CHAPTER V

CASE STUDIES (UNDER TRIAL AND STRUCTURATION CASES)

The present chapter highlights the cases under two specific categories. The first section includes the cases of the young gangsters who are under trial and are presently housed in the correctional home. The second section consists the "structuration" cases (Giddens, 1986) of those youth, who have had a background of an earlier association with certain gangs and a long career in several gangland activities but are, presently, attempting to come back to the mainstream life. The role of the police, community and family would be of special emphasis in this regard.

SECTION I: SELF-REPORT (UNDER TRIAL)

As it has been mentioned before, the researcher had visited only Arthur Road Prison to interview a few youth who were under trial. These youths mainly belonged to the Chhota Rajan gang. Giving consideration to the sensitivity of gang rivalry and the factors associated viz. suspicion, vulnerability to safety, etc., the researcher did not explore any other gangs within that jail premises and restricted her data collection only to the respective gang. The Rajan-gang members were interviewed not on the basis of the researcher's choice, but rather on the willingness to be interviewed. The first person who agreed to share his experience, incidentally, was a member of Chhota Rajan gang and, thus, other gang members followed. One female prisoner whom the researcher found willing to talk to and share her life experiences happened to be the member of Dawood Ibrahim gang. There was no other female under the category of youth in the Prison. Thus, the researcher included this female gangster in her interview quota.

The interviews were undertaken with all hurdles possibly imaginable. As the Jailor himself was apprehensive about such interviews, there was no special place given to the researcher to conduct them. The Jailor of the Prison simply denied
the possibility of a private place that the researcher could use for conducting the interviews. Thus, the interviews were conducted in the office room where the Jailor used to be present. But the researcher gradually observed the timings when the Jailor would go for inspection or for lunch, and made a point to interview the youth during that limited time. Therefore, the interviews took longer time to complete. However, after a few days of observation, the Jailor himself became impassive to the interviews as the researcher could prominently establish the fact that nothing sensitive was to the enquiry, rather the emphasis was more on their childhood, peers, family, neighborhood and other general harmless detailed information. In all, five interviews were conducted by the researcher in this Prison and are discussed below.
SELF- REPORT: -I

Name: Parab Shetty
Age: 29
Education: X
Gang Chhota Rajan

If you ask me whether I would like to come out of the prison and lead a normal life, my answer is no, as it is simply impossible after what has happened. I see myself dead the day I am out of the jail....there is no plan also as such that why I should be leaving Nana Bhai. Dying as gangster is my destiny.

We come from Mangalore. We Shettys are usually businessmen and are mostly into the hotel industry. My father was here since his childhood as his father also had a business here. But we, I mean my sister and myself, used to be with our uncle in Mangalore. But when I was in class IX, my parents wanted us to come to Bombay and be here. I see since that day my life took a different turn.

I joined to Jhunjhunwala College for my SSC. The college was both for the bad and the good boys. It was a big and over crowded college. Here I met Rakesh. He had lots of money. I also came from a rich family, but when I would bring my scooter, he brought a Maruti Van. Unfortunately, with this group, I went more for fun and 'dadagiri' in the college than studies. There were other groups in the college and fighting with them on some or the other issue was common. During that time all small gangs, even gangs in colleges used to keep weapons. There were a boy Deepak who was the captain of the senior class cricket championship and he was really good in sports. In a competition we knew we could not defeat him so we threatened him to leave the game. Deepak was a Brahmin boy and didn't listen to us. So we beat him up so badly that he was hospitalized for one month. We were arrested for rowdy hooliganism.
Today, when I look back, I remember another incident that I should have never done. That incident led to the first police record against me. I was in police lock-up for 14 days and in jail for 3 days. When I came out, instead of feeling bad, I felt good about it. If you remember, in the late 1980s, it was a fashion for the young boys to do *dadagiri*. We had already formed our own gang and used to compete with upcoming ones as well as other gangs of our age. I started failing my exams and my mother wanted me to go back to Mangalore again but "*tab tak to nasha lag gaya tha*". So I refused to listen to her.

We (me, Rakesh and others) decided that we would look at life in a different way. We would make our own money. We had all the sharp weapons except a revolver. I remember that was my second attack on another gang in my locality. There were 10 of them and we were 8 of us. We attacked fiercely and severely injured one; the others fled. This time, the filed FIR to police against me was serious and I was kept in prison more than three months. I hated every moment of it.

That was the first time I thought that the path I was thinking of could be wrong. I was more convinced about this on seeing my family suffering and promised to my mother that I would appear for my SSC exam and would never do such things again. I still remember that I had sent a special application to the Sessions Judge. But they released me on bail just two days before the exam. Obviously I could not do well and failed badly.

At that moment, I was angry at everything and decided I would make my own fortune and take all the opportunities that came my way and would not think of good deeds. I had a friend, Raju, whose brother was a member of Rajan company and had the same name as mine. Raju's brother knew my "mamu" (uncle), as my uncle had strong links with Rajan. My uncle never came to our house as my father never allowed him to. However, I had already developed my own group of 15 boys in the year of 1990-91. This was the time gang war was at
is peak and was the most discussed topic in the city. We also used to talk about it a lot and dreamt several times of associating with such big company.

My work became simply dadagiri in my locality. Mostly, I used to collect hafta. The attitudes were simply chhin lo (snatch it) as they (businessmen) had a lot. Otherwise also we looted several businessmen. Money came not in big amounts but in thousands and I had what I wanted. Meanwhile, the police arrested me by mistake as I had the same name as that of Raju’s brother. There, in jail, I met Raghu Shetty, a close associates of Chhota Rajan. I stayed there for months as this time bail was a bit more difficult. When I came out, my group had dispersed and I had no money and no future. It was at this moment when Sadhu Shetty asked me to join him. I agreed happily. I looked after certain areas of Rajan's locality and did the same thing - collecting hafta, but on a larger scale. Another thing that was added was the "killing" and I became a chronic gangster. We collected hafta and but did not send it to "bhai" all the time, but distributed among other members according to the contribution and the status of the company. The main aim was to look after "bhai's" reign rather than to earn and give him the money. As I proved myself, I got promoted. Yes, whatever we say that we are all members of the same company, there is also competition to prove oneself and get promoted.

I earned a lot and spent money like water. There was no tomorrow, as the line of work I did was so risky that I wanted to live life at the fullest and get whatever I wanted. I still remember that I had spent 12 lakhs in three days. Do not ask me how! My activities went on for five odd years and finally I was arrested for the murder of a Dawood gang member. Yes, even within the jail premises there is demarcation and rivalry. But some of us know that after all we are working for the big boss and are the soldiers of such company. We are more than 200 hundred people from the same company. I believe Dawood’s and Shakeel’s members would be more in number. Their people die less as they have Gulf money and international support. They can also give more to the police.
No, I do not want to come out. I know that is not possible as the police could kill me in an encounter. If you want me to look down ahead one year, I see myself dead if I am not in the prison. I also do not see any reason why I should be leaving company. After specially BBC case we, Rajan’s members, have taken a vow to kill each and every member of Dawood. Yes it might sound impossible at this moment but this is the dream that we see.

