CHAPTER 4
POLITICS OF ALIENATION: LIFEWORLDS OF MANG WOMEN

This chapter deals with the ethnographic sketches of the life worlds of Mang women. It explores the every day politics from their social, political, economic perspectives, and narrates their struggles for existence. It describes the rituals, customs and practices of this caste, and attempts to re-read the existing stratification of women. It also looks at the nuances of economic and occupational changes among the Mang women from rural and urban areas, and tries to understand the nature of work such as bonded labour, agricultural labour etc. Therefore, it enters into a dialogue in an attempt to see the modes of patriarchy and political consciousness within them.

The vestiges of caste always lurk in the unconscious realm of the Indian mind, and this phenomenon of power and inequality is also exercised on those castes that are in the lowest rung of the caste system. This ethnographic work tries to penetrate the social, cultural and political bodies of higher societies as well as the lower caste/class societies. Politicians from the Gram Panchayat level to Parliament have strengthened the caste hierarchy with the goal of consolidating their hold on power and knowledge. Caste gives them a sense of pride or a feeling of superiority which is inculcated through their social and cultural upbringing. In Maharashtra often the surname also legitimises the 'caste' pride of the upper caste. Moreover, male members of the families of this caste objected to their women speaking candidly and sharing their problems.

A few Hindu Mang families warmly opened up to discussion in the confines of their homes. Their hospitality was also impressive. But, the Christian Mangs as
well as some Hindu Mangs refused to answer the questions directed at them. They did not like the idea of discussing caste and gender.

This study targeted both types of families—nuclear and joint families. In the urban areas, the educated as well as the uneducated women staying in the major slums areas were interviewed to understand the economic hierarchy and their approaches towards the poor Dalit women. Urban slum dwelling women were found to constantly struggle for water, electricity and other day to day facilities.

Therefore, priority was given to interaction with the Mang families, who belonged to the Hindu, Christian and Buddhist religion. Variations among these communities were found in the villages like Atpadi and Jamkhed. Atpadi comes under Sangli district which is considered as one of the most backward areas of Maharashtra. The literacy rate among males, especially Mang Hindu boys were very high. But, girls had no access to education. In the urban spaces of Sangli the majority of the educated Mangs were from the Christian groups. Most of the women in Jamkhed were influenced by Christianity. It was not necessary for them to be officially converted; faith in Jesus Christ was sufficient. These days, more and more of the Christian Mang girls are getting educated. In the rural areas, most of the women who were interviewed were agricultural workers and bonded labourers who worked in the sugar-cane and maize field. However, in the major slums in rural and urban areas, it is observed that Mang males usually sit together and indulge in activities such as playing cards, sleeping, drinking alcohol etc. As maximum number of leaders (male) and general men did not like an idea that Mang women should be participated in to politics. But, Mang woman are not conscious regarding the polities and argues that it is spectrum of male. Therefore, they are not interested to discuses any issues about
politics. Mang male were slightly aware about reservation debate and the women were completely ignorant about quota within quota. However, male were aware about it.

**Cultural Sphere of Mang Women**

Women's movements in the country have begun to show the direct linkage of culture with political movement in contemporary India. Kumkum Sangari and Vaid (1994) have pointed out the need for understanding the subjugation of women in the material as well as social and cultural surroundings from the political perspective because the cultural sphere of the women resolves the status of women.¹ Therefore, it is important to understand the cultural aspects of every community on the basis of day to day observations. The categories of each woman's experience in the social realm are constructed by the existing patriarchal order. The Mang community exhibits distinct cultural specificity to mark their identity.²

This community shares a unique subculture to embody their social existence.³ It also exists as a trope to their culture to the meta-narratives of dominant culture of Hindus. Earlier, Mangs were found on the outskirts of all Hindu settlements in rural and urban spaces. Those areas have been merged with the mainstream areas of the villages and cities due to the expansion of the boundaries through internal and external migration and easy access to communication facilities.

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In every village, the Mangwadas existed in the vicinity of the Maharwadas which is today popularly known as a Buddhawada. Most of the houses in the rural areas are of Kuccha walls which can be called as hut or Zapadi. Most of the houses in the rural and urban slums have at the most two rooms. However, the urban houses are properly constructed under the aegis of government schemes. Thus, they are transformed into Pucca homes. However, some homes did not have bathrooms and women bathed in the same room they cooked food.

Both in the rural and urban areas, due to the lack of proper housing, the family members and their relatives have to make do with just two rooms. Most of the houses are registered in the name of the husband or father-in-law. Sanitation in the rural areas was in a pathetic condition. In the rural areas of Sangli, especially Atpadi, there was not a single household with a Pucca sanitation system. Bathrooms in the houses were constructed poorly. Most of the bathrooms did not have doors. Since there was no drainage system, dirty water flowed in front of homes and thus provided an ideal breeding place for disease-causing microorganisms. The situation was comparatively better in places like Jamkhed and Ahmadnagar.

However, the difference of class was visible among the Mang women in rural and urban spaces. There were a few urban educated Mang women who were in the government services, financially stable to some extent, and living in Pucca houses with good conditions. But, they did not have any feelings for the welfare of their community. There were no civil society initiatives that looked into the conditions of these women in the rural areas. There were neither leftist nor socialist organizations that addressed issues related to their day to day survival. However, some activities in the urban areas affected the lives of women in subtle
ways. For instance, the women who worked in the government offices as sweepers knew about Ambedkar as one who tried to emancipate them from the dominant ideology of the Brahmanical patriarchy. The reason for their awareness was that in their offices, organization with limited membership celebrated the Ambedkar and Buddha Jayanti. Rural Mang and Mahar women participated collectively as members of the community. Most of the rural Mang women are unaware of the land given to them under the land distribution schemes in the 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, many of them did not approach the government offices for bona fide documents to be able to claim the pieces of land in their respective family names. Also they despised the land given to them as they were barren. Significantly, many of them could not sell the land even if they wanted to. But, these lands were dubiously used by the caste Hindus for their commercial ventures, store houses etc. Many of the family in the rural areas were found to be starving. Some of them ate once a day while others managed to eat just once a week.

