Chapter VI Major Findings and Conclusions

Recapitulation

The present thesis is an attempt to examine occupational mobility of a nomadic community which was notified as a ‘criminal tribe’ in the colonial period. In India about seven per cent of nomadic communities exist and could be broadly categorized as pastoralists, foragers/hunter-gathers and peripatetic people. These communities provided various types of services to sedentary people. Many of them were traders, artisans, entertainers and marshal groups. In the colonial period, the economic policies and infrastructural developments introduced by the British government ruined the traditional means of livelihood of nomadic communities. The British government wanted to increase its revenue; hence, it introduced several economic policies. The trade regulation policy, the land acquisition policy and the forest policy were policies, which affected the livelihood of nomadic communities. The trade regulation policy established a government monopoly over the traditional trade of the nomadic communities. In the name of the environment, the British government introduced the forest policies and land acquisition policies. The government was interested in accumulating the forest wealth as state property to increase its revenue. Along with these revenue increasing policies, the British government established the railway network for the transportation of new material and manufactured goods. These economic policies and technological developments changed the traditional structure of trading and livelihood of indigenous nomadic communities. It brought darkness in the life of the indigenous communities. They were displaced in the process of development. Many petty traders, transporters, pastorals, and foragers lost their traditional livelihood. In these circumstances, some of these members of nomadic communities resorted to committing crimes for their survival, which caused the notification of some of these nomadic communities as
‘criminal tribes’. In fact, in Europe and particularly in England, the vagrants’ i.e. nomadic communities were notified as a ‘criminal class’. This skewed approach towards nomadic communities remained crucial in the stigmatization of nomadic communities in India and in the construction of the Criminal Tribe Acts. The communities notified as a criminal tribe in the colonial period were stigmatized. Later, their stigmatized identity became an obstruction in their development and assimilation. Attitudes towards nomadic communities remained despicable. They have been seen as a social problem and alienated from larger society. They faced several problems concerning their survival and settlement.

Later, these notified ‘criminal tribes’ suffered a lot. Their criminalization resulted in notification, registration and a daily roll-call. Due to restrictions on their wandering life, their survival became hard. Their notification as a ‘criminal tribe’ was turned into the basis of their identification and social status. As a result, they were excluded from the process of development.

In the post independent period, with the introduction of western education, urbanization, industrialization, rational bureaucratic system of administration and judiciary, the traditional social structure started changing. The central and state governments have adopted a policy for enlisting of backward classes to bring about some changes in the life of backward communities. The planning in India was initiated to bring economic equilibrium and social justice to the people of all strata. To bring about equality and social justice, the government of India implemented the policy of protective discrimination i.e. reservation of jobs in government administration, in public undertaking and in state-funded educational institutions, which created opportunities for social mobility of marginal sections of Indian society. It introduced a number of welfare measures for the upliftment of marginal sections. On the same lines, the state government of Maharashtra launched several welfare schemes for the development of denotified-nomadic communities. The process of planned rehabilitation and assimilation of denotified-nomadic communities started from 1960. For the economic development of denotified and nomadic communities and to motivate them for self-employment, on 2\(^{nd}\) February 1984, Vasantrao Naik Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes Development Corporation
was established. The state government made a provision of 3 per cent reservation for denotified communities in government jobs and educational institutions.

In the context of stigmatization of the nomadic communities in the colonial period and the post-independent welfare programmes of the government, the present thesis examined the sources of occupational mobility among the Kunchi Koravis in Kolhapur district. The Kolhapur district has a historical background of social reform movements and of being a welfare state of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja. Chhatrapati Shahu had taken special efforts for the inclusion of backward classes in the process of development. He raised the aspirations of the backward classes by introducing social legislations. His policies were not confined merely to caste people; he patronized the nomadic communities too. While nomadic communities were ostracized as a criminal tribe all over India, Chhatrapati Shahu began to assimilate and settle them permanently. He took special efforts for the inclusion of the nomadic and the then criminal communities in the process of development by providing them land, building houses and employing them in several departments of the Kolhapur state. The Kunchi Koravi community was also patronized by Chhatrapati Shahu. He made several attempts to bring them into the mainstream society and to wipeout the stigma of criminality. After Shahu, the social movements in Kolhapur were led by Marxist, Phule-Ambedkarite and Lohialite activists. The Rashtra Seva Dal and its activists had taken efforts for the eradication of stigma of criminality and to involve the Kunchi Koravis in the process of development.

In brief, taking into account the stigmatization of Kunchi Koravis in the colonial period, the post independent welfare programmes for denotified-nomadic communities and the unique social reformatory background of Kolhapur, the present thesis asks the following questions - whether the Kunchi Koravis have been mobilized towards modern occupations and if so, what has been their motivation? Whether they have been assimilated or integrated into mainstream society? This chapter presents the major findings of the thesis, which have been discussed in the previous chapters and the conclusion in the context of the selected conceptual framework.

