CHAPTER - 7
MR. PACHPUTE’S CONTRIBUTION IN POLITICAL FIELD

7.1 INTRODUCTION:

The politicians have external broad vision regarding the all round development of the region. It includes economic, social culture & political developments. Babanrao Pachpute was born in a very poor family of a farmer in a very small village, of Kashti. So his political career developed through the conflict against the established politicians. He was not having any background of politics. He had to struggle on his own. His political career began from his college life. He got admission in New Arts, Commerce and Science College, Ahmednagar. He contested the election for General Secretary. He won the election and tried to give justice to various problematic issues of the students. He completed his graduation with political science as a special subject for B.A. Thus his first victory in the election was the beginning of his bright, outstanding and dynamic political career. After graduation he had to concentrate on agriculture because he was the elder son in the family. His conflict became severe against the established politicians in the society especially in the sugar factory. In order to overcome the obstructions, hurdles and challenges against exploitation and injustice he laid the foundation of Sangharsha Yuva Manch platform against exploitation of new youngsters.

7.2 POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN MAHARASHTRA AT THE TIME OF RISING OF LEADERSHIP OF MR. BABANRAO PACHPUTE:

7.2.1 Political Parties -

Democratic politics is a party politics. All the national parties are present in Maharashtra, as mentioned in the previous chapters. What is attempted here is a brief description of the major political parties operating in the politics of the region.¹

1) Congress (I) -

In, Maharashtra, the Congress party dominates the political scene. During the last 30 years and more since the emergence of Maharashtra, the Congress has gone through two splits and mergers. In 1960, the Congress was well-known, unified party under
the leadership of Y.B. Chavan. In between 1960-70, there was complete obedience to this father-figure of Maharashtra; he was held in reverence and awe. This explains the way Maharashtra Congress leaders behaved after the first split in 1969 and dealt with the problem of the “conscience vote” in the presidential elections. They voted for the official Congress candidate- Sanjiva Reddy. He was narrowly defeated by Mrs. Gandhi’s candidate V.V. Giri. Mrs. Gandhi never forgot this in her later dealings with Y.B. Chavan or for that matter with the Maharashtra Congress.

The Congress in Maharashtra had suffered only during the Samyukta Maharashtra agitation, it lost to the Samyukta Maharashtra Samitee in a major way in western Maharashtra. But it scored in Vidarbha and some extent in Marathwada. The Congress regained more than its previous position in 1962. The trend continued from 1967 onwards.

The Congress organization has reached the village level in Maharashtra. One reason is off course the establishment of the Panchayati Raj in 1962. Thus, there is a hierarchical ladder of power from the village to the state level. The region has two Pradesh Congress Committees, one for Bombay and the other for the rest of the region. The BRCC was in existence before the emergence of Maharashtra. After some time it merged with the MPCC. It was again received due to Mrs. Gandhi’s directive. The two PCCs do not see eye to eye. The Bombay Regional Congress Committee (BRCC) is the stronghold of the Non-Maharashtrian bourgeoisie of Bombay, while the MPCC mainly represents rural Maharashtra.

The Congress party suffered because of the two splits and the personalized politics of Mrs. Gandhi and her son. At present not only the organizational wing is in bad shape but it is also playing second fiddle to the chief minister and the legislative party. The recent example of the pre-eminence of the chief minister was evident when Sharad Pawar could get Pratibha Patil removed from the chairmanship of MPCC and get his nominee, N.M. Kamble installed in her place. The organizational wing always suffers as it is not representative like the legislative wing. With Panchayati Raj institutions, all the elected persons get a higher status.

The Congress has its own front organizations like the Congress Seva Dal, the Youth Congress, the National Students Union of India (NSUI) or the Mahila Aghadi. But most of these are active on certain occasions like a visit by the prime minister, a national convention, or a student agitation. Otherwise these front organizations are generally dormant.
The Congress party, or for that matter many other parties, become active mainly at the time of elections, national state or local, as also for elections to important co-operative organizations. Otherwise the Congress offices at every level wear a desolate look, with very few persons around. The elections have become the sole purpose for which the parties function.

Mrs. Prabha Rao was appointed in 1985 as the MPCC president against the expressed wisher of the then chief minister Vasantdada Patil, which led to his resignation. This appointment was another evidence of the total centralization of power in the party, and of the subservience of the state units. Shankarrao Chavan was the chief minister in 1985 and he and Prabha Rao were on better terms. She joined as a cabinet minister in Sharad Pawar’s government in June, 1988. Pratibha Patil was then appointed as the president.

In 1985, the Maharashtra Congress was a divided house with powerful factions by Vasantdada, Sharad Pawar and the loyalists, who were active in undermining the support structure of S.B. Chavan who remained at the helm of affairs owing to the support of the central leadership. In 1988, the prime minister had to make up his mind about the leadership issue in Maharashtra. This was hastened by the adverse results of bye-elections, especially in Allahabad. Rajiv Gandhi realized the immediate need to replace Chavan and appoint Sharad Pawar as Chief Minister. As chief minister Sharad Pawar was expected to revamp the sagging Maharashtra Congress and prepare the party for the forthcoming elections, in 1990. But factionalism raised its head with the alliance of actually Patil-Nilangekar, Tirpude and S.B. Chavan. Everyone had a grouse against Pawar and all of them (except S.B. Chavan) were out of power.

Sharad Pawar was able to save the Congress in the 1989-90 elections. He was able to win 28 out of 48 Lok Sabha seats, in comparison to the party’s poor performance in the northern states and Congress (I)’s lowered strength in the Lok Sabha. He was not able to get 60 percent seats in the 1990 assembly elections, but he succeeded in thwarting the ambitions of the BJP-Shivsena alliance. He secured the largest number of seats, 141 out of 288, and formed the Government with the support of Independents. It was no doubt a weak government facing a formidable opposition. But Sharad Pawar had ample political dexterity experience to tide over the situation. His closer relationship with Chandrasekhar enabled him to be independent, to an extent, of the directives of the High Command. This marked him as a support in the eyes of the late Congress president Rajiv Gandhi.
2. The Opposition -

In Maharashtra, there was no strong opposition party for many years since Independence. The Congress party regained its hegemonic position after the formation of Samyukta Maharashtra and remained firmly entrenched in power, except for a brief spell during the “Janta Wave” when Maharashtra was ruled by the PDF coalition government, under the leadership of Sharad Pawar, himself a Congressman. The main opposition parties existing in Maharashtra today are the Shivsena, the Communist Party of India (CPI), communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPM], the Peasant’s and Worker’s Party (PWP), the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) and the Janata Dal.²

3. Communist Parties -

Although the communist party was among the first to be formed, its two wings do not have a stronghold in Maharashtra. Their sphere of influence is limited to certain pockets like Bombay, Thane, Nashik and southern Vidarbha. The main source of strength of the communists has been from industrial workers, particularly the textile workers, from among whom many communist leaders have emerged. However, the spread of non-communist trade unions appears to have eroded the strength of the communists. The failure of the communists lies in their ability of not being able to draw support from the rural peasantry, which mainly belongs to the Maratha caste as well as the scheduled castes. They are often criticized for having loyalties outside India and are dubbed as anti-national. The Communist Party suffered major setback in 1942. When World War II started, the communists were denouncing it as imperialist war. Even the Molotov – Ribbentrop Non-aggression Pact of August 1939 was defended by them as a clever move on the part of Soviet Russia. But when Soviet Russia was attacked by Nazi Germany, the war suddenly became a people’s war for the Indian communists. Then the Congress in its “Quit India” resolution of August 1942 asked the British government to leave the country. Thus, the nationalists were against the war effort in India while the communists were supporting it. This anti-national role created widespread resentment in the general public.³

The splits in the Communist Party have further eroded the myth of communist unity. The communist have very little strength in Maharashtra. The effect of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) [CPI (M-L)] is felt a little in Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts, but this is a spillover from their movement in Andhra Pradesh. The present strength of the CPI and CPM in the assembly is negligible, though the parties can claim very devoted band workers who have always stood by them. The split in 1962 resulted in the formation of
the two communist parties, the CPI and the CPM. The former was regarded as moderate, while the latter was considered more radical. A second split occurred when S.A. Dange and his followers left the CPI and formed the All India Communist Party. But the new splinter groups has remained stagnant and confined to Bombay.