Even if you insist on the possibility of my being alive and leaving the gang, perhaps the first thing I should do would be to leave the city and go to far away and start a decent business and lead a normal life. But it is not possible as we both know.
I see myself out of the prison soon and continue to eliminate Dawood and Shakeel's men. Yes, I do think of being encountered as the police is only after our 'company', but I wouldn't stop killing them unless I am killed.

I grew up in Khar in a chawl. It was not for the middle class people, but for the lower middle class. I had mother and three brothers. They are all working and do not have any police record as such. My neighborhood or mohalla was not good. Since the day I can remember, dadagiri in the locality was common. As you might also know, in the mid 1980s, Bombay used to be the kingdom of all the gangs. Now it has reduced as police conduct encounters. When I was 10-11 years I used to see how the local gangs used to force us to serve them. If we said no, we would be severely beaten up. I was caught several times on the way to my school or on the way back by these gangs to go to the shops to get things for them. I do not know why families never even thought of moving out of the area. The reason could be that they did not have enough money. My other brother took some job or the other and became indifferent like other peace-seeking people in the locality, who used to compromise with the nuisance.

Nobody is highly educated in that locality. You can't be so. The environment is like that. But till my eighth standard I was doing well and had interest in studies. But my friends used to tease me by saying "he wants to be a good boy". The kind of peer groups I used to be associated with none of them had interest in studies. Gradually, I also started thinking differently. Meanwhile, a local gang whose leader was named Babu emerged. He used to tease and beat us often.
I was 16-17 years when the thought of taking revenge on them occurred. We heard that Babu had links with the Shakeel gang. He had a revolver also. I had my own group of 12 friends. All of us had reached that stage where the thought of taking revenge was uppermost in our minds. We collected swords, lathis and chakus. But we did not have revolvers. We stored all the weapons on the roof or in small grocery shops so that nobody doubted us.

One evening, when Babu visited the house of one of our neighbors (who used to be Babu’s friend), we entered the kholi. Five of us went in while the rest of us surrounded the house and kept watch over the area. Babu was with two other friends. I attacked first and before he could retaliate, he was badly hurt. The three of them were severely injured and Babu died later after being hospitalized. I was imprisoned for three years. When I was released my group was there. One Basudev, who used to be a close associate of Rajan approached me directly. He told that they were appreciative of the fact that I had killed Shakeel’s man and they would like to have me in the company. That was year of the bomb blast case and we all knew that Chhota Rajan had become a rival of Dawood and had also killed many of Shakeel’s and Dawood’s men. I had a soft corner for Rajan and always supported such attitudes. After I came out, there was no other way also that I could explore as the people in my locality started calling me “bhai” and many came to me for solving their problems. Also quite few young boys wanted to join me. I will not say that I did not enjoy such attention and felt somewhat proud also, as I was too young to understand all these.

After I joined the Rajan company, I worked actively with them. "Bhai" tell us to do extortion, also we have to do it for our own survival. Collecting hafta is also a compulsion as it gives you a fixed amount to run your gang and keeps up the fear and dominance of the gang.

That was few years back, I thought of getting married to my childhood friend, Heena. She was educated and intelligent and worked in a computer school. She had promised to marry me, but as she got to know about my work, she denied
any association with me. I could have forced her but I did not, as I loved her. I heard that she has got married and has moved to Bangalore. If I want I can still find her, but I will not do so as I feel what she did was right for her life. Why should she get married to a gangster? She is a nice girl. But after her marriage there is no looking back. As long I am alive I have taken a vow to kill my opponents. Otherwise they will kill me. I know Dawood and Shakeel are more powerful in terms of money and influence, but we will fight against them till the very end.

No, I do not think gang war has stopped. It has come down as many of us are in jail. A few continue to kill each other either out of the city or out of the country. I do not exactly know when I will be out but there is a good lawyer we have appointed who is looking after the case and I believe I will not be getting severe punishment, though there are 11 cases against me pending trial.

To me, it is our environment and the lack of money that pull us in this line. I strongly believe that "one who has money, has everything".
SELF - REPORT: III

Name: Suresh Naik
Age: 22
Education: VI
Gang: Chhota Rajan

Riots taught me what I should do. Since then, by not knowing the details about my religion, I can tell how fanatic a Hindu I am. When I joined Nana Bhai, my only venture became to kill Muslims, either businessmen or gangsters like me working for Muslim gangs and in contact with Pakistan and against Nana Bhai's interests.

I grew up in an area of Mumbai where the city saw maximum violence during riots. Even today, if I close my eyes, I can clearly recall what had exactly happened in the city. It was during 1992-1993 riots, I was only 13, we heard on the TV, about the Babri Masjid demolition and the disturbance that had started in all places of the country. But I had no idea that Bombay would create history in the riots and communal violence.

Riots started early in the morning in the Jhule Maidan area, that is a predominantly Muslim locality. We heard that Shibani who was handicapped and used to stay in that area was put to fire by them and had died helplessly. We all loved her as she had no parents. She was pursuing her studies with our help and was doing very well in the school. She could not walk and therefore used the wheelchair. When she used to go to her school, all the boys on the road used to help her cross the bridge.

When we got information, it was already late. She was taken by a group of people to the Jhule Maidan area and was set afire. That day about 250 of us, including the young and the elderly, went to attack the area. We did not have fire weapons but we had chakus, swords and lathis. I still remember that this is how
violence in my life began. I killed three of them and quite few people from both sides died that day. After the riots got over, we were sent to jail. There I met a couple of youths who were elder to me but were friendly. They had a record of stealing and snatching and belonged to a local gang in an area near my residence. When I came out I started going with them. My parents were not bothered as they were too busy with their day-to-day survival. Father is still working in a factory and mother goes to a tailoring shop. I have two sisters: the eldest one had a love marriage and stays near our residence; the other sister is not married.

At the age of 16, I was jailed in the Arthur Road Jail for a case of snatching. As I was growing up, I learnt that Chhota Rajan has split from Dawood Ibrahim and was taking revenge against him and his people. We used to be thrilled to know how many of the Muslim gangsters died in the gang wars that lasted from 1993 to 1998. I had developed tremendous hatred for Muslims and did not allow any Muslim members in our own gang. I almost became a leader and had 20 boys with me. When one wants to collect *hafta* from black marketeers, it is always better that you belong to a certain company. I knew Manish Bhai, who was a close associate of the Chhota Rajan gang and went to him and directly ask for an entry. My intention was not only to execute Muslims, but also extract money from Muslim businessmen. In 1998, I joined the gang and did mostly "extortion" and "killing" of our opponents. My biggest victory was when I operated the whole extortion threat in Dawood's area and collected Rs.25 lakhs from a businessman. No, I did not extort money from ordinary businessmen, but only from the blackmarketeers. That is why most of them gave money to us. No, we did not send the money to Nana Bhai. This money was for our personal expenses and expenses needed to run the show with all equipments and the members.

There are various kind of expenses as we have to give some money to those members who are working. The some money goes towards paying good defense lawyers so that our men can come out. We also send money to the families of those members who are in jail or in police custody. My family was also offered money, but they refused to take it. But the company pays for my defense lawyer.
None of my family members came to see me since when I came "here (in the jail) except for my mother. I do not blame them as I only gradually left them, not they.

I came here in 2000 for an extortion case and presently I have 9 cases against me of which one is a murder case. I don't think I would be doing anything else except this as I feel it is now too late and impossible to do anything else. But perhaps it would be safe to leave the city and operate from there. I would look for suggestion from "bhai" as I am about to come out of the jail.

