

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

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3.1 INTRODUCTION:

The community of Gabits in the district of Sindhudurg practises fishing as their occupation and the main economic activity, though about 300 years ago, their occupation was naval warfare. The community, presently settled in the coastal areas of Sindhudurg district, considers itself as distinct from other communities and possesses certain individual religio-cultural traits and practices. The present Chapter attempts to present and analyse the primary data collected from the sample respondents through the administration of an interview schedule.

3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PECULIARITY:

3.2.1 Sexwise Distribution:

The Census Reports do not provide separate identification on the basis of caste and hence, it is difficult to ascertain the exact population of the Gabits in the Sindhudurg district. The population of the Gabits in the four centres selected for study, viz. Vengurla, Malwan, Deogad and Vijaydurg, is recorded in Table 3.1 (on the following page).

Table 3.1

A Table showing the population of Gabit males and females in selected centres.

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Males	172 (52.76)	162 (49.39)	168 (50.91)	167 (51.23)	669 (51.06)
Females	154 (47.24)	166 (50.61)	162 (49.09)	159 (48.77)	641 (48.93)
<u>Total:</u>	326	328	330	326	1310

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

The Table above shows the division of the Gabit population between the males and females. It appears that in all the four centres, the population of males and females is nearly equal. In Vengurla, males are 52.75% while females are 47.24%; in Malwan, the males are 49.39% while females are 50.61%; in Deogad, males are 50.91% and females are 49.09% and in Vengurla, males are 51.23% while females are 48.77%.

It is natural that in normal course, there is no significant difference between the number of males and females. But many a time, man interferes in the natural orderliness and upsets the balance. In the Gabit community, due to their social customs, women enjoy equal status, on par with the men, which also spares women from hardships. Further, the Gabit women help their menfolk in the fishing activities as equal partners. Also, since during fishing season, men spend most

of their waking hours out on the sea, they are contented to leave the responsibility of taking care of the day-to-day household affairs to the women. Hence, in the areas of hardwork and labour, the dividing line between men and women is almost indiscernible, which has also reflected in the insignificant difference between the number of men and women in the community.

3.2.2 Age-groupwise:Sex-wise Distribution:

The age-groupwise:Sexwise distribution of the heads of family in the selected centres is shown in Tables 3.2A and 3.2B

Table 3.2A

A Table showing age-groupwise distribution of the male heads of family in selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
18-28 years	7 (14.00)	5 (9.43)	8 (15.69)	12 (21.43)	32
29-38 years	16 (32.00)	19 (35.85)	10 (19.61)	18 (32.14)	63
39-48 years	12 (24.00)	25 (47.17)	27 (52.94)	23 (41.07)	87
59 years & above	7 (14.00)	1 (1.89)	2 (3.92)	1 (1.79)	11
<u>Total:</u>	42	50	47	54	193

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

Table 3.2B

A Table showing age-groupwise distribution
of the female heads of family in selected
centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
18-28 years	1 (10.00)	3 (42.86)	- -	1 (25.00)	5
29-38 years	3 (30.00)	1 (14.28)	3 (33.33)	-	7
39-48 years	5 (5.00)	-	2 (22.22)	3 (75.00)	10
49-58 years	-	3 (5.66)	-	-	3
59 years & above	1 (10.00)	-	4 (44.44)	-	5
<u>Total:</u>	10	7	9	4	

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

Tables 3.2A and 3.2B taken together show the division of 240 heads of family between males and females. The analysis shows that in Vengurla, there are 10 female heads of family; while in Deogad, there are 9 female heads of family. In the other two centres, i.e. Malwan and Vijaydurg, the numbers of female family heads is 7 and 4, respectively. In other words, 30 families (12.5% of the total 240) are being headed by women. As already pointed out, women's share of responsibilities and workload is same as men in the Gabit community, so it is not surprising that some of the more active women are actually the heads of family. This also shows the Gabit women's preparedness to shoulder the family and occupational responsibilities.

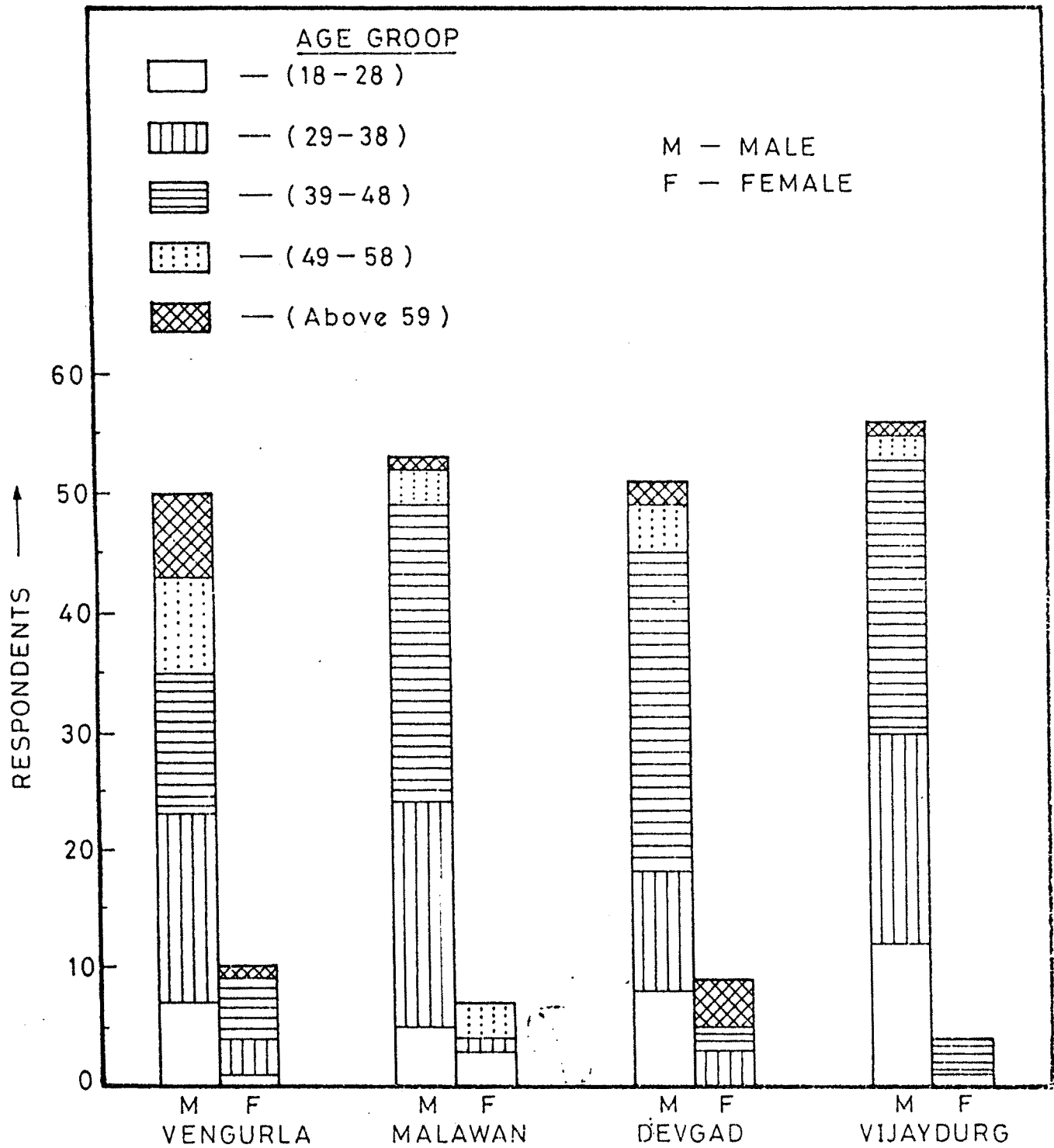


FIG. 3.1 : SEX AND AGE OF THE HEAD OF THE GABIT FAMILY.

Graph 3.1 on the following page shows the age-group wise and sex-wise distribution of the Gabit heads of family.

3.2.3 Marital Status:

Table 3.3 below presents the statistics about the marital status of the sample population.

Table 3.3

A Table showing the distribution of Gabit population according to marital status in selected centres.