Women in particular were found facing the major brunt of hunger and poverty. Males above fifty years among the Mang community in the rural and urban areas do not involve themselves in work to eke out a living. Therefore, women in such houses have to bear the burden of their livelihood. The Government of India has introduced schemes such as the below poverty line schemes in which rice, kerosene oil etc., are provided. However, most of them have no BPL cards and, hence, do not benefit from the schemes. Most of them do not find their names in the list of those eligible for the schemes. Native cum rural activist women pointed out that local politicians, activists and bureaucrats were corrupted and took bribes from the poor natives. Since they were illiterate they could not question the caste Hindu bureaucrats. To make matters worse, the Mahar and
Mang officers and activist too behaved in a similar manner with their community members. Thus, the day to day existences of the Mangs were a big challenge because of the dominance of caste Hindus and corrupted community members within their own community. However, the roadways and transport system are quite good and most of the people prefer to travel by the State transport bus services.

Earlier, Mang women were pushed into the vicious circle of forced prostitution such as Devdasi which was sanctioned in the name of religion. Such customs are still today found among the Mang community. They also still engage in the practice of sacrifice of women and man to the deity. Khandoba of Jaisuri is an example. The state agencies have failed to abolish this custom of disgrace; it continues to be practiced because caste Hindu bureaucrats have no sensitivity for these women. The caste Hindu bureaucrats are thus to be blamed for the perpetuation of the image of hedonistic activities related to these women. The ignorance and superstition of the Mang communities is also responsible for the continuance of this tradition of dishonour. The female who is sacrificed to god is called a Murali and the male is called a Vaghya. With the formation of the Indian nation-state, laws were enacted to do away with such derogatory customs but they are still widely practiced in rural areas, especially Western Maharashtra. According to a leading political leader, about Rs 65 lakhs were sanctioned by the government of Maharashtra in 2008 for the upliftment of Muralis and Vaghyas, and Devdasis. But this money is diverted away from the development of those women by unscrupulous politicians. Thus the Indian society is caught between tradition and modernity. The dominant ideology of the nation is culturally

4 Personal communication with a Mang politician on 14 June 2008.
schizophrenic in every respect. It exists as a sublimation of mistaken modernity.\textsuperscript{6} Most of these women, who live in the rural areas, thus endure different forms of social exclusions.

The marriage rituals are rooted in Hindu religion. Before the day of marriage, five married women would mix millet, turmeric roots and betel leaves with nuts and divide the mixture into two parts. They would then put each of the two shares in a piece of new cloth and tie one of them to a mud vessel where water is stored (also known as \textit{ranjan}) and the other to a grindstone or jants. The boy and the girl are asked to apply the turmeric paste on their bodies; and the girl is sent with a new robe and bodice. The customs are the same as those of the local husbandmen, except that here the couple is made to stand in two bamboo baskets at the time of marriage, and a yellow thread is passed around their necks seven times. The Brahmin priest stands at a distance and repeats verses of fortune. At the end of the verses, the priest throws yellow millet towards the couple, the curtain is withdrawn and they are declared as husband and wife. The father of the girl feeds the bridegroom and takes them to his house on a horse. They are accompanied by relatives, friends and indigenous musicians.

Once they reach the house, the mother-in-law in a symbolic gesture moves the bread that is cooked in fire and washes the feet of the bridegroom with water. They remove the decorated caps of the bride and bridegroom. They are then asked to wear them again. The ceremony ends with a sumptuous meal. They allow and practice early marriage, polygamy and widow re-marriage. They bury the dead and mourn for them for thirteen days. On the thirteenth day, the chief

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{7} A big pot made of mud.
among them goes to the burial ground with his relatives. He has to tonsure his head and take a bath. He arranges thirteen saucers or drones side by side filled with water. He then returns home with his friends. Women are not allowed to visit the burial grounds. However, they bury the dead and mourn for them for ten days. They offer food to the dead on the eleventh day and feed the caste people on the thirteenth day. Girls undergoing puberty are asked to sit away from the other members of the family for three days. On the fourth day, they have to bathe themselves and their laps are filled with rice and coconut.

The caste council of the rural areas resolves disputes in special meetings. Myths about the genesis of the Mang community are prevalent. It is believed that Mangs are the descendants of a Mahar, who was asked by the saint Jambrishi to guard his cow and who, instead of watching the cow, ate it. Thus, he was cursed by the saint for his gluttony and given the name ‘Mang’ which means ‘cruel’. Scholars such as V.R. Shiende argued that they may have descended from the community of fisherman.

It is also believed that the Peshwa regime attacked the Mahars and Mangs as they started taking up the occupation of fishing. The community is sub-divided into Chapalsandes, Garudis, Jiraits, and Thokarphodes Mang; they abhor intermarriage and commensality. Their mother tongue, which is a dialect distinct from Marathi, is on the brink of extinction. For instance, people have started greeting each other saying ‘Namaskar’ in Marathi.

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B.P. Somvanshi, *BuddhaDharmiya Matang*.
However, the members of the Mang community greet others with the word *Furman*. This language, known as a secret language, might have been developed under colonial period because Mangs were declared as criminals and were pushed to the periphery of the villages and settlements. Considered a criminal tribe, the British colonial masters kept a watch on them through a daily roll call. This form of surveillance is an act of panopticonic gaze in the Foucauldian sense, that the colonizers exercise on the social bodies of the colonized untouchables. Their family deities are *Khandoba of Jejuri* in Poona, *Mariaai* and *Mhasoba*. They rear cats and dogs at home. Women tie their hair in a solid knot or *buchada* which they wear at the back of their heads. They do not wear wigs or flowers. Men wear loincloth, a shoulder cloth and a Maratha turban. Women wear a bodice with a back and short sleeves. They also use a Maratha robe without passing the skirt back between the feet, and wear green bangles on their wrists. In the rural areas, women take care of every household chore, including fetching firewood from the forest. They worship all Hindu gods and goddesses. They also take part in all types of feasts celebrated on auspicious days. They fast on the lunar eleventh day or *Ekadashi* every fortnight, on *Shiv’s night* or *Shivratri* in February, and on Mondays and Saturdays in the month of *Shravan* or in August. They allow Brahmin priests to conduct the rituals in their marriages.

