CHAPTER 12

(A) CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS
(B) THE LEGISLATURE WING AND THE ORGANIZATION WING OF THE CONGRESS PARTY (C) INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIOUS PARTIES IN THE
MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATURE

(A) Contributions of the Individual Members

The government seems to be more responsive to the collective demands of the honourable members, while members individually rarely influence the government policy. It is true that the legislator's contribution cannot be judged from his activities in the legislature only. The legislator's work outside the House should also be considered. This is true in connection with all the parties. But even then, the contributions of some individual members in the House are significant.

These prominent members took a lead in voicing the views of their groups or parties in an effective manner. Sometimes they had their own points of view to present, which appealed to the House, at times even the government. Thus these members became the focal points for the mobilisation of the legislators around certain significant planks or issues. The stature of the members as party leaders outside the legislature might add to this influence of his inside the legislature, but it is not a pre-condition for the
The profiles of the contributions of a few members who figured prominently in the legislature are presented below.

**Datta Deshmukh (Lal Nishan Group, Sangamner)**

Shri Datta Deshmukh had a lion’s share in causing the formation of the unilingual State of Maharashtra. Most of his speeches in the legislature directly or indirectly stressed the unilingual principle. He showed alertness in safeguarding the interests of Maharashtra. For example, his studious speeches highlighted the importance of the Narmada Project for Maharashtra. His speeches revealed his thorough grasp of the various aspects of the irrigation project like the Narmada Project.

His contributions regarding some significant bills are worth mention. Out of keen interest in the industrial working class, he exerted considerably on modifying the L.A. Bill No. XXII of 1958, to make Temporary Provisions for Industrial Relations and other matters to enable the State Government to conduct Industrial Undertaking as a measure of Unemployment Relief. Shri Shantilal Shah the then Minister for Labour congratulated him. But afterwards, Shri Datta Deshmukh himself, denounced the Bill since it was not flexible to suit the changed circumstances.

The result of the Tenancy Acts would have been spectacular, had Shri Deshmukh’s suggestions been considered
seriously by the government. He was precisely correct in regarding the absence of a definite rationale in the Tenancy Acts. His forecasting came true and a large number of big landlords exploited the loopholes.

His suggestion for finding out a new criterion for the distribution of irrigation water to the farmers was of vital importance, but unfortunately government did not pay any heed to it. The government made out a claim that only the Congress Party was interested in the field of Co-operation and other parties showed disinterest in this movement. But the suggestions of Shri Datta Deshmukh, in this behalf, exhibited an appreciably balanced study of the various problems. Shri Datta Deshmukh aired a suggestion of forming the Sale and Purchase Societies. He suggested that, if 66 per cent of the agricultural lands were to be covered by the co-operative sector, compulsion would have to be resorted to to bring the bulk of the lands under co-operation.

Shri Datta Deshmukh came under the influence of the Congress Programme announced at Awadi. In response to this Programme the Opposition groups supported the decentralization of administration in the rural areas. Congress introduced a Bill to implement the decentralization. During the course of the first reading Shri Datta Deshmukh supported the Bill, but afterwards he felt that decentralization was utilized for serving the selfish interests of the Congressmen. Hence, during the Second Reading of the Bill Shri Datta
Deshmukh opposed it. The Congress Party used the decentralization programme for consolidating their strength in the State.

The Opposition tried to build up a strong public opinion against the government on the issue of the inclusion of Bombay City in Maharashtra. Particularly the Namboodiripad Ministry resigned in because the Congress has engineered a similar movement against the Communist government in Kerala and succeeded in it. Shri Datta Deshmukh also participated in this Opposition embarked upon a big programme move. But, unfortunately for him and the Opposition Parties, the Congress declared its decision of keeping Bombay in Maharashtra.

Thus Congress succeeded in restoring its dwindling prestige in Maharashtra. Shri Datta Deshmukh and other Opposition party leaders could not succeed in retaining the big land holders in the Opposition parties. For one reason or the other the big land holders supported the Congress and the powerful wave of Opposition subsided in Maharashtra.

