

# A STUDY ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES OF TRIBA COMMUNITIES IN RAIGAD DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA

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## **Abstract**

*In India, the tribal community constitutes approximately 8.6% of the total population (Census 2011). The tribal communities, often referred to as Adivasis, have distinct cultural identities, languages, traditions, and socio-economic structures.*

*Historically, they depended on forest-based livelihoods. Later, colonial policies disrupted their way of life, leading to severe economic hardships. Land alienation has made them highly vulnerable to economic instability. Additionally, with limited access to education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities they remain vulnerable. Despite various government interventions and legal provisions for welfare schemes, the tribal community continues to struggle to meet their basic needs and achieve economic stability. The objective of this paper is to study the social, economic challenges faced by the tribal community. It also emphasises the need for the introduction of policies focusing on education, healthcare, livelihoods, and land rights to ensure sustainable development for the tribal community in the Raigad district of Maharashtra. The data was collected by using Survey method in a tribal hamlet namely Chafewadi, Phanaswadi and Dhamole.*

**Keywords:** Tribal community, Livelihood, Economic instability, Raigad district.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The scheduled tribe (ST) population is 104.2 million, which is 8.6 percent of the total population of India (Census 2011). Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Karnataka are the states having a large number of ST populations. The overall areas inhabited by the tribal population constitute a significant part of the underdeveloped areas of the country. About 93 percent of them live in rural areas and are engaged in agriculture and allied activities.

Tribal communities in India are known as Schedule Tribes (ST). They have a definite geographical and Social area and live in hilly or Forest areas. According to D.N. Majumdar “a tribe is a collection of families or group of families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well-assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations”

The socio-demographic figures reveal the disadvantaged position of the STs compared to other categories of the population. The literacy rate among the STs in India is 63.1 percent (NSSO, 2010), which is lower than the national literacy rate, i.e., 72.8 percent (Census, 2011). The dropout rate among the STs is 70.5, which is much higher than the dropout rate of all categories, i.e., 49.15 percent. The sex ratio among the STs is 990, which is relatively better than the general population, i.e., 940 (Census, 2011). The demographic figures reveal that the tribal population is the most disadvantaged, exploited, and neglected in India. Despite specific constitutional provisions, they are backward compared to the general population; even their situation is worse than the Schedule Caste (SC) and Other Backward Class (OBC) population (Xaxa, 2012). As per the Census, (2001), As compared to the sex ratio for the overall population (933 females per 1000 male), the sex ratio among Scheduled Tribes is more favourable, at 977 females per thousand males.

In Maharashtra, the scheduled tribe population was 73.18 lakhs (1991), which constituted 9.27 percent of the state's total population. It increased to 85.77 lakhs in 2001, but the proportion has reduced to 8.85 percent and 9.35 percent in 2011 (105.10 lakhs). There are many tribal communities in the Raigad district of Maharashtra. The total ST population in Raigad district as per the 1991 Census is 2, 33,953. The 2001 Census reports a marginal rise in the population of Scheduled Tribes in Raigad 2, 69124. The 1991 Census provides details of

three major tribes in the Raigad district as below, and the Katkaris constitute the most numerical Scheduled Tribe in Raigad. (Census, 2001)

The present study is on Katakari and Thakar community in Kharghar, Navi Mumbai. Katakari were thinkers scattered in small communities throughout the hill ranges and forest of Raigad and Thane districts of the state of Maharashtra. Later, in 1950's Katakari families began to migrate permanently from ancestral area in the hill to out karts of agricultural villages on the plains, and many very small Katakari hamlets are now spread throughout the region Khalapur, Sudhagar, Karjat, pen, Panvel Tahsils of the Raigad district and various Tahsils in thane district, right up to outskirts of Mumbai.

### Methodology

The mixed-method approach was adopted for this study, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Data was collected using tools such as Community Profiling, Focused Group Discussions, Semi-Structured Interviews, and Field Observations.

### Sampling

The study was conducted in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, where three tribal hamlets were selected as the study universe. Simple random sampling was used for data collection.

### Data Collection Tools

**Community Profile:** The village information included the socio-economic background of the villagers, covering aspects such as religion, caste, housing, sanitation facilities, water sources, fuel usage, and ownership of modern household items. It also examined educational status, schooling facilities, and economic activities within the community. Additionally, the study assessed awareness and knowledge of government schemes and programs aimed at uplifting socially and economically disadvantaged communities. The livestock situation in the village, along with income generation from livestock, was also documented.