No, I am not guilty for whatever I have done. Money needs to be extorted from these black-marketeers, and Muslim gangsters against our interests should be out. I look at myself as a soldier who is working for Nana Bhai to eliminate Muslim enemies in our city.

I am scared of encounters, but at the same time I see that not all of us are killed, so I still hope to survive and continue to do what I am doing.
I look at a criminal career as a quick way of earning money. I was too poor to enjoy a good life and now I have had a taste of what I always wanted. So I am not sad that I am in jail, it is all part of the game. I know I might be encountered, but there is also chance of living and escaping. I have kept some money with a friend of mine. If I survive, I wish to leave the city and go to Emirates and do some business there.

During my childhood, my father came to our *kholi* only sometimes. He used to love drinking whenever he came to us. My mother used to fight and protest against this habit, but he never listened to her. Several times I saw him beating my mother. We are a big family as we are eight brothers and sisters. One brother died last year in an encounter. My sisters are married and have no educational background. My other brothers are elder to me and are having their own auto-rickshaws. Mother does not work and we all give her money. She stays alone.

Our native village is in Basti, a district in Uttar Pradesh. My father came here soon after his marriage. Within a few years he was disappointed with the city, but never decided to return to our native village. Instead he continued staying here and indulged in drinking. I am not sure but he could have indulged in prostitution trade. I have no attachment for anybody, except my mother.

I was admitted to an Urdu medium school, but as I grew older I did not continue with it. I do not know why I was not prevented from leaving school, but in my *mohalla*, there are many of my age who have not had a high school education. I have seen educated ones not getting a good job and doing the jobs
that illiterate or poorly educated youth do. I mean driving auto-rickshaws or having small kirana shops, etc.

At the age of 13, I took up my first job in a garage. I was getting Rs.600-800/-. I worked there for two years and then gave up the job as I did not feel interested. Though I was fully unemployed, I had friends (who were working) helping me by giving money. At that age the nasha (addiction) was only for films and ghumna (roaming) with friends and eating what we could afford. A few months after giving up my job, I met Rashid, who was four years older than me. His talk about money and a good life attracted me. We became very close and one fine day Rashid told me about his plan for robbing a Hindu businessman by using a Muslim gang's name (I will tell you the name we used).

Rashid had two other partners and I brought a friend, Alam. Rashid's instructions to me were "seth ke gale me bas yeh chaku rakh dena". We went to the seth's office one afternoon, when he was alone, and successfully robbed Rs.6 lakhs from the locker. We left the city for a few days and distributed the money amongst ourselves with Rashid taking a larger share. I was thrilled with so much money and did so many things that I wanted. I bought a second hand motorbike, went to a bar and bought good clothes. Yes, some of my friends and my mother asked me later about this. I told that I brokered a property deal, for which I got some money.

I became addicted to this kind of work as there was a lot of money in this. We had our own group and very soon I became the leader of my own group. We started snatching and then collecting haftas from our locality. I was using a gang name as I told you and did small range extortion also. We had a second hand car, weapons and young members. Very soon, a person, Arfan, who had links with the gang whose name I was using, called me. He told me to join the gang formally. In the meantime, I called my younger brother, Suleman, who was in Dubai, and told him to join me. His business was not doing well and he wanted to come back. When he came back, he told me that he would join my gang. He joined us, but
mich later I got to know that he had done some work for the Abu Salem gang in Dubai. This was a problem as the company I was working with was in dispute with Abu Salem gang. The Abu Salem gang members were angry with him. Meanwhile, the police was looking for the robbery case I had done two years back and I was arrested along with three of my companions. But, Arfan did not come to help me because he knew about my brother.

I have been on jail for two and a half years now and one day I saw my brother's name in the newspaper when he was encountered. It was my mistake to bring him in this line and to this city. I know all the police who did this and I have formation that Arfan's people extended information.

I will not be encountered as I won't let them touch me so easily. When I come out I would like to take revenge on those responsible for my brother's death, I am not scared of the police; rather I fooled them several times and kept on changing my looks and went several times out of the city and came back safely.

Yes, this time I was caught as I love kids. It was at an orphanage home that used to visit. The police had the information, and it is most unfortunate that one of the kids gave the information not knowing that police would come and arrest me.

My life's mission is no longer money but to take revenge. Regarding money I am no longer greedy as I have earned and spent a lot. But unless I take revenge, I will have to sustain myself and need shelter. When I came here I was kept in general cell and not with any specific 'company' cell. Parab (the researcher's first interview in the jail premises, who was also cooperating with the researcher to some extent in giving his men for interviews) has offered me to join them and I have agreed. It's been now three weeks that I have been shifted to Rajan's company's barrack. No it is not only for Hindus, there are many Muslims in this company. Raghu has said that a lawyer would be appointed for me. I think, now I can do the things that I have planned for.
Related Information:

From records and the Jailor's statements, Faizal Sheikh has more than seven property offenses against him and he has also been associated with a certain gang in the police records. It would be important to mention that, every gang has their own cell to stay in and are kept separately from members of other company.
I do not know whether I will be alive as the police is after me as well as my rival who used to be in Rajan gang. But there is a possibility of escaping at least from Rajan if I join his gang. I have been given an offer, but neither do I trust them nor the police. I know neither of these sides would be fair to me.

I was born in Kolhapur but brought up in Bombay. My father was a textile mill worker and we used to stay in Agripada. We have land in the village but since my father used to work in Bombay we mostly stayed in Agripada. My uncle looks after our property and has also grabbed a lot of our land. But I remember, that when I was in school, my father started drinking. He gradually became an addict. There was problem in the mill and my father was losing interest in work. My uncles and relatives in the village convinced my father that he should stay back in village. My father got convinced as the mill strikes were about to begin and there was lot of union problems that had emerged. He was also not getting his salary every month.

My father left his job and for sometime we went back to our village. But as I grew up in the city and my all friends were there I could not adjust and decided to return. My sister was married by then and was staying in Agripada. I joined my sister there and gave up schooling. I took up a job in a grocery shop. There was a matka shop next to the shop I was working in and the owner was affectionate to me. Whenever I used to get the time I did his accounts. By the time I was 15-16 years old, I knew everything of the illegal betting called matka: how much the police would take, how much would be given to local goons or gangs, etc.
With the money that I earned for looking after the accounts, I got a shop in the vegetable market in Dadar. I was earning well. I had good rapport with Gawli's men and I met Gawli also several times. I had a rapport with the police and it was compulsory that we give money to the local police station. Within a few years I had earned well and gotten married, and I had a hotel and bar in Govandi. Sometime I used to go to my village with my friends, few of whom were members of the Gawli gang.

One day I heard that my friend Laxman's brother was killed. Laxman had a business in Kolhapur. I went there and got to know that his political rival, Sairam, had murdered his brother. We thought of settling scores with them. I spoke to Sairam's cousin brother, who was in the opposition (of political party), and made an agreement with him on how they could help us in getting the right information on getting Sairam alone.

They gave us shelter and declared to their friends that I belonged to the Gawli gang. I didn't oppose as I thought it would instill some respect and fear in them. I had a plan to finish Sairam but I did not know that Sairam was a close associate of Chhota Rajan. Sairam got to know of our plans and made a plan to kill me when I was travelling to my village from Bombay on a weekend with my family. But they mistook a friend of mine (a Gawli gang member) for me and killed him. This friend was coming to my village for my son's naming ceremony.