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Unmarried	187 (57.36)	191 (58.23)	168 (50.90)	154 (47.23)	700
Married	121 (37.11)	119 (36.28)	147 (44.54)	159 (48.77)	546
Widowed	14 (4.29)	6 (1.82)	4 (1.21)	4 (1.21)	28
Widowers	4 (1.21)	12 (3.65)	11 (3.33)	9 (2.76)	36
<u>Total:</u>	326 (24.88)	328 (25.04)	330 (25.19)	326 (24.88)	1310

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

The above data, taken together with the data in Table 3.1 about sex-wise distribution of the sample population, shows that most of the people in the marriageable age-group (46.55%) have settled down to married life. The remaining 53.45% population is too young. It is seen that Gabits respect and abide by their traditional ethos. From the economic viewpoint also, a working woman in the family contributes

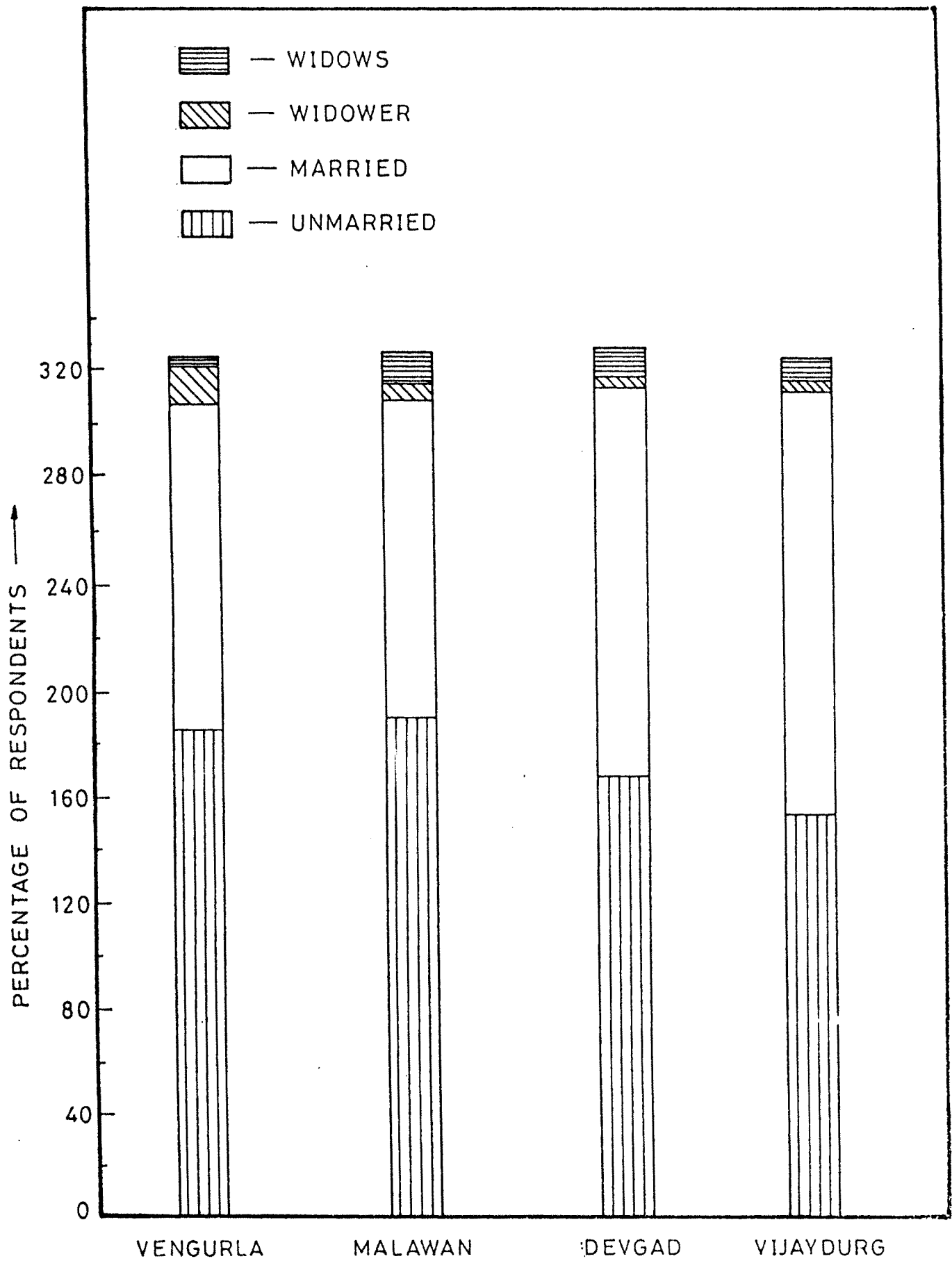


FIG. 3.2 : PERCENTAGE OF MARITAL STATUS OF GABITS.

to the household's income. This probably explains as to why the number of widows and widowers is insignificant, though the men lead hazardous life at sea and women share equal workload and responsibility in the household.

Graph 3.2 shows the distribution of the Gabit population according to their marital status in the selected centres.

3.3 STANDARD OF LIVING:

The succeeding group of 5 Tables (Tables 3.4 to 3.8) deals with the general standard of living of the Gabits.

3.3.1 Residential Houses:

Because of the economic backwardness and the struggle of eking out the living on day-to-day basis, coupled with the seasonal nature of the fishing business, possession of a reasonable appointed house has become almost a luxury for the Gabit community. Table 3.4 (on the following page) presents the data pertaining to the types of houses occupied by the Gabits.

It is seen from Table 3.4 that out of 60 households at each centre; in Vengurla, 5 (8.33%) were staying in thatched huts, 33 (55.00%) in packed clay houses and 22 (36.60%) in stone and cement concrete (RCC) houses. Similarly, at Malwan; there was only 1 (1.66%) hut, 35 (58.33%) clay houses and 24 (40.00%) RCC houses; while at Deogad, there were 3 (5.00%) huts,

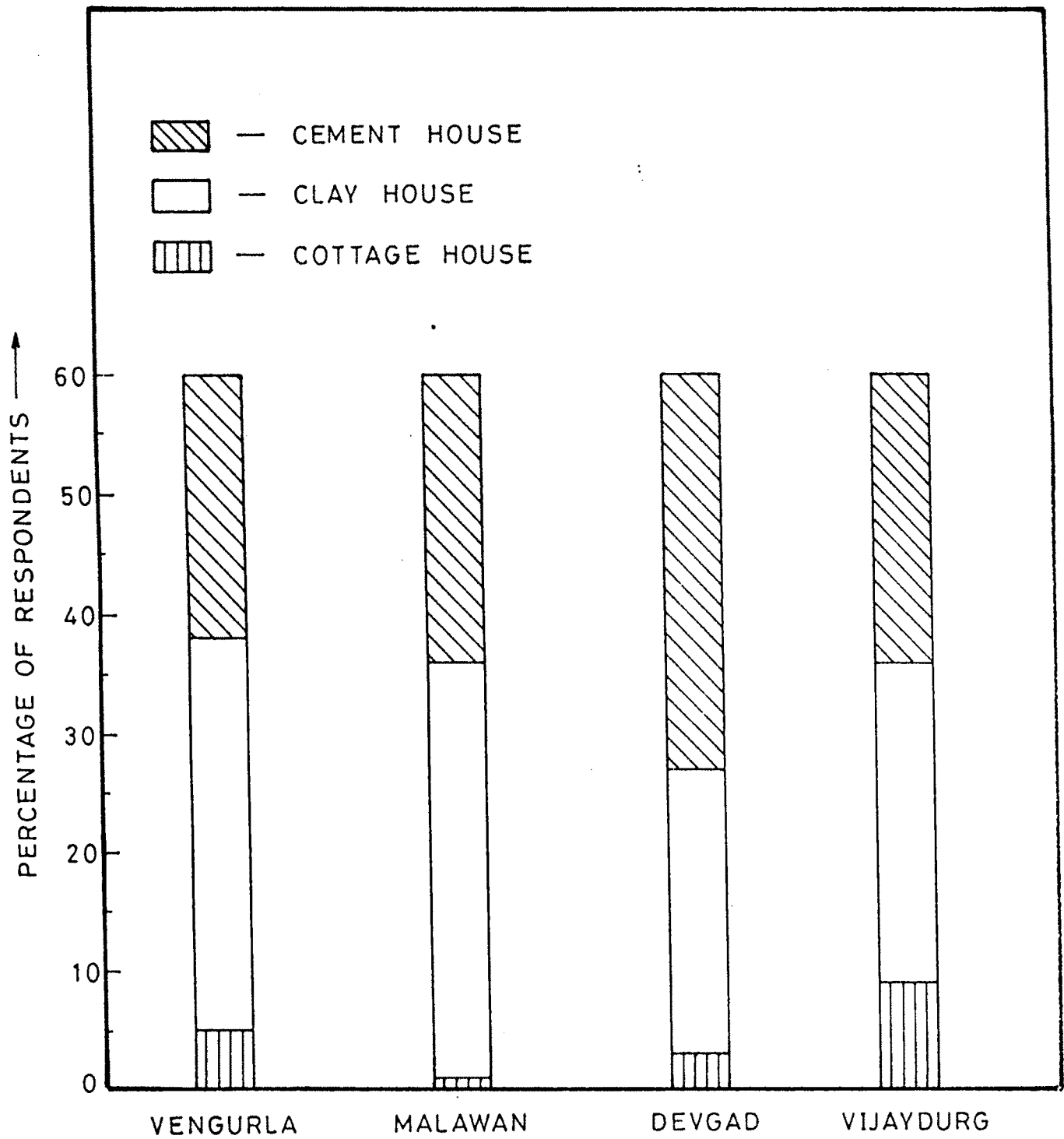


FIG. 3.3 : PERCENTAGE OF THE KINDS OF HOUSES OF GABIT.

Table 3.4

A Table showing the kinds of houses occupied by the Gabits in selected centres.

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijaydurg	
Thatched huts	5 (8.33)	1 (1.66)	3 (5.00)	9 (15.00)	18 (7.50)
Packed clay	33 (55.00%)	35 (58.33)	24 (40.00)	27 (45.00)	119 (49.58)
Stone & RCC	22 (36.66)	24 (40.00)	33 (55.00)	24 (40.00)	103 (42.90)
<u>Total:</u>	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	240 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

24 (40.00%) clay houses and 33 (55.00%) RCC houses. Vijaydurg had 9 (15.00%) huts, 27 (45.00%) clay houses and 24 (40.00%) RCC houses.

