Social Analysis Systems²

Concepts and Tools for
Collaborative Research and Social Action

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Title	**Insecure Village and Housing Land among the Katkari, Maharastra, India**
Key Words	Order and Chaos, India, tribal population, Katkari, project planning
Reference and Acknowledgement	Buckles, D.; Khedkar, R.; Patil, D.; Ghevde, B. 2006. Insecure Village and Housing Land among the Katkari, Maharastra, India. Social Analysis Systems² Technique Report #2, 5 pp. Retrieved from: http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/handle/123456789/22505

Context

The Katkari are a tribal population in Raigad and Thane Districts of Maharashtra, India. More than 200 of their hamlets do not have legal title to the land where their homes have been for decades. The land is owned mostly by non-tribals living in nearby villages. Some of the hamlets are located on government lands (generally the Forest Department). By and large, the land owners do not allow Katkari families to improve or build new houses, to grow backyard gardens, to keep cattle in the hamlet, or even to develop basic amenities like drinking water wells, schools, approach roads, or dispensaries. As a result, conditions in most of the villages are primitive, cramped and filthy. Families live as well with the constant fear of eviction, an ever-increasing occurrence in Thane District where land prices are rising rapidly due to proximity to Mumbai. In some cases entire hamlets have been surrounded by barbed wire fences to prevent any further expansion by the Katkari families and to intimidate them into moving to another location. Most healthy men, women and children in the hamlets 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.

Governments at both the State and Federal levels have put in place a great deal of legislation to secure village and house sites for

families from so-called "backward" classes (including tribal communities). They have also periodically issued Government Resolutions, Circulars, Orders and Letters pertaining to village and housing land, based on legal instruments such as The Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1948; The Maharashtra Land Revenue Code, 1966; and the Bombay Village Panchayats Act, 1958. Implementation of these measures has been poor, however, as evidenced by Government correspondence criticising the Collectors and Tahsildars for failing to implement the Village and Housing Site schemes.

The non-governmental organizations Academy of Development Science (ADS) and SOBTI have been working in Katkari communities for many years, and have accumulated a great deal of information regarding the legal rights of the Katkari. They joined forces to secure Katkari ownership of housing land in a few hamlets, with a view to showing that it could be done and providing a model for the government to follow. Funds were acquired from an international organization to engage a team of people, including several Katkari, to undertake the project.

For a report on a series of SAS^2 diagnoses undertaken with the Katkari, see Buckles, D.; Khedkar, R.; Patil, D.; Ghevde, B. forthcoming. The Land Struggles of the Katkari. Social Analysis Systems^2, http://www.sas2.net.

Purpose	To characterize the project and select the planning approach and management tools needed to achieve project goals.

Process Summary

Staff of ADS and SOBTI met to develop a plan for securing housing land in a few Katkari hamlets. After reviewing project goals and outlining plans in general terms, they estimated the chances of achieving these goals and the level of certainty or confidence in the knowledge they had about the conditions and factors affecting the plans, using a scale of 0 to 10. The character of the project was identified and a planning approach and management tool was selected. Six months later, a second assessment was done and project modalities adjusted.
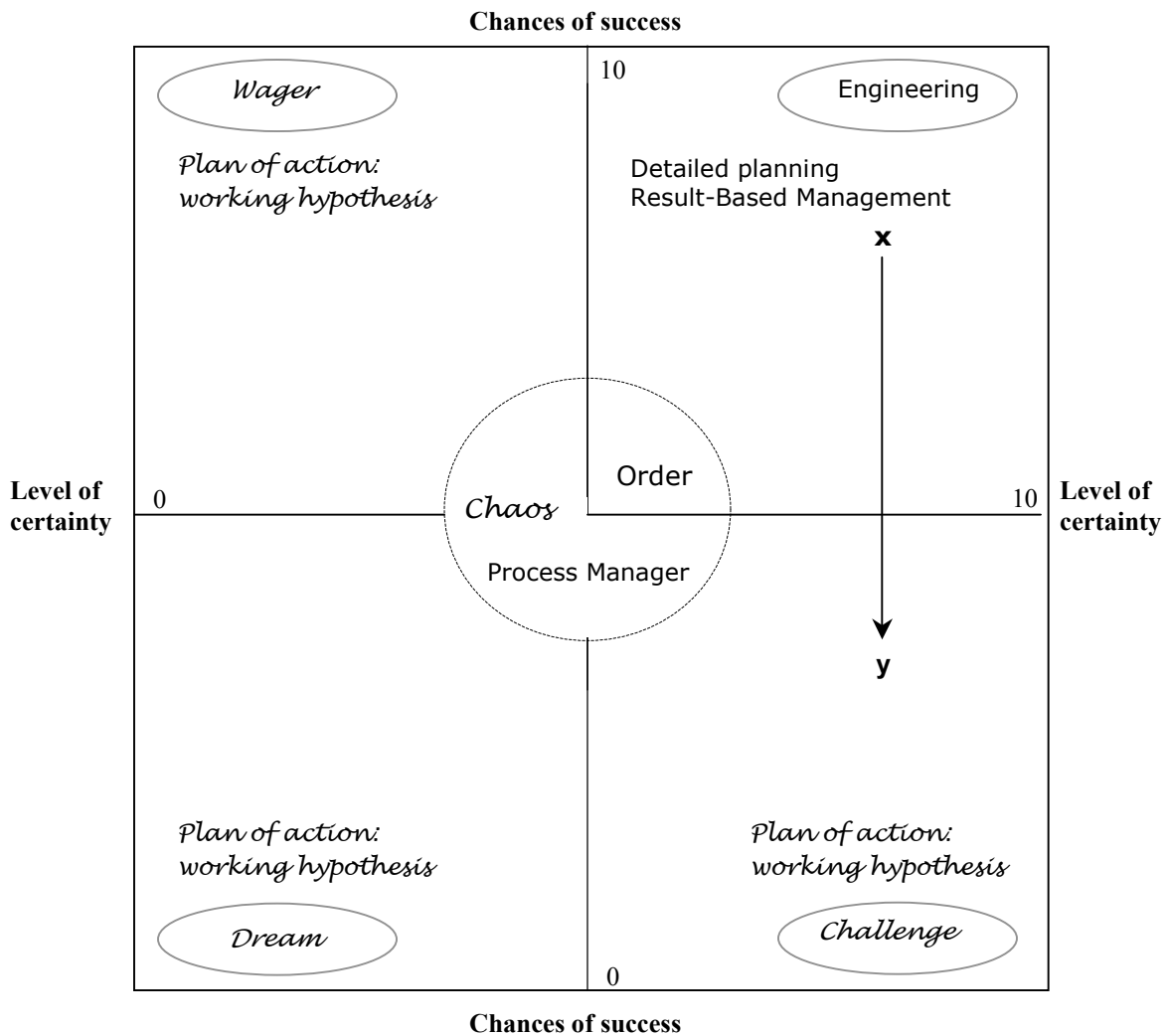
Analysis