When I got to know that Sairam was behind this, I took a vow to kill him. When we went to lodge a complaint in the nearest police station in the taluka where my friend was killed, the police refused to lodge our complaint. Much later, I got to know that Sairam, who had won the elections, had influenced the police. One senior police officer came and told me to compromise with Sairam. I knew that Sairam was using this police officer as his representative. I agreed, but insisted that instead of a police station, the meeting should be in a quiet place. A hotel in Kolhapur was fixed for this discussion.
I went there with three friends of mine. We had a revolver, but I hid a *chaku* under my shirt. When the meeting got over, we shook hands and parted. Sairam lent outside to wait for bus along with his brother and the police officer. They were so sure that a compromise would be reached, especially with the police as the go between, that they did not come with weapons. As they were waiting, I took out my *chaku* and stabbed him thrice in his stomach. The police officer was shot lead by Ajay, one of my friends and a Gawli associate, before he could draw his revolver.

Sairam and the police officer died on the spot. We hid in the villages and since there was *nakabandi*, we could not go out of that taluka. We were constantly on the move as now along with the police, Sairam's brother and his party people were also hunting for us. Two of my friends got encountered after two days and I somehow managed to escape and came to Kolhapur. There, Laxman helped me to come to Bombay. I was in Agripada but the gang war still continued as the police and the Rajan gang was looking for me. I kept moving from place to place mainly in the villages of Maharashtra. In the process, I killed one of Rajan's men also, but finally I thought I would surrender as I was tired of hiding. But I did not surrender in Kolhapur but in Bombay.

They have put 11 cases against me and three cases of murder. I do not exactly know how I will come out and once I come how I will survive. I cannot go back home to my village as Sairam's brother is there, neither I can stay in the city as I know police would take revenge on me. My business is still on. I have a few trustworthy friends including Laxman. My family stays in Thane and my only daughter goes to an English medium school. It is just to tell you that I do visit them two/three days in a month with the help of these prison personnel. Whenever there is a court date, I give them money and I visit my family. My neighbors know that I am out because of business purpose. Nobody knows that I am in prison. My wife, Neeta, says that the day the neighbors get to know, she will commit suicide.
I love my wife and children and want to lead a peaceful life. I understand I should not have done such things. But I still doubt if the system could have done proper justice to Laxman's family. I wish to leave this city and go far away from my known circle, but I doubt how much of it would be possible. Parab is negotiating with me within the jail premises if I can join Rajan, and then they would forget everything. But I do not want to be associated with any gang but there seems to be no option. I am presently staying in Rajan's barrack and that is why Parab wanted me to speak to you as one of their men.

Related Information:

It would be important to mention here that the person was extremely unwilling to give his interview and this was researcher's last interview of men from the Rajan gang. The person, while sharing his experience, confessed that he had kept a watch on her and had found out that it was purely for academic purpose. He further requested not to mention his name and for some suggestions if researcher could give him. The researcher counter checked and found the person had 7 cases against him, including three murder cases. The researcher further found that though the person within the jail premises is with the Rajan gang, as per police records he is a Gawli man.
I was working with my partner, Sajeed, as I had no other option left except joining him. I needed lots of money for my children's schooling and for myself. I was so much in need that I could not stop myself or leave even though within three months of our relationship I got to know that he has black way to earn money. If I come out, I wish to be with my children and with Sajeed also.

I am basically from Delhi. My natal family is from Merut Nagar. My father was a tailor and had earned good name in jari ka kaam and money as well. We were a big joint family with 6 siblings and 8 cousin brothers and sisters. I was very close to my father and everyone in the family was fond of me, as I was the youngest. In our kind of family (traditional Muslim and upper caste) women are not allowed to go for higher studies. So I gave up studies just after completing my primary schooling. I was not sad as I got more time to play with my sisters and brothers.

When I was 12 years old, my family started looking for a suitable match for me. It was part of our culture that a girl should get married early. I was married the year I turned 13 and came to a new family where I found everybody to be different from my own family members, including my husband. I could just not accept them as my own. My husband, Naseer, was 14 years older than me and I found him to be the most alien. I preferred to play with the kids in the house and not talk to anybody, not even to my husband. Whenever he approached me, I cried and created a scene. After few months I was sent back to my natal family where my mother-in-law threatened my parents. "Tame your girl, we want a bahu in the
louse, not a daughter". My elder sisters, chachis (uncle's wives), and phupis (father's sisters) tried to convince me as to why I should go back. I refused to listen to them and would be busy playing with friends. But, gradually, I saw that everybody in the house was unhappy and my father really looked sad. Finally, I decided to go back and accept my life as it came.

I thought that I would try my best to make my in-laws happy and do whatever they wanted. I started joining them in kitchen and also all housework and had listened to my husband and did what he wanted. Gradually, my husband became very fond of me and I also started enjoying my marital life. Naseer used to take me out for cinema as it was my favorite form of entertainment. Because I liked to watch films, Naseer gave me a video player and brought all kinds of cassettes for me to watch. As we became close to each other, I gained confidence and used to steal time for relaxing and watching TV and films. I had two unmarried sisters-in-law, who became quite jealous of me and then even my mother-in-law. They would force me to work, particularly when I wanted to be by myself. They would stop my husband from taking me out by saying that "people are talking too much about it and it doesn't look good". I used to feel very angry and frustrated and fought often with them.

Gradually, they started poisoning my husband's mind by saying that I was a loose woman and flirted with the boys in our neighborhood. Our relationship started breaking up as we fought more often. Naseer started drinking also. Meanwhile, I became pregnant. One day Naseer beat me severely and told me that I was not carrying his child. I went into depression and used to fall sick often.

Then, I got to know from a friend of mine that my in-laws were looking for another girl for Naseer. The girl was very rich and my in-laws were quite keen on the match. I fought with Naseer and he didn't say much. So I doubted more. One day, my mother-in-law said I should take a break as I was falling sick frequently. I told her that I would go only if Naseer or she came with me. I was scared that they would get Naseer married to that girl. My mother-in-law agreed to come to Merut
Nagar, but she told that she also wanted to go to her brother’s house, which was Jiearby. I agreed and we went to Mamu’s (mother-in-law’s brother) house. I was five months pregnant then.

One night, Mami, Mamu’s wife woke me up from my sleep. Hindu-Muslim riots were taking place. I still remember as my Mami took me quietly to Mamu’s room and closed the door. Mamu told me that my mother-in-law had some vicious plan that they doubted. They suggested that I leave the house that night itself and a bullock cart had been arranged for me. I was very scared and doubted that she ranted to kill me, so I agreed to leave the house. All the way I was very tense and was weeping. When I saw my village, I fell unconscious. When I got up, I found myself in my house with everybody standing around me. When I felt a little better after a few minutes, I got to know that the cart driver had been beaten up severely. I immediately told my father to save him as the cart driver had saved my life.