Shri T. S. Karkhanis (Peasants and Workers Party, Shahuwadi, Kolhapur)

Shri T. S. Karkhanis was a well known leader of the Peasants and Workers Party. His Motor Car Drivers' Bill was held in high esteem by the government. In principle, the government accepted the Bill. The private member's intention in initiating Bills is limited. Shri Karkhanis was satisfied when government welcomed his Bill. Regarding A Bill to Amend
the Irrigation Laws (Amendment) Act, 1964, Shri Karkhanis offered a good suggestion of rendering compensation for the acquisition of lands for water courses. Shri T.S. Karkhanis was aware of the inefficient administration, therefore he demanded that the value-determining power should not be vested in the hands of the officer.

His study of minute details of administration was very keen. Government had estimated that by the Right Bank Canal of the Gangapur Project 9743 acres were to be irrigated but actually 2121 acres were brought under irrigation. Shri Karkhanis found out the discrepancy in the demand and suggested that the demand should be postponed.

The problem of irrigation facilities was difficult in Maharashtra. The water-potential in Maharashtra was very limited, and on the other hand sizable water was being wasted. Shri Karkhanis brought this fact to the notice of the government.

Shri Karkhanis was fully equipped with information. His powerful argument for the abolition of beggary had a sound basis of information. In half an hour discussion on beggary he stated very pungently that the government did not possess the information, which was possessed by the member.

On a number of occasions he attacked the growing corruption in the Maharashtra State. During the course of the half-an-hour discussions he appeared as a powerful
critic on corruption. His suggestion regarding the timing of the half-an-hour discussion was apt. He made it because during most of the half-an-hour discussions it was noted that the members were not interested in this important business of the legislature.

His following suggestions about the questions in the House are also very significant:

(i) He requested the government to give correct information.
(ii) He suggested the adoption of some new method for replying the answers.

His opinion that the Ministers and the Deputy Ministers should not accept the chairmanship of the private companies was worth consideration. His findings about the underestimation of the government revenues were pertinent.

Shri D. B. Patil (Panvel)

Shri D. B. Patil also belonged to the Peasants and Workers Party. He had done his best in safeguarding the interest of the farmers. He found out that the regulated marketing committees were not functioning properly. The dealers in foodgrains exploited the farmers by purchasing from them at lower rates and then selling at higher rates. He suggested that while fixing up the prices of the essential commodities the costs should be estimated. The suggestion regarding the maintenance of a relationship between the prices of the agricultural commodities and commodities required for subsistence, was very significant.
When the interest of the Khots and the tenants clashed in the legislature, he attempted to protect the interest of the tenants.

Shri D. B. Patil’s demand for a larger rural representation on the Zilla Parishads was justifiable. He requested the government to give the co-opted members on the Zilla Parishads, the right to address the meeting. It was notable that his suggestion for the appointment of Business Advisory Committee regarding the Krishi Vidyapith was accepted.

Government’s defective approach towards the preparation of the water-supply schemes was exposed by Shri D. B. Patil. The main reason to be attributed for this defective approach was the non-availability of data. The government always boasted of the land reforms. Actually the benefits of these reforms could not reach the poor farmers. Therefore he suggested the constitution of an eleven member committee to find out the results of the land reforms.

Shri R. K. Mhalgi (Mawal and Poona)

Shri Mhalgi ably represented the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in the legislature. He was one of those few members who succeeded in articulating their views on Bills to the government. Government accepted the bill of Shri Mhalgi in principle. His arguments were forceful when he talked on L. A. Bill No. VI of 1958 (Essential Commodities and Cattle Control Bill).
His suggestion for forming a committee to make the farmers understand the Tenancy Acts was apt. He attacked the 'delaying' on the part of the government. He pointed out that some tenancy cases in the Commissioner's Office had been pending since eight years.

He was keen on the eradication of corruption from the administration. Government considered the arguments of Shri Khalgi in favour of prescribing the time limit for providing the extract from the Khatedar's revenue record under Section VII.12.

Shri Khalgi succeeded in convincing the government the inconvenience caused to a new Sarpanch in connection with taking charge of his office. Government promised that a new legislation would be moved to remove this specific difficulty.

In connection with the propagation of the Co-operatives in the villages, Shri Khalgi opposed the suggestion of compulsion emphasized by Shri Datta Deshmukh.

