathodis are left to the mercy of petty traders, things will not work to their benefit. 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 can the Kathodis be freed from the vicious circle of economic degradation and exploitation.

The economy of the Kathodis comprises of different activities like forest labour, hunting, fishing, agriculture, animal husbandry, poultry, etc. However, this is not available to them always. Hunting and fishing too, are not a regular source of food supply. They possess little land and that land is also not very fertile, is of the undulating type and mostly unirrigated. Agricultural 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 for that matter they hardly bring any stability to 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 the Kathodis. The ever increasing restrictions and withdrawal of forest concessions have led to many hardships to them.

For the 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 the 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 the 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 people of other advanced tribal group. During the course of field investigation, it has been found that in Sabarkantha region many plots of land of the Kathodis 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 released for cultivation should be allotted to the landless Kathodis. Besides land, bullocks and agricultural implements should also be given to them. If it is possible new wells should be dug 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 Bhoodan, but the condition of the land in possession of Kathodis is not upto the mark. 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

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take up complementary occupations which will pay them as much as they will earn from wage paid employment. So 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 from their farms alone.

The three major constraints inhibiting their agricultural development have 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 increasing employment and income opportunities to the 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 the Kathodis, it will be necessary to provide them with enough subsidy for their agricultural development.

The basic strategy in formulating development programmes for agriculture and animal husbandry should aim at increasing productivity in order to raise the consumption level of the Kathodis. With this 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 the Kathodis and the working out of detailed land development schemes should have first priority. The programmes of reclamation, bunding, levelling 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 for 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 the 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, Brinjal, Lady's fingers, Cucumber, Chillies, Coriander, Garlic and Turmeric could be grown in the kitchen garden. By introducing and popularising kitchen gardening the consumption of vegetables will be substantially increased among the 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 have some cattle while poultry is found quite universally 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. Besides 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 at least two years. From the third year onwards the owner will be able to finance the annual cost from its own resources.

Consumption of milk among the Kathodis is almost nil. The consumption of milk can be raised 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

The Forest plays an important role in the economy of the Kathodis. Quite a good number of Kathodi households subsist mainly on forest work. The ever increasing restrictions and withdrawal of forest concessions 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 has undertaken 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 known to collect fire-wood but they have to sell it 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 an 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 Societies of the Kathodis which may undertake forest work, i.e. felling of trees, laying of nurseries, plantation, gathering of forest produce and charcoal making. The government should do away with the contract system and give these works to the cooperatives on monopoly basis.
- (3) Introduction of a few forest based industries such as bidi making, mahua oil extracting or reviving their age-old indus-

try 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 need to employ simple technology. These activities will give them the maximum possible wage employment. It should also generate sufficient income to bring them upto or above the threshold level.

- (4) The Kathodis have been 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 the Kathodis have been inhabiting villages which are quite near the Ukai Dam. They have been catching fish on a marginal scale. In this particular area special Fish Cooperative Societies for the Kathodis should be set up to provide them with opportunities of earning an additional income. At present in this area a 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 the 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 Dangs area has studied upto the S.S.C.E and has been working as a teacher in the Ashram School. But on the whole the general standard of education among the 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 a gradual awareness among the 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 their parents to earn a living. It is really

absurd to imagine that a community whose members have to struggle hard for a 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 the fact 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 the 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 the southern part of Dangs or in Vijaynagar taluka a separate Ashram Shala for the Kathodis should be started. It is true that compared with other primary schools the per student cost of education is higher in an Ashram Shala because of the free boarding and lodging. But if such facilities can prompt the poor Kathodis to send their children for schooling and if such schooling can keep children better fed, the cost incurred will be a social investment.

Moreover, the young Kathodi men and women with requisite qualification should be given top preference in jobs of Peons, Drivers, Foresters or Beatguard and Teachers.

Housing

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

Health

The isolation of the Kathodi communities impedes their social education and inadequate housing further lowers the standard of the health of the Kathodis. Malaria, tuberculosis, fever, respiratory diseases, dysentery, diarrhoea, scabies, rickets and skin diseases are found among the Kathodis. The Kathodis

have not been accepting the medical treatment partly because of lack of awareness and partly because of their poor economic condition. In addition to the health programme that is carried out by the Doctors and Nurses of the Primary Health Centres, Kathodi welfare workers should be appointed to assist these people in tackling problems arising from the 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 discussing with them regarding tribal development programmes, it has been found that the Kathodis do not know much of the contents of the tribal development programme. This is partly because they have not been associated with various institutions at the village level, through which the programmes are being implemented. Block Development Officials seldom approach them for their socio-economic development as is being done in case of other tribal communities. So the internal conditions of Kathodis have 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 will the Kathodis be in a better position to take the 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 the real needs of the Kathodis.

The other tribal groups with whom they have been living consider the Kathodis as untouchables. They occupy the 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 the rest of the others. The cultural gap 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 an inferiority complex as the circumstances and surroundings have made them more conscious

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of their present position and treatment. They feel they have no spokesman of their own who can look after their interest and welfare.

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

In short, the development of the 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 as to 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 sociocultural constraints of any programme meant for their development. The Kathodis and other minority tribal groups who are living in a precarious and primitive condition, should be considered as a trust of the State Government on behalf of the best traditions of mankind.