The *Mariaai* or the cholera goddess is their favourite god. They are not allowed to enter the village shrines but made to stand at a distance and bow their heads in reverence. They do not believe in the powers of witchcraft, soothsaying and evil

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10Personal interview of D.D. Kachole on 13 March 2006, at Aurangabad. I stayed with a Mang family and visited some of their relatives. There, I found that this language was spoken by old people.

spirits. When the planet Saturn or Shani occurs in the spiritual trajectory, the sufferers call Mangs to their houses and feed them with millet bread, pulse and oil, and give them an iron nail or cotton. When cholera rages in a village, the Mangs are asked to assemble the villagers together and asked to make some offerings to Mariaai. They worship a stone painted white or saffron and covered in red powder and flowers. This stone is usually situated at the boundary of the village. A red flag is fixed near to the stone. The villagers each bring one or two millet cakes and pot-full of ragi gruel seasoned with salt and chilly. They meet at the village temple and then decide to buy a goat. The Mangs had to take the goat to a symbolic hut of Mariaai and the villagers followed them.

Mangs pray to the goddess and appeases her with the offerings and asks her to guard her worshippers. A large hole is dug in the ground near the hut and the ragi gruel is poured into the hole and covered with earth. All of them except the Mangs return home; meanwhile the Mangs offer the goat to the goddess and feast with cakes and boiled mutton. On the fifth day of the birth of the child, they draw an image of Satvai and celebrate by treating the members of their caste to dinner. On the twelfth day, the mother and child will take bath. The clothes of the Mang women are washed and they are allowed to rest in a room whose floor is painted with cow dung. The mother sets seven pebbles in a line outside of the house and lay before them sandal paste, flower and vermilion in the name of Satvai.

To see Mang women/men early in the morning is believed to be a good omen. To explain these phenomena, one has to understand the myth of Hindu ethos in the Balutedari system that further carries the hierarchy within castes. Mangs are regarded as the carriers of prosperity and messengers of happiness. The oblation
of Mang males and females while constructing temples, forts, railways, buildings etc., are considered as a part of the ritual.\textsuperscript{12} This phenomenon is ritually sanctioned in the Hindu society to maintain the power and hegemonic structure. It also subordinates the lower caste in order to maintain the status of the caste Hindus.

However, Mangs have also started recognising the efforts of Ambedkar for their empowerment and have begun to celebrate Ambedkar Jayanti (Birthday celebration of Ambedkar) and Annabha\textsuperscript{13} Sathe Jayanti these days. The majority of the Mangs in the rural areas follow the Hindu religion. They worship all Hindu deities. In a way, their caste-based privileges sanctioned through the religion have instilled a sense of pride in them. They worship new cults like \textit{Nirankari} Baba and follow his sermons. They argued that \textit{Nirankari} baba has guided them towards a new way of life. According to them, had they not be ignored by the Ambedkarites, they would have followed the path of Ambedkar.\textsuperscript{14} Women among them are neither aware of the discourses of Ambedkar nor do they know anything about other social issues. They are staunch devotees of several cults or Babas.\textsuperscript{15} This devotion to the new sects is a rejection of the Hindu gods and goddesses. However, they worship Mariaai or Lakshmiaai in the rituals performed by each family.

Neither the rural nor the urban women take any decision without the consent of the male members in the family. The caste Hindu people believed that Mang women were the symbols of Lakshmi. Caste Hindu males touch the feet of these

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Personal interview of Kishor Jadhav on 11 April 2006 at Pune.
  \item \textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Personal interview of Satish Randive on 12 June 2006 at Atpadi.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} I have interacted with seven and eight family who are the devotees of Nirankaari Baba.
\end{itemize}
women cleaning the roads in the morning. The Hindu Mang has a communitarian priest who hails Mariaai as Potraj. The number of Potraj is high among the Mang community. After Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism, most of the Mahars followed suit and embraced Buddhism. But, Mangs did not convert to Buddhism because they were proud of their Hindu identity. As some of the respondents from the Mang community said that if they had converted to Buddhism then they would have been stereotyped as Mang Buddhists. They said that the Mahars would not have accepted them as equals; instead they would have continued to project their ‘superior’ status as Mahars even after conversion to Buddhism. However, they were ready to convert to Buddhism if doing so will sort out their problems of sustenance. On the other hand, many of the rural and urban Mahar women respondents said that they have been trying to accommodate Mang women in the private as well as public spaces. For instance, it is the Mahar Buddhist women who have been handling the legal cases of forsaken Mang women in urban slums.

Only in the Western Maharashtra especially in Ahmadnagar and Jamkhed, are found that many Mangs have converted to Christianity. Therefore, Mang Hindu women have been impacted by Christianity as well. Their lifestyles were not rigid but they do follow the Hindus customs. Mang women used to put big round-shaped vermillion marks on their foreheads. Mang women carried such marks as a sign of their superiority. They link it with the legacy of the mythical and feminine cult Renukamaata who was a Brahmin woman. However, Mang women wear Mangalsutra and other ornaments. Most of the Mang women are

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16 A Potraj is a person who is dedicated to the gods and goddesses from childhood. He performs some duties of the gods and goddesses. During my field trip, I came across a Potraj who was a Nagar Sevak. He also worked as a rag picker.
experts in indigenous midwifery and even today these women, who are better known as Dayi, can be seen in the rural and urban areas. The traditional knowledge that is related to midwifery is passed on from one generation of Mang women to the next.

Complexities of Traditions

Historically speaking, Mangs worshipped many deities. They include Asure, Vetal, Ambabai, Bahiri, Janai, Masai, Yemai, Innayi, Marimmai, Mtammai, Bhavani, Lakshmiaai, Asora and Gauri. The other deities are Bahiroopa, Masoba, Khandoba, Bahirambua, Makutteshwar etc. They perform rituals to appease their favourite gods and goddesses such as Brahmadev. Some Mangs worship Muslim saints too. Mangs also worship cults like Sai Baba. Many families are embedded in its own religious identities and cult figures. Mangs also share different elements of pantheism and Mariaai is the most popular goddess among them. A common Mariaai temple is situated in each village. They paint a stone in saffron or white with red vermillion and call it as Mariaai. The temples that propitiate Ranuka Aai temples can be seen in the municipalities and other urban centres. Potraj has the sole right to initiate the rituals for Mariaai. The other deities are accessible to the laymen. They conduct prayers every day as well as during special occasions. They use flowers, coconut, goat or any other animal as ingredients of their Pooja. Mangs worship saints and ascetics. In the field survey, more than ninety-nine per cent Mang woman and man were found to perform poojas daily. Goats, cocks etc., are sacrificed while performing the Pooja of Mariaai. It is a common practice among the Mangs.
In the worship of Sadhus, fruits and flowers are commonly used. Every Mang family visits a Baba twice a year; in fact, this Baba is respected as though he was their ancestor. Babas or Sadhus perform different religious rituals like Brahmins.