Shri Warty (Vassal)

Shri Warty belonged to the Praja Socialist Party. His most important suggestion was about the formation of a miniature finance commission, for distributing financial resources between the State and the Local Bodies. In fact this demand was befitting the growing movement for decentralization.
Secondly, his demand for introducing the subject of Military Studies in the educational curriculum was apt. Presently the subject is being taught at the University level also.

Shri V. B. Gogate (Maharashtra Graduates)

He was member of the Hindu Mahasabha. For sometime he was elected as the leader of the Opposition in the Council. He pressed for State Trading. In his opinion for removing excessive profiteering and black-marketing the State trading was the only solution.

In his numerous speeches he disclosed the drawbacks in the prohibition policy. He also called for the eradication of anarchy from the primary and secondary schools.

Shri B. N. Rajhans (SSP, Elected by Assembly)

He posed himself as a very assertive member in the Council. He appeared more radical for being a socialist. He whipped the government on the charge of providing false and illusory statistics. He was convinced that nothing was done to bring about the socialistic pattern of society. His arguments relating to decentralization were just. He emphasized decentralization in the industrial field also. The government boasted of a balanced economic growth in the State of Maharashtra, but the fruits of industrial decentralization were not visible. He pressed for the industrial development of Marathwada to promote the balanced economic growth of the State.
For the effective implementation of the ideology of socialism, he held that nationalization of industries was a must.

His suggestion for the application of the Minimum Wages Act to the labour in agriculture was appropriate. All the land reforms in Maharashtra proved beneficial to the big land holders and practically nothing was done for the poor agricultural labourers.

He used his abilities to ventilate the grievances of the backward class people and the Adivasis. He expected the government to formulate substantive plans for the uplift of the downtrodden.

**Shri A. H. Namdani**

Shri Namdani, a Congress man got elected from Darwha constituency. He pleaded government policies, however his support to the Congress Party was not blind. He possessed independent thinking. Hence, he registered his opposition to some of the points insisted by the Congress party. He firmly believed in the socialist philosophy. When he observed that a Textile Commissioner was inclined towards the industrialists and consequently injustice was done to the cotton-growers, he candidly opposed that tendency.

In the legislature the government brought one bill (a bill further to amend the Bombay Legislative Members' Salaries and Allowances Act, 1956) raise the salaries of the
members of the legislature. Shri S. K. Athalye (Independent, Lanja) opposed the bill. Shri Kamdani was the only Congress-man who appreciated the emotions of Shri Athalye.

Shri A. H. Kamdani enthusiastically took part in the business of the legislature and proved effective member on resolutions. He had studied several problems of the farmers. He insisted on removing the class of middlemen (dalals) to prevent the exploitation of the farmers.

Smt Ramabai Deshpande

Smt Deshpande was perhaps the most active lady-member in the legislature. She represented Yawal constituency. Throughout her career in the legislature her speeches conveyed that she had deep faith in the Gandhian Philosophy.

On basic principles she supported the ruling party, however she was courageous to criticise the government. She became convinced of the fact that the government was very slow in eradicating unemployment from the State. She tendered advice to the government to become alert in this behalf. The people of her constituency and nearby region demanded one medical college in Jalgaon. Smt Ramabai Deshpande tried to convince the government of this particular demand.

During the business of the legislature she made valuable suggestions to the government. Her suggestion of distributing surplus land among the retired military soldiers was precious.

She pondered over several crucial issues before the
legislature. Her plan regarding removing unemployment in the State of Maharashtra was feasible. She recommended to the government to conduct a survey to find out district-wise unemployment. Then the government should find out the stock of natural resources in all districts. After these two surveys the government might come to a conclusion that which factories and industries were feasible in a particular district. These industries might create employment potential in all districts of Maharashtra.

Shri K. S. Dhariya

Shri Dhariya belonged to the ruling party. He was elected from the Kolaba constituency. He was very sharp in retaliating the allegations made by the Opposition members. His arguments during the no-confidence motion in 1963 were forceful. He proved his independent thinking when he opposed a bill further to amend the Bombay Municipal Corporation Act. Generally the ruling party members used their speeches for defending the government policies. However he was one of those few members who were very aggressive.

Owing to his aggressiveness against the Opposition he became an asset to the Congress party. He was basically socialist and at the same time had full faith in democratic principles. Therefore he constantly opposed to the communist philosophy. Though his contribution was not substantial, it was beyond doubt that he made the debates more lively. He
made the debates interesting when he was confronted with Dr. Mandlik or Shri P. K. Atre.

