



Social Analysis Systems²

Concepts and Tools for
Collaborative Research and Social Action

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Title	Reasons for Neglect of Residential Land Issues in Navliwadi, Maharashtra, India
Key Words	Gaps & Conflicts, India, Tribal People, Land Tenure
Reference and Acknowledgement	Buckles, D.; Khedkar, R.; Patil, D.; Ghevde, B. 2006. Reasons for Neglect of Residential Land Issues in Navliwadi, Maharashtra, India. Social Analysis Systems ² Technique Report # 6, 4 pp. Retrieved from: http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/handle/123456789/22553
Context	<p>Navliwadi is a hamlet of tribal people known as the <i>Katkari</i>. All but one of 33 families in the hamlet is landless, and all live below the poverty line. The hamlet is on a hillock and does not have a drinking water source. Women from the hamlet have to carry water daily. Sometimes, two or three families live in the same house. There is no school in the hamlet and an approach road was built only a short time ago. The land on which the hamlet sits is owned by a distant descendent of a local Royal Family (<i>Bhor Sansthan</i>) who is well-known in the field of education. Because of his social standing, the land owner does not want to appear to be opposed to the <i>Katkari</i> living on his land. However, he does not allow the <i>Katkari</i> to expand their homes or use land around the hamlet. The <i>Katkari</i> families are concerned about this and unhappy with the lack of interest by government officials and elected representatives in matters related to their hamlet. A non-governmental organization SOBTI has been working in Navliwadi and other <i>Katkari</i> communities for many years and has tried in the past to draw official attention to these kinds of problems.</p> <p>For a report on a series of SAS² diagnoses with the <i>Katkari</i>, see Buckles, D.; Khedkar, R.; Patil, D.; Ghevde, B. forthcoming. The Land Struggles of the <i>Katkari</i>. Social Analysis Systems² http://sas2.net</p>

Purpose

Determine whether the neglect of *Katkari* concerns by government officials and elected representatives is mostly due to **gaps** or **conflicts** in 1) power, 2) interests (gains and losses), 3) moral values (norms and principles), or 4) information and communication.

Process Summary

SOBTI held a meeting of 9 *Katkari* (6 men, 3 women) at its Centre near Navliwadi. Participants made a list of what they believed to be the reasons why their concerns have been neglected by government officials and elected representatives. They then stated what **kinds** of issues each cause involved, choosing between issues involving 1) power, 2) interests, 3) moral values and 4) information and communication. These were then further described by participants as either **a gap** or **a conflict**. The information was displayed on cards in a table format. Then, participants decided which issues were most important. SOBTI subsequently prepared a draft report on the assessment.

At the request of participants, no photographs were taken during the exercise. This was to reduce the risk of individuals being identified with the actions the group decided to take. The participants in the exercise understood that the results would be used in reports by SOBTI, and agreed to share the information they provided so long as it remained anonymous. The village name used in the report is fictitious.

Analysis

The issues that participants raised are as follows:

1. Government officials act in favour of the land owner because he holds political power and they do not want to oppose him. Participants said this reflects a power gap: *Katkari* lack the resources to influence government officials.
2. Government officials act in favour of the land owner because they believe he is the rightful owner. They do not recognize the moral claims of the *Katkari*, even though they have occupied the land for a long time. Government officials consider the *Katkari* good-for-nothings. Participants described this as a

conflict in moral values: opposing judgments are made regarding rights and moral worth.

3. The *Katkari* do not press the issue with government officials or elected representatives because they are not aware of their rights as citizens or the laws that pertain to tribal lands and long term occupancy of land. Participants described this as an information gap: *Katkari* do not know what rights they have.
4. Elected representatives are not aware of the legal rights of the *Katkari* and they do not believe the problem is serious or very important. Participants described this as an information and communication gap: information on *Katkari* rights is not communicated to elected representatives.
5. Elected representatives and government officials see no gain from helping to solve the *Katkari*'s problems, and they do gain financially from their relationship with the powerful land owner. Participants described this as a conflict of interests: elected representatives and government officials gain from the neglect and the *Katkari* lose.

Table 1: Ranking of issues that result in neglect of *Katkari* concerns

TYPE OF ISSUE	GAPS	CONFLICTS	RANKING
POWER	<i>Katkari</i> lack resources to influence government officials.		2
INTERESTS		Elected representatives and government officials gain and the <i>Katkari</i> lose.	1
VALUES		There are opposing judgements regarding rights.	4
INFORMATION / COMMUNICATION	<i>Katkari</i> do not know what rights they have. Information is not communicated to elected representatives.		3

The ranking of the issues that cause government and elected officials to neglect the *Katkari* are presented in Table 1. A conflict in interests (gains and losses) between the *Katkari*, on one hand,

and both government officials and elected representatives, on the other, was considered by the participants to be the most important reason for the problem. Government officials and elected representatives gain financially from the current situation, and see no gain from helping to solve the *Katkari's* problems.

A gap in the power of the *Katkari* to influence was seen as the second most important reason for the neglect, followed closely by gaps in information and communication affecting both the *Katkari* and elected representatives. While judgements on the part of government officials regarding the moral worth of the *Katkari's* land claim play a role, this was considered an issue of lesser weight compared to the others.

Interpretation

The **conflict of interests** reflects the fact that patronage plays an important and well known role in Indian society. Participants agreed that success in government jobs and politics depends on keeping and adding to the networks of people who have power, such as the land owner. The participants also recognized that the **gaps in information and communication** related to the *Katkari's* legal rights make the situation worse by keeping from public view the illegal advantage that the land owner has.

Action

Towards the end of the assessment, the participants decided to present a land petition at the village assembly (*Gram Sabha*) and with officials of the revenue department (*Tehsildar*), in an attempt to broaden their network of support and draw attention to their rights.

Observations on the Process

Differences within the group appeared when two *Katkari* men said they did not agree with the arguments made against the landowner, whom they believed to be an ally in the situation. This tension was managed by reminding participants that the focus of the assessment was neglect of government officials and elected representatives, a concern shared by all. The arguments of women in the group for ranking the **conflict of interests** as the main reason for neglect also helped manage the differences by keeping attention on the main topic.