I then had a miscarriage and I got to know that Naseer had remarried. I had no option left except to stay back at home. I gave talaq (divorce) to Naseer as per my father’s suggestion and slowly tried to recover from my past. Then I met Aman, who was a friend of my elder brother-in-law. He had accompanied my brother-in-law and sister, who was expecting and had come home for her delivery. I was good looking and young. Aman had heard about me and proposed to my parents for my hand. Everyone was happy, and so was I. Aman was not much older than me and I thought that this would definitely make a good partnership. My father gave him Rs.25,000/- and lots of jewelry to me. I left home happily.

We stayed in Delhi where Aman had dye-manufacturing factory. The business started growing after our marriage as I also invested my labor and sincerity in the business. Here, I had a mother in law and three brothers-in-law who were dependent on Aman. Aman had a small grocery shop at their disposal. I had two daughters in two years, but Aman wanted a son and we used to have arguments on that. As Aman’s business started growing, we bought a small flat
and one second hand fiat. We also had some money in the bank but nothing was in my name separately. As we were becoming a little well off and also had our own flat to stay in, my in-laws started feeling threatened and used to poison Aman’s mind. They would tell him that I would not be able to carry a son for the family and then who would look after this business and property later? I could see Aman changing after four years of my marriage. He started drinking and partying with varied friends. We had our flat adjacent to the factory and often, till midnight, I used to serve tea or coffee to his clients-cum-friends. Aman would force me not to use the dupatta and would tell me that it was old fashioned. He also started going out of the house while keeping his clients alone at home with me and would order me to entertain them. I could feel that he was getting corrupted as he tasted the nasha (addiction) of money. He also started going to prostitutes, I believe.

One night, when I was carrying my third child and was seven months pregnant, Aman brought one client home. I was forced to cook at midnight and feed and serve them with drinks. Aman drank hard and started snoring on the carpet. Then the man approached me and said that Aman had said to go ahead and if I could make him happy, Aman would get an order worth lakhs of rupees. I refused, pushed him away from me and rushed to the room where my daughters were sleeping. Before the man could chase me, I left home and took a rickshaw to my elder sister’s house. It was unfortunate that they had shifted to Faridabad only two days back in a hurry and I was not aware of their new address. I was helpless with nowhere to go and the only person I could think of was my childhood friend, Nur. I reached her house early in the morning. She was surprised to see me and told me not to worry about anything as her brother-in-law was a politician and an MLA. I rested with my children at her house for two days. Nobody came looking for me and I thought that Aman had no need left for me. I was helpless and kept crying all through this time.

A week later Nur told me that she had spoken to her brother-in-law about me and if he could help me in getting a job. I was desperate not to go back to Aman or even to my natal family. I decided to do something on my own. Nur’s
brother-in-law was also a well-known goon in the area he was staying and I heard that he had some links with Dubai. When I met him, he clearly told me that my daughters would have to be kept somewhere else and so that I could be free to work.

I decided to keep my daughters in boarding. I delivered a daughter again and Nur wanted to keep her. Therefore, within few months I was free and felt much stronger. I decided to do any job as I had to look after my children. Nur's brother-in-law was very straightforward with me: he told me that in his business he met several people and I would have to go to a hotel or a particular bungalow or flat to entertain them. Money would not be a problem. I was given a small flat to stay and Rs.20,000 as joining salary. I was young and the job promised me more money and I agreed.

After a year, in 1997, I met Sajeed. It was not always the prostitution that I did, but sometimes it was just giving company and cordially treating the guests. We had a proper office from where we usually communicated. He told that he had a business in Dubai and though he mostly stayed in Mumbai. Sajeed liked me and visited Delhi frequently on some excuse of work. One day Sajeed simply offered me to stay with him and be his wife. No, we did not have a court marriage but a qazi (the priest) came to his flat and we read the kalam and were married. Nur's brother-in-law was present and so were a few of Sajeed's friends. I came to Mumbai.

Within a few months I understood that he did not have a business, but some strange way of living. How? We never stayed in a flat and kept on moving from hotel to hotel, sometimes outside Mumbai and sometime within the city. I was fed up and in desperation I asked exactly what he did. He told me that he was into 'D' company and he would like me to be with him. It was too late for me to come out and there was the temptation that I would have a man in my life and my children would get a father, as Sajeed seemed to be quite nice when he visited my children. He gave them gifts and sweets and within few hours my daughters were
quite attached to him. I kept on telling Sajeed that we could do something else, but he insisted that once you were into it you can not leave as it is a blind lane. Much later I got to know Sajeed had a conventional family in Khar: he had a wife of eighteen years and two children. I again had no option but to stick to him. But since this is not so uncommon in our community, I tried to convince myself. Besides, Sajeed had promised to look after my children.

I had helped in several activities but it was a murder case that I am accused of now and have been here since 1999. The fellow was of the Chhota Rajan gang and Sajeed had shot him at point blank range after I made an approach and forced the person to open the door. My lawyer says that I will be released and that Sajeed will be released before me. We have introduced ourselves as husband and wife here and would like to be together. I heard that my children have been brought back from the boarding school and are presently staying with my natal family in Merut Nagar. I still do not know how I will go back there and bring my children back to me. I know everything about Sajeed and have accepted him for whatever he is. I do not think that he would leave me either. He needs me, so I might get a home.

I never had such faith in 'Allah', but now I feel that He is there and He would forgive me and let me lead a restful and peaceful life, once I come out. I also feel that my punishment will be over in this "hell" soon. But I need help from somebody to start a new life.

**Related Information**

Farida was initially not willing to speak and it took a few days for her to confirm that the researcher was not manipulating the statements. The researcher patiently waited during this time and collected some authentic background information for the purpose. Farida kept on lying and her statements never matched. Finally, the researcher could build trust with Farida who opened herself to the extent that she convinced Sajeed, also inside the jail premises, to talk to the researcher. A few months after the
researcher had wound up data collection, Sajeeed sent a letter to the researcher stating some of the story indirectly as Farida had stated. He also mentioned about his willingness to talk to the researcher. But due to the sensitivity of the information and the risk factor involved in taking an interview in the jail premises after interviewing the opponent gang, the researcher avoided the matter.
SECTION II: THE STRUCTURATION CASES OF A FEW YOUTH

As mentioned earlier, inclusion of the "structuration" cases was considered crucial as it was important to see if the attempt on the part of these youth gangsters to join the mainstream of society life was practically feasible or not. How far the community, family, NGOs and, law and order agencies have been helpful to these youth to motivate them and to bring them in the state of "structuration" that is, the sedentary state of active criminal career and a normal stage of life. In this section, in all, five cases are presented.

SELF- REPORT (STRUCTURATION) I

Name: Zakeer Khan
Age: 34
Education: V
Gang: Dawood

Even as a shooter, I could not get the security and financial support from the gang, as I thought. The underworld, for so many like us, looks glamorous but once you are into it you know that either you do what the "bhai" orders or be killed. It doesn't seem as colorful. Instead you feel like running and you hide like a wild animal who either kills others or be killed.

You feel nothing of yourself, but a criminal who should not survive in this world.

I was born in Mumbai, but my father came here for better opportunities from Aurangabad. He had a job in metal box but he could not earn much. Since my childhood we have been in a 'chawl' (residence) for lower middle class people in this area of Bandra (East). We are two brothers and have no sister. My brother is much younger than me and now he is studying in junior college in Matunga. He is serious about studying and so are we about him. I do not want him to see the
world that I have seen and want him to be someone who would be respected by all.

