

## Occupational Aspects of Katkari Community

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The Government of Maharashtra has identified that Katkaris as main primitive tribe of the State. The traditional occupation of the Katkaris was catechu making. Now, most of the Katkaris are found working as labourers under contractors for various construction works and as agricultural labourers. Goat keeping, fishing, etc. are also some of the occupations of the Katkaris. In Maharashtra, the Katkari population is concentrated in Thane, Raigad, Pune and parts of Ratnagiri district. However, no systematic efforts have been made so far to know the various aspects of occupation of Katkari community from Konkan region. The present study was, therefore, conducted with the following objectives in mind :

1. To study some occupational aspects of the Katkaris.
2. To understand the problems of Katkaris in performing their occupations.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Mandanagad tahsil of Ratnagiri district of Konkan region, as infrastructurally, it is considered to be the most backward tahsil in the district. So also, the Katkari population is sizeable in the tahsil.

One hundred Katkari households from ten villages of the tahsil were selected for the purpose of the investigation by random selection method. Personal interview technique was used for data collection.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A) Major occupations :

Based on the maximum share in annual income, major occupations of the Katkaris was decided. The information in this regard is given in Table 1.

Table 1 reveals that 'non-farm labour' was the major occupation of 82.00 per cent of the Katkaris while 'agricultural labour'

**Table 1. Major occupations of the Katkaris.**

Sr. No.	Occupation	Respondents (n=100)	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Non-farm labour	82	82.00
2.	Agricultural labour	17	17.00
3.	Service	01	01.00
	Total	100	100.00

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was the major occupation of 17.00 per cent respondents.

Imparting knowledge about new skills related to non-farm and farm activities will increase their work efficiency, minimise hardships and increase the production. Careful study of their employment pattern is a pre-requisite in that direction.

The findings of the present study differ from the findings of Srivastava and Kherde (1984), Kanherikar (1985), Aphale (1988) and Lal *et al* (1990).

### B) Types of occupation :

The data in respect of various occupations performed by the Katkaris are presented in Table 2.

It is seen from Table 2 that, 'labour' was the major earning activity among the

Katkaris, supported by occupations namely goat keeping, finshing, farming and hunting.

The findings themselves speak about the uncertainty in the life of thje Katkaris. Every effort needs to be made to educate the Katkaris about the technicalities of the occupations being performed by them.

### C) Employment and income :

The findings pertaining to per capita employment and income from different occupations in Katkari households are given in Table 3.

It is observed from Table 3 that, on an average, two members, mostly husband and wife, in the Katkari families used to work for enarning the bread. They were engaged mainly as 'labourer' for maximum

**Table 2. Types of occupation performed by Katkaris.**

Sr. No.	Occupation	Respondents (n=100)	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Non-farm labour + Agril. labour + Fishing + Goat keeping	35	35.00
2.	Non-farm labour + Agril. labour + Goat keeping	27	27.00
3.	Non-farm labour + Agril. labour	19	19.00
4.	Non-farm labour + Agril. labour + Farming + Fishing	09	09.00
5.	Non-farm labour + Agril. labour + Fishing	07	07.00
6.	Non-farm labour + Agril. labour + Farming + Hunting	01	01.00
7.	Non-farm labour + Agril. labour + Fishing + Hunting	01	01.00
8.	Service	01	01.00
	Total	100	100.00

**Table 3. Occupationwise per capita employment and income.**

Sr. No.	Occupation		Per head employment in days/year (n=207)	Per capita income in Rs. (n=207)
1.	Non-farm labour	(n=206)	117.95	1329.44
2.	Agricultural labour	(n=206).	58.98	810.31
3.	Goat keeping	(n=62)	39.37	124.25
4.	Service	(n=1)	01.84	69.57
5.	Fishing	(n=52)	01.74	66.23
6.	Farming	(n=10)	01.59	08.70
7.	Hunting	(n=11)	00.41	06.62
	Total		221.88	2415.12

days of the year and also earned maximum share of the income from these occupations than that of any other occupation. Further, it was noticed that the working members in the Katkari families were gainfully employed only for a period of seven months.