4) Peasant’s and Worker’s Party -

The PWP originated within the Congress fold. Leaders like Keshavrao Jedhe, S.S. More, etc. who were actively associated with the social reform movement started by Mahatma Phule, formed a Peasant’s and Worker’s League within the Maharashtra Congress in 1947. The leaders of the League had a strong hold over the Congress organization, but they met with opposition from the ministerial wing. When the AICC decided not to allow any political group with a separate ideology to function within the Congress Party and amended its constitution accordingly in February 1948, these were forced to break out and establish a new party, the Peasant’s and Worker’s Party. The PWP gathered support from the rural areas and in the initial years posed a serious threat to the Congress. Although it had strong leftist leanings, its purposely did not merge with the Communist Party, in view of what was perceived as that party’s longstanding anti-national stance. Rather, it preferred to stay aloof but pledged its loyalty to the Comintern in the Dabhandi Thesis in 1950. Its strong anti-Brahmin attitude did not permit its merger with the Socialist Party either, due to the Brahmin leadership of the party. The period from 1951-56 was marked by strife and rivalries, and the party had to struggle for its very existence because of Intra party conflicts. Their followed group dropped out and formed the “Lal Nishan Gat’, whereas the Nana Patil group merged with the CPI. Later, R.K. Khadilkar and Tulsidas Jadhav broke away from the party to form the Mazdoor Kisan Party (MKP), but Jadhav rejoined the Congress in 1955. Keshavrao Jedhe and S.S.More also withdrew from the party and went back to Congress. The only remaining founder, leader, R.B. Raut, stood by the shattered party and courageously revitalized it, enabling it to regain some of its lost strength and establish itself as a political force in Maharashtra. The PWP has the backing of both landlords and tenants in certain areas of rural Maharashtra. It has steadily maintained its strength in the legislative assembly in almost all elections to date. It held 13 seats in the 1985 assembly and its leaders like Keshavrao Dhondge. N.D. Patil, etc. performed their roles as opposition party members, in an able manner. But it does not pose any threat to the Congress monopoly of power. In the 1990 elections the party lost some more ground and has now only nine seats in the assembly. It has fought the elections in alliance with the Janata Dal sponsored Progressive Democratic Front.4
5) **Janata Party / Janata Dal -**

The Janata Party came into existence on 23 January, 1977, when four parties, the Congress (O), the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh and the Socialist Party merged to form one Opposition party to challenge the hegemony of the Congress. Jayprakash Narayan, the venerated Sarvodaya leader, was instrumental in getting these desperate political forces together to be an alternative to the Congress (I). Janata Party reaped quick electoral benefits and was successful in toppling the Congress government in the 1977 general elections to form the first non-Congress government at the Centre. Strong aspirations and hopes were raised everywhere about the development of a two-party system in India, but these were to be short-lived. The anti-Indira and anti-emergency common platform which had helped to form the party and win the elections was insufficient to hold the parties together. Ideological and personal rivalries which had been submerged for some time began to surface. Factionalism and intra-party squabbling destroyed the party completely and tore it to shreds. Maharashtra could not remain insulated from all these events. During the “Janata Wave”, the Janata Party had secured 99 seats in the 1978 assembly elections. Although this was insufficient to enable the party to form a government on its own, a dent had been made in the standing of the ruling Congress. In collaboration with a faction of the Congress which had broken away, a collection – the progressive Democratic Front- was formed to assume power. But in the subsequent election of 1980 the Janata Party’s position dwindled to only 17 seats in the state assembly. The Charan Singh and Raj Narayan factions could not get any seat at all. In the 1985 assembly the Janata Party held 20 seats.

In the 1990 elections the newly formed Janata Dal fought the elections in alliance with the communists, PWP, Shetkari Sanghatana and a faction of the Republican Party under the banner of the Progressive Democratic Front. But the performance did not come up to the expectations of the Janata Dal or its alliance partners. There was a marginal increase in the seats from 20 to 25 in the house.\(^5\)

6) **Bharatiya Janata Party -**

The Janata Party, formed in January 1977, had begun to disintegrate rapidly after capturing power. Factions led by Charan Singh and Raj Narayan had quit to form their own parties. On 19 March 1980, the Janata parliamentary board decided that no legislator
should take part in day-to-day activities of the RSS. A.B. Vajpayee, L.K. Advani and Nana Deshmukh, leaders of the former Jan Sangh, however, did not agree and called for a separate convention of former Jan Sanghities on 5th and 6th April 1980. It was decided to break away from the Janata Party and to form a separate party called the Bharatiya Janata Party. Thus, the BJP members were RSS sympathizers, whereas its opponents remained in the Janata Party. The BJP is an urban party in Maharashtra and has a small following, mainly from the middle class. In 1980, it could secure 14 seats and it slightly increased its strength in the 1985 assembly by capturing 16 seats. In the 1989-90 elections, the BJP, in alliance with Shivsena was able to capture 10 Lok Sabha Seats. In the assembly elections it captured 42 seats, major of which were from rural areas. Thus, it is changing its urban middle class character and emerging more as a rural based party.

As stated at the outset, Maharashtra did not have any strong opposition till 1990. The Congress maintained its hold because of the support drawn from dominant caste – “The Maratha” and other intermediate castes and minorities, both religious and linguistic. The Janata Party and the BJP drew their support from the urban areas and the middle class. The PWP is a state party and draws its strength from a part of the rural peasantry. The Communist parties do not have much of a popular base in Maharashtra and it is not likely that they can make any inroad either because they lack mass appeal among the rural peasantry as well as the lower castes. The Shivsena is making its presence felt and the organization has been discussed in the following section. The opposition parties in Maharashtra are fragmented and regional and there appears to be no likelihood of any of the opposition parties growing in strength so as to provide an alternative. The 1989-90 elections materially altered the political situation. The BJP-Shivsena alliance suddenly emerged as a challenge to the Congress monopoly of power. Their strength in the assembly increased five-fold. The Janata Dal did not fare well; it could secure 24 seats only.6

7) Shivsena -

The Shivsena (which literally means Shivaji’s army) was formally launched by its leader, Bal Thackeray, on 19 June 1966 in Bombay. Bal Thackeray was formerly a cartoonist in the Free Press Journal, but left it to start his own Marathi cartoon weekly, ‘Marmik’. It has a large readership. Soon after its inception, the Shivsena received a massive response and over the years it has shown a phenomenal growth. Within the first six months of its existence it had set up 95 branches in the Bombay region. It entered the political arena by helping the Congress defeat Krishna Menon who contested as an Independent in 1967. Its political career was started in 1968 when it contested the Bombay Municipal Corporation
elections and won 42 seats, standing second only to the Congress. The Sena stronghold was in Bombay and Thane and today it has 83 seats in 221 member house the Bombay Municipal Corporation. For the fifth time successively it has managed to retain the mayoralty. The Shivasena had two seats in the Maharashtra legislative assembly in 1985 and two seats in the legislative council. It contested the Aurangabad municipal elections in April 1988 and was successful in securing 27 out of the 60 seats. This proved to be a major setback to the ruling Congress party. The Shivasena appears to have become a dominant force in the corporation and was able to secure the mayoralty for an Independent member supported by it.

Originally urban-based and concentrated in the Bombay- Thane region, the movement has widened its base and has spread to rural areas all over Maharashtra. Its presence is felt in the remote areas of Konkan and the small villages in Chandrapur district of Vidarbha. The saffron flags and Sena graffiti is visible almost everywhere in Maharashtra. The party was organized originally to protect the interests of the “local people” or “sons of the soil”. It wanted to reserve 80 per cent of the jobs in Maharashtra for Maharashtrians. Marmik published statistics (which were often half-truth) regarding persons employed in various offices which led the laymen to believe that job selections were not made on merit, but there was discrimination against Maharashtrians. Unemployed and frustrated youth, especially found it easier to believe the Shivasena propaganda rather than verifying the facts. The Samyukta Maharashtra movement had mobilized the Maharashtrians, and the realization that in their own capital all the jobs were monopolized by the South Indians (as was made out to be the case by Shivasena propaganda), helped to swell the support received by the Shivasena. Further, the ranks of the educated unemployed were increasing with the greater turnout of fresh graduates who could not be accommodated in the employment market and hence felt frustrated.

During the campaigns for the 1990 assembly elections, Bal Thackeray boasted of hoisting the saffron flag of the Shivasena on the assembly. The Shivasena could not realize its dream and its alliance with the BJP secured only 94 seats to become the opposition. The new strength of the Shiv-Sena - BJP alliance put the Congress (I) on the defensive.