**Major findings:**
The major findings of this research are given below:

The Kunchi Koravis in the Kolhapur district were engaged in four main occupational categories. It was found that for majority of the respondents, the sources of employment were wage earning (35.2 per cent), Class IV service jobs (25.7 per cent), petty business (15.2 per cent) and small business (12.6 per cent). The data indicates that traditional occupations of the community were declining. However, 50 per cent respondents were engaged in lower level of occupations.

Within the age group of below 40 years, 106 (55.7 per cent) respondents have adopted non-traditional occupations. Among them, the proportion of wage earners was 48.1 per cent. Secondly, from older to younger age group, the number of wage earners increased which indicates a lower level of occupational mobility among the younger age group.

In this study, residential background is a significant factor. It was found that housing segregation is an important indicator of social background of the respondents. Out of the 190 respondents, 79.4 per cent were concentrated in slum settlements. Of them, 134 (70.5 per cent) were residents of the Makadwale Vasahat, a homogeneous slum settlement while another 11 respondents (5.7 per cent) were resident of homogeneous settlement at Gadhinglaj. It reveals that residential segregation is a major aspect in this study. It is found that the respondents who had a lower level of occupation were mostly residents of either homogeneous settlements or slums. The respondents having the occupation of wage earning, petty business, small business and Class IV service jobs (74.7 per cent) were highly concentrated in the slum settlements. In contrast, the maximum respondents in Class II and III service jobs and medium business (10 of 14) were residing in the mixed and non-slum areas.

Out of the 190 respondents, there were 35 females (18.4 per cent) and 16 of them were engaged in petty business of cutlery selling, stationery and plastic goods selling. Eight respondents were sweepers in Kolhapur Municipal Corporation. Male respondents were concentrated in occupational categories of wage earning (31.5 per cent) and in Class IV service jobs (21.5 per cent). Of the 35 female respondents, 24 (68.5 per cent) were widows and the integrated percentage of widow, divorcee, deserted and separated was about 83 per cent. All the female respondents were
residents of the Makadwale Vasahat. The marital status of female respondents underlines the pathetic conditions of the settlement.

In spite of educational developments of the marginal sections in Kolhapur district, among the respondents, 40.5 per cent were illiterate and a majority of educated respondents had a lower level of education. It clearly shows the relation between occupational status and educational level. The illiterate and less educated respondents resorted to wage earnings, petty business and Class IV service jobs. Obviously, the respondents having a higher educational background were inclined towards Class II and III service jobs. The study reveals interrelation between residential background and educational attainment. It was found that the illiterate respondents spent their childhood in homogeneous settlements.

The data indicates the lower income level of the community. Out of the 190 respondents, 54.7 per cent received incomes below Rs. 5000 per month and 20 per cent (38) of them were earning between Rs. 500 and Rs. 2000 per month. All these respondents belonged to traditional occupation, wage earning and petty business.

It was found that 75 (39.4 per cent) respondents achieved intra-generational vertical upward mobility. Intra-generational occupational mobility was higher among the respondents in medium business and Class IV service jobs. Later, 15 respondents in small business showed upward mobility and their previous occupations were wage earning (12), petty business (1) and traditional occupation (3).

Some 54.2 per cent respondents show either inter-generational horizontal mobility or downward mobility and some 46.8 per cent respondents achieved inter-generational upward mobility. The respondents in Class II and III service jobs and medium business achieved medium level inter-generational occupational mobility. Thereafter, 30 respondents (15.9 per cent) in Class IV service jobs achieved inter-generational mobility.

In this study, apart from intra-generational mobility and inter-generational occupational mobility, the trend of occupational change was tested on two levels of generations. First, we looked at the percentage of respondents' generation with that of their fathers' and grand fathers' generation in each occupational category. The
data on the shift in occupations between generations proved affirmatively the result of inter-generational occupational mobility. It shows a trend of lower level of occupational mobility across three generations of the respondents, fathers and grandfathers. The lower level of occupations such as wage earnings, petty business and small business has shown an upward trend across three generations. Hence, a medium business and Class II and III service job is an emerging occupational category for the Kunchi Koravis in Kolhapur.

Secondly, the trend of occupational change was examined by making three generational categories of the respondents. The occupational category of wage earning has shown an upward trend across three generational categories of the respondents. Increased number and percentage of respondents in the occupational categories of wage earning and petty business indicates an overall trend of downward occupational mobility of the Kunchi Koravi community.

The data on education of respondent’s children reveals that compared to the respondent’s generation, the literacy rate was higher among the children’s generation and awareness about education of the children had increased among the respondents. However, some 44 per cent dropout rate among the children raises the question and anxiety about the social environment in the community.

