

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

Concepts and Tools for  
Collaborative Inquiry and Social Engagement

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### Title

**The Ideal Scenario of Legal Title in Siddeshwarwadi,  
Maharashtra, India**

### Key Words

Ideal Scenario, Technique Report, India, Tribal Population, Land  
Tenure, Environment

### Reference and Acknowledgement

Buckles, D.; Khedkar, R.; Patil, D.; Ghevde, B. 2006. The Ideal  
Scenario of Legal Title in Siddeshwarwadi, Maharashtra, India.  
Social Analysis Systems<sup>2</sup> Technique Report # 13, 3 pp. Retrieved  
from: <http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/handle/123456789/27343>.

### Context



Siddeshwarwadi is a hamlet of non-literate and very poor tribal  
people known as the *Katkari*. Most healthy men, women and  
children work as bonded labour at brick-making kilns in the region.  
They move from one place to another, from season to season, to  
find work, leaving their homes unattended for months at a time.  
The hamlet is located on parts of three properties owned by people  
in the nearby caste village (Siddeshwar) some 110 Km southeast of  
Mumbai, Maharashtra. The *Katkari* do not have legal title to the land  
even though they have lived there for many generations and special  
clauses in Indian law affirm the rights of tribal people to residential  
lands (Goathan).

A non-governmental organization called SOBTI has been working  
in Siddeshwarwadi and other *Katkari* communities for many years  
and had conducted an assessment of the problem with residents  
(using *Problem Tree*, see Buckles, et. al. 2006, Social Analysis  
Systems<sup>2</sup> Technique Report #4, 4pp.). It had shown that while  
residents did not feel threatened with immediate eviction from their  
village they felt strongly that the causes and effects of not having  
title touched on matters of more immediate concern. They wanted  
to do something about it but could not imagine how to inspire other  
residents to act.

For a report on a series of SAS<sup>2</sup> diagnoses with the *Katkari*, see Buckles, D.; Khedkar, R.; Patil, D.; Ghevde, B. forthcoming. The Land Struggles of the *Katkari*.

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## Purpose

To imagine an ideal scenario that residents of Siddeshwarwadi could achieve if they had legal title to residential land.

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## Process Summary

SOBTI convened an evening meeting in Siddeshwarwadi of the same people who were involved in earlier discussions (see Problem Tree). Most attended (7 men and 3 women) along with several other residents who had not been part of the previous meeting. The core problem (no legal tenure) was discussed and converted into a positive goal shared by the participants (Siddeshwarwadi becomes a legal hamlet). Participants then reviewed the reasons they do not have title to the residential lands identified during the *Problem Tree* exercise (causes) and converted these into positive statements of what they would have to do (means) to secure title. They also reviewed the effects of the problem of not having title identified using the Problem Tree, and converted these into positive statements (dreams) of things that could be achieved if they had secure title. The multi-level relationships were displayed in a visual way using cards on a wall and the main findings discussed in detail. The facilitators prepared a draft report on the assessment afterwards. The participants knew that a report would be prepared based on the results, and agreed to share their information.

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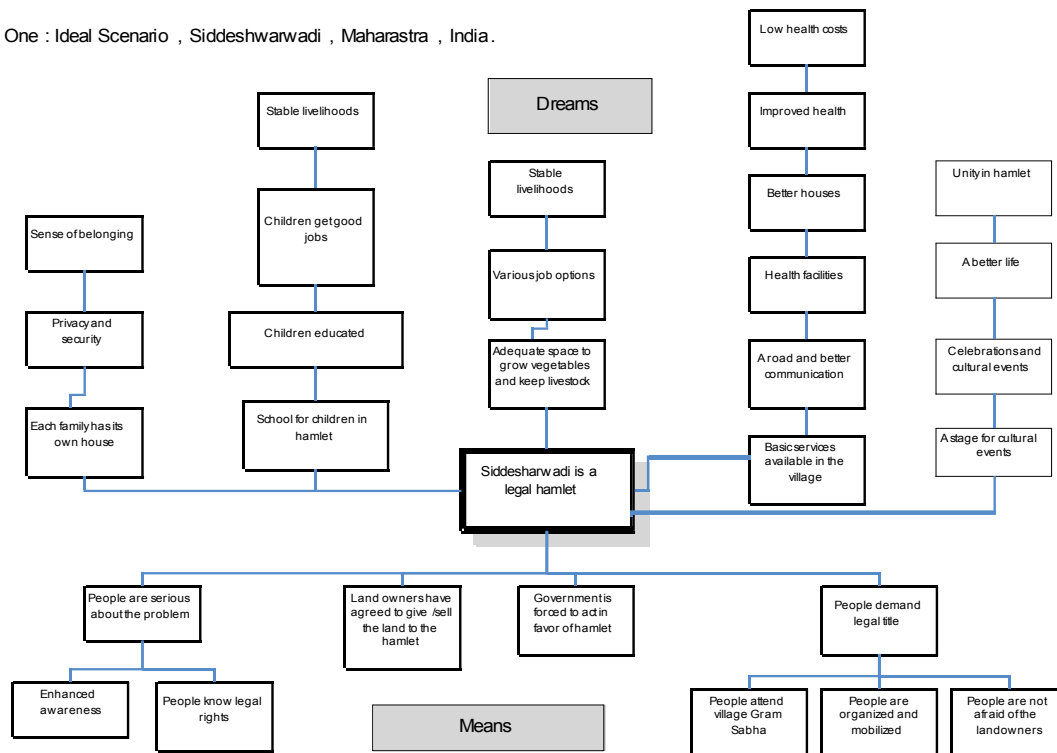
## Analysis