In its propaganda, the Shivasena brought up the idea of a conspiracy by Non-Maharashtrians against the Maharashtrian and this awakened strong feelings to drive out the outsiders. Later when it was realized that it was impossible to drive out all the outsiders at one stroke, the stand changed into prevention of further migration. Curiously, the Shivasena attacked South Indians more vigorously and the Gujarathis and the other north-Indians to a
lesser extent. This was due to Bal Thackeray’s own personal bitter experience in the Frees Press Journal and also because the South Indians occupied white collar middle-class positions, mainly clerical, while the Gujarati and others were businessmen and industrialists.

The Shivsena is unreservedly anti-communist. In its view the communists owe their primary loyalties outside India either to Soviet Russia or China. Thackeray emphasized that communist regimes had not even solved basic problems of food shortages in China and Russia. “The Indian communists will open their umbrellas when it rains in Russia and will go on a hunger strike when there is a food shortage in Russia.” This is a sample of his satirical attacks on the Indian communists. All forms of industrial strikes and unrest were condemned as they were anti-national, and as such they must be stopped completely. The Shivsena became the strike breaker. The Bharatiya Kamgar Sena was established in August 1968 to look after the workers' demand and keep them safe from the influence of the communists. There were attacks on communist party workers and their office too. Before Shivsena no one had the muscle to attack the communists. In the conflict between the two, a few communist and Shivsena activists were murdered.

The Shivsena is staunchly pro-Hindu and intensely anti-Muslim. One of its slogan is “Say it with pride that I am a Hindu”. The Sena believes that Muslims, like the communists, owe their allegiance primarily to the green flag and to Pakistan and hence they are anti-national. Thackeray believes that Hinduism is nationalism and brands all Non-Hindu groups as anti-national. He also feels that Hinduism should be the dominant culture.⁸

Shivaji is Shivsena’s favorite legendary hero. To them he was not only an ideal Maharashtrian, but an ideal Hindu too. The myth of this legendary hero, Shivaji, is used to inspire all and to mould Shiv Sainiks, and its vigorous popularization helps to reinforce its symbolic content. What Shivaji actually was is beside the point, but what he represents symbolically today is important.

The Shivsena is totally authoritarian. Complete obedience is expected from all Shiv Sainiks. Branch Offices are set up under the leadership of the Shakha Pramukhs appointed by the supremo. Meetings are held regularly and issues are discussed but no votes are taken, “We discuss and He (Thackeray) decides” is the motto of Shiv Sainiks. All decisions are those of the leader. There are no committees and no elections. The Shivsena thrives upon a regional frame of mind and utilizes a variety of tactics like mass propaganda, tactical use of violence, social service, strike breaking etc. It uses methods of coercion and intimidation and has an aggressive militant image. It neither believes in non-violence nor in peaceful means of persuasion.
Over the years the Shivsena has seen many ups and downs in its political fortunes. But in recent years there has been a continuous increase in its influence and spread. It started with a pronounced emphasis on “Maharashtra for Maharashtrians” and an anti-south bias. It has now changed its stance to “Hindustan for Hindus” with a pronounced anti-Muslim bias. In the early years of its existence it was nurtured by the Congress, and V.P. Naik, the then chief minister. Shivsena was nicknamed “Vasant Sena” by its critics. Owing to its anti-communist attitude, it received generous support from the Bombay bourgeoisie.

Whether it was the controversy over the “Riddles of Hinduism” (Dr. Ambedkar’s controversial writings about Ram and Krishna, published by the government of Maharashtra), or any other issue, Shivsena has been extremely hostile to Dalits. But Thackeray truly hit the headlines by asking for an economic boycott of Sikhs in Bombay for their failure to stop the killings of innocent Hindus in Punjab. Under public pressure he withdrew his call. But he got the necessary mileage in publicity for himself and his organization.

Another feather in his cap is the unconditional merger of the Hindu Shivsena in Punjab with his Shivsena. The Shivsena may not prove an immediate threat to the ruling party but it will continue to be a growing headache to the Congress, as both in urban and rural areas, Shivsena’s ambitions are growing. Thackeray even dreamt of capturing power at the state level. Its revivalist slogans, militant posture and readiness to use violence have created a special place for the Shivsena in Maharashtra politics. But as drawback it has no economic programme even for rural Maharashtra.

The appeasement of minorities in pursuit of factional politics by the party in power has resulted in strengthening the Shivsena. Some observers believe that increasing factionalism, declining efficiency, growing corruption and nepotism in the party in power are providing fertile ground for the further growth of the Shivsena.

The Shivsena again shot into limelight in December 1992, when it claimed its prominent role in demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on 6 December 1992. The Shivsena came in for heavy criticism about its role in the December 1992 and January 1993 riots in Bombay.9

8. Shetkari Sanghatana (Peasant’s organization) -
Shard Joshi, a former UN employee who gave up his job and returned to India with a want to do something to remove India’s rural poverty, is the founder of the Shetkari Sanghatana (Peasant’s organization) in Maharashtra. He is better known than all the other farmer’s leaders in the country such as Mahendra Singh Tikait. Over the years, he and his colleagues have built up a new theoretical system which they claim takes over from where Gandhi and Marx left off.

Sharad Joshi began his activities with a campaign for raising onion prices which had fallen very low. At that time it was said that agitation was in the interest of the rich onion growing farmers in the irrigated areas. But the Shetkari Sanghatana countered by pointing out that in the dry areas all onion-growing farmers were poor. A united peasant movement, it was claimed, could be built through the efforts of all the farmers, rich and poor. Soon after, with the shift to a demand for higher sugarcane prices, the peasant movement acquired a class character. Despite the fact that the peasant movement was dominated by the rich peasants, it also tried to mobilize poor and middle-level peasants. In course of time, criticism of Sharad Joshi on the grounds that he was a highly educated urban Brahmin withered, and he emerged as a leader of the peasants. He has been accepted by the peasants who are non-Brahmins. The movement established its strong base in Nashik, in northern Maharashtra, perhaps the biggest sugar belt. Though there has been support from the rich farmers and from some of the sugar barons, they have shown little willingness to go out on the road. In Nashik, farming is still backward and the sugar factories are inefficient and corrupt, so they do no pay the farmers their dues. But in South Maharashtra things are better, as on Sangli farmer explained it “We get proper prices.” Hence there was absence in support to the Shetkari Sanghatana in South Maharashtra.\(^\text{10}\)

It appears that the rich farmers themselves did not personally participate; nor did the Dalits (scheduled castes), Adivasi, or agricultural labourers to any significant degree (except perhaps where they were pulled in by the left parties), in the peasant agitations organized by the Sanghatana.

Ideology of the Shetkari Sanghatana: According to Sharad Joshi, the national cities widely constitute “India” whereas “Bharat” consists of the rural areas, and the former exploits the latter. In other words, the organized exploit the unorganized. He argues that the Shetkari Sanghatana is not just a temporary union or a price-demand campaign. It is an independent system of thought comparable only with Marxist system of thought. He shares with Marxism the materialistic approach. He also accepts the importance of capital accumulation as a gathering force. He finds Marx’s analysis of surplus value incorrect. Sharad Joshi points that the communist revolution did not take place in industrialized
countries such as the USA, the UK, France or West Germany, workers have never acted as class as such.

Joshi feels that in India, the approach of unifying the farmer is being opposed not so much by the real beneficiaries of the capital accumulation process but by the so-called leftist intellectuals. The latter have now realized that they were flogging the wrong horse in every case. The fact that there is not much that can be milked out of the farmers and the success of the Shetkari Sanghatana, are the best testimony to their failures. In the opinion of Sharad Joshi, the leftists in India do not know what agriculture means or what a farm is; they talk on the basis of the writings of Cathleen Gough, and this is the sort of hypocrisy that he would like to hit at.