From the data on occupational experience, it was found that some 81 respondents (42.6 per cent) were satisfied in their jobs. A majority of them belonged to the occupational category of medium business, service jobs and small business. All have cited increased income as the prime cause for job satisfaction. As many as 53.6 per cent respondents expressed dissatisfaction towards the job and most of them belonged to wage earning, petty business and traditional occupation categories. Low income, temporary nature and hardship in the job were the causes for their dissatisfaction.

Out of the 190 respondents, some 99 (52.1 per cent) perceived improvement in their social status compared to their parents. A majority of the respondents felt that adoption of modern occupation led to social status improvement. Most of them belonged to service jobs, small business and medium business. Especially for these respondents, along with modern occupation, personal conduct, educational
development and personal contact with other caste people was also important for status elevation.

It was found that satisfaction towards job and improvement in the social status was experienced by the respondents belonging to the same categories and vice versa.

To examine the assimilation and integration of the Kunchi Koravis into mainstream society was the main thrust of this study. It was found that at the personal level, only 26.3 per cent respondents had interaction with other caste people. All the respondents in medium business and Class II and III service jobs had interaction with other caste people. In contrast, 140 respondents’ (73.6 per cent) social interaction was confined to their own community. It was found that a majority of them belonged to traditional occupations, wage earning, Class IV service jobs and petty business. Compared to the respondents personal interaction with other caste people, a few i.e. 35 (18.4 per cent) families have interaction with other caste families. As many as 155 (81.5 per cent) respondent’s families’ interaction was confined to their own community. It was found that the respondents residing in the mixed settlements expressed satisfaction and reported satisfactory acceptance and social interaction with other caste people. However, for the respondents residing in homogeneous settlements, their interactions were confined to their own community and they had less experience of social status elevation. It indicates that along with the occupation of the respondents, the residential background was also a crucial factor in their social mobility.

In the context of the 'culture of poverty' concept, cultural traits of the slum settlement are examined to analyze downward and horizontal mobility or immobility. These are indebtedness, low literacy rate, stigmatized identity, drug addiction and its implication.

Out of the 190 respondents, 40 per cent were debtors. A majority of the respondents i.e. 64.4 per cent resorted to private sources such as relatives, friends, community people, money-lenders and cooperative credit societies for their loan requirements. Among the debtors, 70 per cent respondents belonged to the occupational category of wage earning and Class IV service jobs.
About fifty per cent respondents had at least one type of addiction. Out of the 190 respondents, 28.4 per cent had addiction of alcohol/dipsomania and 33.1 per cent had the habit of tobacco or gutka chewing. The respondents in wage earning (40 per cent) and Class IV service jobs (22.4 per cent) had a higher proportion of alcohol addicts compared to other occupational categories and were spending the maximum amount of their monthly incomes on their habits.

Out of the 190 families, only 61 (32.1 per cent) had benefited from welfare schemes. Merely 6 respondents (3.1 per cent) were rendered financial assistance by the government agencies such as VNDNTDC (Vasantarao Naik Denotified-Nomadic Tribes Development), nationalized banks and cooperative banks.

The analysis of upward occupational mobility of Kunchi Koravis indicates some motivational sources such as (i) Intervention/Help of community leaders, political leaders and social activists, (ii) Encouragement by the persons in the life of the respondents, (iii) Emulation of other’s jobs, (iv) Educational qualifications and (v) the Historical background of Kolhapur.

A significant number of respondents i.e. 29 (15.8 per cent) have given credit to the community leader or social activists for getting them a service job. A majority i.e. 25 of them were Class IV employees. A service job was the new and modern occupation for the Kunchi Koravis. In fact due to their nomadic way of life, low literacy or high proportion of illiterate people and absence of any skill, it was difficult for them to get any service job. But the intervention of community leaders, political leaders and social activists proved helpful for them to get service jobs.

Some 21 (11.5 per cent) respondents achieved upward occupational mobility due to some people who came into contact with them. The persons who encouraged occupational mobility were mostly immediate family members and other kin members. Besides them, friends, teachers and other acquaintances also had an important role to play. The respondents in the business of hoteling (1), transport (1), real estate agency and motorcycle mechanic (2) got the guidance and monetary help from their friends. One respondent who was a Cooperative Officer was motivated by his teacher who provided him financial assistance and career guidance.
Some 15 respondents (7.8%) were motivated by their employers and friends and emulating them, they shifted towards modern jobs. Most of them i.e. 8 respondents, emulated the work of their previous employers and they were the proprietors of motor garage (3), welding work shop (1) auto-rickshaw (2), newspaper selling agency (2) and tourist car ownership. Three respondents adopted the business of television cable network, emulating their friends. Two respondents were motivated towards the occupation of cutlery selling, emulating their neighbours. One respondent who was a police-constable was influenced by a female respondent and two youths of his own community, who were on the same position.