He could read well the political situation in Maharashtra. During the clashes with Dr. Mandlik (PSP) he foretold that the Opposition would have to face bad days and his forecasting came to be true.

(B) The Legislature Wing and the Organization Wing of the Congress Party

The relationship between the legislative wing and the organization wing in Maharashtra cannot be studied unless the impact of the Central Government and the national headquarters of the parties, especially the Congress party, on this relationship is closely looked into. The Centre nowadays plays a decisive role in the important governmental and administrative issues of the States including the State of Maharashtra. 4

So far, the Centre has successfully controlled the politics of the State of Maharashtra. It is because of this fact that the Congress in Maharashtra stood in support to Mrs. Indira Gandhi during the Congress split at the Centre. The emergence of Mrs. Indira Gandhi as the foremost national leader strengthened her position in Maharashtra to a great extent. 5

The position of Mrs. Indira Gandhi at the helm at the Centre did not permit a serious dispute between
wing and the organizational wing in the State of Maharashtra. Yet some disputes regarding developmental imbalance received a wide publicity in newspapers, but the nature of these disputes was different. It was not a dispute between the legislative and the organization wing, but between two groups for leadership. Such groups existed in the legislative wing as well as in the organizational wing but this did not prove damaging to the Congress Party.

The uneven regional development was one of the main reasons of the dispute. The Congressmen from Marathwada complained that economic injustice was done to them, and to correct this, they demanded that greater authority regarding development be delegated to the area. They urged in favour of taking up more ministers from Marathwada. When another sizable group in the Congress party did not take note of this situation, dissatisfaction on the part of the Congressmen from Marathwada grew more, and in this case, the Opposition members from the said area supported the Congress. The Viderbhians also tried to demand more facilities. Outside the legislature the Nag-Vidarbh Andolan was also launched. Shri A. B. Bardhan and Shri V. D. Deshpande (both Communists) and Smt Sushila Balraj (Congress) so often raised the problems of Vidarbha. The continuous flow of demand from Konkan also reflected the economic backwardness of that area. Shri Thakre (Congress) and Shri S. K. Athalye ventilated the grievances of Konkan. However, they were not as aggressive as the Members from Marathwada and Vidarbha.
These new elements demanded a change in the leadership. Some Congressmen were driven to conceive that the economic advancement of Marathwada could not be accelerated by keeping status-quo in the leadership. One Congressmen in the interview raised several important problems of the area.

It is stated by responsible Congress members that the formation of the State Ministries in 1971 after the mid-term Lok Sabha election which was sequel to the Congress split, had an impact of this state of affairs, and owing to that fact important ministers were ousted. The exclusion of the previous ministers was not without risk. They might not have sufficient number of members of the legislative assembly to support them but they had their supporters among the rank and file at the lower levels. It was disclosed that the Congress government was not afraid of the Opposition since it knew the weakness of the Opposition, but the government had to be very alert about the Opposition from within.

(C) \textbf{Inter-relationships among Various Parties in the Maharashtra Legislature}

In the Assembly as well as in the Council, the Congress party, being the majority party, played a dominant role. But during 1957-61 the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti challenged the Congress on the issue of the bilingual State. As the move for the unilingual State, after its creation, subsided, the Congress was again on the ascendant.
Among all the parties in the legislature, the Congress Party stood as the most disciplined group. Conflicting views on the fundamentals were never expressed by Congress Members. The Opposition members on some occasions charged that the Congress members did not comply with some of the views of the Congress party. Anyway they did not express divergent ideas on the floor of either House.

But during the course of the discussions on demands they can be said to have enjoyed much latitude in presenting their demands and in ventilating their grievances.

In the first phase of the conflict on the bilingual State, government took a stiff attitude and all Congressmen supported the government until its fresh decision on the said issue. The prohibition policy created many social evils. Many Congressmen were aware of the drawbacks in the prohibition policy but they defended it. On major issues they were bound to endorse the policies of the government, and this was entirely in conformity with the parliamentary system. Yet the Congress party in Maharashtra, suffered from an internal schism which became visible after the inclusion of Marathwada and Vidarbha in Maharashtra. This dispute was not between the organizational wing and the legislative wing, but it occurred in both the wings.

