During the post-independence period all Assembly elections in Bombay/Maharashtra State showed popular support in favour of the Congress Party. Many factors were responsible for the consistent Congress victory. The most vital of them was the Congress Party's close links with the farmers in rural areas. Mahatma Gandhi was the first Indian leader to realise the strength in the awakening of rural area and he successfully channelised it to the cause of independence. This was conducive to the continuing popularity of the Congress after independence.

The Bombay/Maharashtra State's rural areas are inhabited by the farmers and the landless. Prima facie there is every reason to believe that the Congress Party's programme in the eyes of the people living in these areas has no other competent alternative.

Though the programme is held as a vote-winning device, it only expresses broad principles or policies. However, there are other several matters e.g. execution of tenancy acts, provision of foodgrains and maintenance of industrial peace, which are indecisive in nature. It is the administrative
skill of the Government which handles them properly. Considering these two points the present chapter is divided in two parts. Part I refers to the policies of the Congress Party and Part II refers to the attitudes of ruling party towards some important administrative issues.

Part I

Government Policies

In this part the policies of the government in the following sectors have been analysed: (i) Agricultural policy, (ii) Industrial policy, (iii) Policy towards socialism, (iv) Policy regarding Harijans and Mah Boudhas, (v) Policy regarding balanced growth in Maharashtra, (vi) Policy regarding decentralization, (vii) Education policy, (viii) Prohibition policy, (ix) Policy on Co-operation, and (x) Tolerance - a part of policy.

(i) Agricultural Policy

As the Congress party established close contacts with the rural population right from the inception of freedom movement, it could gather solid popular support after independence. In all election manifestoes it announced its bounden duty of ameliorating the economic as well as the social status of farmers. The boosting up of production was the means to this end. The government announced that for realising the object of increasing production the following measures would be used.
(a) Extension of irrigation facilities,
(b) Provision of seeds, manures, pesticides and better implements to the farmers,
(c) Popularising new methods of cultivation,
(d) Advancing loans and subsidies to the farmers, and
(e) Bunding, terracing and levelling programmes.

The problem of increasing production was really a difficult one because it had other dimensions also. The important of them were fixing the prices of agricultural produce, establishing co-operative marketing societies and abolition of middlemen (dalals). The question of widespread network of agricultural extension services to train and orient the farmers to the use of more intensive methods of cultivation was also important.1

Another considerable point was to have a view of agricultural production in the context of small farm economy in which millions of farmers were to be assisted to increase their level of productivity. Apart from these points a structural change was to be effected.

On account of the increased expenditures2 incurred on the Western Maharashtra and Viderbha many irrigation projects reached their completion. Particularly in Viderbha the Bor, Nilanga, Ekburjee and the Pindharabodi deserved mention.3

The backward people were provided lands and a good result of developmental programme was marked in connection with cultivators.4
The food problem was associated with the agricultural production. It was literally no less than a matter of national survival. The government had undertaken some schemes for providing supplementary business like poultry farms, dairying or rearing of pigs to the farmers.

(ii) Industrial Policy

The government was keen on industrialization in the basic sector. By virtue of national industrial policy, the heavy industries were to be opened up in public sector only. As the government believed in plural economy scope was left for private sector also. The programme of industrialization was expected to reduce the burden of population totally depending on agriculture for daily bread. Thus an employment potential was to be created in the industrial field.

The government regarded the growth of small scale industries as a symptom of progressive economy. The government planned to render financial assistance to the small scale industries. These industries were to be labour intensive. Thus as regards the industrial development the government had proposed a combination of small and large scale industries.