Joshi feels that people in the urban areas have no idea of the kind of bureaucracy that has come to lord over the rural folk over the past forty years. It is alienated from the people and is corrupt to the core.¹¹

He has always alleged that there is a “conspiracy” on the part of the post-independence governments to keep agricultural prices low to enable private capital accumulation in urban areas. He quotes government documents with a telling effect. In 1966, “It is not pragmatic to pay a price for agricultural products that will fully cover the cost of production.” 1978: “For the progress of the nation, farmers should run their business at a loss”. Joshi thinks that this is the logic of India’s industrialization. Our planners are helpless; someone has to cover the expenses, if farmers are paid the costs of production plus profit, industry will grind to a halt. The other excuse that this fuel inflation, that food will be priced out of reach of the poor are politically designed to hide this one unbridgeable truth. Joshi has advanced the argument that the payment of remunerative prices to agriculturists will enable industrialization to flourish without its present attendant evils. This is difficult to conceive. But Joshi feels that the solutions to farmer’s problem cannot be found within the industrial culture.

Techniques of the Shetkari Sanghatana: Joshi does not believe in a formal organization with a constitution, officer-bearers and fund-raising. The techniques of agitation advocated by Joshi are Rasta Roko, Rail Roko, not to grow surplus food, a blockage of urban areas by not sending them food grains. Joshi believes in peaceful means and always avoid violent methods even when they are advocated by some political party leaders, including the ruling Congress (I) party.¹²

Women and the Shetkari Sanghatana: In November 1986, the Shetkari Sanghatana mobilized women in the small taluka town of Chandwad (district Nashik), a
drought area and held one for the biggest women’s meeting which was attended by 25,000 women for the delegate’s session and nearly 5,00,000 women for the open session, with nearly a lakh of men. The Chandwad meeting gave a call for voting only for women candidates in the forthcoming Zilla Parishad elections and a threat to take the massive force of rural women to Delhi to siege Rajiv Gandhi if the “Mafias” and political leaders responsible for the rapes of women were not brought to book. This meeting was a tremendous success for the Shetkari Sanghatana. The large majority of women’s were from middle level peasant families, including the educated daughters of these families, working in their own fields, in their homes, and on the government’s Employment Guarantee Schemes. Joshi now accepts that the general solution of peasant problems will not automatically solve the problems of the women of these families, and that the women of India are also oppressed.

One can say that Joshi does not believe so much in (formal) organizations and in mobilization. This mobilization can relate to a specific issue and continue till the issue is resolved. A permanent organization with formal structures and offices may become necessary once when the Sanghatana enters electoral politics, as it has declared recently.

The impact of the Shetkari Sanghatana: In the tidal wave that swept the Congress (I) to power in 1984, the farmers and their candidates also received a drubbing. However what is significant is that in most areas where they contested, farmers’ candidates came close to second or third.

The Sanghatana backed the opposition in a major anti-Congress (I) offense. The sympathy wave for Rajiv was too powerful for the strategy to work, but a close analysis of the data shows that in more than 70 assembly constituencies (using the data from the 1984 Lok Sabha polls), the opposition, backed by the Sanghatana was in the lade. The Sanghatana was partially responsible for the massive victory of Sharad Pawar. In the 1985 assembly elections Sharad Pawar’s group emerged as the main oppositions, mainly due to support of Shetkari Sanghatana. All the 13 seats from Nashik district were won by candidates supported by the Sanghatana. It reduced Vasant Sathe’s margin of victory by more than 1,50,000 votes.\(^{13}\)

In order to achieve the objective of the Sanghatana, Sharad Joshi also tried to establish contacts outside Maharashtra. He traveled to Madhya Pradesh to join hands with trade unionist Shankar Guha Niyogi of the Chhattisgarh Mines Shramik Sangh. Soon thereafter, he made an agreement with Thakurdas Bang of the Sarva Seva Sangh. The Sarva Seva Sangh feels that the farmers have legitimate cause to agitate. Joshi is quite aware of the political advantages stemming from an agreement with Niyogi and Bang. The left wing has been effectively cowed down with Niyogi’s warm endorsement of Joshi’s
movement, and Bang's offer of cooperation has made Joshi respectable in the eyes of a vast army of Gandhians. He had also established contacts with Mahendra Singh Tikait of Uttar Pradesh peasant's movement. Joshi and Tikait have fallen out as the latter was trying to dominate the entire peasant movement in the country. Joshi has now concentrated his attention more on Maharashtra than on building an all-India movement. Until 1990, the Shetkari Sanghatana remained outside electoral politics. In the 1990 elections it joined the Janta Dal led Progressive Democratic Front, but did not make any significant gains. The Sanghatana contested eight seats under the Janta Dal symbol, but secured only one seat in the Vidarbha region. Joshi joined the National Front establishment with the rank of a cabinet minister as the chairman of the statutory committee on agriculture. He continued in the same office under the new regime of Chandrasekhar.  

9. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

It is difficult to know whether to categorize it as a pressure group or as a political formation. It was started in 1925 by Dr. K.B. Hedgewar, an active Congressman of the time, with a strong revolutionary background, to safeguard the interests of the Hindu community. The emphasis was on a socio-cultural organization, though anti-imperialistic attitudes were prevalent. The RSS became an organization with new techniques of socialization, including daily attendance at a Shakha (branch), prayer, drill and uniforms, saluting the saffron flag and total obedience to superiors. It had aspirations to become an all India force. In 1940, Hedgewar died. Under his successor, M.S. Golwalkar, it became truly an all-India organization by 1948.  

On 30 January 1948, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse. On 4 February, the RSS was banned and many of its office-bearers, including M.S. Golwalkar (the Sar Sangh Chalak) were arrested. Sardar Patel clarified the position of the RSS in his letter to Pandit Nehru pointing out that RSS was not involved in the murder. Banning did not destroy the organization. It was able to survive through newly formed clubs and gymnasiums. It also launched a Satyagraha in 1948 to remove the ban. Thousands courted arrest and imprisonment. There was popular sympathy for the RSS and this must have influenced the government's policy. The ban was subsequently lifted in July 1949. The next time the organization was banned was during the Emergency in 1975-77, and again in December, 1992.
The RSS has now been in existence for more than 65 years. Considering its national strength and its long life, it is surprising that it has not been able to influence politics in the country in any significant manner.

Politics, in India in general and in Maharashtra in particular, is rural based. RSS has remained mainly an urban middle class phenomenon in Maharashtra. One can say that the social character of the RSS changes from one region to another. In Kerala, for instance, it represents the lower classes and castes. In north India it represents the trading community, rich farmers and the new middle class in urban areas. The RSS leadership has been primarily from among the Brahmans, though there have been a few significant changes in recent years. The role of the RSS in politics will always remain an enigma. The organization always claims aloofness from politics. But it has a symbiotic and umbilical connection with the former Jan Sangh, and now the BJP, when the Jan Sangh came into existence in the fifties; it was the RSS which provided all the full time workers for the party, who were primarily answerable to the RSS leadership. Swayam Sevaks are “individually” free to join any party. However, the Jan Sangh and its new incarnation, the BJP, have always depended on the support of RSS Swayam Sevaks; senior pracharaks (full time workers) of the RSS were and are loaned to the BJP for a specific period.

RSS has now entered many fields of activity – trade unions (through the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh), the press (through organizer, Motherland, and many other journals), religious establishments (Vishwa Hindu Parishad), character building (Vivekanand Kendra), and rural development in Gonda, a backward district in Uttar Pradesh. All these activities headed by devoted RSS worker. This group of organizations is known as the RSS family.\(^6\)

The RSS and its family no doubt have placed in Maharashtra. The social composition of the ruling party is guaranteed that it would be next to impossible for any other social group to get power. However, groups like the RSS can always have a certain nuisance value.

The RSS became lukewarm in its support to the BJP, owing to the adoption of a pronounced secular approach by the party under leadership of A.B. Vajpayee. In the 1984 elections the BJP did not receive full support from the RSS cadres. The situation changed in favour of the BJP in the 1989-90 and '91 elections.

The relationship between the RSS and the BJP will always remain fluid and subject to stresses and strains, due to the RSS leadership and the growing independence of the party. Balasaheb Deora, the former RSS chief had categorically stated that in the
elections after 1989, RSS would support the Bharatiya Janata Party. The 1989-90 elections demonstrated what the unified efforts of the RSS and the BJP can achieve. BJP secured 88 seats in the Lok Sabha, the highest by the party. This achievement was possible because of the seat adjustment the party had with the Janata Dal and National Front. Before the dissolution in December, 1992, the states of Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh had BJP governments. In Gujarat it was an equal partner in the Janata Dal ministry, till 1990.\textsuperscript{17}

The RSS will always remain in the wings. Its leadership would prefer the role of interested observers of the political scene which they would like to shape from outside. Direct participation in politics does not seem to be on the cards for them.