The success of the majority party lies in using offensive tactics also. Generally these offensive tactics are operated by the Opposition Camp. But ruling party also
manipulated this method. When the Opposition attacked the industrial labour policy of the government, government had to counterattack the leaders of the industrial working class. Shri S. G. Patkar and Shri K. N. Dhulap were charged of exploiting the trade unions for their political aspirations.

The Minister for Labour remarked that the trade union leaders launched anti-government propaganda. Whenever the police opened fire on the workers, government pleaded that a situation was created by the leaders in which police had no alternative to opening fire.

Regarding the various compromises between the workers and the industrialists government recriminated that the trade union leaders rejected those compromises which were earlier agreed to by them. Government taunted the union leaders. Shri Patkar was taunted on account of the declining strength of his union.

Government revealed that the Opposition members demanded the price-support for the cultivators, and on the other hand they protested against the rising prices. It was very difficult for the government to adhere to these two conflicting policies. The Congress party members often criticised that, in the Opposition party, groups having divergent ideologies had assembled. The criticism appeared more piquant when the no-confidence motions were brought on the floor of the legislature. There was no unanimity among
the Opposition groups. Deliberating on the collective farming the Opposition parties had three different trends of thought. One group insisted on making the collective farming compulsory after the consent of 66 per cent of farmers was obtained. The Communists emphasised the compulsion, while the Jana Sanghaits and the PSP members opposed compulsion.

Regarding the safeguarding of the interests of the tenants, Shri Dhariya commented that the Congress was not the solitary well-wisher of the rich. Shri Ahalgi had also expressed views which suited the capitalists.

Since the Chinese aggression the Communist party found its prestige dwindling. Very often the Communists were charged of treachery against India. Many times hot discussions were held and the loyalty of the Communist members was called in question. Shri Varty charged through a cut-motion that government was not able to find out such persons whose loyalties were with the foreign countries like Pakistan and China. In this discussion only the Communists were left in want of support.

Shri Y. B. Chavan, during the adjournment motion at the time of the murder of Patrice Lumumba, expressed doubt about the loyalty of the Communists. The Opposition members made violent speeches, but Shri S. M. Joshi’s speech was cautious and impartial. He did not support the Opposition
members wholeheartedly therefore he was criticised by Shri P. K. Atre, another Opposition (Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti) member.

On December 4, 1961 Shri R. D. Bhandare moved a no-confidence motion, but Shri S. M. Joshi and his party (PSP) did not support the motion. Shri S. M. Joshi's arguments were convincing but other Opposition groups did not respond to them. Such instances displayed the rifts in the Opposition. Dr. Lohiya's remarks about the PSP were also referred to. Some Opposition members remarked that materially there was no difference between the PSP and the Congress.

The Jana Sangh had only a few seats in the Assembly. Shri Mhalgi was the most active member of the Jana Sangh. But he concentrated on minor problems. He was congratulated by Shri Shantilal Shah for preparing a Bill on the basic policies of the Government. Jana Sangh contributed rarely. Like the Praja Socialist Party, during 1957-61, it remained away from the Samiti, but on many occasions supported it. On the matters pertaining to the working class and the agriculturist class, it had contributed on a few occasions. But Shri Mhalgi's suggestion for appointing a Committee for educating the farmers on the provisions of the Tenancy Acts was apt.

The Peasants and Workers Party was the most active party, having able members in the legislature. After 1962, among the Opposition groups it practically dominated.
Sanrashri K. N. Dhulp, T. S. Karkhanis, Dhondge and D. B. Patil seemed to have taken the charge of the Opposition groups. In 1957 it gained 24 seats, but in the 1962 elections it could retain 14 seats only.

Whatever might be the good intention of the PSP, its lenient policy affected the vigour and ardour of the Opposition, which resulted in indirect political assistance to the Congress.

Two alternatives before the PSP might be postulated as under:

(a) To evolve a healthy parliamentary system by offering responsible criticism.

(b) To support the Opposition groups so that the downfall of the Congress might be caused.