The government expressed a sympathetic attitude towards the industrial workers. The government stated that it would maintain a good relationship between the workers and the owners of the mills. It announced that more facilities i.e. medical, educational and financial were to be given to the
workers. The government conducted a socio-economic survey for the evaluation of the effects of the application of the Minimum Wages Act. Several other facilities were given. For the training of the workers Rs. 1,20,000 were kept and for the expansion of the administrative machinery Rs. 2,50,000 were allotted. The progress of the industrial estates was remarkably satisfactory. Seventeen industrial estates were to be created and the target was achieved. The working community suffered from the rising prices. Therefore government was to arrest the rising prices of the essential commodities. The Congress government assured the farmers of fixing up reasonable prices of the foodgrains and on the other hand it promised the workers and the consumers to arrest the prices. The government had to take a lot of trouble in maintaining a balance between these two opposing objectives. But the Congress, it seems, succeeded in maintaining a balance between them.

(iii) Policy towards Socialism

The socialist principles were the bases for the agricultural and industrial policies of the Congress party. On the national level the Zamindari system was abolished and in Maharashtra a speedy programme was prepared for making the tiller the owner of the land. The Congress party launched an ambitious plan for providing financial assistance to the class of cultivators which was mercilessly exploited even in the post-independence period. The Congress Party's programme for
providing irrigation facilities, manures etc. to the cultivators and its endeavour to train and orient them had socialist principles behind it. Not only that, but the steps taken to enable the peasant proprietor to derive economies of scale through credit co-operatives was a step towards socialism.

The concept of socialism in the eyes of the Congress party was essentially democratic. Therefore, according to the Congress programme, the posing of the antithesis between the private and the public sectors was misconceived. However, it opined that the government was to be assigned importance in deciding the distributional aspect having the principle of social justice in mind. The Congress party's socialism being democratic and far away from communism planned to tame both the public and the private sectors. The supplementation of one sector with another, according to the Congress party, was productive.

Another important pre-requisite of socialism was set forth by the Congress party and it was the decentralization of economic power. The Congress knew very well that the fruits of economies and technological applications could be enjoyed by the big industrial concerns only and by doing so the concerns might develop still bigger. The history also manifested that in economic development the concentration of economic power was sure to occur. The Congress party wa-
correct the situation with the democratic and constitutional means, for example, through taxation.

Taxes constitute a major part of the revenues of the State. Therefore the ruling party had to impose them. In case heavier taxes were imposed on industrialists the economy may not develop, but indirect taxes were opposed by the poor sections. According to the Congress, tax evasion was another large and corroding evil; partly it might be due to the loopholes and the ineptitude of the taxation machinery. These were to be set right. The Congress was to enforce more rigorous measures for the blocking up of loopholes.

(iv) **Policy regarding Harijans and Nav-Bouddhas**

This policy was also a part of the socialist programme. Mahatma Gandhi once stated that swaraj without the removal of untouchability would have no meaning for him. For upgrading the standard of living of the Harijans, in addition to the constitutional measures the Congress suggested to change the attitudes of the people. In this behalf it was ready to accept the help of other political parties. Socialism, as conceived by the Congress, implied provision of equal opportunities to all people irrespective of caste, religion or sex. The Harijans were not in a position to enjoy equal opportunities because of their traditional suppression. Therefore, the Congress pleaded for several additional facilities for the Harijans. When a majority of the Harijans embraced Buddhism,
the Congress government withdrew the facilities. But again it had to return to its original policy. As regards other backward classes also, the Congress was to adopt favourable measures. It was to provide educational facilities as well as lodging and boarding facilities to the backward class students. However, all Congress members did not agree on the adequacy of these measures. Shri P. N. Rajbhoj stated that the life of the scheduled castes people was based on pity and financial assistance.10

A charge was often made that the complaints made by the Harijans and the Nav-Souddhas were not paid heed. Therefore the Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1961-62) categorically recommended that their complaints should be noted immediately.11