They wear a saffron-coloured dress with Rudramala and Kamandalu. They smear their foreheads with powder to create a distinct identity. They perform propitiation like homahavan (a fire ritual) and Satyanarayampuja. Among the Mangs, Sadhus are as powerful as Brahmin priests. Following the Pooja, people pay homage to the Sadhus and give them some money as a token for their services. Sadhus recite the psalms to the devotees. Fasting is a common ritual among the Mangs particularly among women. They believe that they have to constantly pray to god to prevent bad luck falling on them. Thus, the salient features of the religious life of the Mangs are fasting, feasting and festivals. To be able to carry out these three religious practices even in conditions of poverty they constantly borrow money from landlords or the rich people of the villages.

During the Chaithtra to Phalgu months, the festivals, such as Gudipadwa (the celebration of Marathi New Year), Ramnavam (the celebration of the birth of lord Rama), and Hanumanjayant (the celebration of the birth of Hanuman) are celebrated by the Mangs; this act of involvement is the symbolic power as Pierre Bourdieu argues and it is explicit through the operation of the Hindu religion over their spiritual life. In the month of Vaisakha, Akshayatritiya is celebrated to worship their ancestors. They cook special food as a token of love and gratitude for the spirits of their ancestors. They will put the food on the rooftop and if a crow eats it, it is considered as an offering to the ancestors. During the month of  

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Jaishta, Vattapoornima festival is celebrated during which the women will fast the whole day for the long life of their husbands. They also pray to god that they have the same husband in all the seven births. Mangs believe in the seven cycles of birth as per the Hindu beliefs. They worship snakes by celebrating Nagpanchami in the month of Shravan. They also celebrate Raksha Bandhan in which brothers tie silk threads on the wrists of their brothers. Pola is a celebration in which cows and buffalos are worshipped; during this celebration a special dish called puranpoli (a sweet dish) is offered to cows and buffalos. They also celebrate Sarvapatriamousha of Bhadrapath. They celebrate Diwali/Dipavali and Bhaubeejsss in the month of Kartika. They celebrate Holi in the month of Phalgun.

Many of the Mang women said that they worshipped the bush of Tulsi in the morning after bath and simultaneously pay obeisance to Surya (the sun-god). During marriage ceremonies, they worship gods and goddesses. Mang women are invited to the marriages because their presence is considered a good omen. In the several interviews it was revealed that the celebration of the festivals in the rural areas has close relationship with the Balutedari system. For instance, the Mang women should visit the houses of caste Hindus and hang festoons of mango leaves or flowers on the main door during festivals like Pola and Holi. It is believed that Mang women bring peace and prosperity to the homes of caste Hindus. As a part of that omen, the caste Hindu women will give grains, cereals, edible oil etc., to the Mang women in exchange. These acts were practiced in all the four places in the urban and rural areas where this researcher conducted field survey. The Mang family members performed the rituals under the control of Brahmins. For example, during the Vattapoornima when the Vatt (Banyan tree) is worshipped, the Brahmin will guide the women for the Pooja. Many of the Mang
women will apply turmeric and vermilion on tree. Mang women from nearby places congregate near the tree during this form of worship.

According to Hindu religion, one has to go through sixteen types of Sanskaras in one lifetime. These Sanskaras start with the conception of the child and end with the death of the person. Among the Mangs, Panchvi Pooja, (a celebration on the fifth month of a Mang woman’s pregnancy) is celebrated by the parents and relatives of the woman; the celebration includes the offering of a green-coloured new sari, green bangles and white flowers. The mother of the pregnant woman offers five types of nuts to her and this is called Ottie Bharani or Dohale or Garbadan. Usually, the rich Mang women conduct such ceremonies. But, even poor families borrow money to celebrate it. The naming ceremony of the baby on the twelfth day after birth is considered auspicious by the Matang women. The presence of maternal uncles is compulsory during such rituals. The converted Buddhist Mahars also celebrate Akshyatritiya, Pitremokshaamvasya, Dassehra, Rakshabandan and Nagpanchami.

**Potraj, Mariaaicha Gada and Savashni**

Mangs consider the Potraj as the priest of the deity Mariaai. The Potraj performs all the rituals of the deity Mariaai. It is the Potraj who conducts the Jatra of Mariaai in the villages. People offer grains, wheat, rice, jawar and other edible items to appease the Potraj. These rituals have been sustained even today because they have been deeply ingrained in the unconscious planes of the mind. The Mang Potraj performs them because they get eleven bags of grains for such a performance during the course of a year. They point out that they do not have to work because of this ritual. The negative outcome of such rituals is that they
make the *Potraj* lazy and greedy. However, currently they also worship the silver statues of Ambedkar and Buddha along with the deities like Maraaai, Lakshmiaai and Khandoba. The persistence of this ritual can be analysed in two ways. One is to enquire into the legitimacy of this ritual in the society. Perhaps it is poverty, ignorance and the uncertainties of life that has forced this ritual upon them. In that case, the government has failed to ban such practices which are opposed to the modern way of life. The other is to analyse them through the lens of culture. In that sense, these rituals are defended as the part of the culture of Maharashtra. The educated Mangs have been unable to mobilise their community to give up such rituals. In the meantime, those who get money out of the performance of such acts continue to enjoy legitimacy on the basis of the consensuses of that has emerged through religion and the folk tradition of Maharashtra.

**Mariaaicha Gada:** This ritual is observed by the rural Mang communities. The word *Mariaaicha Gada* refers to the mobile temple of Mariaai. The *Potraj* carries the idol of the goddess Mariaai, Lakshmiaai or a model of Lakshmiaai of Kolhapur. The idols are carried in a decorated and painted square-shaped wooden box. The *Potraj* and his wife travel to different places. But, they concentrate on visiting the Mangwadas. They get grain from every home of the Mangwadas. Every home gives grain according to their financial status with a Dakshina of one or two rupees. The performer employs the media culture to commodify the aura of these deities. Each village has a senior *Potraj* with 18 to 20 junior disciples. Women are not allowed to become *Potraj* but they can become disciples. Some of the class four government employees use to perform the role of *Potraj*. 
Savashni: This tradition is practiced among the Mang, Malis and Maratha castes. A group of five married women observe a fast and they will come together in the evening. They prepare five delicacies and offer it in the temple of Mariaai.