**Household Survey:** The household survey gathered information on family members, income sources, livelihood patterns, educational status, belief systems, and cultural practices.

### Data Analysis

The collected data was entered into Excel, and charts and tables were prepared for analysis

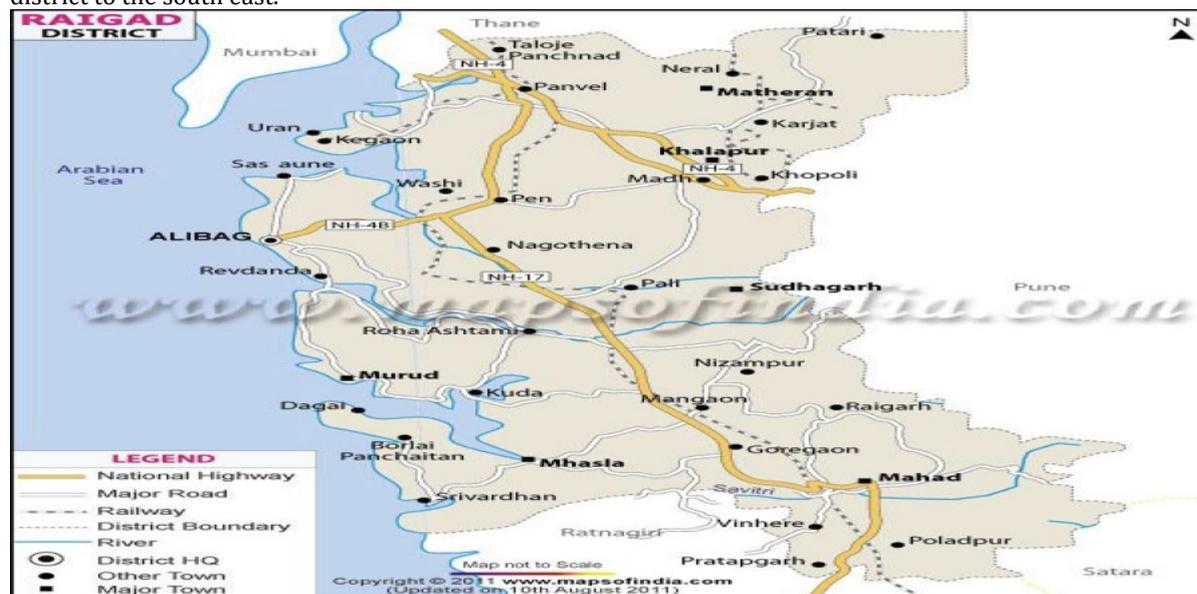
### Study Area

According to the 2011 population census, Maharashtra has a population of 112.4 million, making it the second most populated state after Uttar Pradesh. (Economic Survey of Maharashtra, 2021)

The State has 36 districts which are divided into six revenue divisions viz. Konkan, Pune, Nashik, Aurangabad, Amravati and Nagpur for administrative purposes, with effective machinery for planning at the district level.

### Study District

Raigad district is situated in Konkan region of Maharashtra and it is surrounded by Mumbai Suburban district to the northwest, Thane district to the north, Pune district to the east, Ratnagiri district to the south and Satara district to the south east.



The total population of the district as per census 2011 was 2634200 of which 63.2 percent is rural and 36.8 percent is urban population (k. Khemnar, 2017)

The study was conducted in tribal areas in Kharghar city of Raigad District of Maharashtra. The tribal hamlets are located on Kharghar hill, namely Phanaswadi, Chafewadi, and Dhamole. The Kharghar hills are always crowded on weekends as visitors go for a walk in this area. The area is covered with greenery and waterfalls during the monsoon. The greenery and nature attract people from Mumbai, Thane, Navi Mumbai, Raigad, Kalyan, Badlapur, etc. Due to heavy rainfall, landslides, and uprooting of trees are significant issues faced by the people.

### Objective

To study the social, economic situation of tribal community from Raigad District of Maharashtra.