From the above analysis, it is clear that the number of stone and RCC houses is comparatively higher at Deogad, which, in other words, means that the Gabits at Deogad are economically better off than their brethren at other centres. Vijaydurg and Malwan come close second and third, but the plight of the Gabits at Vengurla is worst amongst all. The Table also makes it clear that while 7.50% of the households continue to live in thatched huts, at the mercy of elements, 43% have moved into the comparative comfort of stone and RCC houses. Half the sample households, however, have to spend their days inside packed mud and clay houses.

Graph 3.3 shows the percentage of the kinds of Gabit houses.

3.3.2 Household Facilities:

In the following Table, the data relating to the household facilities like electricity, water (well) and latrine available in the Gabit households in the study area is presented.

Table 3.5

A Table showing the facilities available in the Gabit households in the selected centres.

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijaydurg	
Electricity	55 (91.66)	59 (98.33)	44 (73.33)	42 (70.00)	200 (83.33)
Water (own well)	55 (91.66)	46 (76.66)	52 (86.66)	48 (80.00)	201 (83.75)
Latrine	3 (5.00)	11 (18.33)	13 (21.66)	4 (6.66)	31 (12.90)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

The above Table throws light on the basic minimum facilities available in the Gabit households. Electricity is available in 59 (98.33%) houses in Malwan and in 55 (91.66%) houses in Vengurla. Even in the remote areas like Deogad and Vijaydurg, electricity is available in 73.33% and 70.00% houses, respectively. Lack of electricity may be attributed to two reasons: first, the household does not have the necessary money to incur the substantial initial expenditure; and secondly, the neighbourhood is not being served by a powerline at all.

About the availability of water, it seen that out of 60 households in each centre, 55 (91.66%) in Vengurla, 52 (86.66%) in Deogad, 48 (80.00%) in Vijaydurg and 46 (76.66%) in Malwan, draw water from their own wells. Typically, the groundwater in the study area (being situate at the foot of the seaward leg of Sahadris) can be tapped at much shallow depths and the well itself could be of much smaller size (say 5 ft.square and 10-20 ft. deep). Still, not all the households have the luxury of owning a well.

In the majority of the households, the essential hygiene facility of a latrine is conspicuous by its absence. In Deogad, only 13 (21.66%) households have it; in Malwan, 11 (18.33%); in Vijaydurg, 4 (6.66%); and in Vengurla, 3 (5.00%) have it. The non-availability of latrines is again a question of economic resources and personal preferences. As regards latter, the older generation expressed that they do not like the malodorous air that surrounds the latrine and would prefer to go out in the open air. It would certainly take the Gabits a long time to learn about personal hygiene.

3.3.3 Household Appliances:

With the advent of economic affluence, peoples start looking for conveniences and small pleasures to lessen the drudgery of the day-to-day survival. Table 3.6 (on the following page) presents the data relating to the household appliances

being used in the Gabit households.

Table 3.6

A Table showing the appliances used in the Gabit households in the selected centres.

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijaydurg	
Radio/Wallclock/ Steel Cupboard	28 (46.67)	38 (63.33)	22 (36.67)	37 (61.67)	125 (52.08)
Sewing Machine	6 (10.00)	7 (11.67)	10 (16.67)	10 (16.67)	33 (13.75)
Television/Video Cassette recorder	2 (3.33)	5 (8.33)	5 (8.33)	1 (1.67)	13 (5.42)
None	24 (40.00)	10 (16.67)	23 (38.33)	12 (20.00)	69 (28.75)
<u>Total:</u>	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	240 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

It is seen from the above Table that the number of non-users of any appliances at all is highest in Vegurla (24 - 40.00%) and the least in in Malwan (10 --16.67%). In between, it is 12 (20.00%) in Vijaydurg and 23 (38.33%) in Deogad. Out of the total 240 households surveyed, 69 (28.75%) households do not own any applinaces at all. Radios, wallclocks and steel almirahs appear to be rather popular with the Gabits sinnce 125 (52.08% households have reported owning them. A sewing machine, a useful and handy appliance for women, was owned by 33 (13.75%) households. Television sets and/or video cassette recorder, a truly middle- and higher-middle class possession, were owned by only 13 (5.42%) households.

Overall, about 3/4th of the total households surveyed, do possess one or the other appliance, either for the sake of convenience or as a status symbol.

3.3.4 Cooking Fuels Used:

In the following Table, information about different types of cooking fuels and their combinations used in the Gabit households is being presented.

Table 3.7

A Table showing the types of cooking fuels used in the Gabit households in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
LPG/Kerosene	3 (5.00)	3 (5.00)	7 (11.67)	2 (3.33)	15 (6.25)
Kerosene/Firewood	53 (88.33)	38 (63.33)	30 (50.00)	43 (71.67)	164 (68.33)
Kerosene/Cowdung	7 (11.67)	32 (53.33)	38 (63.33)	25 (41.67)	104 (42.08)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

Fuel is a basic necessity in the kitchen. Out of the total 240 households surveyed, only 15 (6.25%) were using liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) as their main cooking fuel. Absence of LPG cylinder in the kitchen usually indicates the lack of household's female members' exposure to modernity. It may also indicate the lack of the requisite initial funds. Kerosene is used as the main fuel by all the remaining

households. But 53 (88.33%) households in Vengurla use it in combination with firewood and the descending order is followed by 43 (71.67%) households in Vijaydurg, 38 (63.33%) households in Malwan and 30 (50.00%) households in Deogad; that is, the kerosene-firewood combination has been adopted by a total 164 (68.33%) of the total 240 households as their main cooking fuel. The other combination of kerosene and cowdung has been adopted by a total of 104 (42.08%) households, i.e. 38 (63.33%) in Deogad, 32 (53.33%) in Malwan, 25 (41.67%) in Vijaydurg and 7 (11.67%) in Vengurla. Both these combinations, however, are deceptive; only a few drops of kerosene are used to first ignite the dry firewood or cowdung cakes and later, only the firewood or animal waste keeps the fire going.

The general observation on the above Table is that very few households can actually afford LPG; while a large number of households, though they can afford LPG, would like to remain tradition-bound and burn firewood, and the remaining households are simply unable to afford anything better than the cheapest animal waste fuel.

3.3.5 Vehicle Ownership:

Generally, people tend to use a faster means of conveyance to enhance their economic activities, to lessen the strain and stress of travel and also to find more time for

leisure and relaxation. The following Table shows the use of speedier means of conveyance by the Gabits.

Table 3.8

A Table showing the types of vehicles used by the Gabits in the selected centres.

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Bicycles	28 (46.67)	34 (56.67)	21 (35.00)	28 (46.67)	111 (46.25)
Motorcycles	2 (3.33)	2 (3.33)	1 (1.67)	- -	5 (2.08)
None	30 (50.00)	24 (40.00)	38 (63.33)	32 (53.33)	124 (51.67)
<u>Total:</u>	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	240 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

The data in the above Table shows that the numbers of bicycle/motorcycle users and non-users in all the centres are nearly the same; and in general, there are 51.67% non-users of vehicles. Among the vehicle users, an overwhelming majority, i.e. 111 (46.25%) of the total households surveyed possess a bicycle and only 5 (2.08%) households own a motorcycle.

Another likely reason for the non-use of any vehicle by about half the samples is that they do not have any reason to, since the men have to go out to the sea for fishing and the womenfolk have to trek to the market place for selling the fish. For both these activities, bicycles or motorcycles are of no use. Obviously, these vehicles are held more as prestige symbols or for attending to the activities unrelated to fishing.

3.4 AWARENESS ABOUT FORMAL EDUCATION:

3.4.1 Education Levels:

It was interesting to explore the Gabit's awareness about the formal education; especially when theirs is a tradition-bound community and in addition, they have to rely purely on manual effort to earn the livelihood. The succeeding two Tables (Tables 3.9 and 3.10) are related to this.

Table 3.9

A Table showing the educational levels of the Gabit population in the selected centres.

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Illiterate	73 (22.39)	80 (24.39)	65 (19.69)	58 (17.79)	276 (21.6)
Primary School	63 (19.32)	71 (21.64)	57 (17.27)	67 (20.55)	258 (19.69)
Secondary School	122 (37.42)	93 (28.35)	113 (34.24)	128 (39.26)	456 (34.80)
Higher-secondary	35 (10.73)	22 (6.71)	39 (11.82)	33 (10.12)	129 (9.84)
Attending College	20 (6.13)	6 (1.83)	7 (2.12)	12 (3.68)	45 (3.43)
Graduation	13 (3.98)	56 (17.07)	49 (14.85)	28 (8.59)	146 (11.14)
<u>Total:</u>	326 (24.89)	328 (25.04)	330 (25.19)	326 (24.89)	1310 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

It is seen from the above Table that out of the total sample population of 1310, 276 persons (21.60%) were illiterates. Among the literates, 456 persons (34.80%) had been able to secure education upto secondary school while 258 prsons (19.69%)

had managed upto the Primary School; 129 persons (9.84%) had completed higher secondary level and 45 persons (3.43%) were attending the college. In addition, there were 146 (11.14%) graduates in the sample population.

Interestingly, despite its remoteness, Vijaydurg proved to have highest number of persons with secondary education; while Malwan claimed the top ranking for having maximum graduates (56 - 17.07%) with Deogad close behind with 49 (14.85%) graduates. The top ranking for having maximum illiterates also goes to Malwan (80 - 24.39%), followed by Vengurla with 73 (22.39%).

Taken as a whole, it is heartening to note that while national literacy percentage averages around 35%, the Gabit community has attained a literacy level of 79.40%. It is also a sign that the community is coming out of its shell and is interested in exploring the vistas of knowledge.