(v) Balanced Growth in Maharashtra

The re-organization of the State of Bombay in May 1960, and the emergence of the Maharashtra State on unilingual basis created many problems. Prior to this re-organization, the State of Bombay had been created on bilingual basis. In fact the Indian National Congress had for several years advocated the re-alignment of the boundaries of provinces on the lines of homogeneous linguistic units.12 This principle was canvassed inside and outside the legislature. Ultimately, it was settled in the creation of the bilingual State of Bombay in 1956. The party had to revise its decision in 1960.
In 1956, new areas of Marathwada and Viderbha were included in the State of Maharashtra. These newly included areas were economically backward and they expected a special treatment in the new Maharashtra State. The Congress party was then in power and Shri Y. B. Chavan, the then Chief Minister, negotiated with the leaders in Viderbha and Marathwada. These negotiations were embodied in the 'Nagpur Plan'.

The Chief Minister Shri Y. B. Chavan assured the people of these areas to improve their economic condition. Therefore the Congress party was to provide them more financial assistance. The Congress party was aware of the financial, educational, agricultural and industrial backwardness of Marathwada and Viderbha. As regards the question of balanced growth Konkan’s difficulties were also to be taken into account. The Congress party was to undertake small irrigation schemes in Konkan. It was to embark upon some special measures relating to the famine-stricken areas. The Congress party was aware of the ever growing industrial strain on big cities like Bombay and Poona. Hence the Congress proposed to decentralize the industries. It planned to start several industries in other undeveloped areas of the State.

The Maharashtra Industrial Corporation attempted to serve the purpose of decentralization of industries. Within its ambit of activities the Maharashtra Development Corporation had taken whatever steps it could, by way of creating
Incentives for decentralized location of industries. The concessions were granted in rents and the Maharashtra Investment Centres as divisions of Corporation were set up. 13

Several factories were started in Maharashtra. The regionwise break-up of the number of factories in 1965-66 was as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>No. of factories started in 1965</th>
<th>No. of factories started in 1966</th>
<th>Increase or Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Bombay</td>
<td>4802</td>
<td>4819</td>
<td>+ 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>1680</td>
<td>1762</td>
<td>+ 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poona</td>
<td>2206</td>
<td>2164</td>
<td>- 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurangabad</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>+ 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>1055</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>- 35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The industrial advancement in the Bombay and Aurangabad regions was satisfactory. 14

(vi) Policy regarding Decentralization

To establish democracy on a firm foundation, the Congress chalked out a programme of decentralization. Secondly, this opportunity was taken to bring about a drastic change in the administrative structure of the State. It had to serve an educative purpose also. The people in rural areas were to be trained politically and at the same time this plan was expected to nourish leadership at local level.

(vii) Education Policy

The Congress held education as one of the principal
determinants of good civilization and true democracy. Hence it tried to expand educational facilities. The Congress thought that education should not be the privilege of the few. It announced educational facilities to low income groups in the State. It was to continue the facilities to backward class students. At the same time it was to provide lodging and boarding facilities also to the backward students. For the Bhils and other scheduled tribes, Congress was to open Ashram Shala.

The Congress party announced that for the financial convenience of the students the government would take the responsibility of printing the text books of the schools. The primary education was given the first preference. New schools were to be started in small villages. It was to train primary as well as secondary school teachers. The Congress was to undertake a planned programme regarding engineering and medical colleges. The Congress declared to reserve some seats for the backward class students in medical colleges.

(viii) Prohibition Policy

In spite of the criticism from many quarters, the Congress party expressed its firm belief in prohibition policy. In fact the prohibition policy had been discussed thoroughly and well-considered even in the pre-independence period. The Congress party was to continue the policy in missionary spirit. The Congress government in Maharashtra had to sustain a
financial loss because of the prohibition policy but it remained firm on its earlier stand.

(ix) Policy on Co-operation

The Congress party was anxious to spread the co-operative movement. From the point of view of the Congress co-operation had immense tasks to carry out in agriculture and industry. The Congress party was determined to give impetus to co-operative societies in different fields.