The participants noted during their first meeting that the problem they are addressing through the project (legal title to housing land in a few communities) is very precise and narrow, and that project resources are adequate. While intervention of government officials in support of the project goal could not be assured, they noted the substantial legal support for the position of the Katkari and favourable political climate for minority rights. They consequently considered their chances of achieving the project goal to be quite high, meriting a score of 7.5. They also gave a high score (8) for the level of certainty they felt regarding the assessment of probability. This reflected their considerable knowledge of the legal issues and of the hamlets and actors involved. Based on this assessment (Graph 1) the participants characterized the project as a straightforward 'engineering' project that could be planned now in detail. They subsequently developed a linear and sequential plan with specific and measurable objectives involving a detailed series of activities and sub-activities leading toward their goal.

Six months after initiating the project no hamlet had acquired legal title to village land and only one had submitted the requisite petition to the village council. The main reason for this situation was that while individual Katkari wanted to secure their tenure, collective will was undermined by fear of retaliation from the land owners. This apparent failure led to a reconsideration and reassessment of the character and plans of the project.

The new score given for probability of success was much lower than before, dropping from 7.5 to 4. The experience of the previous six months had shown that insecure tenure over housing land, while a very specific problem, is embedded in a much broader and complex situation involving inter-related factors such as insecure livelihoods, rapidly changing land prices in Thane District, the political and social marginalization of the Katkari and other considerations affecting the willingness of the Katkari to actively and collectively petition village and housing land. The impact of these factors on project goals could not have been predicted before actually engaging with the entire community on the issue, testing plans in some settings and collecting information on emerging

trends and alternative legal strategies.

The confidence they have in this new assessment is high (8), reflecting their view that the experience of the previous six months had revealed all of the likely hurdles and barriers to project goals. Information gaps remain, however, regarding the best timing for submitting petitions to government officials and the capacity of ADS and SOBTI to assess and respond to the problem of insecure livelihood. The participants concluded that the situation is a 'challenge' because it seems that the situation of the Katkari needs to change on many fronts simultaneously before later steps can be planned.

Chances of success

Wager	10 Engineering
Plan of action: *working hypothesis*	Detailed planning Result-Based Management
	x

Level of certainty   0   *Chaos*   Order   10   **Level of certainty**

Process Manager

y

Plan of action: *working hypothesis*	*Plan of action:* *working hypothesis*
Dream	*Challenge*
0	

Chances of success

Interpretation	The development of detailed project plans at the outset reflects the orderly situation anticipated by the organizations and funding agency involved. The impact of factors like insecure livelihoods and the rapid pace of changes in land prices on project goals could not have been predicted before actually engaging with the entire community on the issue, testing plans in some settings and collecting information on emerging trends and alternative legal strategies. The revised assessment reflects the need for iterative and continuous planning of activities in response to a challenging situation.
Action	The organizations decided to focus their attention on Katkari hamlets in Raigad District where land prices are more stable and the organizations have funded projects offering livelihood options for the Katkari. Detailed plans were developed for a one year period. Ongoing work in Thane District was planned for the short term only, with a focus on monitoring both local and state-wide political developments with the potential to impact on the timing of future petitions for village and housing land.
Observations on the Process	Differences in the knowledge base of the two organizations involved were not considered during the first assessment. One organization had a history of working in both Raigad and Thane District while the other organization had only worked in Thane District. This was corrected prior to the second assessment by organizing frequent cross-visits between the two regions, to ensure that when assessing the chances of success and the level of certainty the representatives of both organizations were intimately familiar with the conditions affecting the project as a whole.