3.4.2 Adult Education Programme Beneficiaries:

The Government has launched a massive literacy drive recently. Table 3.10 (on the following page) shows the number of beneficiaries of the Government's Adult Education Programme.

The Table reveals that at Malwan, out of 80 illiterates (highest amongst the selected centre), just 1 person has come forward to be benefitted by the Programme. At

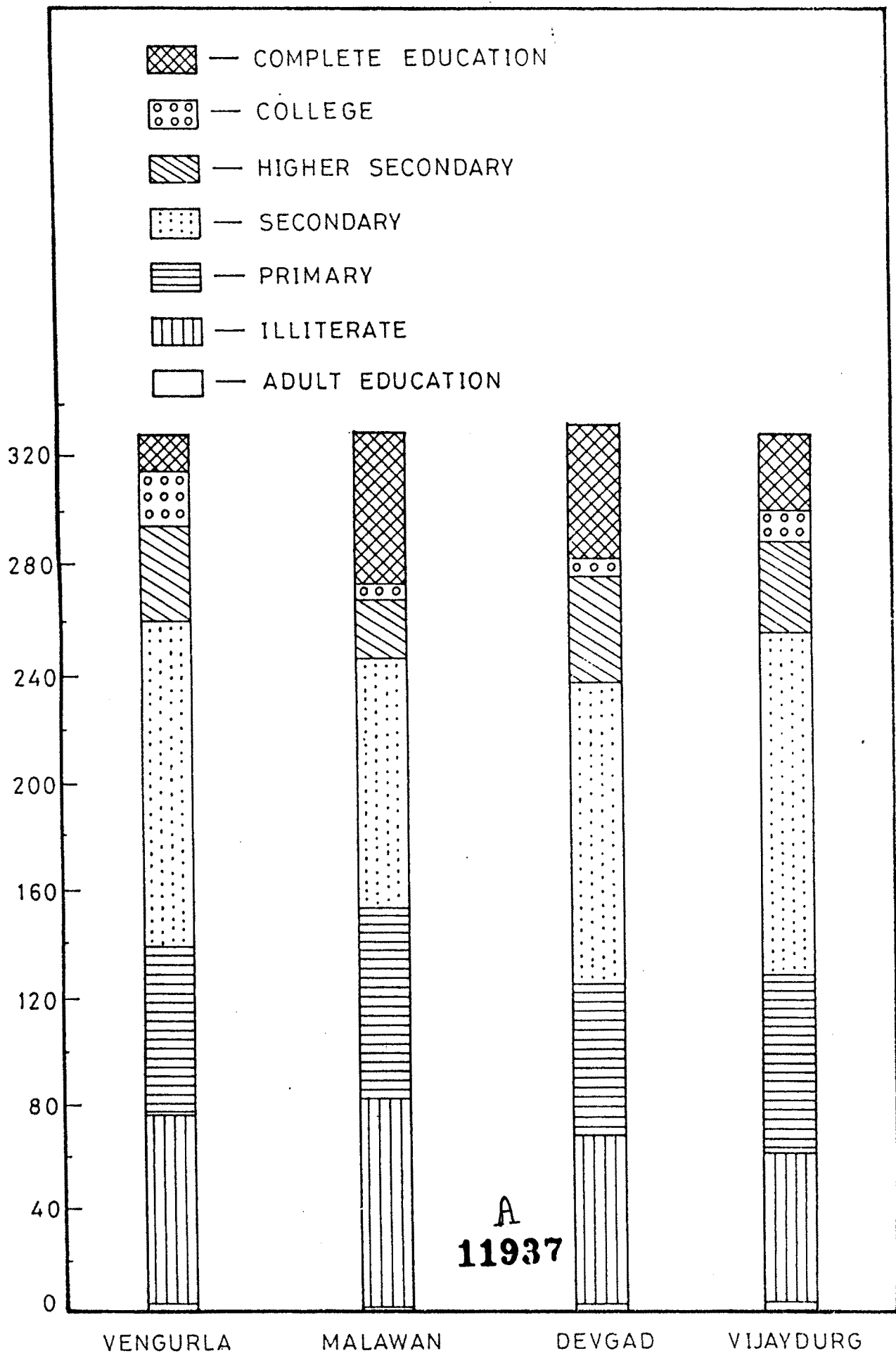


FIG. 3.4 : PERCENTAGE OF DIFFERENT EDUCATION OF GABIT PERSONS

Table 3.10

A Table showing the number of Adult Education Programme beneficiaries in the Gabit community at the selected centres.

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Illiterates	73 (26.45)	80 (28.98)	65 (23.55)	58 (21.05)	276
Adult Education Class Attendees	2 (2.73)	1 (1.25)	2 (3.07)	3 (5.17)	8

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

Vengurla (73 illiterates) and Deogad (65 illiterates), their number has been two each and at Vijaydurg (58 illiterates), 3 persons have participated in the programme. This shows that the literacy drive has not made much inroads into the Gabit community, may be because their day-to-day working hours keep changing with tides and ebbs of the sea and they are unable to attend the Adult Education Classes at fixed hour every day.

3.5 ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES:

Being dependent on sea-fishing for their livelihood, the Gabit community's economic activities also revolve around fishing as a base. With the adoption of mechanization and modern fishing techniques, the survival economy of the community is now becoming slowly oriented towards market economy. The 9 Tables in this group (Tables 3.11 to 3.19) attempt to elicit information about the community's economic activities.

Graph 3.4 shows percentage of different educational levels of among Gabit population.

3.5.1 Annual Income:

Table 3.11

A Table showing the annual income of the Gabit households in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijaydurg	
Below Rs.6,000	35 (58.33)	28 (46.66)	55 (91.66)	47 (78.33)	165 (68.75)
Between Rs.6001 & 12,000	15 (25.00)	27 (45.00)	4 (6.66)	8 (13.33)	54 (22.50)
Above Rs.12,001	10 (16.67)	5 (8.34)	1 (1.68)	5 (8.34)	21 (8.75)
<u>Total:</u>	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	240 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

The above Table shows the annual income of the Gabit households divided over three slabs, (1) below Rs.6,000, (2) between Rs.6,001 and 12,000, and (3) above Rs.12,001. In Deogad, the number of households with the annual income of below Rs.6,000 is maximum (55 - 91.66%), followed by Vijaydurg (47 - 78.33%), Vengurla (35 - 58.33%) and Malwan (28 - 46.66%). In the middle income group of 'between Rs.6,001 and Rs.12,000', there are 27 (45.00%) households in Malwan, followed by 15 ((25.00%) in Vengurla, 8 (13.33%) in Vijaydurg and 4 (6.66%) in Deogad. In the last income group of 'above Rs.12,001', there are 10 (16.67%) households at Vengurla in Vengurla, 5 (8.34%) each in Malwan and Vijaydurg and only 1 (1.68%) in Deogad.

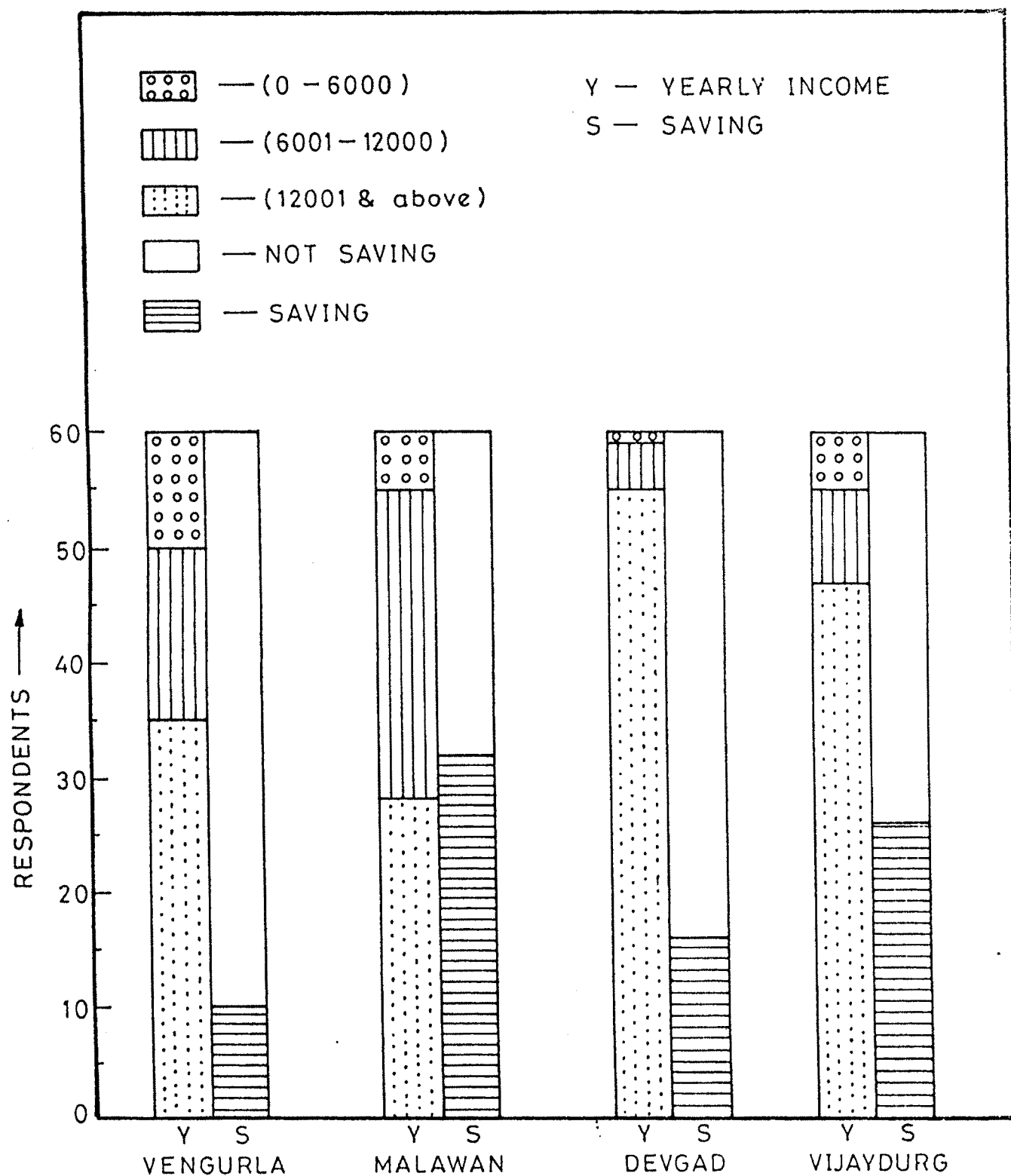


FIG.3.5 : YEARLY INCOME AND SAVING (L.I.C./ BANK) OF GABIT RESPONDENT.