The resort of the second alternative was more appropriate and might have changed the political complexion in Maharashtra and the resort to the first alternative might have helped usher in a healthy parliamentary system also. The PSP seemed to have been attracted by the first alternative. But the overall impression was that the political phase existing at that time was not properly analysed by the Opposition groups. Hence they did not present themselves as a solid and homogeneous groups. The Congress Party was endowed with a keen insight and prudence. In the crisis it was never found in a bewildering state.
In the Assembly, the Opposition parties and the Congress party expressed identical views on the Bombay Reorganisation Bill. The Congress members and Opposition members expressed themselves strongly in favour of retaining those areas, which were included in Maharashtra but were claimed by the Gujarathis. Shri Datta Deshmukh, Shri Patkar, Shri Deshpande, Shri Berdhan and Shri Joshi opposed the speeches of the Gujarathi members in the Assembly which aimed at grabbing more areas from Maharashtra. Shri Atre, Shri Deshmukh and others pressed a demand for the inclusion of the Dangs in Maharashtra. But the Chief Minister Shri Y. B. Chavan replied that the elections of the Dangs District Local Board indicated the verdict in favour of Gujarat. The Opposition members objected to the transfer of the amount of Rs. 60 crores to Gujarat as the starting cash balance after the reorganisation.

The Peasants and Workers Party, the Communist party, and to some extent the Lal Nishan Gat, practically did not have radical differences on their attitudes towards the government. They professed identical ideologies on the questions of the industrial working class and its problems, the industrialists, rural decentralization, and specially on the attitude of administration towards strikes, marches and demonstrations. These parties always pressed for entirely favourable negotiations. In the industrial field these parties should have adopted the give and take policy. Without
any shadow of doubt it should be accepted that in its view
PSP did not have a complete identity with the Congress. The
economic programme of the PSP was radical. But its attitude
towards the Congress was soft. It believed in peaceful
negotiations with the Congress while other parties except
the Jana Sangh were extreme, quite away from the Congress.

Taking into consideration the circumstances existing
in 1960 the Opposition had a faint chance to offer an
alternative government by struggling hard in the ensuing
election. Having an eye on this particular situation the
Congress attempted to liquidate the Opposition. Through the
introduction of the decentralization programme it strengthened
itself. The Congress Party’s steps were so well calculated
that it could better its position.

The Communist party’s and the PSP’s ends and means
were different. The rigid Communist ideology was abhorred
by the PSP and the Jana Sangh. The PSP and the Jana Sangh
being the nationalist parties were reluctant to change their
ideology to suit the Communist gamut. Sometimes the
Communists were out to adopt unconstitutional ways. The
Congress members used to criticise the Communist Party that
the Congress wanted a socialistic set-up to be realised
through democratic means, while the Communist Party stood
against democracy. Leftist leader Shri Datta Deshmukh also
did not accept the suggestion of compulsion entirely while
implementing the scheme relating to collective farming.
On few major issues, the PSP, the Communist party and the Lal Nishan Gat had identical views. During 1957-61, these groups expressed identical views on unilingual State, abolition of the Homeguard Department, nationalization of banks, State trading, repeal of the prohibition policy, problem of foodgrains and agricultural and industrial production.

On the Co-operation Movement, though all the Opposition members were very critical, indirectly they expressed their faith in the movement. Actually the objectives did not raise any moot points but the defective implementations and frauds were the targets for criticism. All parties in the Opposition voiced similar views against the appropriation of huge profits by the middlemen traders, and these groups maintained that this class was to be eliminated by strengthening the co-operative movement.

The decentralization programme of the Congress was accepted in principle by all the Opposition parties. But the execution of the programme could not command the appreciation of the Opposition parties. All the Opposition parties believed that the rural democratic decentralization programme might strengthen the democratic set up in the State. Sometimes the Opposition members were more enthusiastic about it and they pleaded more vigorously that greater authority should be transferred to the representatives of the rural people. Government expressed unwillingness to vest more powers in
the hands of the popular representatives in rural areas, on account of the rivalry among the political groups in the villages. But the Opposition party members requested the government to take off the Department of Education from the Zilla Parishads. Dr. V. R. Pandit (Jana Sangh) a member of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, levelled bitter criticism against the working of the Zilla Parishads. The members of the PSP and the Peasants and Workers Party particularly complained that those panchayat samitis were put to hardship which were controlled by the Opposition parties. The Opposition also pressed for economic decentralization. The government was anxious to execute the decentralization programme with considerable speed.