Pilgrimage and Mang Women's Perception

Mang women enrich their religious life by going to their communitarian temples like Vairkhede and Shendre which are located in Marathwada region near Aurangabad, once a year. They visit such temples in the month of April. In Western Maharashtra, they particularly visit Khandoba of Jaisuri, Shiv temple etc. Many of the Mangs perceive pilgrimage as a way of making their wishes come true. Mang women fast once a week on the days of Ekadasi, Sivaratri, Ashadikartiki etc. They believe such fasting will purify their souls and become a source of bliss. Some of them also fast on particular days of the week: Thursday for Sai Baba, Saturday for Hanuman etc.

Bagat

Bagats play very important role among the Hindu Mangs. Their main task is to protect Mangs from the destructive effects of black magic. They are also known as quacks in some regions. Bagats are considered to be the higher members in the hierarchy of a particular region. They are thought to protect the community from evil spirits, ghosts and incurable diseases. They are saviours as well as agents of purification for the whole community. Their dress code differs from that of the Sadhus. Bagats possess certain magical powers; to ensure that these powers remain with them, they lead a disciplined life. They cure people possessed by evil spirits and provide a black or a red thread as a solace. Devotees of Bagats
consider them as the direct messenger of the gods and goddesses. Uneducated poor Mangs consider Bagats as an answer to their wretched life. However, these days urban educated Mang women have stopped visiting Bagats. It is seen that they are easily influenced by Christian values but not much by Buddhism. An internal stratification exists among the Bagats. Bagats are classified based on their competence to employ the magic. There are two types of magic—black and white magic. Black magic is employed for activities related to destruction. White magic works as a medium of protection.

**Solar Day and Lunar Eclipse**

Mang women beg during the days of the Amavasya period. Amavasya is considered an auspicious day. It is believed that evil spirits visit the earth on that particular day. They can wreak havoc in the lives of people. Mang women request alms (satka and matka) from the upper caste neighbours. The alms items include jawar, udithdaal, nails, salt and chilly. The alms are given to the Mang women to drive away all the problems of upper caste neighbours. Such an act is considered as a way of ensuring that no misfortune fall on them in the future. On the day of the eclipse, they beg with the words 'De daan suttee graham' ("give me alms, eclipse is over"). In the rural areas more than eighty-five per cent of the respondents believe in the begging on the day of the eclipse. This is so in both the rural and urban areas of the Sangli and Ahmadnagar districts. Educated women have discarded such practices of their caste.

Most of the Mang women argued that they wander and beg during the eclipse days due to their economic distress as well as their belief in supernatural powers. During eclipse they get money, clothes, grains and this helps them meet their
daily needs. Therefore, we can argue that this is a tradition-determined livelihood which is sanctioned by the upper castes to maintain the caste system. It makes them feel lower and inferior in the caste hierarchy. The educated women of the urban areas perceive begging as a stigmatized custom. This awareness explains the absence of such practices among educated women; but it is still largely practiced in the day to day life of Mang women.

The educated girls among Mangs demanded that laws should be enacted to discourage such women and that the government should provide opportunities through employment schemes. The more progressive of the community members said that they are not interested in continuing the ritual though their ancestors might have begged during the eclipse. Mangs are secondary natives during the festival in the rural areas. For example, they play string instruments like Vasnatri and arrange festoons. However, they do not get an equal share and status. Still, their caste-based occupations remain a relic of the Balutedari system and have not brought about any change in the rural areas. The modern industries have enabled the giving up of caste-based occupation; therefore, those who have discarded such stigmatized jobs have achieved social mobility. But, a number of Jogtin have been observed during sampling in the urban spaces of Sangli as well as Ahmadnagar.

Jat Panchayat

The Panchayat consists of five members and their main task is to deal with the problems within the community. Whenever, members of the community are

18 A woman who begs from door to door daily in the name of god.
unable to resolve their problems they usually go to the Panchayats of that particular caste. Those who are interested in having the problems sorted out bear the expenses of the Panchayats. Thus the main function of the Panchayat is to keep a watch on the members of that particular caste. Those deviating from the norms and values of the sub-caste are punished by the Panchayat. Caste-based Panchayats thus ensure the purity of their sub-caste through such means. Among the Mangs, Jat Panchayats can be organized during marriage ceremonies or death of relatives.

Traditional and Modern Trends of Occupational Mobility among Mang Women

The traditional Balutedari system determines the occupational mobility of the Mangs. The system was responsible for the caste hierarchy in the Hindu social order. However, it has also drawn in hierarchy into the Dalit caste. For instances, the identities of chambhar, kumbahr, dhobi etc., are segregated in every respect. Mangs were given a different status of jobs and professions. There were forty types of jobs which include rope making, basket making, broom making, and castration of bulls, which is specially handled by Mang males. Mangs are thus stratified on the basis of their different occupations. Sub-castes include Mang garudi, Daffile Mangs, Dakkalvar Mangs etc. Begging is one of the traditional occupations and is commonly observed in the villages due to poverty. They make rope from the Ghaypat tree. But, today they have shifted to thread rope making. Some make baskets out of bamboo while others are engaged in broom making.
After conversion, many of the Mahar Buddhist males and females discarded their traditional/occupational jobs. These were picked up by Mang males and females. The refusal to live within the fold of the Hindu religion is apparent in their modern aspirations. In rural Maharashtra, Mangs in general and women in particular are extremely backward in every respect. Industrialization, urbanization, education, law and order in the nation-state have been instrumental in bringing about changes in the occupation of caste. But, in the rural areas caste-based occupations persist because of the inability to impose law and order.