It is clear from the above Table that an average Gabit household's annual income is near about the Poverty Line income. In other words, the Gabits live on day-to-day basis, leaving very little for saving or for something more than the basic necessities of life. Graph 3.5 shows the yearly income and saving habits of Gabits.

3.5.2 Secondary Occupations:

By tradition, the Gabits fully engage themselves in fishing and fishing-related activities. But there would always be some who would make a foray outside their traditional occupation. The reasons sometimes are economic, sometimes sentimental. In the Gabit community also, some of its members are indeed seen to be engaged in jobs like woodcutting, market gardening and horticulture and even as land labourers. These are a Gabit's secondary occupations in the study area. The following Table shows the numbers of Gabits engaged into occupations other than fishing.

Table 3.12

A Table showing the number of Gabits engaged in secondary occupations in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Woodcutting, Market gardening, Landlabourers	1	5	1	6	8
Horticulture	2	8	1	6	17

The data in the above Table shows that in Vengurla, 3 Gabits are engaged in the secondary occupations; while in Malwan, their number is 13; in Vijaydurg, 12 and in Deogad, 2. An exploratory enquiry into the reasons of these person's venturing into other occupations brought out the information that they are not able to invest in the fishing requisites like nets, catamarans and boats and other fishing paraphernalia. Of course, the number of such deserters is so small to be of any significance.

3.5.2 Subsidiary Activities:

Atleast three subsidiary activities are directly related with fishing. When the catch is heavy, the excess fish is either turned into dry fish, or after suitable drying and pulverising, turned into fish manure. Non-eatable varieties of fish can also be dried and pulverised into manure. Protein-rich fish manure has good market in horticulture and production of animal feeds. With culinary skills, dry fish can be turned into delicacies when fresh fish is unavailable, especially during monsoon. The third activity is export of fish, particularly the prawns, which fetches handsome prices. Table 3.13 (on the following page) brings out the information about Gabit households engaged into these subsidiary activities.

It is seen from the above Table that many a Gabit household is engaged into more than one subsidiary activity.

Table 3.13

A Table showing the number of Gabit families involved in the activities subsidiary to fishing in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijaydurg	
Fish-drying	52	51	36	39	178
Fish-manure	8	13	31	9	61
Fish-export	32	21	18	13	84

At Vengurla, 52 families are engaged in fish-drying, 8 in fish-manure and 32 in fish-export. At Malwan, their numbers are 51, 13 and 21, respectively; at Deogad, 36, 31 and 18, respectively; and at Vijaydurg, 39, 9 and 13, respectively. By and large, the families are more involved in fish-drying as it brings in ready cash. Fish-manure and fish-export, though lucrative, need business acumen and capital investment and hence, probably, the Gabit families are not much involved in these two subsidiary activities.

3.5.3 Occupational Training:

In recent years, fishing, as an economic activity, has undergone a sea change in terms of development of scientific fishing methods, methods for fish preservation and processing. The technically superior methods of deep sea fishing yield bigger catches and thus bring in more money.

The following Table shows the data about the Gabit fishermen who have undergone short-term training courses in modern fishing methods at one or the other State-sponsored training institutions.

Table 3.14

A Table showing the number of Gabit fishermen who have undergone training in modern fishing methods in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Trained	1 (1.03)	1 (1.09)	1 (1.02)	6 (5.13)	9 (7.69)
Untrained	96 (98.97)	91 (98.01)	97 (98.98)	111 (94.87)	395 (92.31)
<u>Total:</u>	97 (100.00)	92 (100.00)	98 (100.00)	117 (100.00)	404 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

The Table shows that only 9 (7.69%) of the total 404 active fishermen in the four selected centres have undergone training in modern fishing methods like trawling or purse-netting. The remaining 395 (92.31%) fishermen have opted to remain loyal to their traditional fishing methods like Rapan (which is labour-intensive, time-consuming method and the quantum of the catch is also very low).

The obvious conclusion on the above Table is that their tradition-bound nature prevents the Gabits from discarding the old and learn the new. In bargain, they are loosing financially to big trawler operators and launch owners.

3.5.4 Adoption of Modern Fishing Techniques:

Coastal fishing is done by employing two alternative methods, first is 'Rapan', which is a traditional method, and the other is through trawling, a recent innovation. Of course, the equipment required for trawling is prohibitively costly and individual ownership is not always possible. Yet an expert fisherman wise in the ways of the sea and experienced in handling the mechanized equipment, can always find gainful employment on trawlers. Some of the Gabit fishermen, in fact, have crossed over from continuing with traditional fishing to working on trawlers. Table 3.15 below presents the data relating to the Gabit families about the fishing methods they follow.

Table 3.15

A Table showing the distribution of the Gabit households according to their fishing methods in the selected centres.

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijaydurg	
Traditional Methods	44 (73.33)	23 (38.33)	42 (70.00)	45 (75.00)	154 (64.17)
Modern Methods	16 (26.67)	37 (61.67)	18 (30.00)	15 (25.00)	86 (35.83)
<u>Total:</u>	60	60	60	60	240

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

It is seen from the above Table that out of 60 households at each centre, 45 (75.00%) households in Vijaydurg follow the traditional Rapan method of fishing. They are



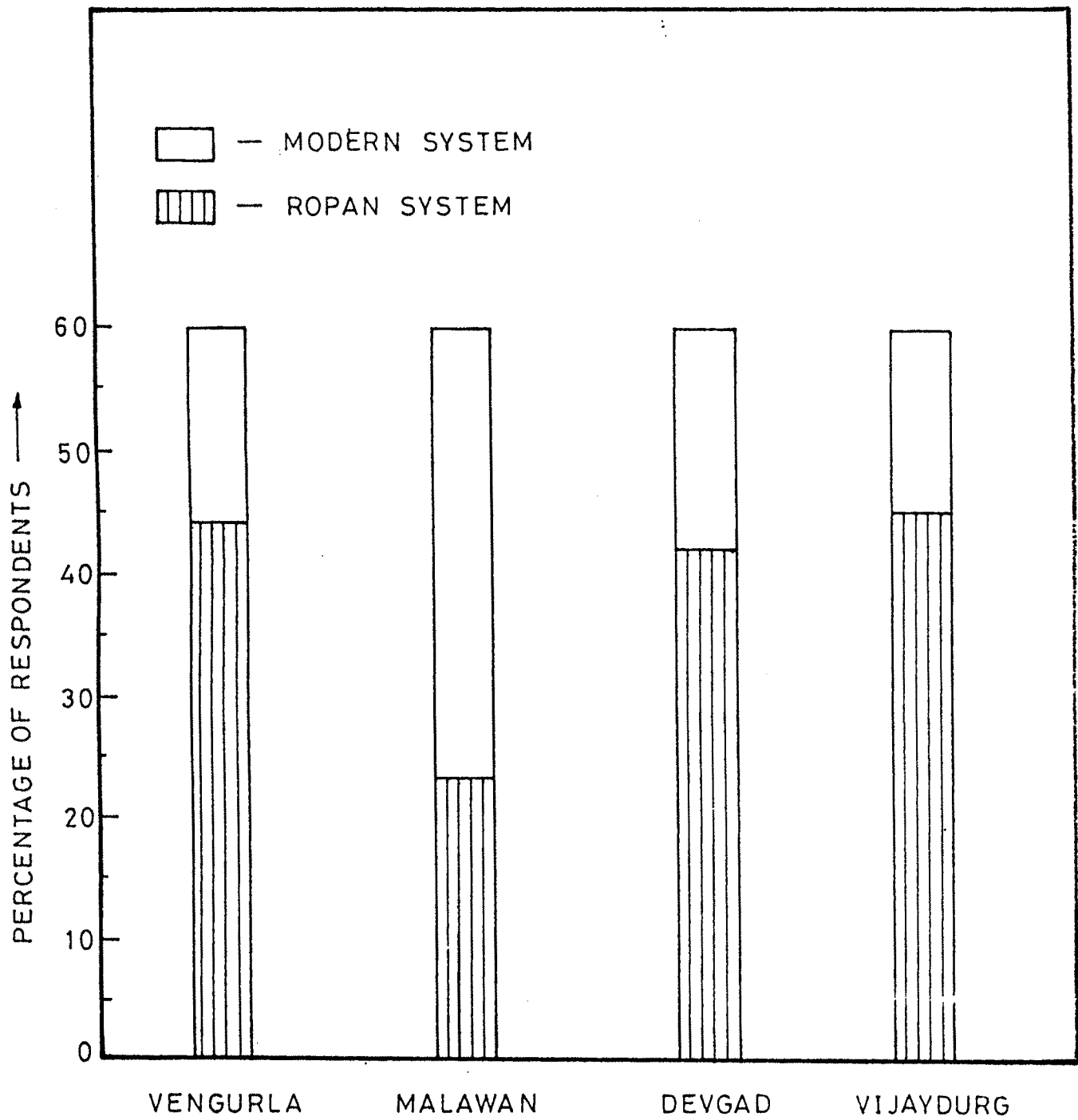


FIG. 3.6 : SYSTEM OF FISHARY ADOPTED BY GABIT. (PERCENTAGE)