The Congress was anxious to remove malpractices from the co-operative societies. The government resolved to set up (a) flying squads, (b) police cell, and (c) State Co-operative Accounts Committee. Besides these measures, scheme to reorganize co-operative rural banking with a view to making cultivator self-sufficient in his requirements was made by the government.

(x) Tolerance - One Part of Policy

The Congress party was the largest party in the State. It was conscious to build up a healthy democratic society. Freedom of expression of opinion was to be respected. Few political parties with such standing and record, would be found equally ready to withstand such ceaseless barrage of criticism and censure both from within and without as the Congress party had been. It was ready to give thought to disputable problems in the State sitting together with the opposition. It was not complaisant. There was then a wide recognition amongst the Congressmen themselves of the need
for a sharper focus and a clearer definition of the Congress policies and a more determined and even ruthless implementa-
tion of the policies embodied in the programme.19

Thus the Congress party envisaged plan relating to important aspects of national life. In all general elections in Maharashtra since 1962, it had been the party getting the largest popular support from the people.

Part II

Government Attitudes

This part is mainly concerned with the ruling party's attitudes towards several administrative issues. The follow-
ing main issues have been dealt with: (i) execution of tenancy legislation, (ii) corruption and delays, (iii) execu-
tion of decentralization programme, (iv) views on balanced growth, (v) maintenance of law and order, (vi) industrial peace, and (vii) foodgrains problem.

(i) Execution of Tenancy Legislation

It was one of the most important issues in this State. The Congress being the ruling party made sincere efforts to give effect to its policy of improving the social status of the small farmers. Another aspect involved in this regard was that of increasing the agricultural production. The Congress party, after observing the agricultural condition of the State, was led to believe that one of the main reasons
of low productivity in the agricultural field was the concentration of lands in the hands of big landlords, many of them absentees. It gathered its strength from the rural areas and many Congress leaders, as they belonged to the community of farmers, appreciated this need as deserving highest priority in the programme and consequently pressed hard for it.

The sincerity of the Congress party in this direction could not be called in question. However, the actual execution of this policy was to meet relentless criticism from opposition quarters. The Congress government replied some points raised by the opposition. It tried to convince the opposition of the sincerity of its attempts. The government presented statistical data in support of its contention that many tenants were made owners by virtue of the government legislation in this regard. A serious issue in the administration of the tenancy legislation raised by the opposition was that the government fell a prey to the pressure of the landlords and eventually the date line for the partition of the agricultural lands was postponed. The government negatived this criticism and argued that for administrative convenience the government postponed the partition year. The Congress party and the opposition were unanimous on the need of such legislation.

(ii) Corruption and Delays

The Congress was in the know that corruption was endemic in several departments. Neither Government nor Opposition
expected complete removal of corruption from administration.

In fact, the Congress and the Opposition differ in their views regarding the 'size' of corruption.

Any department could not save itself from the onslaughts of the opposition in the matter of corruption. The government's plea was not considered by the Opposition. The Government tried to convince the Opposition that it took certain steps to reduce corruption. The Anti-Corruption Department according to the Congress was capable of reducing corruption to a considerable extent. Government further argued that it instituted certain inquiry committees to investigate several cases and punitive actions were taken against the defaulters.

Corruption in the Departments of Police, Revenue and Co-operation was referred to frequently. As regards the alleged corruption in providing the farmers VII-12 forms by the talathis, Government was ready to take action if concrete cases were put before it. Government never opined that there was no corruption but it asked for concrete cases of corruption to enable it to take strict action. The Opposition's and the Government's views were subjective. The Government's argument in connection with the Co-operation Department was convincing. The Opposition brought out that corruption was prevalent in a number of Co-operative Societies. Government however pleaded that considering the total number of
co-operative societies in Maharashtra the percentage of corrupt societies was small.