The 12 respondents (6.3 per cent) who had higher educational qualifications compared to other respondents achieved middle level occupational mobility. They were belonged to Class II & III service jobs and medium business category.

**Conclusions**

Some of the important conclusions of this thesis are stated below:

From the above brief review of occupational mobility among the Kunchi Koravis, one can come to the conclusion that community leaders, social activists, family and kin, friends and the people such as employers, teachers et al have played an important role in their occupational mobility. It shows that the social relations developed at the community and personal level became helpful in the upward mobility of the respondents.

Their stigmatization as 'criminal' isolated and segregated them from larger society. There was little scope for interaction with other people. As an ex-criminal community, they experienced ostracism in public life. Scepticism about their behaviour and rejection of their economic services by settled people became a barrier in their occupational mobility. In this situation, social activists and community leaders had taken some initiatives to break the impasse and accommodate the community people into the process of development. Rashtra Seva Dal’s social movement had made an attempt to bridge the gap between the marginal sections and the mainstream society. Association with social organizations was found to be useful in the emergence of leadership within the Kunchi Koravi community and ultimately for occupational mobility. Secondly, segregation from
mainstream society, lack of financial assistance from formal financial institutes and welfare agencies of the government, encouragement by family, kin, friends and persons in contact have also proved effective in the acceptance of new occupations.

Besides the above, the historical reformative background of Kolhapur resulted in the permanent settlement of the community and the emergence of post independent social movements for the upliftment of the marginal sections.

The gist of this analysis/argument is that as mentioned by Coleman and Putnam, the motivational factors of occupational mobility are nothing but social networks which served as resources for personal achievement i.e. occupational mobility of the respondents. Community leader, activists, family members, friends and welfare programmes (at the lower level) contributed towards finding a job, financial support and training i.e. guidance which resulted in the occupational mobility of the respondents. In short, social capital served as an asset for the Kunchi Koravi community.

However, in spite of available social capital in the form of their association with social organizations, through community activists and their kinship network; the Kunchi koravi community shows a trend of downward and horizontal mobility, particularly the respondents residing in the homogenous settlement.

The thesis argues that a low level of occupational mobility among the respondents is attributed to their stigmatization and the sub-culture of the settlement. The thesis reveals that there is interrelation between the place of settlement and occupational mobility. Despite their small numbers, respondents residing in the mixed non-slum areas have experienced upward mobility at occupational, educational and social interactional level as compared to the respondents residing in homogenous and slum settlements. Besides, the stigmatized identity of the Kunchi Koravi has resulted in the apathetic approach of outsiders and segregation of the community from larger society.

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1 John Field: *Social Capital*, Routledge, 2008, pp.48-60 and 133-156.
The respondents residing in the mixed areas had got an opportunity to effectively participate and integrate in the major institutions of the larger society. Their social interaction with other castes is not only outcomes of occupational mobility but it became the foundation of their occupational and social mobility. It became served as an asset for their mobility. Even a few respondents residing in the Makadwale Vasahat and Gadhinglaj settlement who achieved upward mobility and became medium businessman, owner of small business and Class II and III Officer because they got an opportunity to interact with the persons in the larger society and develop interaction with the persons of other castes in their student age. In contrast, the respondents of the Makadwale Vasaht and Gadhinglaj, their social interaction was confined to their own community. Lack of effective participation and integration in the larger society, they continued to preserve their own culture resulted in the downward and horizontal mobility of a majority of the respondents.

The thesis argues that the segregated homogenous slum settlement generates a set of negative traits such as drug addiction, illiteracy or low level of education, resorting on money lending for day to day needs and indebtedness, absence of savings etc. which become tends to perpetuate from generation to generation and reduce the possibility of effective participation in the socio-cultural and economic system of mainstream society results in the downward or horizontal mobility.

Social segregation and stigmatized identity of any community not only prevents them from social interaction with larger society but it preserves their sub culture for many generations and they also experience exclusion at social, political and economic level. Hence, the Makadwale Vasahat becomes an isolated and segregated colony in Kolhapur even when it is located in the centre of the city.

Besides, it has been found through in-depth survey that the majority of the respondents and their family members were deprived of state welfare programmes. The thesis come to the conclusion that state agencies have failed to approach the people at the bottom level and to structure need based policies. The state welfare measures have played a limited role in the assimilation of the denotified communities into mainstream society.
Finally, the thesis concludes that social capital i.e. social network developed at the individual and community level has a significant role in the occupational mobility of the respondents. It has served not only for their occupational mobility but to stop brutal atrocities against the community people. Without intervention of social activists and social associations, the assimilation of stigmatized communities into mainstream society would have been difficult.