closely followed by 44 (73.33%) at Vengurla and 42 (70.00%) at Deogad. In Malwan, however, the situation has reversed, that is, 37 (61.67%) households have switched over to modern fishing methods. Taking the entire study area as a whole, it is seen that majority (64.17%) of the households still adhere to the traditional Rapan fishing method, while only about one-third households have adopted themselves to the modern fishing methods. Atleast two reasons are possible for this obstinacy favouring the traditional; first, lack of funds to modernize and second, lack of aptitude to handle mechanized equipment. Graph 3.6 shows the percentage of Gabits using different kinds of fishing methods.

3.5.5 Ownership of Fishing Equipment:

The general practice in the fishing industry is that big businessmen or fish-processing plants would finance the purchase of fishing launches, nets, etc., in return for the daily fish catch. Alternatively, a team of fishermen, that is, the crews of a Rapan-type fishing boats, would jointly own the necessary equipment. A lone fisherman or two would own a small boat of their own but they would not be able to go too far away from the coast where big schools of fish populate the sea. Table 3.16 (on the following page) presents the information regarding the ownership of the fishing equipment by the Gabit fishermen.

It is seen from Table 3.16 that at Vijaydurg,

Table 3.16:

A Table showing the distribution of the Gabit fishermen according to the ownership of fishing equipment in selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Owens the fishing equipment	73 (75.26)	77 (83.70)	40 (40.82)	84 (71.79)	274 (67.82)
Does not own the fishing equipment	24 (24.74)	15 (16.30)	58 (59.18)	33 (28.21)	130 (32.18)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

out of 117 fishermen, 84 (71.79%) have their own fishing equipment. They are followed, in the descending order, by 77 (83.70%) at Malwan, 73 (75.26%) at Vengurla and 40 (40.82%) at Deogad. On the whole, 67.82% of the Gabit fishermen have their own fishing equipment. But as already pointed out, it is traditional gear and is not good for hauling the large catches. The least ownership of the equipment at Deogad was explained away as the Gabit community there is mostly engaged in the activity of preserving the fish (which they buy off other fishermen) through drying and hence, do not need to have their own fishing equipment.

3.5.6 Occupational Health Hazards:

Open sea fishing is full of certain health hazards. Sea water contains numerous salts, some quite hazardous to the skin and tender tissue. Handling of dead fish is yet

another hazard. Sunlight reflected off sea surface plays havoc with eyesight. As a result, and combined with their poorly hygienic living conditions, fishermen develop night blindness and skin diseases. The following Table shows the Gabit households affected by these two ailments.

Table 3.17

A Table showing distribution of the Gabit households suffering from the ailments of night blindness and skin disease in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijaydurg	
Night blindness	-	9	1	-	10
	-	(15.00)	(1.67)	-	(4.17)
Skin disease	9	6	12	23	50
	(15.00)	(10.00)	(28.00)	(38.33)	(20.83)
No diseases	51	45	47	37	180
	(85.00)	(75.00)	(78.33)	(61.67)	(75.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

It is seen from the above Table that out of 60 households at each centre, 9 in Malwan and 1 in Deogad had at least one member of it suffering from night blindness, while no household in Vengurla and Vijaydurg had any night-blind family members. As regards skin diseases, 23 (38.33%) households in Vijaydurg, 12 (28.00%) in Deogad, 9 (15.00%) in Vengurla and 6 (10.00%) in Malwan had skin diseases. The remaining 180 (75.00%) households in the study area were ailment-free. Resistance to night blindness could be built up through diet rich with Vitamin-A and skin diseases

could be taken care of through improved living conditions and more awareness of personal hygiene.

3.5.7 Organizational Membership:

As the number of educated and literate Gabits has increased in the community, they have come into contact with new ideas. Unionization in the fishing industry is one such idea. A Gabit fishermen's union is presently led by the educated Gabits among them, who are trying for the social and economic upliftment of the community and also is trying to secure certain facilities for the community from the Government. The following Table presents the data about the organizational affiliation of the Gabits.

Table 3.18

A Table showing the distribution of the Gabit fishermen according to their affiliation to the union of fishermen in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Members of the Fishermen's Union	30 (30.93)	1 (1.09)	1 (1.02)	6 (5.13)	38 (9.41)
Non-members	67 (69.07)	91 (98.91)	97 (98.98)	111 (94.87)	366 (90.59)
<u>Total:</u>	97	92	98	117	404

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

The above Table shows that in the 240 sample house-

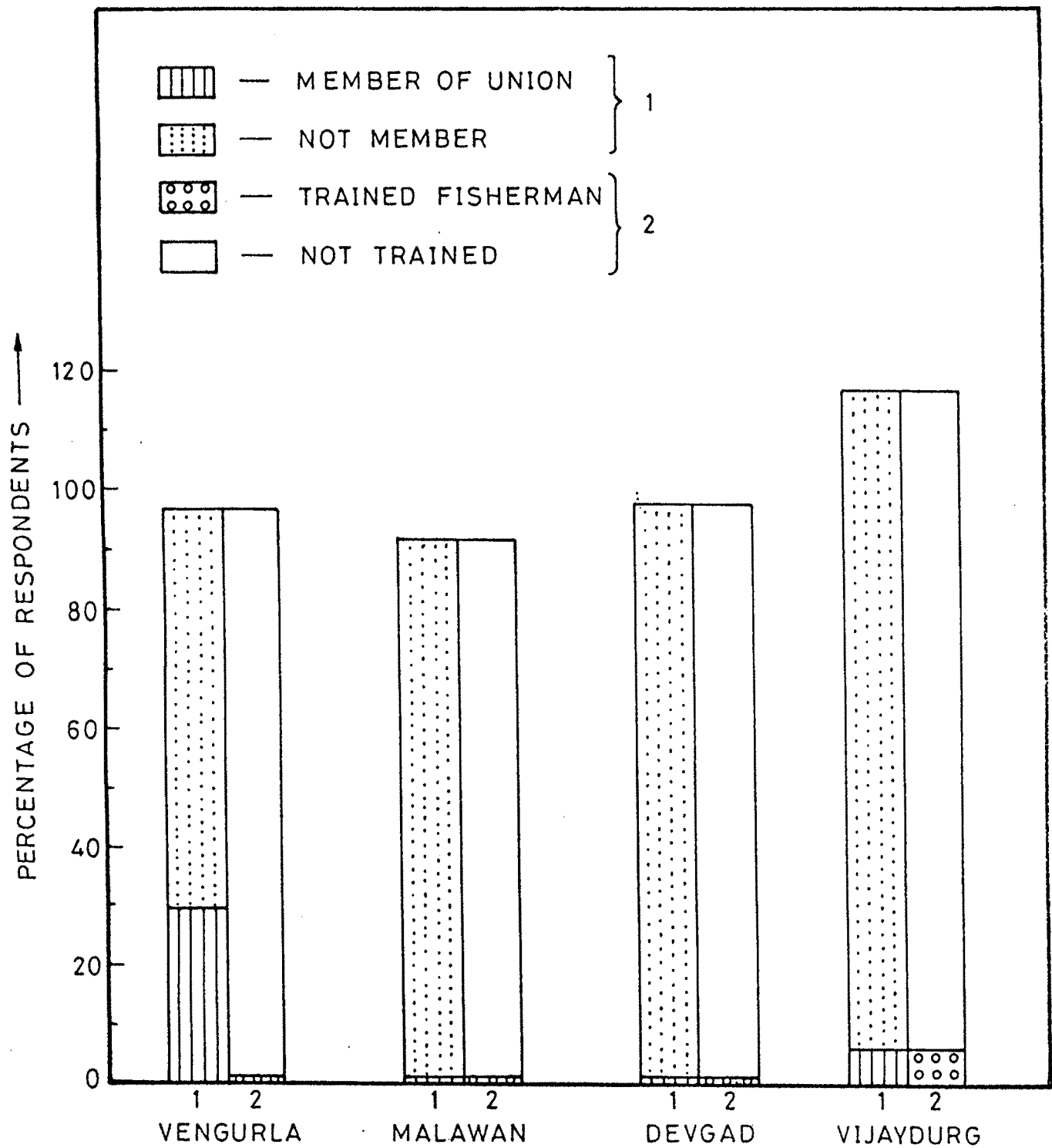


FIG. 3.7 : PERCENTAGE OF MEMBER OF FISHERY UNION AND TRAINED FISHERMAN.

holds in the four selected centres, 404 persons in were fishermen in the real sense, that is, they manned the fishing boats, went out to the sea and caught fish. Their number was maximum at 117 in Vijaydurg, followed by 96 in Deogad, 97 in Vengurla and 92 in Malwan. Out of 97 fishermen at Vengurla, 30 (30.93%) were members of the fishermen's union. The number of union members at other three places is just token. Overall, only 38 (9.41%) fishermen were the members of the union. It was revealed that the local union leadership at Vengurla had taken an initiative to liaise with the ice-producers and could enroll about one-third of the local fishermen in their union (since ice is necessary for preserving the fish during its transport from the beach-head to the market place or to the fish processing plant). It seems that at the remaining three places, there are no such pressing reasons to induce the Gabit fishermen to form themselves into a union, or even a working alliance, for their own benefit. Graph 3.7 shows the percentages in this behalf.