Caste-based occupations because of the servile nature have been turned into bonded labour. However, many Mang women prefer to remain under the shadow of it. They asserted that it was better for the government to promote them in their traditional jobs instead of coming up with new schemes like animal rearing. The usual complaint was that they had no food to eat. Therefore, they could not feed the animals given to them by the government. Those engaged in the democratic set-up, such as politicians and bureaucrats, claim that the rigidity of the caste-based system will wither away gradually. But looking at the present unchanged scenario, their claim, however, has to be questioned. There is a shift from traditional jobs to other jobs like agricultural labour in the rural areas and, in the urban areas, to jobs as porters, rickshaw pullers, servants, construction labourers and sweepers in several places. Thus, many families have migrated to the urban areas in search of jobs. But the question is whether the socio-economic status of the Mangs has changed.
### Table 1.1: Traditional and Modern Occupations of Mang Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational change of Mang Women: Traditional and Modern</th>
<th>Traditional Occupations</th>
<th>Labourers/Daily Wages/Construction Workers/ Rag Pickers</th>
<th>Agricultural/Seasonal Labourers</th>
<th>Domestic Servants</th>
<th>Government Services</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Mang Women</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Mang Women</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistics shows that 25 per cent of the Mang women from the rural areas are engaged in traditional occupations. Out of the five women (25 per cent), two women were into broom making, two into basket making and one was into rope making. Therefore, 10 per cent each were engaged in broom and basket making and 5 per cent were engaged in rope making. However, among the urban women, two of them were engaged in broom making. Broom makers in urban areas thus accounted for 10 per cent. The rural Mang women who were daily wages labourers and construction workers constituted 15 per cent. However, in the urban areas, Mang woman performing the same jobs accounted for 50 per cent. Among them, 30 per cent were rag pickers and 20 per cent were daily wage workers.

The rural Mang women agricultural labourers are facing a major crisis of jobs due to agricultural policies in the era of globalisation. They constitute 55 per cent of the occupations. Most of these women are engaged in the seasonal jobs related to agriculture. Therefore, there is an increasing migration of these women to...
urban places. Many of the women who were once agricultural labourers have ended up as sex workers due to the miserable conditions of their lives. And several of them worked as domestic servants in the urban places. Among the urban Mang women, 25 per cent were engaged in agricultural labour. In the rural areas, Mang women engaged in domestic service is 5 per cent. In the urban areas, 10 per cent of Mang women are into domestic work. The percentage of government servants among rural Mang women is zero. However, among urban Mang women 5 per cent are into government services. Thus, it can be argued that the conditions of rural women engaged in agricultural occupations have not improved.

Mang Women as Sweepers

It is observed that the maximum number of women in the urban places at Sangli and Ahmadnagar consist of Mang Hindus working as sweepers. This form of work can be analysed through caste and patriarchy in the following manner. The upper caste Hindus maintain caste-based hegemony through division of labour which gives rise to a structural framework of the patron and the dependent. For example, the labour of sweeper and scavenger is constructed in the form of pollution by the upper castes protected by the Balutedari system. Hence, Dalits did not question their traditional occupations. They remained within the patronage and dependence structural framework for their livelihoods in the traditional barter system.

The status of these labourers as ‘servants of untouchability’ has remained unchanged even in modern times. The jobs of sweepers and manual scavengers have been provided with proper salary and other government incentives like
provident funds. As non-Dalit castes refused to apply for these posts, the ex-untouchables continue to remain tied to these traditional and specific-location-centred jobs, although they are aware of the derogatory nature of the system. It is also observed that most of the time the male sweepers suffer from the humiliation related to this labour; they thus take to drinking, gambling and other bad habits. The low status of their work in conjunction with their untouchable status creates an inferiority complex within them. Thus, the wives of these men are often forced to work as scavengers or sweepers.

But, the salary goes to the husbands and the wife remains in their stigmatized job which further reinforces the patriarchy and caste in their lives. In the economic realm their condition is relatively better. In the education and political realm, they are marginalized in every respect. An interesting trend that is observed among the Mang community women is that the traditional occupation of a sweeper is handed over to another member of the family especially to a woman. The mother-in-law, who works in the municipality or in the Zilla Parishad or Nagar Palika as a sweeper, hands over her job to her daughter-in-law and takes voluntary retirement. This chain thus remains unbroken from one generation to the next. However, the most disgusting feature which is noticed in all offices during the field survey is that these labourers are provided sticks of brooms and thread. The concerned authorities deliberately do this to reinforce the traditional occupation of the Mang women like broom making. This is a symbolic gesture to keep the caste-based occupation alive.

Broom (Phada) Making

It is one of the commonly practiced traditional occupations of the Mang women in rural areas. This practice is also found in the urban slums although it is rarely
practiced as a profession. The monthly incomes of these women depend on the quality of raw material of Phada. It is made from the leaves of palm or Sindhi tree. Usually, the male member of the Mang community goes and purchases a tree of Sindhi. Sometimes, the raw materials of good quality are unavailable; so, they order them or personally go and collect them from the outskirts of a Karnataka district. The best quality Sindhi tree costs one thousand and eight hundred rupees. Each leaf of the tree is tested for its softness or hardness for the production of brooms. Once made, each broom is priced at six or seven rupees. Interestingly, respondents pointed out that during the marriage ceremonies of the Maratha and Mang families, about twelve brooms were bought for the marriage of their daughters. They believed that each broom is a form of deity Lakshmi. Therefore, every Mang and Maratha family will buy the broom particularly during the festivals like Diwali and Dassehra. The Mang women involved in this profession earn three to four thousand rupees per month; this amount, however, is not enough for their economic security. The income also depends on the availability and quality of raw materials. Most of the Mang households were found to be critical of the government schemes especially the Annabhau Sathe scheme.

Both the women and men felt that the government of Maharashtra are least interested in providing livelihood security for them. For instance, the scheme provides thirty thousand rupees each for the beneficiaries to construct houses. Bank demands official documents, in particular land documents, from the potential beneficiaries. As per the rules of the bank, the beneficiary should have five acres of land in his/her name. They, however, questioned the rationality of the demand by the bank by pointing out that those who do not have proper livelihood are the ones alienated from the land. Another scheme provides two
hundred rupees to the persons above sixty-five years of age. Bank officials demand hundred rupees every month from each of the beneficiaries without any guilt. They then give five hundred rupees to the beneficiaries after five months. They also criticised the insensitive Mang politicians and their caste organizations for their lack of interest in addressing the plight of poor Mangs.