Most of the Katkari workers are young and physically fit to perform the strenuous work. The energies of such youth should be channelised towards the development of tribal areas. They should be provided with opportunities of employment throughout the year alongwith proper training.

#### D) Annual earnings :

The information about the average annual income from each occupation of the Katkaris is given in Table 4.

Table 4 indicates that 'non-farm labour' and 'agricultural labour' together contributed about 90.00 per cent to the total annual income, whereas, remaining one-tenth of the annual earnings were derived from rest of the occupations.

#### E) Problems of Katkaris in performing their occupations :

The problems reported by the Katkaris in performing various occupations are shown in Table 5.

**Table 4. Annual earnings from various occupations.**

Sr. No.	Occupation	Annual earnings (Rs.)	Percentage to annual income
1.	Non-farm labour	2751.93	55.05
2.	Agricultural labour	1677.35	33.55
3.	Goat keeping	257.20	5.15
4.	Service	144.00	2.88
5.	Fishing	137.10	2.74
6.	Farming	18.00	0.36
7.	Hunting	13.70	0.27
	Total	4999.28	100.00

**Table 5. Problems in performing occupations.**

Sr. No.	Occupation	Problem	On actual performers	On sample
1.	Agril. labour (n=99)	i) Seasonal nature	99 (100.00)	99 (99.00)
		ii) Less wage rates	99 (100.00)	99 (99.00)
2.	Non-farm labour (n=99)	i) Less number of opportunities with less wage rates	99 (100.00)	99 (99.00)
3.	Goat keeping (n=62)	i) Low milk production	62 (100.00)	62 (62.00)
		ii) Low returns from selling of goats	44 (70.97)	44 (44.00)
4.	Fishing (n=52)	i) Lack of fishing nets	04 (7.69)	04 (04.00)
		ii) Less returns from fish selling	41 (78.85)	41 (41.00)
5.	Farming (n=20)	i) No own land for cultivation	05 (50.00)	05 (05.00)

It is observed from Table 5 that agriculture itself is a seasonal occupation hence the wage employment in this field will obviously be seasonal. However, it needs to be ensured that the Katkaris are not exploited by paying low wage rates.

There are less employment opportunities for the Katkaris working as non-farm labour. The problem is further aggravated by low wage rates. The Katkaris might be getting wage employment only in unskilled jobs. Imparting them knowledge and skills about few occupations in the tribal areas may increase their chances of getting employment for more period and at higher wage rates.

The Katkaris maintain local goat breed by traditional methods. Obviously, the milk production is low. So also, due to poor consumers preference for goat milk, the producers might be receiving low rates for

it. It, therefore, becomes imperative that the Katkaris should be trained to maintain the goats on scientific lines which will provide more returns after selling of goats.

Fishing is one of the major occupations of the Katkaris. Besides providing nutritious food, this occupation has potential of earning money for the family. Fishing nets have been provided to the Katkaris but the quality of fish caught by them might be poor which fetches low prices in the market. The Katkaris could become the clientele for training in sweet water fish farming. This would provide gainful employment to them.

The Katkaris who are interested in farming may be provided with government land for cultivation. All the concerned agencies together should work out available solutions to the problems of Katkaris as their economic stability depends largely

**Table 6. Choice of the Katkaris about occupations.**

Sr. No.	Occupation	Respondents (n=100)	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Farming	72	72.00
2.	Goat keeping	15	15.00
3.	Fishing	09	09.00
4.	Service	01	01.00

upon the occupations performed by them.

#### **F) Choice about occupation :**

The choices of the Katkaris about occupations are indicated in Table 6.

It is revealed from Table 6 that 'farming' was the occupation preferred by nearly three-fourth (72.00 per cent) of the Katkari respondents, while three out of every twenty of the respondents were interested in 'goat keeping'. Thus, it can be said that majority of the Katkaris are in favour of agriculture and they would like to enjoy settled life.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Efforts need to be made to transform the interest of the tribals in agriculture into ultimate acceptance of this occupation. Distributing the Government land for cultivation purpose to the desirous Katkari households should be a first step in this direction. This should be followed by technical guidance, service support and also financial assistance.

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