The **dreams** and **means** that participants stated during the exercise are presented in Figure 1. The means to achieve the initial goal (Siddeshwarwadi becomes a legal hamlet) were separated into two categories: those that residents have control over and those that depend largely on others. Discussion focused on the means within their control, and in particular the fact that all residents would have to take the problem seriously and collectively demand their rights. Participants also recognized that government would need to act in favour of the hamlet and landowners would need to be convinced to sell or give the land to the hamlet.



If the initial goal was achieved, the *Katkari* could act on many dreams important to them. Government programs that support tribal people could be used to: i) build a school in the hamlet, which would in turn give their children an opportunity to learn and get access to better jobs; ii) build better houses, a road to the village, and a health centre, bringing important overall improvements to the quality of life in the village. Presently, these programs were not available to them because of the insecurity of the village land. The participants also said that their incomes would be more stable if they could use their homesteads to raise livestock and grow market vegetables, something not allowed by the current landowners. The dream that generated the most excitement in the group, however, was the idea of building a village stage for cultural events. The *Katkari* have a unique style of music and dance they enjoy immensely. They said that having a stage on which to perform would bring immense benefits to community life and foster unity among residents.

Figure One : Ideal Scenario , Siddeshwarwadi , Maharashtra , India.



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## Interpretation

The vision of the future that emerged through the assessment was inspiring for the participants not only because they saw how the basic amenities of life could improve but also because their dignity and value as individuals and as a distinct community could be affirmed. The possibility of creating a cultural space of their own was particularly important to the participants as they and *Katkari* generally take particular joy in their own songs, music and dance. The uncertainty of the participants regarding how to convince other *Katkari* that they should join forces to address the problem was resolved by the development of a vision of the future in which they had a cultural life they could enjoy.

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## Action



Participants decided to discuss their collective dreams with other members of their community, with a particular focus on the cultural stage. If the response was positive, they would organize a petition to the village authorities for support during an upcoming general assembly (*Gram Sabha*). As a symbol of their resolve, the participants and other residents later raised and anointed a stone pillar marking the entrance to the hamlet. Rituals of this kind had marked the boundaries of *Katkari* communities in the past. They also noted that the gesture could be seen positively by the landowners as an indication of the proposed legal limit of their village, beyond which they would not try to expand (see Social Analysis Systems Technique Report #4, this volume, for a discussion of the concerns of landowners). SOBTI decided to support these village actions by facilitating an assessment of the stakeholders involved in the *Gram Sabha*, so residents could know how best to approach them.

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## Observations on the Process

Initially, participants could not imagine the main goal of having legal title to the hamlet because it seemed beyond the reach of any one person. They also thought that the idea of “dreams” was to be taken literally, as in the dreams people have when they are asleep. The idea of a group dream emerged when someone suggested that they build a stage for cultural events. This captured the imagination of the group and stimulated their thinking about different ways their lives could be improved as a community. They said that they

had never before considered what it meant to have a collective dream. The participants indicated that they were moved by the breadth and depth of the picture of their community that emerged from the exercise, something they had not thought possible. They also noted that the means identified during the exercise, and in particular inspiring villagers to take the problem seriously, were very relevant to their circumstances and worth pursuing.