### Finding of the Study

#### Background Information

The Katakari Tribes are located in Raigad, Palghar, Ratnagiri, and Thane District of Maharashtra. They are former criminal tribes under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871. After independence the act was repealed and these tribes were decriminalised. However, currently, they are classified as particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). The Katakari community is a tribal group of indigenous hunter gatherers. They live near forests and hills and hunt wildlife. They also gather forest products such as firewood, honey etc. They also work in agriculture as farm labourers. The name Katakari comes from their traditional livelihood activity which includes collecting catechu (Katha) from the forest. The Katakari community is known as Katakari, Kothari and Kathodia and also has been categorised as a scheduled tribe.

#### Occupation

Agriculture and Livelihood: The majority of people are working in Indian oil companies, Golf, Central Park as laborers and some of the people are working in Kharghar *Mahanagarpalika* as sweeper staff. Majority of female members are engaged in buying and selling vegetables. They used to go to Panvel market in the early morning to buy the vegetables and then they sell vegetables in Kharghar near Central park. Also few people are cultivating vegetables in land given by the Forest Department as all the land in the area comes under the forest department. Therefore the people do not have land in their own name.

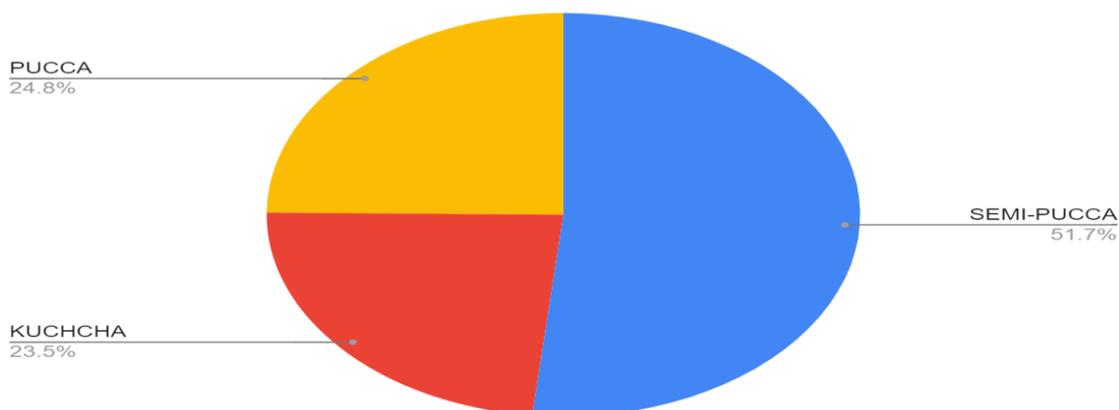
#### Education

Education in Range	Frequency
Uneducated	76
Primary	34
Upper Primary	13
Higher Secondary	26

The tribal hamlets have primary school and Anganwadi. Majority of children's are in *Nere Ashram School* in Panvel. The Ashram school is providing education from 1st class to 12th class. Also children's are not able to continue their school after secondary school especially girls as they have to go to Kharghar city for further education.