10. Dalit Panthers –

The emergence of Dalit Panthers in Maharashtra signifies a revolt of the socially depressed communities against upper caste Hindu dominance of the social, economic and political life in the region. The Dalit Panthers have borrowed their name and partly their organizational set up from, the militant Black Panther’s movement in the United States. But beyond this the Dalit Panthers are totally indigenous and rooted in the Indian social milieu. Though the Hindu caste system and untouchability, which are its pathological aspect, are more than three thousand years old, it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that a beginning was made in undoing the evil legacy of the past, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, who established a school for the untouchables in Pune, in 1848, was the first social reformer to grasp the severity of the problem and take a definite setup towards its solution. The Satya Shodhak movement initiated by Phule was later carried on by Shahu Maharaj (1884-1922), the ruler of Kolhapur state and his followers.\textsuperscript{18}

Jyotiba Phule belonged to the Mali caste, a relatively upper stratum of the Hindu Social hierarchy. The scheduled caste, as the socially depressed castes (the former untouchables) are at present officially termed, had no one from amongst themselves to whom they could look for leadership. It was not until Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar appeared on the scene that this community developed a sense of confidence, self-respect and courage. The day when hundreds of scheduled caste people reached the public lake in Mahad in Kulaba district under the leadership of Ambedkar and drank its water, marked the beginning of a new phase in the social history of Maharashtra. It is significant that in spite of the fact that the lake had been declared open for the use of the scheduled castes by the Mahad
municipality, the scheduled castes themselves had not felt confident enough to use the lake earlier.

The scheduled castes, who were christened Harijans (children of God) by Mahatma Gandhi, had followed him for several years in his movement for the abolition of untouchability. Gandhi’s interest laid in avoiding the breakup of the country on religious or communal lines. Though gradually he learnt to put up with the separatist aspirations of the Muslims, his mind revolted against the thought of Harijans making a similar claim in the form of separate constituencies. The political schism of Hindu society would, in his opinion, sow the seeds of the final disintegration of the country. Staking his life for the purpose, he virtually coerced Ambedkar to sign the Pune pact to give up his demand for separate electorates.19

Ambedkar organized the scheduled castes into a political party, the Scheduled Castes Federation, which later came to be known as the Republican Party of India, and pinned his hope on using this political level for the upliftment of his people. The challenge was resented by the high caste Hindus who resorted to all kinds of practices to intimidate the scheduled castes. Under one excuse or the other they were socially boycotted, physically assaulted and their dwellings were burnt.

The defeat of Ambedkar and his Republican Party in the first general elections in 1951-52, gave him a rude shock and forced him to think in terms of a broader base for the party. He died in 1956 before his ideas about the reorganization of the party could take definite shape. It is not certain whether he meant to build a comprehensive political organization comprising socially and economically depressed people not only of the Hindu community but also of the Muslim and Christian communities, most of whose members were converts from the lower strata of the Hindu society. More than such ideas, however, what appeared uppermost in Ambedkar’s mind was to extricate his fellow men by a single stroke from the social and psychological bondage to Hindu religion and society. Thus he died in 1956, a little before his death, by abandoning Hinduism and embracing Buddhism along with his followers, particularly those of the Mahar caste to which he himself belonged. This conversion to Buddhism was mainly confined to Maharashtra and that too to the Mahar caste. The other scheduled castes did not follow his head. Neo-Buddhists, as they are called, can be regarded as more enlightened, better educated and more organized among the scheduled castes.20

Through conversion to Buddhism the scheduled caste people achieved a new social identity. In their social behaviour they became more self-respecting and began to discard their servile attitude towards the high caste Hindus. In several villages they gave up
their traditional functions imposed by the Hindu Social system. The Bhangis for instance refused to carry sewage and the Mangs stopped removing dead animals. Many of them also broke the age-old feudal relationship with high-cast land-owing aristocracy. After Ambedkar’s death the political struggle of the scheduled castes continued under the banner of the Republican Party of India. His erstwhile lieutenants could no longer hold the party together. The RPI was split into three major factions in 1959, namely, RPI (Khobragade), RPI (Gavai) and RPI (Gaikwad – Kamble), all swearing loyalty to Ambedkar.

The constituent Assembly of India, which elected Ambedkar as chairman of the drafting committee, was aware of the problem of scheduled castes. Ambedkar accepted this key role in framing the Constitution because it was a historic opportunity not only to put extraordinary legal competence to work, but also to secure through the basic law of the land, a fair and just place among 60 million people for those who had suffered the worst kinds of indignities and humiliations under the Hindu social system sanctified by the law codified in the “Manu Smriti”. It was for this reason that Ambedkar was sometimes referred to as the “Modern Manu”. The Constitution as it emerged after two year deliberations made several provisions whose purpose was to bring this ignored and neglected mass of humanity into the mainstream of the country’s life. Article 17 of the Constitution banned untouchability in any form at public places. The parliament enacted a law in 1955 treating the practice of untouchability as a cognizable offence punishable by rigorous imprisonment. The practice of “Bigar” under which mostly the scheduled castes were exploited, was prohibited by law. In a more general way the Constitution prohibited discrimination, among other things, on ground of religion, race and caste. Though the constitution thus upheld the principle of equality, it was felt that the state must make certain provisions in the interest of the scheduled castes, which, though seeming contrary to the principle of their social and economic level. In one of the directive principles of State Policy, the Constitution directs the state to promote special care for educational and economic interests, particularly of the scheduled castes.21

Consequently the Central and the state governments have been reserving around 13 per cent seats for the scheduled caste in governmental appointments. Similar quota of reservations is also maintained in respect of admissions to the educational institutions especially technical colleges. The students belonging to the scheduled castes not only receive free education to the highest level, but are also provided with stipends to cover their living expenses. The scheduled castes are given top priority in the purchase of government lands and financial assistance in the form of loans and grants (75%-25%) is made available to them for the purpose of land development. The principle of reservation also applies to seats in the legislature. One of the first acts of the Janata Dal government under V.P. Singh was to extend this reservation for a further period of ten years by
amending the Constitution for their purpose. The principle of reservation applies to seats in all the legislatures. Seventy five out of 544 seats in the Lok Sabha and 32 out of 250 in the Rajya Sabha, as well as 503 out of 3,563 seats of the state assemblies are reserved for them. Barring reservations in legislatures, the record of the benefits actually received by the scheduled castes is most depressing. Largely owing to the social intolerance of the higher castes, the scheduled castes have not been able to fully realize the opportunities made available by the government rules.

The Dalit Panthers came into prominence on 5 January 1974 when large scale riots broke out between the scheduled and the Hindu caste, in residential colony in Bombay known as BDD chawls. The government owned tenement houses built by the Bombay Development Departments in 1925 are inhabited by a mixed population of nearly 60,000. Both the caste Hindus and the scheduled castes, in a 60:40 ratio, have been living in these buildings for the last fifty years apparently without any serious social conflict. Economically both belong to the working class, but their political affiliations differ. The scheduled castes have their own party, namely, the Republican Party, and the Hindus are generally divided between the Congress and the Shivsena. The riots occurred on the eve of the Lok Sabha bye – elections in the central Bombay constituency. The seat had been vacated following the resignation of R.D. Bhandare who was appointed as the governor of Bihar. The Dalit Panthers led a campaign to boycott the election in protest against the continued ill-treatment of the Dalits by the upper caste Hindus, with the connivance of the Government. In a pamphlet issued on this occasion, the Dalit Panthers lashed out at the prevailing “hypocritical” policies of secularism, which not only tolerate the anti-secular preaching’s of the Shankaracharya, but go out of their way to bestow state honours on the Brahmin priests. The pamphlet contained references to Ambedkar as well as the Buddha. By abstaining from voting in the bye-elections, it argued, the Dalits were casting their vote for the Buddha. Thus, the election boycott was being turned into a sacred and religious act.22

The boycott campaign of the Dalit Panthers was going to damage the Congress support. Already tension existed in the area. On the evening of 5th January, the Dalit Panther leaders were addressing a meeting at a nearby ground. The purpose of the meeting was to explain and justify the decision of the election boycott. The meeting, however, was disrupted by sudden stone-throwing and then the Dalit audience was subjected to a serve lathi-charge by the police. After the meeting was broken up, the riots spread to the chawls where the scheduled caste population had their worst taste ever of organized repression, in which the police were reported to have collaborated with the upper caste Hindus. There are controversial reports that Raja Dhale, the then president of the Dalit Panther used abusive language about Hindu mythological figures. However, it is not a
significant fact so far as the BDD riots are concerned. Since the Dalit Panther leaders and even that incident, debunked Hindu religion, mythology and culture. What is significant about the incident is that the Maharashtra government and the police appear to have acted as allies of the upper caste Hindus in terrorizing the scheduled caste men and women.\textsuperscript{23}

In a massive response to the appeal of the Dalit Panthers, nearly 80,000 scheduled caste voters reportedly stayed away from the poll. The Republican Party had entered into an alliance with the Congress in this bye-election, and Ramrao Adik, the candidate fielded by the latter was expected to receive the support of the scheduled caste voter who generally vote as a group. As this did not happen Mrs. Roza Deshpande, a CPI candidate, won the seat while the Congress candidate was relegated to the third place.