Though I was admitted to a municipal school, I can hardly remember going to school. If my mother scolded me, I stayed out initially in the neighbor's house with friend and later even out of the chawl and my neighborhood. If you even try to study too hard there, you will be mocked as most of the children do not study and take up petty jobs as they grow older. None of my friends continued with their studies and today they do some petty jobs. A few of us even went into gangs and saw the world in a different way.

I remember that I had a very big peer group and we used to play the whole day. I grew up playing cricket, football and kabbaddi. But later, as I grew older, I played cards for money. Such things are also common there.

When I gave up schooling, there was not much commotion, as my parents had already understood that I would not study. I took up a job in a mike renting shop and I used to get Rs.5/- per day that time. I gave it up within a few months and took up a job in a garage. I used to get Rs.1500/- there, but even that never satisfied me as I used to love going for movies, eating out, etc. I met Salim there; he always had money to spend and used to give me money just like that. He used to take me to bars and restaurants. I used to be so impressed with him and kept wondering how come he spent so much so easily. My frustration was very obvious to him and to my friends as I always told them, "if you have money, you have everything".

One day Salim called me and said that if I wanted I could always earn more. I was curious and asked him what kind of job it was. He told me it is about the Dawood company and for whom we would have to work for. Money would not be a problem as we would get as much we wished. I did not think twice and joined since then. Within one week, Salim gave me a revolver and showed me in the garage itself on how to operate it. I was really excited. I was a boy of 18-19 years
then and such a thing seemed to be adventurous. I always thought that even if I was not given much money, I could at least earn this way and get whatever I wanted in life. Salim gave me Rs. 10,000. I gave my mother Rs. 2500/- I remember that it was during Id-ul-Fitr' (a festive season for the Muslim community). My mother was surprised, but happy.

The first murder case that I committed was at the age of 19. He was a businessman. Sajid told me, *usko udana hai.* I agreed, but could not do it alone. The day I thought I would kill the businessman, I found the place crowded and it was daytime. Salim introduced me to another Salim, a sharp shooter. We completed the operation together. After that I killed quite a few of the company's target. Most of them were either rival Rajan's men or the real estate businessmen, till 1995.

The life style we went into was of good eating and drinking. I started taking drugs also. I never wanted to be in normal state as my peace of mind was completely lost. Money didn't come as much I thought. Though a few of us stayed in good houses, we were continuously running from place to place. The modus operandi was always to complete the task and then leave the city. We had vehicles and money flown in exactly from where, I do not know. But in this sort of group there are youths, who looked after a particular area of an operation. Much later, I found out that Salim used to look after the finance aspect.

Even though I did not earn too badly, the money would go to look after my immediate needs. The feelings I had developed gradually was that whatever I got I must consume. I also visited prostitutes. There were quite a few of us who were ready to kill for money and move higher up in this line. But after I started staying with them, though there was always that pride and zest that our Company should rule other gangs in the city, I, personally, was never ambitious in making a career in that. Perhaps that was the reason why they refused to give any legal protection when I was caught.
During 1995, when the Mumbai police was looking for me like mad and I was evading them like a dog, a friend of mine helped the police to get me arrested. He was a Hindu. I could have taken revenge, but his wife was like my sister so I kept quiet. I was fortunate enough and do not know still why, I was not encountered. I was in prison from 1995-1999. My parents came to meet me and when I told them that I wanted to come out of it and lead a normal life, they sold everything that they had. My mother is still attached to me and has spent about Rs.80,000 in the process. In prison, I had the time to think and I thought seriously about life since from then. What I understood that these "bhais" used youth like us and threw us away like tissue paper when the need was met. Many of my co-partners died in encounters during 1995-1998. It was the grace of "Allah" that I was saved, because I was in prison at that time.

Now it has been only two years since my release and I never went back to that line again. I have a kirana shop there in the same locality. I am also married and have one daughter. It also seems that my neighbors have forgotten that I was ever in the gang. But younger people still have lot of curiosity to ask me about what happened during that time. When I keep hearing even in the news and read in the papers that the police is doing encounters of even those gangsters of yesteryears, I get scared. But I am confident that I am not in this line. The police do disturb me and make me feel fed up and bitter with them, but I have taken a decision that whatever happens I will not go back. Even if they encounter me, I know that "I was not at fault". What hurts is that my youngest brother is still angry with me and doesn't speak to me properly.

I have given up drinking and sleep well at night, as I do not feel guilt about my past anymore. But the attitude of the police still makes me angry sometimes. I strongly feel it may not be so much of the environment as much as my greed and ambition to get a quick and good life that had pushed me into it. After my marriage, I feel more responsible and on looking back I feel that I won't be able to do the things that I did earlier. Now it is the "greed for love, family and the future". I dream with them so that they will not let me do anything dangerous anymore.
I still feel bad that I was born poor and cannot live like the rich. But I feel honorable to live a normal life like most people. But if you ask me I will say that I do not support such "unfair" judgments of "Allah" where many have no money to eat and few of them have so much that they can't consume in their lifetime. To me "there no fair world exists, but it is my decision not to be unfair".
It was the love for a girl whom I later got married to that changed my attitude and made me feel that being a gangster was not so respectable. You can only get respect through fear but not love. As long there is muscle power, they would respect and show artificial respect by calling us "bhai", but within their minds they would always consider us as "criminals". There is genuine respect here I understood it much later.

I was born in the Bhandup area of Bombay. My father came from Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh when he was 18 years old and started his garment shop in our locality. We are a big family of eight brothers and sisters. All my sisters are married and three elder brothers have joined my father's business. They are all married now and have children. My two younger brothers are in college. In my family my elder brothers and sisters and myself didn't go for much education. Neither were my parents so educated. But I am very keen that my two younger brothers should study. They are doing well in junior college.

My childhood was quite adventurous since the beginning. Having a big family, my mother always kept herself in the kitchen and looked after the younger ones. I had full freedom to roam around, bunk school and go for movies or play. 'Gradually, I gave up my studies and I do not remember if there was much resistance from the parents about this.

During 1985-1986, I joined my father's business. In our locality, like any other business locality, there would be a local "bhai" representing a big gang or his own with a dream to join or be a big gang leader in future. These local gangs
used to collect *hafta* from almost all businessmen. My father never denied them the *hafta* and maintained friendly and amiable relations with them. He used to say that it is also a business policy in a city like Bombay. But when I joined, I could not stand such *dadagiri* and revolted against the local goon over there. The goon was associated with the Thapa gang that time and threatened my father that he would take action. My father told me to stop coming to the shop and therefore I was jobless.

But that local goon was already after me and wanted to scare me with threats. I had a big group as well and we had a group leader named Chilwa. Whenever I shared my worries with Chilwa, he would remain composed and would always say, "*dekh lenge*" (we'll see). This local goon of Thapa once attacked one of my friends at night and asked for a message to be conveyed to me: to stay away and behave myself. My friend, Kamal, was seriously injured and I told Chilwa that I wanted to counter this attack. We were 20 of us and though we did not have revolvers, we had sharp weapons. We attacked this "goon" and some of his members one day wherein this "goon" was severely injured and subsequently died.

I didn't try to run away and was arrested. We got to know then that Chilwa was a member of the Ashok Joshi gang and we were all considered as members of this gang. Though this was surprising, we felt good as at that time the "gang culture" in the late 1980s for young boys like us was a matter of fashion and pride. We were kept in different cells and were not allowed to mix with others. The treatment we got in prison was also good and much different in quality as compared to common detainees. Food and other required things used to come from the gang.