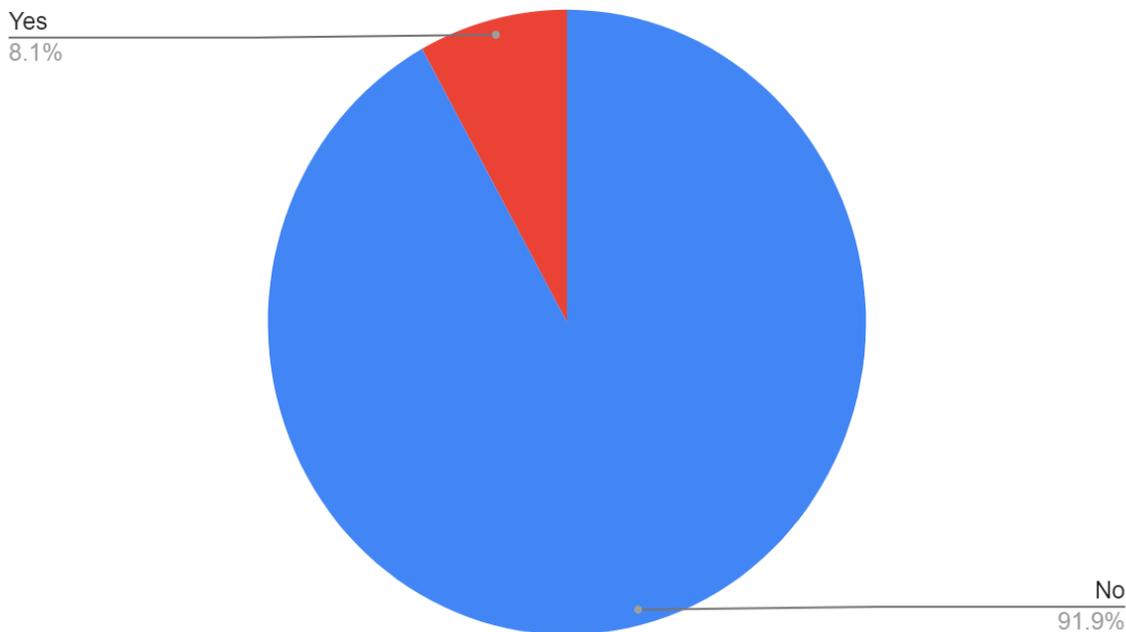
#### House & Land

Type of house



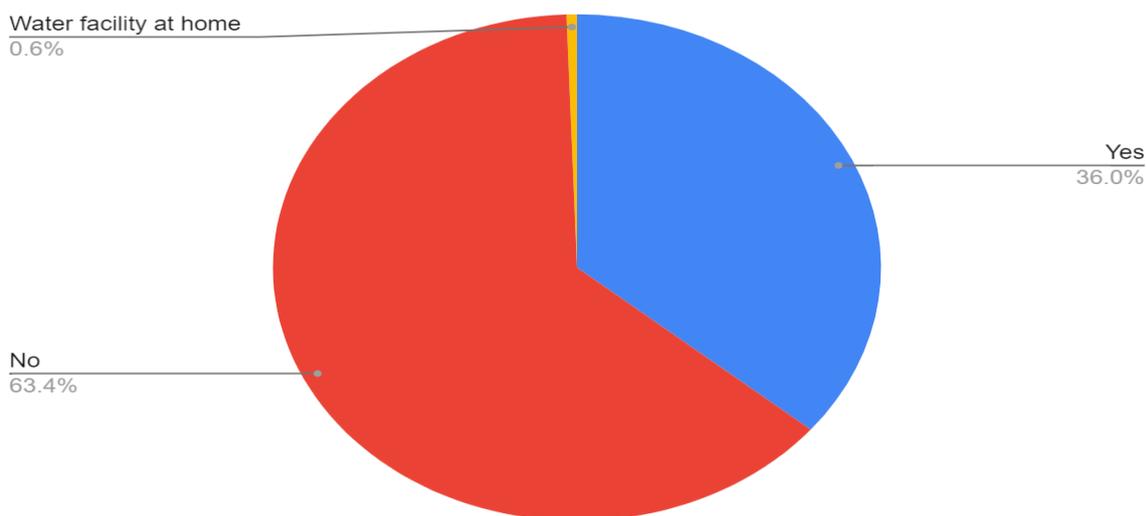
The Majority of tribes have kaccha houses which are made by dunk and soul. According to the various literatures, landlessness is the biggest problem of these tribes. They do not have a culture of savings and due to this they expect payment at the end of the day.

### Own Agricultural land



### Water Facility

#### Water facility at home



The main source of water is well especially in the rainy season but there is a lack of water in the summer season. In the summer season they depend on the water tanker.

### Market and Transportation

The roads are available in all three hamlets which are constructed by the CIDCO. There is no bus facility in the hamlets. Therefore the majority of people use their own Motorcycles or Auto to go to Kharghar city or their

workplace. There is no daily market available in the hamlets. People go for shopping such as groceries, clothes, utensils etc in the weekly market of Kharghar city which is on every Friday.

## CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted the social economic condition of Katkari and Thakur tribal communities from Raigad district of Maharashtra. The study found that majority of Tribal communities have lost their traditional source of livelihood. The tribes have limited socioeconomic activities due to lack of education, lack of productive assets, and lack of livelihood opportunities. Landlessness is another major issue of Katkari tribes in study area. Their livelihood is totally dependent on daily wages and lack of awareness and access to resources leads to poverty and they have to search survival opportunities for livelihood outside the village. The government has introduced various laws and acts but still it has failed to provide land rights to the tribes. Lack of education is another major issue of Katkari tribes.

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