The Dalit Panthers is a militant political organization committed to total revolutionary struggle for the destruction of the established socio-political and economic order. The Dalit Panther manifesto declares that the term “Dalit” does not mean only the members of the scheduled castes and tribes, but includes besides them, the entire working class, that is, all those who are exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion. It thus distinguishes itself from the “parochial” and “casteist” Republican Party of India which exclusively represents interest of the scheduled castes and tribes. The Dalit Panthers maintain that the complete emancipation of the Dalits cannot be brought about on the narrow basis of caste or religion. The battle against the ruling class can be successfully waged only if all the oppressed and exploited people come together under one banner. Now withstanding these claims, the Dalit Panthers, like the RPI, has more or less remained an organization of the Mahar Caste. Another distinguished aspect of the Dalit Panthers is its denunciation of the current parliamentary institution and practices. The present-day elections to the legislatures as well as to the local government are, in its opinion, rift with corruption, casteism, unprincipled contest for power and utter selfishness. It feels that given these factors and the most distorted social and economic structure of society, it is no wonder that the existing parliamentary institutions have been reduced to shame. All of them, right from Gram Panchayat to Parliament, have been turned into devious instruments for power and are used to perpetuate the social and economic slavery of the Dalits.\textsuperscript{24}

The scheduled castes under the influence of Dalit Panthers accordingly boycotted the bye-election which took place in Bombay in 1974. They also did not participate in the Pune Municipal elections held June 1974. The faction-ridden Republican Party, by mounting the slogans of the ruling elite and by falling prey to its tactics, has completely lost the claim to lead the scheduled castes and tribes. The smugness with which that party has
played the electoral game shows, according to the Dalit Panthers, both its political impotence and ideological bankruptcy.

The most outstanding feature of the Dalit Panthers is its fundamental critic of the prevailing social and cultural system. Though the constitution of India has promulgated the principles of social equality, the history of four decades of independent India shows utter failure of both the Government and the people to bring that principle into practice. Attempts on the part of the Dalits to realize the social, economic and political freedom granted by the Constitution have resulted in their persecution on a large scale by the high caste Hindus. The persecution has taken in many forms: burning their huts along with the inmates, raping or parading their womenfolk in the nude, polluting their wells, pillaging their farms and imposing a social and economic boycott on them. It is estimated that during 1967-70, 1100 Dalits were forced to death by the caste Hindus. The same trend continued. In the 1990 elections, efforts were made to unite all the factions of the Republican Party, the Dalit Panthers and other groups under one banner. Though there was brave talk of unity and capturing power, the effort failed. One faction led by Ramdas Athawale joined the Congress which was very anxious to have the scheduled castes with them. The other faction under Prakash Ambedkar joined the Janata Dal led PDF. Ramdas Athawale has now joined the Sharad Pawar ministry after the 1990 elections. Complaints of various kinds addressed to the scheduled castes commissioner during 1968-70 numbered 2,522. While all this was happening, the wheels of the administration moved slowly, if at all. The government officers are not always prompt in affording protection to the downtrodden when they are wrong. Either they may not be sympathetic to the cause of social equality, or they may find themselves under pressure from the influential caste Hindus involved. The Dalit Panther manifesto states: “The Hindu federal rule can be a hundred times more ruthless today than it was in the Muslim period or in the British period in oppressing the Dalits because this Hindu federal rule has in its hands all the arteries of production, bureaucracy, judiciary, army and police force.”

The young men who have emerged as Dalit Panthers have therefore lost patience with the present system. They say “We do not want a little place in the Brahmin alley. We want to rule the whole land.” This may, however, be a distant objective. As for the present, they have been concentrating their attack on the social, religious and cultural hegemony of Hindus. Accordingly they burnt the Bhagavad Gita and hurled shoes at the Shankaracharya of Puri who is one of four religious heads of Hindus. The Bhagavad Gita is the quintessence of Hindu Vedanta philosophy and the Hindus hold it in extreme veneration. As the Gita contains reference legitimizing the “Chaturvarna system” which is the origin of the present caste system, the Dalit Panthers are dead against it. The Shankaracharya of
Puri staunchly defended the Chaturvarna system both in Kolhapur and Pune and thus provoked the Dalit Panthers. According to the latter, propagation of the percepts of the ‘Manu Smriti’, runs counter to the spirit of the Constitution. In spite of this the Shankaracharya’s sermons are heard, and heard with respect by those who believe in the traditional Hindu religion. This is so because the caste Hindus, while paying lip service to the Constitution, are just not ready to consider the Dalits their equal. The humiliation of Shankaracharya in Pune, as also the burning of the Bhagavad Gita, reflected the determination of the Dalit Panthers to challenge Hindu domination by demolishing the symbols of Hindu religious order and faith. These tactics of the Dalit Panthers again indicate its effort to destroy the legitimacy of the present socio-economic order based on traditional Hindu religion and its scriptures. In fact, in its view the entire state machinery is afflicted with the disease of Hindu hegemony leaving little chance for the Dalits to raise their head. Nothing is more absurd, they say, than the face that in this country the flag of the state, which is a “lifeless thing” – a piece or rag is honoured more than the life and honour of Dalit men and women.

The speeches and writings of the Dalit Panther leaders are full of venom for Brahmins who stand at the apex of the caste hierarchy. Some year back a Marathi play “Ghashiram Kotwal” (named after the police chief in charge of Pune during the later Peshwa rule) was staged in Pune. The play depicts the moral degeneration of the Brahmin community during the period of Peshwa rule. The Brahmins in Pune predominantly protested against the play and demand a ban on it. The Dalit Panthers on the other hand issued a pamphlet upholding the play.29

The Dalit Panthers accuse the government of ingenious indoctrination of school children in caste Hindu superiority. The lessons in the school textbooks idolize Hindu gods and goddesses, thus creating a psychological impact on young mind in favour of the Hindu religion. This has a further effect of legitimizing the high caste Hindu rule and this they not only resent but want to eradicate completely.

The Dalit Panthers operate in two ways. As a group of intellectuals, it is engaged in analyzing social phenomena from the viewpoint of the Dalits, and attacking elements of Hindu culture and religion in extreme, sometimes obscene, terms in Dalit Panthers, its mouthpiece, which is published in Marathi. Writings of literary characters also appear in Vidroh (rebellion), as periodical edited by Namdeo Dhasal one of the former top leaders of the Dalit Panthers. Over the years a sizeable body of Dalit literature has been built up, written by Dalit writers and poets. There are even annual literary conferences on Dalit literature. This literature reflects the anger, frustration, alienation and the desire to revolt of
the downtrodden. Written in the language which they speak, the literature has attracted the attention of others. Two of the writers, Daya Pawar and Laxman Mane have received international recognition in the form of Ford Foundation Fellowships. Some of the books have been translated into English, French and other European languages. Dalit literature has contributed to greater political awareness among the scheduled castes. It has also reinforced the efforts of the Dalit Panthers to create a new identity for the downtrodden.

As a field organization it is in the forefront of protecting the lives, property and honour of the Dalits. Panthers emerged by way of a reaction to the social boycott of the scheduled castes in a village named Bawada in 1972. It was during that year that it declared itself a political organization, the general nature of which was explained in the form of a manifesto. As the full membership roll as not as yet been prepared, the precise number of its members cannot be stated. The organizers, however, claim a membership of over 90,000 in Bombay and 9,000 in Pune. These claims appear to include not only the activities and the regular follower but also occasional sympathizers. It also has a sizeable following in other big cities like Nagpur, Aurangabad and Kolhapur. Though it is claimed to have emerged in other states like Gujarat, Maharashtra appears to be the only state where its presence is being felt. In Maharashtra also it has not so far developed a systematic organizational structure. A small group of leaders in Bombay takes the decisions and controls the adhoc committees set up in various cities and towns.

