

## Social Analysis Systems<sup>2</sup>

Concepts and Tools for  
Collaborative Research and Social Action

<http://www.sas2.net>

### Title

**Factors Influencing the Fear of Eviction among the Katkari of Sarang Katkarwadi, Maharashtra, India**

### Key Words

Force Field, India, Katkari, tribal people, land tenure

### Reference and Acknowledgement

Buckles, D.; Khedkar, R.; Patil, D.; Ghevde, B. 2006. Factors Influencing the Fear of Eviction among the Katkari of Sarang Katkarwadi, Maharashtra, India. Social Analysis Systems<sup>2</sup> 1.0, <http://sas-pm.com>. Technique Report #4, 5 pp. Retrieved from: <http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/handle/123456789/22620>.

### Context



Sarang Katkarwadi is a hamlet of 34 Katkari tribal families, located a few kilometres from a major highway between Mumbai and Pune. The hamlet has existed for more than 60 years on land owned by a non-tribal person in the nearby village of Sarang. Sarang is a prosperous agricultural community with access to a perennial water source for irrigation. A number of households lease agricultural lands from non-tribal villagers in Sarang but the vast majority work as bonded labour on brick-making units in the region. A few households work on a sand dredging operation for a contractor in Sarang village. All residents of Sarang Katkarwadi are listed by the government as Below the Poverty Line.

Recently, the local land owner sold nearly 10 acres of his land, including the land where the hamlet is located, to a person from Mumbai. This has created a great deal of uncertainty among the Katkari families regarding the future of their hamlet. They are afraid that sooner or later they will be evicted by the new land owner or that the land will be resold to another. The Academy of Development Science (ADS), a non-governmental organization working in the region for many years, has been encouraging the residents of Sarang Katkarwadi to press for their right to the land

but residents are reluctant to do so. The fear of eviction and open conflict has prevented the Katkari from presenting a resolution regarding their land rights before the village council. Both ADS and villagers felt it was important to clarify why so that they could continue to work together without putting the Katkari at risk.

---

## Purpose

To develop a plan for responding to the situation that would not put the Katkari of Sarang Katkarwadi at risk.

---

## Process Summary

The Academy of Development Science (ADS) convened a meeting of villagers in Sarang Katkarwadi that had participated in previous events concerning their legal rights to land. Six men from this group participated in the exercise, held in the home of one of the villagers. The group defined the key problem as fear of eviction by the land owner and listed the factors that drive or cause the problem and those that counteract it or stop it from getting worse. These were then rated on a scale of 1 (weak) to 5 (strong) and plotted as a graph on a large sheet of paper. Discussion focused on those factors they could control and actions that result from the assessment. The participants understood that a report would be prepared based on the exercise, and agreed to share their information.

---

## Analysis

Graph 1 shows the balance of driving and counteracting forces, as identified and rated by the Katkari participants.

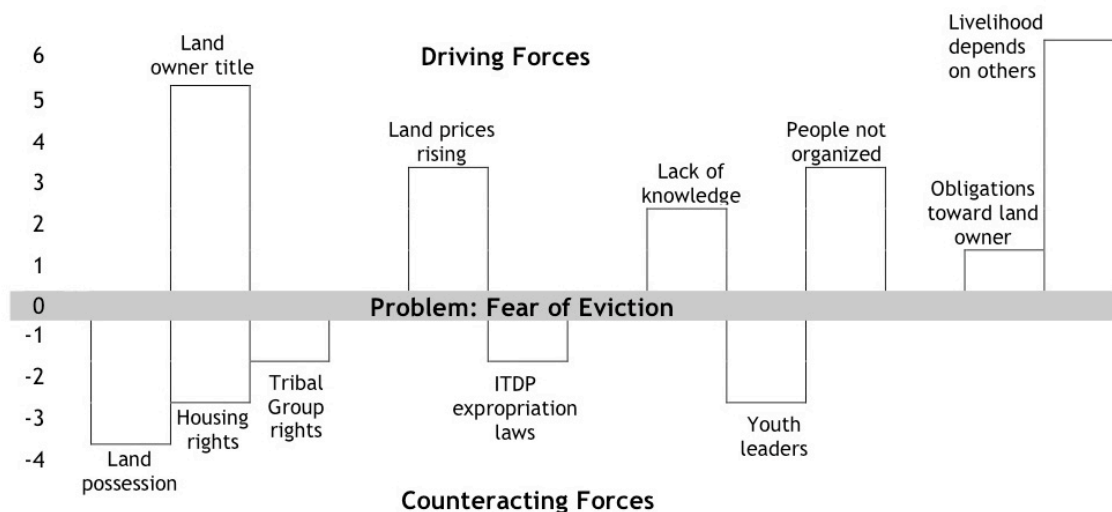
The forces driving the fear of eviction are:

- 1) The land owner has a legal title to the land;
- 2) Land prices are rising quickly;
- 3) The Katkari generally lack knowledge of their legal rights;
- 4) People in the hamlet are not organized;
- 5) There is a feeling of obligation toward the previous land owner due to past and on-going favors;
- 6) The livelihoods of most Katkari depend on others, including the non-tribal villagers.

The forces counteracting the fear of eviction are:

- 1) Families currently have de facto possession of the land;
- 2) Legal provisions (Government Circular dated 1<sup>st</sup> of May, 2000) proclaim housing rights;
- 3) The Katkari are classified as a Primitive Tribal Group with specific measures for legal protection of their rights;
- 4) There are provisions in the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) to compensate land owners in cases of expropriation;
- 5) Leadership is emerging among the youth.

Graph 1: Factors that drive or counteract the fear of eviction



The forces driving the fear of eviction among the Katkari are seen by the participants as stronger overall than the counteracting or restraining forces. The landowner has legal title to the land, and can therefore count on the support of authorities to dispose of his land when and as he wishes. Land prices are rising rapidly, creating ever stronger fears that sellers and buyers will want to be sure the land is free of any encumbrance. The majority of residents in the hamlet remain unaware of their rights and the hamlet as a whole does not have the capacity to organize any collective resistance. Residents

feel an obligation to the previous land owner and therefore some at least are more likely to go along with his wishes. Finally, a very strong driving factor completely unanticipated by ADS is the fact that the Katkari feel highly dependent on the non-tribal village and on non-Katkari employers generally for their livelihood.

The strongest counteracting or restraining force available to the Katkari is their current possession of the land: the Katkari live there while the land owner lives in Mumbai. This factor, along with the legal provisions that back up their tribal and housing rights to residence, helps allay their fears of eviction so long as they are there (and not migrating to work on brick kilns). The provisions of the ITPD for compensation of land owners in cases of conflict with tribal populations are not a strong counteracting force, especially considering that land prices are much higher than rates normally used by government agencies to expropriate land owners. The only other factor in their favour is the emergence of youth leadership in the hamlet keen to break free from their bondage, and able to call on legal protections available to them if the land owner actually begins to evict them. The participants indicated, however, that residents do not want to do anything that would force the land owner to act against them.

---

## Interpretation

The strong forces driving the fear of eviction and relatively weak counteracting forces perceived by the participants reflect the extreme vulnerability the Katkari feel to forces beyond their control. Legal protections of various kinds, while strong on paper, depend almost entirely on the actions of government officials with a history of disinterest or even antagonism toward the plight of the Katkari. The Katkari fear eviction but also open conflict with actors that are much more powerful than they are and that can make things worse not only by uprooting them from their homes but also blocking their access to a livelihood.

---

## Action

The participants concluded from the analysis that they have no option but to live with the fear of eviction. Presentation of a resolution regarding their land rights before the village council seemed too risky at the present time. They appreciated, however,

the importance of a continuous presence in the village as a factor stopping their fears from getting more intense. The emerging youth leadership in the community represented in the group resolved to keep track of family migration out of the community, as a means of monitoring when the hamlet is most vulnerable to eviction. They also decided to continue learning from ADS about their land rights, and to explore more actively the options for diversifying community livelihoods. ADS resolved not to press the Katkari to present a petition to village authorities.

---

### Observations on the Process

The legal factors driving and counteracting the fear of eviction were difficult to score at first because a number of the participants were not very familiar with these provisions. This situation was managed by asking Katkari participants with more knowledge to explain to the others in detail, and revising the scores at various points in the discussion. The accuracy of the final result was confirmed by the participants, who also said that it helped them understand the concerns of their neighbours. All participants felt that it was important for ADS to continue to provide them with access to information on land rights and that they could continue to do so quietly without putting either party at risk.