When I came out, I permanently joined the Ashok Joshi gang. Within a few months, Thapa was killed. Meanwhile, Babu Resham, who was a close associate of Dawood, had a dispute over drug business in India as planned by Dawood. Babu came out from Dawood and joined Ashok Joshi. It was an insult to Dawood and to teach Babu a lesson, Dawood killed Ashok Joshi. After Joshi's death, Chilwa
maintained the gang in the name of Ashok Joshi. The only thing we did for our sustenance that time was collecting *hafta* and sorting out some disputes in the locality. Since we had lost our main leader and were looking for one, we approached Gawli and formally joined him. The main opponent of Gawli was Dawood. So we directly joined the gang war during 1990-92. I remember killing or injuring opponents whenever we had the chance.

Meanwhile, things started changing as I fell in love. The girl (now my wife) was a graduate and she loved me in spite of my background. She convinced me and made me realize how when people called me "bhai" it was not out of respect, but as a criminal. She agreed to get married to me and I also promised that I would give up the line. Meanwhile, my friend and leader Chilwa died in gang war. That also opened my eyes that no one gained in bloodshed and just killing each other in the name of gangs was meaningless, especially as we did not know them personally. After Chilwa's death, I became the local leader and used to get a fixed amount of Rs. 18,000 to Rs.20,000 every month. But then I decided to give up. I approached Gawli. It is not always that your leader would be angry with you if you want to give up. But it is true that his business should not be harmed. Gawli accepted my decision and gradually I came out. It was in 1994 that I came out; otherwise, perhaps, the police would have encountered me. Sometimes I am called by them for a general inquiry and still carry the fear in me that I should not become their target as I want to live and be with my family.

I have a *kirana* shop and I am not in very much touch with my community and friends. But my wife is very social, so I have good terms with my neighbors. My father died few years back and presently my other two younger brothers and my mother are with me. I have two sons. The elder son has started going to school. My wife has changed everything and has made me a new person. Someday I wish to write a novel on myself.
Related Information:

After developing a good rapport, the researcher was able to meet the respondent's family members. The researcher discussed their attitude on how they accepted "his" homecoming incident and what were the main hurdles that he confronted to be back in mainstream of life. The only "fear" discussed frequently was the police encounter. The wife showed her concern and "fear" by sharing a few events when police had caught hold of a few youth who had the background of gang activities even few years back and were shot dead in encounters. Police even now pick up Shyam Prakash on sensitive days and keep him in the lock up with criminals. Such incidents made him feel like a person with a criminal background.

The concerned police officials have shared their view that the respondent was really trying to be in the mainstream of life, but it is a customary for the police station of certain areas to be careful on particular festival days or elections, etc. The people who have some record of severe crimes are kept in the lock up for quite a few hours. The law and order agency has to look after all these prevention aspects to keep control over the situations.
It was my need for money that led me to this line. I do not blame others except myself that I could not prevent myself from deviation and when deviation became addiction, I lost my way and went further into gang crime.

My father died a long time back due to cancer. It was my elder brother who always supported us. We did not have a big family like other Muslim families. We were only two brothers but then my elder brother also died in an accident in the Middle East. I do not exactly know what he used to do, but he had always sent money to my mother and came once in a while to visit us at home. He was quite elder to me and I used to consider him as my father. I grew up at Mira Road, though we are basically from Gonda, a district of Uttar Pradesh. The locality we used to stay was not good and I had lots of friends who were into drugs and alcohol since school. I always saw my mother ill and very irritated. She always used to scold me and beat me up when I was a child. That time I hated her and used to bunk school and spend time with my friends. I gave up my education very early as I never took any interest in studies. The school teachers also used to scold and beat me. I grew up into a very stubborn and arrogant person and fought with my peer groups several times.

We were not so poor but then neither were we middle class. When I was 18 years old, I told my brother that I wanted to own an auto-rickshaw and do business. He immediately sent the money. When I had my auto-rickshaw, I joined auto-rickshaw union and whenever there was any dispute, I went ahead and fought. I never claimed to be a "leader", but very soon I was called as their leader
in my locality. Meanwhile, I hardly stayed at home and whenever I went home my mother fought with me and complained about things.

Meanwhile I fought with another group in my locality who used to be associated with the Thapa gang. I had beaten up that fellow severely and he was admitted to the hospital. I was arrested and stayed for couple of years in jail where I saw how boys from some gangs were treated differently. There I met Rahaman who used to tell me stories of gangs and "as much money" as we needed. By then I was already addicted to drugs and prostitutes, so such stories held much attraction for me. Though I didn't tell him anything clearly, I said that I was interested in doing some business. When I was released I had no job and all the money I had saved had gone. I started selling garad (brown sugar). It was a profitable business as I have seen people queuing for garad as one would queue up at a ration shop. Rahaman had shown me the business. Meanwhile I had an affair with Fatima and I got married. Fatima knew my business but she agreed to marry me on the condition that I would start some "white business". I didn't give up but after one year when I had a daughter I needed more money. My addiction for prostitutes had stopped after Fatima came into my life, but I had gone into drugs as well as alcohol by then.

Rahaman kept on tempting me that if I worked for Shakeel, who was at that time a hand of Dawood, I would have lots of money; and since I was a brave man, I should take up such a challenge. I was really in need of money as my family was growing and so was my addiction for drugs and alcohol. My business of garad was not running well as there was a change of police officer and the new officer kept a close watch on me. Rahaman told me that if I supplied weapons from one person to another I would get enough to support my family. I finally agreed. But for every trip I made, I would get only Rs.500/- to 1000/-. I was not satisfied
attacking rivals as per the orders given. After I killed three of my opponents and was still surviving, my fear disappeared and I took this up as my profession.

I was arrested and was in jail till 1999. Meanwhile, I had realized how this would destroy my life and my family. Fatima was pregnant with our second child (ton) when I was arrested. I used to cry in jail and pray to Allah that if I came out I would try to live a life like other normal people and it doesn't matter even if we remained poor.

Fatima's parents gave us money whenever needed. After I came out, I started plying the auto-rickshaw again. I do not have one of my own now; it is a rented one. My family is happy with whatever I earn. I do not feel bitter about my mother anymore as I feel that she used to scold me so that I would not do what I have done. I have given up drugs but have not been able to give up drinking. But I maintain myself.

I come to the police station whenever I will have to. They do their part and that doesn't irritate me as what I have done, cannot be compared to this harassment. But sometimes when I am kept in the lock-up on some festival days, I feel scared. I also feel scared if police comes and call me at night. But I have lost that strength to commit any crime.

Related Information:

The researcher consulted the local police station about the activities of the respondent. Police confirmed his new 'law-abiding life'. The police further confirmed that the respondent was not only trying to be 'social', but also helped the police by giving information that prevented certain incidents of crime in the area. In spite of repeated requests, the respondent avoided researcher's request to visit his house and speak to his family members.
SELF-REPORT (STRUCTURATION) IV

Name: Ajay Kakkar
Age: 31
Education: VIII
Gang: Ashok Joshi

When Ashok Joshi (gangster of the mid-1980s) died and Thapa (another gangster and a contemporary of Ashok Joshi) was also killed, I went into prison. I had realized that I had a misconception about the power and wealth of gangs. Everybody would call you "bhai" and salute you because you are powerful. You will also have the money to fulfill all the dreams you have. But while in prison, I thought how temporary such beliefs were. The fact is that either you kill or be killed by your opponents or by the police in this line. The end result is always frightening.