The fixation of the prices for agricultural produce was not opposed by any party. The government also considered this issue seriously, and even at the risk of rise in the prices, the price support was given by the government. The prices determined by the Central Government were raised by 20 to 30 per cent by the Maharashtra Government. This might be one of the reasons of the Congress success in the later elections in 1967.

In the industrial working class the Congress started to create rifts. Fortunately for the Congress, rivalries among the Opposition parties began and the strength of the PSP and the Communist party declined. The Congress criticised the Opposition parties for exhibiting their strength by arranging morchas and demonstrations.
After 1961, the Communist Party had to face a barrage of criticism and decline in popularity because of Chinese invasion of India. China being a major Communist country and Communist Party's neutrality towards her created suspicion among the people. On this background the Congress launched anti-Communist and anti-Socialist propaganda and the prestige of the leftist parties suffered an ebb. Dearth of funds also affected leftists adversely, while the Congress received adequate funds from the industrialists.

Still the position of the Peasants and Workers Party was better than all other Opposition parties. After the systematic attempts by the ruling party to liquidate the Opposition, winning 14 seats by the Peasants and Workers Party was no mean achievement. The Praja Socialist Party which bagged 27 seats in 1957 had to fight a tough battle even to win only 4 seats. The Peasants and Workers Party put its efforts to withstand the growing force of Congress.

The Peasants and Workers Party members were active in ventilating the grievances of the farmers. The Peasants and Workers Party influenced the government in the fixation of the prices of agricultural commodities. It put in efforts for creating more co-operative societies to eliminate the class of middlemen. It had also brought to the notice of the government the malpractices in the co-operative societies. On the question of foodgrains and fair-price shops it kept the government on its toes. Shri K. N. Dhulip worked hard
for protecting the rights of the workers. He was also very keen on launching State Trading in Maharashtra in order to solve the food problem. Though the Peasants and Workers Party made efforts for the uplift of the farmers and the workers, government responded to their views concerning the farmers to a greater extent.

Though before 1962 the Peasants and Workers Party had captured more seats than in 1967, it created a better impression in 1967 albeit with less strength in the legislature. Shri T. S. Karkhanis and his partymen in 1967 displayed a great zeal in the proceedings. In 1962 the qualitative standard of the Opposition increased. Much of the credit should be given to the Peasants and Workers Party. Shri Dhondge, Shri Karkhanis and Shri Dhulup created a lively atmosphere in the Assembly.

The Lel Nishan Gat, without Shri Datta Deshmukh was equal to nothing. For five years he dominated the proceedings of the Assembly making the Government cautious about the administrative data it had to present. He pointed out several irregularities in the statistical data published by the government.

The Communist Party had some scholar members during the period from 1957 to 1961. Shri A. B. Barde, Shri Deshpande and Shri S. G. Patkar sought to promote the welfare of the workers. The problems of the bidi workers, particularly in Vidarbha, and the problems of bonus and dearness
allowance, were effectively dealt with by them. The subject of the closure of the textile mills was analysed by Shri S. G. Patkar. The Communist Party brought to the notice of the government the defective method of the compilation of the cost of living index numbers. The Party tried to exercise influence on the government in regard to nationalization of industries and State Trading, but no fruitful results yielded.

But all the members from Vidarbha and Marathwada irrespective of their party affiliation, endeavoured to attract the attention of the government towards the backwardness of these regions. The educational fee concessions annulled by the government recently were referred to by every member. The problem of the integration of the administrative services belonging to different regions in the State and the removal of the alleged injustice to the officers from Vidarbha and Marathwada proclaimed to bring about the balanced growth of the State through decentralization of industries. They therefore demanded industries, medical colleges, agricultural colleges, universities and radio stations. Demands concerning new roads and additional water supply were also pressed. The members presented these demands unanimously. Though Congress party members praised the steps of the government in Vidarbha and Marathwada, demanded something more. The government had already incurred larger expenditure in these areas. Per capita
expenditure in Vidarbha was higher than in other parts of the State. In Marathwada, Marathwada University and some irrigation schemes had been undertaken by the government.

The members from Konkan, irrespective of their party affiliation, placed demands for their region. The principal demands were for the railways and middle-size irrigation schemes. But Konkan had not been paid much attention in the past.