3.5.8 Saving Habits:

Fishing is a seasonal activity and even during the season, there is no assurance of regular income. Also, since the Gabit lead a mere survival existence, it is difficult to spare much money for saving. Table 3.19 brings out the information about the saving habits of the Gabit households.

Table 3.19

A Table showing the saving habits of the Gabit households in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijaydurg	
LIC policies	-	7	1	3	11
	-	(11.67)	(1.67)	(5.00)	(4.58)
Savings in Banks/Post office, etc.	10	25	15	23	73
	(16.67)	(41.67)	(25.00)	(38.33)	(30.42)
No savings	50	28	44	34	156
	(83.33)	(46.67)	(73.33)	(56.67)	(65.00)
<u>Total:</u>	60	60	60	60	240
	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

The above Table shows that in Malwan, 7 (11.67%) households had bought life insurance policies; while in Vijaydurg, their number was 3 (5.00%) and in Deogad, it was 1 (1.67%). There was not a single LIC policyholder in the Gabit community at Vengurla. Again, in Malwan, 25 (41.67%) households had some savings in banks or postal saving accounts; while, in a descending order, their number was 23 (38.33%) in Vijaydurg, 15 (25.00%) in Deogad and 10 (16.67%) in Vengurla. The figures for non-saving households are: 50 (83.33%) in Vengurla, 44 (73.33%) in Deogad, 34 (56.67%) in Vijaydurg and 28 (46.67%) in Malwan. On the whole, 156 (65.00% of the total 240 households) did not indulge into any type of saving. During personal discussions, it was revealed that many Gabits knew about the life insurance policies but they

were apprehensive that they would not be able to pay the premium regularly and hence, opted out of it. The data about the saving habits also highlights the fact that the economic condition of the Gabits is only marginal.

3.6 SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES:

Being a tradition-bound community, the Gabits have carried certain socio-cultural ethos with them down through generation. Fierce pride of their Maratha lineage and maintaining the purity of pedigree are two of them. Also, being wholly dependent on two of Nature's elements, viz. 'Aap' (water, or sea, that sustains their continued survival) and 'Akash' (space, or sky that brings down rains, thunderstorms and squalls, disturbing the sea), they treat the sea with religious reverence. The following group of 6 Tables (Tables 3.20 to 3.25) casts a light on the socio-cultural values of the Gabit community.

3.6.1 Observance of Caste System:

Gabits are a tradition-bound community and hence, by logic, should be firm adherents to the social division by caste. Education and contact with other castes, however, has mellowed down their feelings about the observance of caste. The following Table 3.20 brings out the personal feelings of the Gabit households about the caste system.

Table 3.20

A Table showing the observance of the caste system in the Gabit households in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijaydurg	
Observe the caste system	15 (25.00)	8 (13.33)	12 (20.00)	14 (23.33)	49 (20.42)
Do not observe the caste system	45 (75.00)	52 (86.67)	48 (80.00)	46 (76.67)	191 (79.58)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

The above Table shows that out of 60 households each in the four centres, 52 (86.67%) households in Malwan did not observe the caste system in their day-to-day activities. In a descending order, the numbers of such families were 48 (80.00%) in Deogad, 46 (76.67%) in Vijaydurg and 45 (75.00%) in Vengurla. On the average, it is noticed that nearly 80% families have expressed that they do not observe the caste system. This, however, may not reflect their true feelings when the questions of 'Roti Beti' exchange (partaking of food and inter-caste marriage) would come up.

3.6.2 Acceptance of Inter-caste Marriages:

As seen in the preceding Table, the Gabits' feelings over the caste system have mellowed down. But an inter-caste marriage is an altogether different affair as it involves the questions of experience in community rituals, food-habits, etc.,

and more importantly, the question of children's upbringing. Tradition-bound communities have fastidious views over inter-caste marriages. The following Table brings out the Gabit's opinions about the acceptance of the inter-caste marriages.

Table 3.21

A Table showing the acceptance of inter-caste marriage in the Gabit households in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Would accept an intercaste marriage in the family	35 (58.33)	24 (40.00)	36 (60.00)	17 (28.33)	112 (46.67)
Would not accept an intercaste marriage in the family	25 (41.67)	36 (60.00)	24 (40.00)	43 (71.67)	128 (53.33)
<u>Total:</u>	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	240 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

It is seen from the above Table that the 240 sample families are nearabout equally divided over the issues of acceptance or rejection of an inter-caste marriage. In Vengurla, 35 (58.33%) households have said that they would accept an inter-caste marriage, while 25 (41.67%) have registered their veto over the idea. In Malwan, the consensus is predominantly 'anti' (36 - 60.00%) with only 24 (40.00%) recording a 'pro-' opinion. The situation is exactly reversed in Deogad with 36 (60.00%) 'anti-' and 24 (40.00%) 'pro-'. Majority of the

families in Vijaydurg are against an inter-caste marriage (43 - 71.67%) with only 17 (28.33%) recording a 'pro-' opinion. It is felt that the remoteness of one's place of residence plays a role in forming an opinion about the social issues. Vijaydurg, being the remotest of the four centres taken up for study, has registered a vehement rejection; while Malwan, comparatively less remote, has registered only moderate opposition. Vengurla and Malwan, both taluka headquarters, seem to have been more open to the idea, and though the idea may not be exactly exciting, it is atleast tolerable to them.

3.6.3 Prevalence of Dowry System:

The data regarding the prevalence of dowry system among the Gabits is being presented in the following Table.

Table 3.22

A Table showing the acceptance or otherwise of the dowry system among Gabit families in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijaydurg	
Accept the dowry system	-	3	2	-	5
	-	(5.00)	(3.33)	-	(2.08)
Do not accept the dowry system	60	57	58	60	235
	(100.00)	(95.00)	(96.67)	(100.00)	(97.92)
<u>Total:</u>	60	60	60	60	240
	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

The Table above shows the responses to the question

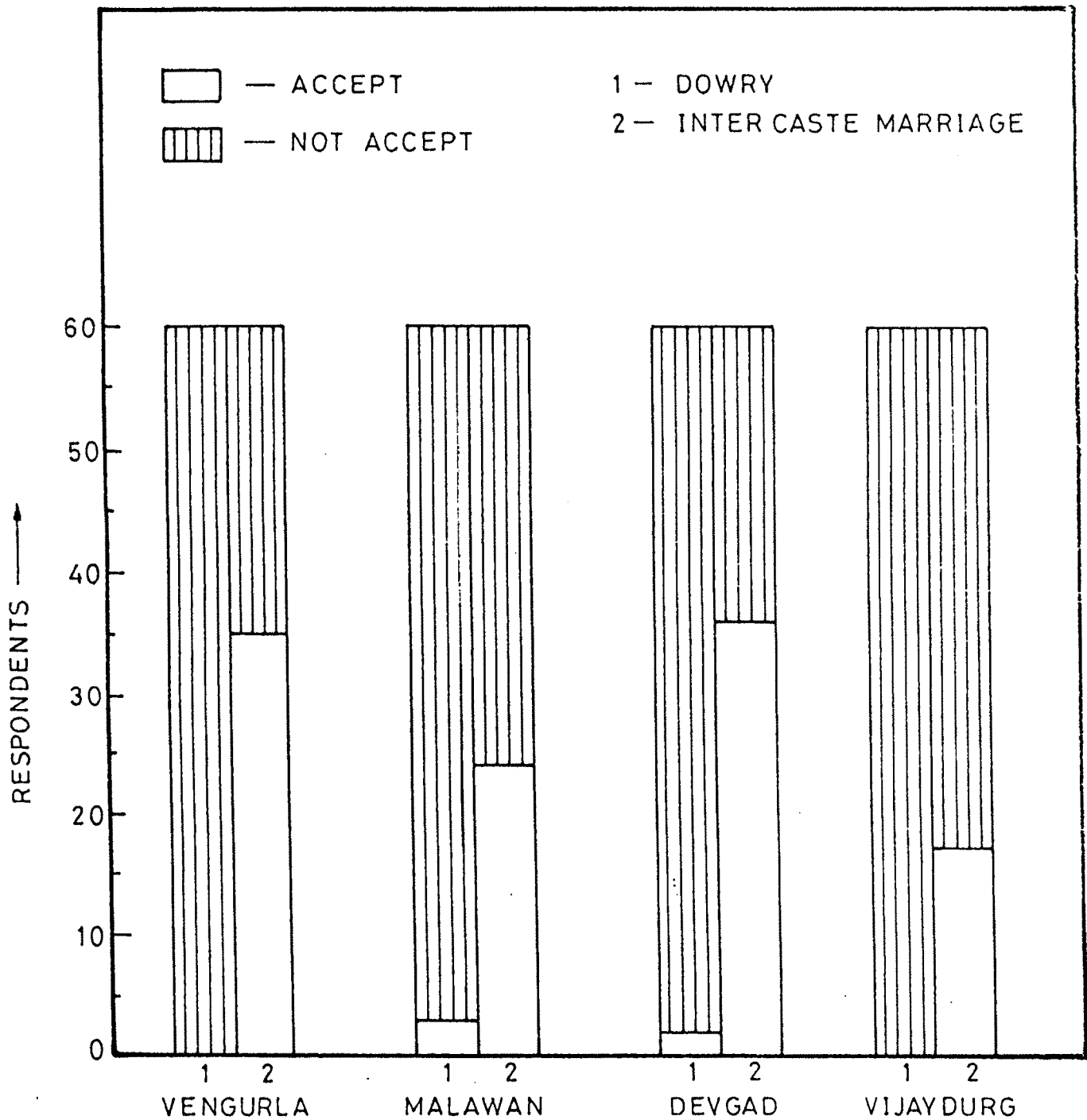


FIG. 3.8 : ACCEPTANCE OF DOWRY AND INTER CASTE MARRIAGE SYSTEM.