The strength of the Dalit Panthers lies in its militant character. It is an organization of the youth. The average age of leaders as well as regular followers of the organization may be within the range of 20 to 30 years. Whenever there is a call by the leaders to mobilize the people against a particular wrong done to scheduled caste persons, hundreds of young men march to the place where the incident has taken place. As yet there are no instances where the Dalit Panther organization has taken up cudgels on behalf of oppressed people other than the scheduled castes. A public meeting is held to explain to the local scheduled caste community the nature of the injustice. The demand for redressal of the wrong is backed by threats of violence. The Dalit Panthers claim that many times the “Dalits" are deprived of legal protection because the administration being in the hands of caste Hindus deliberately connives at or systematically suppresses the crime.

The Republican Party, which claims Ambedkar's legacy, has over the years developed itself into an establishment. It's opportunistic electoral politics and the policy of seeking concession and benefits from the party in power, has resulted in improving the conditions only of the educated section of the community. Its edge of resistance to Hindu domination has been naturally blunted. The Dalit Panthers therefore claim to have taken
upon themselves the revolutionary mission of destroying the casteist foundation of the Indian society. Like Ambedkar it has denounced the liberal approach of Gandhism which sought the solution of the problem within the traditional social system. According to Dalit Panthers “Social System cannot be revolutionized by mere demands for concessions, elections and Satyagraha”. It aims at nothing less than rule by the Dalits over the country.\textsuperscript{31}

Dalit Panthers are aware of the fact that caste conflict alone will not lead it to power. The scheduled castes in Maharashtra constitute only about 9.3 per cent of the population. It has therefore broadened the concept of “Dalit” to include all those who are economically and politically exploited irrespective of caste or religion. Thus, along with caste conflict, another dimension, that of class conflict, has been added to the struggle. It intends to wage both battles simultaneously. This however, is going to create some difficulties for the Dalit Panthers. The distinct identity which it possessed was owing to its militant attack on Hindu religion and culture, and loyalty to Buddhism. The very basis of its identity will be undetermined by widening the connotation of the term “Dalit”. The economically exploited classes who are not –Buddhists, scheduled castes, Muslims and Christians, may have no interest in a movement which has undertaken to wreck the religious and cultural fabric of Hindu society.

It cannot be ruled out that the common hatred of the caste Hindus felt by the scheduled castes and the Muslims may bring together these two minorities, constituting around 20 per cent of the population of Maharashtra. An effort has been made in Bombay by Haji Mastan, an alleged smuggler turned into a respectable Muslim leader, to bring the Muslims and Dalits under one banner. If this happens, it will be a serious development in the country’s political life. Mass conversions of scheduled castes to Islam in certain areas in the south are a pointer to this trend. But there are no such conversions in Maharasthra.\textsuperscript{32}

If, in a bid to secure a wider political basis, the Dalit Panthers underplay the theme of anti-Hinduism, it is likely to lose the identity it has present. It will then remain as more or less another radical group in the state, leaning towards Marxism, competing with those already in the field for a following. And the competition is quite severe!

Gradual collusion is emerging between Marathas and Brahmins in the economics and social life.\textsuperscript{33} So far as the “Dalits” are concerned; the social and economic stranglehold has become tighter than ever. The Dalit Panthers have grasped this truth and have declared its intention to bury the whole economic and social system. Though its wrath is genuine, its prognosis is not correct. For one thing, creating a political unit of eight crore Dalits is little more than a daydream. For another, the aggressiveness of the Panthers will not be permitted by the system to cross certain limits. How ruthlessly the limits will be
enforced is revealed by the BDD chawls incident in Bombay, where riots between Dalits and caste Hindus from the labour class resulted in the defeat of the former.

The hostility of the caste Hindus, especially of the higher castes, was evident at the time of the Marathwada holocaust in 1978. The Dalit Panthers were in the forefront of the movement to rename the Marathwada University after Ambedkar. It is necessary to note certain factors which finally led to this human tragedy. In early 1978, the Maharashtra legislature (both assembly and council) passed a unanimous resolution in favour of renaming the university as “Dr. Ambedkar Marathwada University”. No one even challenged the idea when it was being discussed in the legislature. The press, both English and Marathi, hailed the decision as historic and progressive. The university has a large percentage of scheduled caste students. It is put at around 30 per cent. This high percentage is due to the existence of an educational complex of schools and colleges under the auspices of the scheduled castes, in Aurangabad. This body of students is highly politicized as is the other body of caste Hindu students.34

But the conflagration, in which over 1,000 huts of the Mahars and neo-Buddhists were burnt, was not sudden and spontaneous. It was an explosion of the seething discontent of unemployed upper caste educated youths against the scheduled castes who were getting the jobs. In addition, the militant Dalit Panthers antagonized the majority community by very provocative and obscene language while denouncing Hindu religion and tradition. But the real mischief was done by many Janus-faced legislators who voted for the renaming proposal in Bombay, but instigated the people, especially the youth in their constituencies against it. Thus, the anti-renaming group got support from the party in power and also from other parties.

The incident exhibited deep seated hostility towards the scheduled castes in the minds of the high castes. The so-called progressive veneer was very fragile. The primordial loyalties to caste and the desire “to teach a lesson” won an ugly victory. There was even a method in this organized madness. The defenders of the status did not burn a hut if it belonged to non-Mahar scheduled caste-like Mang, in 1980. Riots in Gujarat on the reservation of seats issue are indicative of the same malaise. In a sense, the majority of community accepts the provisions of the Constitution only with serious mental reservations.

In the Marathwada University agitation, the duplicity of the legislators was exposed. Political hypocrisy at its worst was experienced at the time.

Dalit Panthers today is not a negligible force. Dalit literature is blossoming. A number of books have been published and accepted as of excellent quality by the critics. But
the movement as such is not in very good shape. The Dalit Panthers have lost their earlier plan. The militancy may crop up on a particular occasion. But organizational structure is lost. Some of the more militant leaders have been “pacified” by the party in power by being offered crumbs of office. The others do not show any perceptible quality of leadership. It is sad that the movement did not continue to have a vigorous life. It was one of the unique efforts made by the Dalits themselves to raise their community to a higher status and fight against the high castes for their legitimate rights. The tragedy is all the more depressing because the struggle showed such a promise in the beginning. Another Ambedkar is the need of hour.35
7.2.2 Sugar Lobby –

The sugar lobby is neither an organized political party nor a formation like the Shivsena. But no one can deny its role as a pressure group. A brief historical account is necessary to indicate the inter-relationship between the so-called ‘Sugar barons’ and politics.

Co-operatives came to India through the efforts of the Central Government. The Indian Cooperative Societies Act came into force in 1904. In the early stages, cooperative efforts were confined to providing cheap things to farmers. Over a period of four decades till 1947 cooperative activity spread to banking, marketing and processing. With independence there was a spurt in cooperative activities. Before 1947, Congressmen were indifferent to both cooperatives and local self-government. But after Independence there was a sea change in their attitude and these institutions were looked upon as agencies of rural development. The Congressmen took their activities in a major way.

Maharashtra stands first in the cooperative movement in the country, with 83,460 cooperative societies and more than 100 cooperatives sugar factories. These are increasing almost every year. The first cooperatives sugar factory was founded in 1948 by the late Vitthalrao Vikhe Patil and Professor D.R. Gadgil. In the past four decades sugar cooperatives have come up all over the state including Vidarbha and Marathwada. But the preponderance of these ventures is in western Maharashtra. One can say that Western Maharashtra has produced political entrepreneurs in the cooperative field. They operate at two levels-political and cooperative. D.E. Apte defines a political entrepreneur as someone “who can organize a following in order to gain access to state resources.” Using Apte’s definition, one can envisage a cooperative entrepreneur. He organizes the sugarcane-growing farmers and gets the necessary resources from the state, to establish a cooperative sugar factory.  

The influence of the sugar barons on politics can be better understood by Table 8.13 which shows the linkage between politics and the sugar barons. But this is only explicit and obvious. Every cooperative sugar factory has become the centre of rural economic and political power. The resources of the factory have also been used for welfare functions like setting up and supporting schools and colleges, hospitals and dispensaries, cultural groups etc. But their main use is for securing political power. Even the welfare activities reinforce the power structure built around the sugar factory.