I was born and brought up at Tardeo and, presently, I stay in Vikroli. My father came from Nagpur long back and used to work in a textile mill. We lived in a joint family set-up. As we were growing, my uncle left the house and set up a separate house.

I always had a big peer group and playing cricket was my addiction. I never studied well. Our family belonged to the lower middle class and except for two of my cousin brothers, nobody in the house reached the graduation level. All my brothers are settled, and are into business.

I used to attend inter-college cricket competitions with the local cricket teams of neighboring areas. When I was in class VII, I was already 14 and used to stay quite often away from home. When I somehow reached class VIII, I was seriously thinking about studying, but my father died and I felt the need to earn and help my mother. I took a job in printing company and used to get Rs.2,000/- per month. After finishing the day's work, I always went to play.
One day we had a fight with a local cricket team and their leader injured two of my friends very badly. We could not take part in a competition and the opponent team wanted it to happen that way. We were all very upset and thought of taking revenge. In our area, there was one Abhay Dhopaikar, who used to be associated with the Ashok Joshi gang. He used to talk to us. We went and spoke to him. But my other friends did not want to participate in this except Sunil and myself. Abhay sent his boys with weapons (chaku, hockey sticks, swords, etc.). We were eight of us and we directly went in daytime to the playground where they were practising and beat them up. Due to excessive bleeding, one of the team member died. I was arrested and so was Sunil.

I came out in three months under bail, but by then the addiction for muscle power had developed. Many of my friends started calling me "bhai", and quite a few of them came to me with complaints to solve them. It was a different feeling altogether that made me feel very proud, rather than insulted. Everybody was considering me as a member of the Ashok Joshi gang. One day, Abhay Dhopaikar called me personally seeking Sunil's and my help. We could not say no.

The Ashok Joshi gang was in dispute with the Thapa and Dawood gangs. In the year of 1989-91, the gang wars took a serious turn. Everyday someone or the other from these gangs would die or be injured. Quite a few of our members died and finally Sunil and Abhay were also killed in this gang war. I was in prison from 1991-97. Police encounters also became frequent due to largeumber of gangs harassing the city businessmen, hoteliers and builders.

After I was released, whoever was alive in both Joshi gang or in Thapa gang in my area had understood what life in a gang meant. I started a small photocopying and typing shop as I had some experience in this. I am married now and have two children. I want them to go school and have a good education. My mother stays with me and also one of my brothers. He is younger than me and also helps in my business.
I would like to restate that the feeling of revenge and then addiction and obligation to Joshi gang actually led me in to this. It is also my destiny that I landed up with such a rowdy group and became part of them. I still look back and see that what I have done was not right. My family's support has given me strength to come out of it.

I am not scared of police anymore. Whenever they want me to come, I go and I do not want to be in their bad books as I don't want to die like my other gang members of that time.
SELF-REPORT (STRUCTURATION) V

Name: Mahindra Mhatre
Age: 32
Education: B.Com (first year)
Gang: Ashok Joshi@Gawli

It was my greed for the glamour of gang power that led me to this world. By the time I understood, I was in prison. It is my fortune again that when the Joshi gang was finished, I didn't look for any other umbrella to work.

I come from a middle class family and my father was in rail service. All my siblings are graduates and I also studied till my F.Y. B.Com in the Jhunjhunwala College. My father is basically from Aurangabad and initially we stayed in Mumbra. But we have been here at Kanjur-Marg for more than 15 years.

Everything was fine with me till my initial days of college life. I always had a big friend circle and we never went beyond an occasional drink and watching movies. But I was never serious about my studies. It was not in my family culture that I give up my education, so I continued. My only ambition from childhood was to become something, so that people would know me. I always dreamt of power and influence. The belief I carried was that if you had these two things, money would follow.

When I went to college I had a third class degree and could not opt for anything except B.Com. Our college crowd was mixed. There were rowdy groups as well as decent ones. The rowdy groups attracted me because they also found me interesting to talk to. Besides, if you are with the toughest guys, nobody would dare to harass you. The trend of gang culture during the late eighties was quite powerful and influential in Bombay. Almost all young rowdy groups would talk about gangs and be curious about their activities. I had a friend, Rajesh Bhise,
who used to talk much more than any one else about such groups. He was like our leader and convinced us that this line was better as you controlled everything, including the law and order agencies.

There was another rowdy group in the college whose leader was, Rashid, a Muslim guy and had links with the Mafia gang ruling the city predominantly at that time. We had serious fight with them during a cricket match. One evening, the gang attacked me with hockey sticks. I was alone and there were eight of them. My fault was that I was man of the match of the disputed cricket match. The attack left me with a fractured knee. They left me unconscious and after this incident I was in hospital for more than a month. In the hospital I thought of nothing but revenge. Rajesh had promised that he would help me. Three of my other very close friends also had promised to be with me in this mission. By the time I recovered fully, my final year exam was already over and I was more frustrated because I could not appear for the exam.

When I came back home, I got to know that the police had not done any follow up. I had understood that they might be keeping quiet because Rashid had close links with a powerful gang. One day, Rajesh took me to a flat and introduced me to a few tough guys as members of the Joshi gang. They had everything - car, money, etc. - and took me out for a very good dinner to a posh restaurant in the city. I was pleased and impressed also on seeing the power and influence of these people. During our discussion, they clearly stated the role of police, how they paid quite a few of them to let them run their show, how they got information about other gangs, etc. Much later, I understood that after the death of Joshi, "they" were practically working for Gawli. We planned where to catch Rashid and one evening caught him with three other boys. I hit him hard on the knee and head. After the fighting, I left the place immediately. Within seven days, I was arrested along with two of my friends. In the prison (Arthur Road), we were declared as Gawli's members. I got bail within five months by the Company and worked till 1994 with the gang. I also took a part in the gang war and I was happy to work for a Hindu gang and beating/killing Muslim gangsters. I was rearrested in 1994.
This was to be a long imprisonment as I had murder charges against me. My parents were worried and within two years of my imprisonment, my father died due to a heart attack.

By then, I was aware of Mumbai police encounter culture and became serious about life, all the more when I kept hearing of the death of a few gang members in police encounters. Before I was released, my family went to a good defense lawyer in the city and as per his suggestion I lodged a complaint fearing an encounter death by the police.

I was released two and a half years back and have to go to the police station whenever I am called. I cooperate with them to lead a normal life, but I do not trust them because quite few of them have got fame and promotion by killing gangsters in the city. If they want to finish gang culture in the city, why don't they catch the big fish who promote gangsters like us?

I have a small roadside cart near Kurla station. I have two friends from earlier days who have also left the line and have joined business with me. I have been married for a year. Looking back, I only feel that it was my stupidity that made me join the gang and kill Rashid in that rage. But by the time I understood, I was already labeled a gangster.

My family is cooperative to me and all my brothers and sisters always enquire and help us by giving money for this business. I still the fear of a police encounter. To me, this department (police) has become the biggest gunda (goon) in the city.