Administrative delay was another major defect in the administration. The main reasons furnished by the Government were not genuine. Government used to argue that owing to the need for collection of information delay was caused or it was due to some procedural matters. Some Congress Party members really knew that the arguments put forward by the Government were not justifiable. On one occasion even the Speaker warned the Government to avoid delay. Though some delays amounted to seven years or even more, Government's arguments ought to have been considered by the Opposition because the handling of a vast administrative machinery was not an easy matter. Particularly the problem of the seniority of Maharashtra Government employees after the inclusion of Vidarbh and Marathwade in Maharashtra caused head-ache for the Government and caused delay.

(iii) Execution of Decentralization

Gandhian philosophy pressing for decentralization was reflected in the directive principles of the Indian Constitution had to be implemented. The Congress Party's intentions were appreciated by the Opposition. With a broad view of expanding avenues for democracy and educating the people to benefit them in that set-up this programme was launched. Though the Opposition appreciated the move, it pointed out that step in this behalf was to be taken after examining this problem.
very closely. However, Maharashtra Government was very eager to execute this scheme. Perhaps the political psychology of the Maharashtra Government was responsible for hastening this scheme. Maharashtra was considered a progressive State and known for making new experiments. This image led it to give immediate effect to the decentralization plan. Though the Congress Party was very anxious to execute the scheme, it was not confident that the scheme would operate properly. Vesting of substantial powers in the hands of the Collector in this scheme indicated this fact.

Though the Congress Party was unanimous on the issue of decentralization as a policy, after its execution differences of opinion were recorded. Some Members of the Congress belonging to the backward classes were not satisfied with the provision that the decentralized units should be in charge of important matters pertaining to the backward classes. However, the Congress Party thought of decentralization to be an essential of democracy.

The Opposition did not oppose this scheme. But it complained that Government was not helpful to those decentralized units which were dominated by the Opposition. But the Congress replied that it had accepted decentralization as a policy and it would not be proper to project such arguments at an early stage of its execution.

(vi) **Views on Balanced Growth**

With the transformation of the State of Bombay into
Maharashtra, the problem of balanced growth occupied an important place. While including Vidarbha and Marathwada in Maharashtra certain assurances were given to their leaders. Economically these areas were backward. The Congress Government actively started executing measures plans in this direction of removing this backwardness. But the steps taken by the Government fell short of the expectations of the representatives of those areas. Regarding this issue internal flexibility in the party organization became visible. Some members of the legislature belonging to the Congress Party criticised the government policy in the matter as being inadequate. The members of the Opposition supplemented the criticism made by the Congress members. Government tried to convince them by citing statistical data. The government had made provision for more financial assistance. But the members expected still more financial help. The Congress members with the Opposition members from Vidarbha and Marathwada pressed the government hard for satisfying regional demands. To remove backwardness of these regions the government sanctioned projects of water supply, of an Agricultural University, road-construction schemes and the plan for the nationalization of transportation, etc.

The government also accepted the fact of backwardness of Konkan. The backwardness further deteriorated due to frequent storms leading to the destruction of orchards and denudation of coastal lands. Government convinced the
representatives of the Konkan that major irrigation projects were not feasible in Konkan and hence government was ready to start some small irrigation projects in Konkan. Government was also sympathetic towards undertaking the Konkan railway and recommended to the Central Government to take up the project. The Congress representatives from Konkan placed several demands in the legislature, but their attitude was milder than that of the representatives from Vidarbha and Marathwada.

(v) Issue of Foodgrains

The Opposition criticised that since 1952 government had been referring to this issue as of prime importance but it could not succeed in solving it. This issue gave rise to many other administrative issues, for example, holding the price line, rationing, storage, black-marketing, lootings, strikes, gheraos and satyagrahas, etc. Indeed the issue of foodgrains was the basic issue. Government was also aware of this and tried to get over this principal difficulty. This problem was dealt with by the government from many directions.