about the acceptance of dowry system. The percentage of the 'non-acceptors' is total at Vengurla and Vijaydurg, 96.67 at Deogad and 95 at Malwan. The percentages about 'acceptance', being quite miniscule, could safely be discounted. Non-acceptance of the dowry system alone marks out the Gabits as a very individualistic community that treats its women on par with its men, not only in respect of sharing of family responsibilities and occupational workloads but also in respect of the social esteem they accord to her by signifying that she would not be a burden on her husband (and hence, should bring in the dowry), but would be an equal partner in all her husband's activities. Graph 3.8 shows the acceptance of dowry system and inter-caste marriages among the Gabits.

3.6.4 Acceptance of Family Planning:

The Gabits are a tradition bound community. Moreover, their impoverishment makes them treat manpower as an economic asset. The following Table presents the data regarding the acceptance or otherwise of family planning among the Gabit community.

Table 3.23

A Table showing the acceptance or otherwise of the family planning among the Gabit families in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijaydurg	
Accept the family planning	5 (8.33)	7 (11.67)	11 (18.33)	6 (10.00)	29 (12.08)
Do not accept the family planning	55 (91.67)	53 (88.33)	49 (81.67)	54 (90.00)	211 (87.92)
<u>Total:</u>	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	240 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

The above Table shows that in all the four centres, the percentage of the families who do not accept family planning is extremely high (highest being 91.67% in Vengurla, followed by 90.00% in Vijaydurg, 88.33% in Malwan and 81.67% in Deogad). Out of the total 240 families interviewed, 211 (87.92%) families have rejected family planning. The reasons for this rejection are not far to seek; orthodox conditioning that the children are the benediction of the deity is one such reason. The unfounded notion that vasectomy, besides taking away man's procreativity, also diminishes his physical strength for hard labour is another reason. Other equally forceful reason has economic colouring, that any manual help in the traditional occupation of fishing goes a long way in enhancing the family income by that much. A productive couple would, therefore, try to get as many children as possible, because eventually, they all would be the economic resources of the family.

3.6.5 Religiousness:

The community of the Gabits professes Hinduism as their religion and being tradition-bound, they have an assortment of personal-, family- and community-deities, together with a ritualistic code about deities and things supernatural. Table 3.24 (on the following page) brings out their belief in God.

It is seen from Table 3.24 that while 230 families

Table 3.24

A Table showing the faith in God among the Gabit families in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Faith in God	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	50 (83.33%)	230 (95.83)
No faith	- -	- -	- -	10 (16.67)	10 (4.17)
<u>Total:</u>	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	240 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

have reiterated their firm faith in God, members of 10 households in Vijaydurg do not agree. It is felt that these 10 non-believer families have rejected God for personal reasons.

3.6.6 Superstitiousness:

The natural concomitant of the faith in God is superstitiousness and belief in evil spirits, ghosts, etc. The following Table gives information about the Gabit's superstitiousness.

Table 3.25

A Table showing superstitiousness among the Gabit families in the selected centres

Particulars	Centres Selected				Total
	Vengurla	Malwan	Deogad	Vijay durg	
Superstitious	7 (11.67)	11 (18.33)	10 (16.67)	17 (28.33)	45 (18.75)
Non-superstitious	53 (88.33)	49 (81.67)	50 (83.33)	43 (71.67)	195 (81.25)
<u>Total:</u>	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	240 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages.

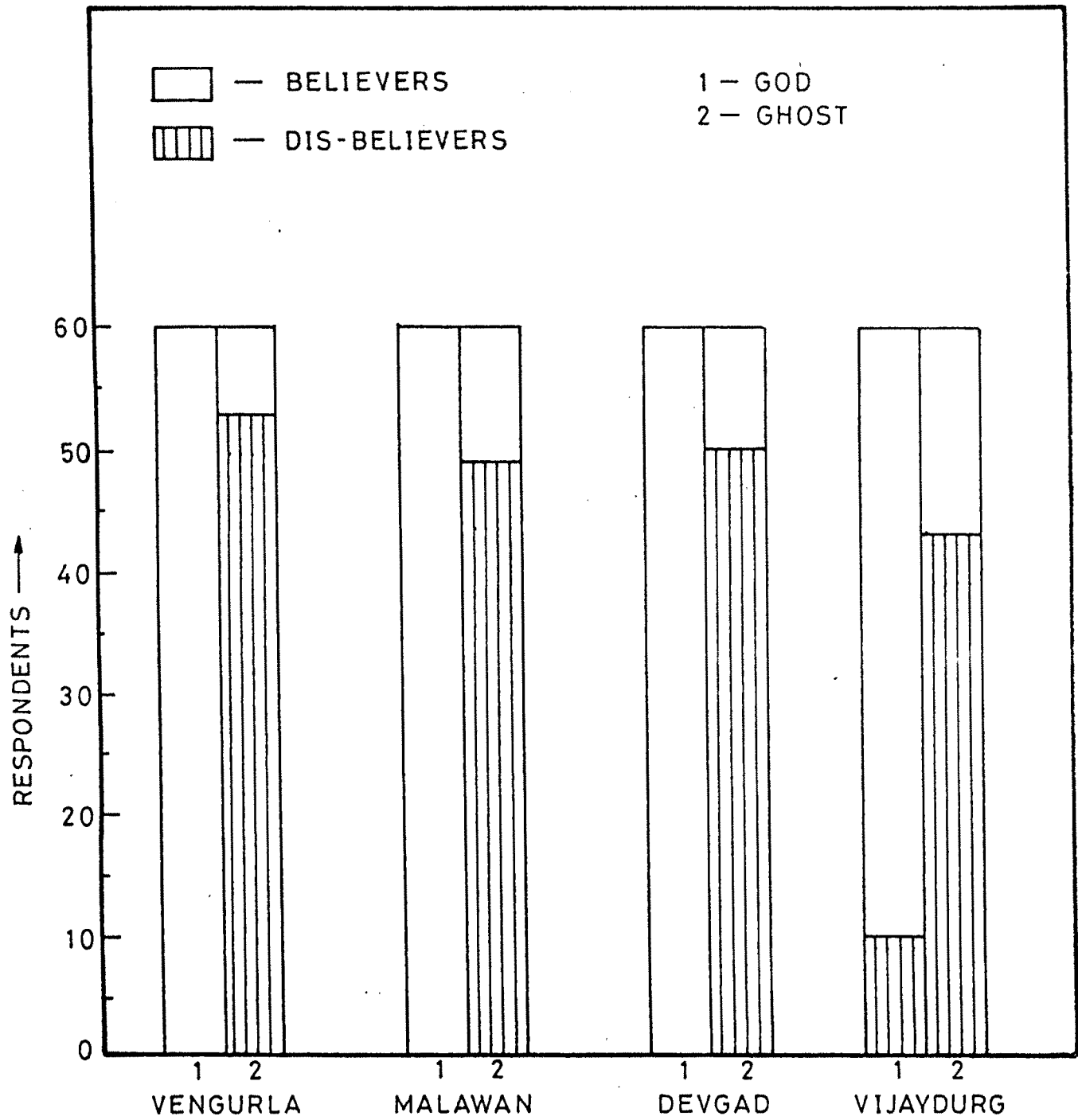


FIG. 3.9 : BELIEVERS IN THE CONCEPT OF THE GOD AND THE GHOST.

The above Table shows that in Vengurla, members of 7 (11.67%) families accepted the existence of ghosts, etc., while 53 (83.33%) rejected the idea. In Malwan, 11 (18.33%) families were adherents to the idea while 49 (31.67%) were against it. In Deogad, 10 (16.67%) families believed in the existence of ghosts, etc., while 50 (83.33%) declined to do so. In Vijaydurg, 17 (28.33%) families were superstitious while 43 (71.67%) families recorded their rejection. On the whole, members of 45 (18.75%) families were superstitious and believed that ghosts and evil spirits do exist, but an overwhelming number 195 (81.25%) families have rejected their existence.

It is likely that the roughness of the Gabits' lifestyle, such as long lonely vigils on open sea where light and sound can play tricks with sensory perceptions as well as the struggle for day-to-day survival have made a majority of the Gabits immune to the idea of ghosts' existence. Graph 3.9 shows the percentages of believers and non-believers in the concepts of God and ghosts by the Gabits.

† † †