The Republican Party had secured 15 seats in 1957, out of these, seven joined the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti. The Republican Party members were very cautious about their rights. The Harijans were thrown into a desperate situation when they got themselves converted to Buddhism, because the educational and economic concessions they enjoyed before were then stopped. The Republican Party had to struggle hard on that issue. The government proclaimed to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. The cancellation of the educational facilities of the Nav-Bouddhas was not relevant to the government's policy of uplifting the poor. The government, however, tried later to remove injustice done to the Nav-Bouddhas in employment. The Republicans drew the attention of the government towards the social injustices suffered by them on account of boycotts and other oppressive methods. Some members of the Republican Party unnecessarily alleged that the government cancelled the facilities because the Republicans joined the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti. The
members of the Republican Party did not plead their case effectively.

In the Council the ideological divergences among the Opposition parties were not sharp. The Opposition members were, by and large, unanimous on different issues. The issue of prime importance during 1957 was the continuance of the bilingual State. Differences between the Maharashtrians and the Gujarathis as well as among them, on this issue were registered.

The distinguishing feature of the Council was that the members supported the demands voiced by the members from Marathwada and Vidarbha. But in the Assembly, though the members did not oppose the demands of the Vidarbhians, they supported them on few occasions. Among the Opposition members, Shri V. B. Gogate, Shri Rajhans and Dr. Pandit supported the Vidarbhians' demands.

It was rather surprising that the member from the Hindu Mahasabha asked for the State trading so much pressed by the leftists. The Jana Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha had a common view on the disputable matter of the celebration of Shri Nathuram Godse's death anniversary (Punyatithi). The Congress members opposed this tendency.

The parties in the Council were unanimous on the education policy and the problems of the teachers. On corruption, all the Opposition parties had a common attitude.
As regards the policies in the field of Co-operation, all parties except the Congress expressed doubts regarding their strict execution. Shri Donde (Independent) and Shri Chhapekar (Independent) were not confident about the success of the co-operative movement. On Krishna-Godawari water dispute the Council was unanimous.

The individual members' contribution had certain limitations of the party discipline. When the members of the concerned parties expressed their independent views they were not contradictory with respective parties' political ideologies. Any type of complicacy was easily avoided because of the harmony between the legislative wing and the organizational wing of the various parties.

The inter-relationship among all political parties was cordial because all political parties believed in democratic principles. Only few instances indicated that the relationship between the Congress and the Communist party was strained after 1962 (after China's attack on Indian territories). The Praja Socialist Party played a decisive role in bringing ideal parliamentary system in Maharashtra and therefore refrained from involving in any violent method. But the political circumstances falsified its contention.
Many Congressmen who lost seats in the election were absorbed in Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samities. This fact was referred to by Shri Datta Deshmukh in his interview with the author on 12th March 1973.


4. In an interview with the author a Congress member said, "The nomination of the Chairman of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee is always made by the Prime Minister of India. The list of the names of the competent candidates is sent to the Prime Minister who makes the final selection. The leaders have to find out 'proper names'. The process of sending in names continues until that 'specific and fortunate name' is received." If this was true then the Chairman and other big leaders would have to depend on the instructions of the Centre.

5. One Congress leader having fair experience to his credit in his interview with the author stated that very often he was reminded of one incident in the Congress Party. He said "Some Congressmen went to Shri Vallabhbhai Patel and told him that they disliked the policy of Pandit Jawanarlal Nehru, and better he (Shri Vallabhbhai) should try to take over the charge of Prime Ministership. But Shri Vallabhbhai Patel who had realised the popularity of Shri Nehru among the masses refused to take any step." Smt. Indira Gandhi enjoyed more or less the same position and therefore dominated the politics in this State also.

6. One question was put to Shri Meesani: "Don't you think that lack of Opposition is, to some extent, made up by the existence of different wings in the Congress Party itself?" He answered: "It is partly true and partly not true. It is true in the sense that the group in power will always have the fear that it will not last for eternity. In a party like the Congress here or the Democratic and the Republican Parties in America internal dissensions will be there. I must, however, tell my friends that, when I say this, I am not saying anything against the rule of the Congress party. What I mean is that there are differences of opinion amongst Congressmen themselves. If we say something like this, Congressmen get excited" (Lectures on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure, 1965, p. 44).