The social workers in the rural and urban areas are equally corrupted and they eke out their livelihood through government schemes. Every Dalit in the rural areas is entitled to thirty thousand rupees through the Gharkul system to construct houses. They said that the meagre amount is not sufficient to build two rooms, kitchen and a bathroom. More often than not, the bank officials and other bureaucrats demand three to four thousand rupees as bribe in availing the amount of thirty thousand rupees. Therefore, they felt that it is better for the government to stop such schemes as they indirectly promote corruption. They added that instead of coming out with such schemes as Annabhau Sathe Yogana the government should take initiatives to promote traditional jobs like Phada making, broom making, basket making etc.

**Rope making**

Ropes are made out of a Gaipath tree. They chop the branches of the tree and soak them in water for many days before they are used to make ropes. The traditional mode of rope making has changed following the introduction of cotton threads. Now, the raw materials for the ropes are collected from the cloth mills. It costs one hundred and fifty rupees. They make sixteen to twenty ropes each ten feet long. Man and woman work together and earn two hundred and fifty rupees a week. The labour of two people is essential to twist the ropes. But,
the profit out of the rope making is uncertain because of the fluctuations in sales in the local market of the village. Under liberalization and privatization and the introduction of nylon ropes by reputed industrial units like Garwari, this occupation is under threat. Women have to double their labour in the traditional mode of rope production.

**Rag Picker**

It is one of the worst jobs carried out by the majority of Mang women in urban places. The reason for their involvement in these jobs is their migration from rural to urban spaces. A lot of Mang women are into this profession. As maximum women argued that they start collecting waste in the morning at five o'clock. Sometime in winters it is very dark. They get cuts and bruises everyday from broken glasses and rusted iron materials. They are afraid of the police. Most of the time, police molest the women doing this work. They can either shout or just ran away from the police. Otherwise, they are helpless. They usually slap false charges on the women rag pickers. They are treated worse than criminals. If any crime takes place, they are arrested for a crime totally unknown to them.

The houses of Nagar Sevak and other government employee whose wives were from the Mang caste and collected waste Bangar were also visited. There, the women shared their experiences at work. They said that they eked out a living by selling waste materials. The worked hard from morning to evening. The police would harass us them. They were often put in jail for no reason at all. Still they cannot retaliate against the police. They have no work apart from this rag picking. Their money is often confiscated by the police. They have to go hungry for days at a stretch. Most of these women's family members became Potraj, as it
was the order of Goddess Lakshmiahai. They dared not disappoint her. If they stopped the traditional role, they feared bad things may happen to their children. However, despite being Nagar Sevak and government employed, there was no awareness at all among these Mang families. They did not have any standard of living. These women enumerated the complexities that were associated with their wretched life. They continued to struggle even in the midst of such harsh realities.

Migration

Mang women agricultural labourers who depended on seasonal farming migrated in search of jobs. Mangs are highly literate even in the underdeveloped areas like Atpadi, but the condition of women remained the same in Jamkhed too. However, the life chances of Mang women are crippled by their illiteracy. In Jamkhed many Mang women worked as seasonal labourers and as domestic workers at work nearby paces. The Mang Hindu women in the rural and urban places are not aware of their rights and constitutional privileges. The women who work as agricultural labourers in the sugarcane and maize fields are caught in bonded labour. The landlord exploits their unfree labour. The common narrations of the Mang women will be discussed here. All of them are engaged as bonded labourer in the sugarcane field.

Most of them are uneducated. Their parents did not send them to school. Their parents never wanted to give them education. Many of these women’s sisters also are bonded labourers. However, their brothers are educated and had government jobs. They, on the other hand, have to go the sugarcane fields with
their husbands. The contractor carries them to the fields by the general purpose farm vehicle.

They have to work day and night. They have no idea how long they are made to work. Often they are exhausted. They get very little sleep. It is as though they are in a rat race working for the landlord. Given their misery, they do not want their daughters to live a painful life like them. They borrow money from the landlord to be able to send their sons to schools and colleges. In one case, the respondent said her son was studying Computer Science at the graduate level. They felt that education is the only hope for them. Although they earn 15 to 20 thousand rupees, the money is not given to them directly. For six months they get work; for the other six months they become unemployed. The money is given to them in instalments. They have no one else to borrow money from. The respondent said, her family had not eaten for two weeks. Still, they did not want poverty to be an obstacle in the education of their children.

**Education: Towards a World of Empowerment**

Education is a tool for building up the consciousness and recognition of the self of an individual as well as the community. It also accelerates the social, economic and political mobility. Mongs are denied education because of their location within the hierarchy of Hindu religion. Such hierarchy also controlled the institutions of caste, class and gender. Ambedkar created space for the Dalits in the constitutional framework by providing them with reservation. He visualized that through education the underprivileged Dalit and tribal people might ameliorate their position in society, assert their rights, and achieve dignity as human beings.
The differences on the basis of gender are stark in the life of Dalits in general and the dalit women in particular, and it needs proper attention. But, here the focus is solely on the education of Mang women. Financial capability and time are essential to acquire education. Most of the Mang families are impoverished and they survive as landless agricultural labourers or as manual labourers. They have started enrolling their children in schools. They believe that the son, not the daughter, should be educated because the son will bring some security to the family. Their location within that caste further multiplies these differences and the Mang girls are excluded from the field of education. Their entry to the field of education is further challenged within the classroom and outside it by extraneous forces thus discouraging them from continuing their education. This is so because this caste lacks social networks and linguistic competencies that are essential to sustain in the dominant field of education. Mang women are uneducated and this stands as an obstacle in their empowerment. The social backwardness that became ingrained in their mentalities too determines the marginalized status of these women.

However, the government of Maharashtra has taken certain initiatives of introducing schemes like free education for girl child under Savitribai Yogana, Annabhau Sathe Yojana etc.

Table 1.2 explains the vast differences in the educational levels of rural and urban Mang girls.
Table 1.2: Literacy among Rural and Urban Mang Girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mang girls in schools/Higher Education</th>
<th>Primary (I-V)</th>
<th>Middle (VI-III)</th>
<th>High school/Hr Secondary (IX-XII)</th>
<th>BA/BA (Hons)/BSc/B.Com.</th>
<th>MA/MSc.</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Mang Girls</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Mang Girls</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data shows that 10 per cent of Mang girls are enrolled in primary education. About 15 per cent are in the middle level and 10 per cent in higher secondary education in the rural areas. Mangs are sceptical of spending money on the education of their daughters. This indicates the patriarchal inclinations of the Mang males who deny the education of the female within their community.