The government chalked out a sound agricultural policy. It increased irrigation facilities and executed plans for providing good quality seeds, manures and pesticides to the farmers. At the same time the government sanctioned loans to the cultivators on very liberal terms. This showed that government was actively involved in finding out certain
measures to remove the food shortage. It imposed rationing. The intention of government behind rationing was bona fide, but in practice, as the Opposition argued, gave rise to shortages and black-marketing. Thus the gap between the policy and government's declared administrative performance widened. The gheraos, strikes and lootings led to the deterioration of the situation.

The monopoly procurement scheme was introduced by the government to improve the situation. But sometimes the government could not take adequate measures, due to the limitations of the constitutional framework and democratic procedures.

Another measure adopted by the Government was the opening-up of a good number of fair-price foodgrains shops. Thus the Congress Government was handling the problems of production and distribution simultaneously. The Government with the help of statistical data was ready to indicate the progress in agricultural production and distributional measures. The government was also aware of the fact that there was the possibility of malpractices in such measures like fair-price shops. Regarding these shops government appointed several squads to inspect the functioning of these shops.

The price-rise was mainly due to the gap between the production and the demand. Real answer to this problem according to the government was to increase the production.
Government tried to increase the productivity with several measures. The Government conceived that the price-rise was the world-wide phenomenon and for the developing economy like Indian even a necessary factor.

The legislative wing of the Congress Party was not unanimous on this stand. Several Congressmen were not satisfied with the steps taken by the government.

(vi) **Industrial Peace**

The Congress government had a faith that industrial progress depended on sound relationship between the workers and the owners of the mills. Therefore, the government executed its industrial policy to suit this objective. The government did not think that the industrial situation was ripe for total nationalization. However, it knew very well that the sick industries were to be run by the government to remove unemployment. The government had no hesitation in applying minimum wage law and providing several amenities to the workers. The government opined that the workers deserved their due share of bonus as well the increase in the dearness allowance. The Congress government was keen on providing housing facilities to the workers. It was open enough to consult the Opposition members.

The main questions giving rise to industrial tension were policy of closure of textile mills adopted by the mill-owners, strikes and demand for the orientation in the method
of compilation of index numbers of prices as the base for computing dearness allowance. For removing unemployment government was to try its best for avoiding closure of mills. The government leaned on industrialization programme to tide over unemployment. The employment exchange centres were on the increase. The government was being constantly informed by these centres about unemployment. The government was liberal in encouraging workers' Welfare Centres.

The Congress government's attitude towards representative trade unions was sympathetic. In this regard government was not anxious to consider the proposals of other trade unions. The government was ready to try its best in settling controversial issues concerning the industrial labour.

The members of the Congress Legislative Wing, to some extent were not satisfied with the policy of the government allowing the industrialists to reap huge profits. They recommended to the government to restrict such huge profits with legal measures.

(vii) Maintenance of Law and Order

The government was primarily concerned with the maintenance of law and order in the State. The Congress government never conceived that law and peace could only be maintained with stern measures. The economic, political and social situation in Maharashtra was complex. According to the Congress some gunda-elements were existing in the society
which provoked the situation and created disturbances to peace. It was the duty of the government to maintain peace. The police opened fire, only when other ways were not open.

The outbreak of riots in some cities of Maharashtra led the Congress government to consider this problem on a broad basis. The Congress Party thought that the law was not an adequate device for meeting all social disturbances. It opined that on the question of riots the suggestions of the Opposition were also to be considered.

In the Congress Party there was no difference of opinion on this issue. On the contrary the Opposition did not agree on the need of firings and lathi-charges. Opposition agreed to assist Government on finding out some ways to prevent riots. The riots were not confined to the traditional form as between the Hindus and the Muslims, but they also broke out between the Hindus and the Harijans.
REFERENCES


2. Vidarbha Western Maharashtra (Rs. in crores)

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>iv) Expenditure per head Annual Plan (1966-69)</td>
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</tr>
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</table>


8. Ibid., p. 52.

9. Ibid., p. 56.


15. Ashram Shala: A school where lodging and boarding facilities are also provided.


17. Ibid., p. 269.