Urban Mang girls at primary class constitute 35 per cent and 20 per cent are in middle level. They constitute 15 per cent in secondary education and 15 per cent in graduation. They constitute 5 per cent in the post-graduate level and are unrepresented in doctoral studies. Moreover, their representation in higher education is almost nil. Therefore, one can argue that the urban and rural Mang women are under-represented both in primary as well as higher education.

The general complaint of the Mang girls is that their families never mobilized them. Even in the middle class families, a girl's education is considered a waste of time and money. In the rural areas, parents believed that girls should not be
educated beyond the junior basic level. It is enough for them to able to read and write. After all, girls are somebody else’s property. They will be married and sent away from home. If they can write letters to their parents, that is considered a sufficient achievement on their part.

Thus, clearly the educational level of the Mang girls has shown no signs of improvement. The drop-out rates of Mang girl children are quite high. Hence, special attention should be given to them. Their ignorance of the reservation/affirmative policies has become an obstacle in the overall development of the community. One of the salient features of caste system was that it was based on occupation. Historically, every caste was divided based on their occupations or traditional professions. This was a superimposed system of work culture for the respective castes. The choice of the worker to select the job was denied by the codes of caste system. Through this discourse of ascribed identity, upper castes and caste Hindus achieved material befits and self-esteem. Thus, Mangs had to confine themselves within the space of stigmatized jobs which denied them self-respect. Therefore, the political economy of caste is very complex and rigid in its day to day operations. The territory of a particular caste was marked to exclude the “other” castes. That kind of ideological exercise includes prevention of upward mobility and restriction of social mobility in education, even today.

Conversion

The discourse of conversion unleashed major debates among the Mangs in Maharashtra. The meaning of conversion is contested within the social world of
the Mangs these days and it has acquired a different connotation. Some of the educated Mangs started converting to Buddhism gradually. But many of them have rejected the idea of conversation because of several reasons. The Mangs who converted to Buddhism during the time of Ambedkar were excluded by the Mahar Buddhists and also by the Mang Hindus. They argued that Mahars, even after their conversion to Buddhism, discriminated them on the basis of sub-caste and the traditional conflict of the two castes persisted. The Hindu Mangs considered conversion as an aberration from their religion. Neither of the two castes was ready to marry their daughters or sons to Mangs.

So, very few Mangs were influenced by the Ambedkarite movement of conversion. The current discourse in Maharashtra which is motivated by leading activist-politicians like Laxman Mane, Awad and others are only for political benefits. Most of the Mangs argued that there is no point focussing merely on conversion when the whole Mang community is suffering from poverty. Mere spiritual assertions that do not take into account the social and political dimensions are criticized in every respect.

Political Parties and Mang Women

The women from this caste are often victims of rape, molestation, naked parade, witch hunt, murder, excommunication etc. A Mang woman faces these discriminations in her day to day life because of her lower caste and gender status within the realm of graded inequality. Of the forty interviews taken, around 39 women respondents said that they have faced discrimination directly or indirectly. The rural respondents faced discriminations in a direct manner and yet were powerless to challenge them. For instance, maximum women says, in
the Panchayat the Maratha caste males did not allow them to sit on the chair because they are Dalit/Mang caste women. They disliked the idea of allowing Mang women to have a say in any decision making. This was mainly due to the upasarpanch who was from the Maratha caste. In such cases Mang women went to the district office and complained against the upasarpanch, but no action would be taken. Though reported in the newspapers, nothing came out of them. The Maratha leaders cut off the electricity and water supply. They threatened to rape and molest them and even tried to kill their family members, especially the male members, husband and son. In such situations the Mang women felt powerless; often they simply had to withdraw the case. These women realized that the Marathas could manipulate them because they had money and power. Moreover, they asked Mang women to contest the election from the reserved constituency and also in the general constituency, even if they are not residents of that particular ward. The women agricultural labourers are sexually exploited in their work places. The urban respondents also reported experiences of caste-based discrimination, although in a subtle manner.

When asked which party they voted for, the women openly said that they supported the Nationalist Congress Party. However, all the while, the male members kept discouraging the women from answering the question. Most of the Mang males said that their open views and opinions often created problems for them. There is tremendous sense of insecurity among them prohibiting them from sharing their political views and their day to day activities. Most of the women said that on the day of election the respective parties would come to their Vastis and take all of them. They would be shown the symbol of the party and given money as well as ration, food and sometimes new cloths. They said they
voted for the party that gave them more money. According to them, the NCP always gave them more than any other party.

But the voting pattern was found to vary from place to place. At Jamkhed, the Mang women voted for the traditional Congress party. They replied that they obeyed whatever the male members told them. In the urban areas, Mang women said they voted for the Kamal (BJP) because that is the party of Hindus. Oh! You can see Lord Rama! That was the common refrain. The Mang women from both the urban and rural areas had no political knowledge and were unaware of their rights. The following table shows their voting patterns.

Table 1.3: Voting Pattern of Rural and Urban Mang Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Political Party</th>
<th>Rural Mang Women</th>
<th>Urban Mang Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress I</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPI</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiv-Sena</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPM</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data above shows us the voting pattern of the Mang Hindu women. The majority of both the rural and urban women prefer to vote for the Shiv-Sena and BJP. In the rural areas, 35 per cent voted for the Shiv-Sena while 30 per cent voted for them in the urban areas. About 40 per cent of the rural Mang women voted for the BJP while 45 per cent of the urban women voted for the same party.
About 20 per cent of the rural women voted for the Congress I. In the urban areas 15 per cent of them voted for the Congress I. In the rural areas 5 per cent of them voted for the Nationalist congress party while in the urban areas this figure was 10 per cent. They totally rejected the existence of parties like RPI, BSP and CPM.

Conclusion

Mang women continue to remain subjugated because of their adherence to the Hindu religion. They are dragged into the abysmal pit of superstitions through the assimilation of the dominant Hindu ethos. Their identities, which are influenced by the Hindu religion, are responsible for the irrational outlook among them. Mang women are co-opted as 'vulnerable communities' within the depoliticized spheres of Ngoization rather than as genuine social movements. Thus, the agencies such as Mang women are depoliticized through the ngoization and patriarchal Mang male leaders as well as family members.