The sugar cooperatives have been mainly under the control of rich Maratha landowners. The meaning of cooperation is to help each other, specially the weaker sections of the society. But in Maharashtra the main advantages of the movement have been
monopolized by the rural new rich (nouveau riche) – the big farmers who were benefitted by irrigation. It is not surprising that the major catchment area for political recruitment is the cooperative field in general and sugar cooperatives in particular. Nearly 30 per cent of the legislators are directly connected with the cooperative sugar factories. Thus, there is a sizeable representation of this interest group in the house. No other interest can claim this much strength. This has given rise to the terms – ‘sugar lobby’ and ‘sugar barons’.37

The sugar lobby is an important factor in Maharashtra politics. But it is not the only factor. The sugar barons are quite aware of their power and also its limitations. Sugar cooperatives spearhead the cooperative network of banks, sell purchase unions, credit societies, ginning and pressing factories and other cooperative enterprises. This integration of interest will always influence public policy and politics in Maharashtra.

The sugar lobby is not a compact cohesive whole. It is fragmented. But it exhibits a loose federal character. Vikhe-Patil, Kolhe and Kale in Ahmednagar; Tatyasaheb Kore and Ratnnappa Kumbhar in the Kolhapur area, the late Vasantdada Patil and the late Rajaram Bapu Patil in Sangli; Sharad Pawar in Baramati; the Kakde’s in Pune district; the list is illustrative. It appears that there is a principle of power sharing and that multiple, rather than single, power centres operate. They compete, conflict and also cooperate, since the territorial divisions and spread of the sugar barns have some resemblance to the feudal estates in Europe. This interest group has provided two chief ministers (Vasantdada Patil and Sharad Pawar), a number of ministers and a large number of MLAs. Though most of the sugar cooperatives are under the control of the Congress men, a few are controlled by leaders of the Janata Dal and the Peasant’s and Worker’s Party.

### 7.2.3 Political Institution – Legislature

**Maharashtra Legislative Assembly (1985)**

**Age wise Distribution of Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No. of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>25 - 30</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>31 – 35</td>
<td>25 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>36 - 40</td>
<td>40 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr. No.</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>No. of Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Non- Matric</td>
<td>51 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>62 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>87 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>76 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Medical Graduate</td>
<td>13 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 289 (16)

(Debates, M.L.A. 1985) 38

Note: Figures in brackets indicate women members

### 7.2.4 Level of Education of Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>No. of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Non- Matric</td>
<td>51 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>62 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>87 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>76 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Medical Graduate</td>
<td>13 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 289 (16)
7.2.5 Estimated Caste wise Distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>No. of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Maratha</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Scheduled Castes</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Scheduled Tribes</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Other Castes and Religious</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>244 +</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Forty Seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

7.2.6 Occupation of Members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>No. of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>142 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Social / Political work</td>
<td>12 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>36 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Industrialist</td>
<td>32 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>19 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Doctor 13 (2)
8. Service 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>No. of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Congress (S)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>PWP</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>CPM</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Nominated</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>289</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Debates, M.L.A. 1985) 41

Note: Figures in bracket indicate women members.

### 7.2.7 Political Institution – Legislature

**Maharashtra Legislative Assembly (1985)**

**Numerical Strength of Political Parties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>No. of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Congress (S)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>PWP</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>CPM</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Nominated</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>289</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Debates, M.L.A. 1985) 42
7.2.8 Participation of Members in Various Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Heading</th>
<th>No. of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sugar Cooperatives</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Trade Unions</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Party Organization</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Cooperatives</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Peasant Organizations</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Educational Institutions</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Youth Activities</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Sports Activities</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Housing Welfare Activities</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Social, Religious and Caste Organizations</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Freedom Struggle (Samyukta Maharashtra Agitation)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Home guards /Scouts</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Members who have participated in more than one activity</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>249</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.9 The number of terms that individual members were elected to the chamber (1985)

| 1.      | 1985                                             | 155            |
2. 1980 and 1985  53
3. More than two terms  55
4. Not Applicable  9
5. Two Non-Consecutive Terms  17

Total  289

7.2.10 Political Institutions – Local Bodies

1. No. of Municipal Corporation  11
2. No. of Municipal Councils  216
3. No. of Zilla Parishad  29
4. No. of Panchayat Samitis  298
5. No. of Panchayat Samitis  298
6. No. of Cantonment Boards  7

(Source – Directorate of Economics and Statics, Govt. of Maharashtra, Bombay) 43

7.2.11 Chief Ministers of Maharashtra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Chief Minister</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Y.B. Chavan</td>
<td>1 May 1960</td>
<td>20 Nov. 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M.S. Kannamwar</td>
<td>21 Nov. 1962</td>
<td>24 Nov. 1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>V.P. Naik</td>
<td>5 Dec. 1963</td>
<td>20 Feb. 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr. No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>From</td>
<td>To</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>S. Patil-Nilangekar</td>
<td>3 June 1985</td>
<td>7 March 1986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source – Directorate of Economics and Statics)

7.2.12  Chairman of Legislative Council (Maharashtra) -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>V.S. Page</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>R.S. Gavai</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Speakers of the Legislative (Maharashtra)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>S.L. Silam</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>T.S. Bharade</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Pranlal Harkisandas Vora</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>M.D. Choudhar</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source – Directorate of Economics and Statics)

### Governors of Maharashtra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Governor</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sri Prakasa</td>
<td>1 May 1960</td>
<td>16 Apr. 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>P. Subbarayan</td>
<td>17 April 1962</td>
<td>6 Nov. 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>H.K. Chainani*</td>
<td>7 Nov. 1962</td>
<td>26 Nov. 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>V. Pandit</td>
<td>27 Nov. 1962</td>
<td>18 Oct. 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>P.V. Cherian</td>
<td>14 Nov. 1964</td>
<td>9 Nov. 1969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. S.D. Sharma 3 April 1986 1 Sep. 1987

(Officiating governors – Chief Justice of the state at that time) 

7.3 Linkage between Politics and Sugar Cooperatives-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>No. of Sugar Co-op. Factory</th>
<th>Name of the MLA’s, MP’s. etc. who are connected with one or more sugar factories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Nashik</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Venkatrao Hiray, B.D. Kawale, Kakasaheb Wagh, Mrs. Pushpa Hiray, T.S. Mogal, M.S. Dighole,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Satara</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yashwantrao Mohite, D.B. Kadam, Pisal and V.B. Patil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jalna</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>S.A. Pandit, V.Y. Akat, A.S. Chavan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Parbhani</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>S.G. Nakate, A.D. Ghatge, V.Y. Akat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Beed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>S.P. Thorve, S.A. Pandit, B.A. Dhonde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nanded</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shamrao Kadam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Osmanabad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A.G. Gore, M.A. Mote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Latur</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>S.G. Maknikar, S.S. Hussain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Buldhana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>T.T. Kayande</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Akola</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Amaravati</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Source – This has been compiled from legislative who’s, what and the published documents of Sugar Co-operative)  

7.4 BABANRAO PACHPUTE’S POLITICAL CAREER:

7.4.1 Elected as the Member of Panchayat Samitee, Shrigonda

The political period during 1976 – 1980 had very long ranging effects on the politics of India. After emergency Janata Party Govt. came into existence in India in 1977. The political scenario has completely changed against the Congress Party. It was entirely anti Congress situation.

Babanrao Pachpute contested the election of Panchayat Samitee, Shrigonda (i.e. arbitrating body of Tehsil Council) in 1979. He defeated the ruling party member and won the victory. He was the member of opposition party. Naturally he had to face several problems. The ruling party members created number of hurdles in his work still his leadership enriched through intimate social contracts with the villagers. His popularity increased tremendously which proved beneficial for his future political career as an M.L.A.

7.4.2 Member of Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra State for Six Terms

Mr. Pachpute contested the election for M.L.A. from Shrigonda constituency, as an independent candidate in 1980. There was anti congress public opinion in the country. There was strong feeling of anti- incumbency against the dictatorship and monopoly of ruling party M.L.A.’s. In spite of the tremendous political pressure of ruling party Mr. Pachpute won
the election and got grand success in his first election. His age was just 25 years, then. So he became the youngest M.L.A. of Maharashtra. He was unmarried, young, dynamic and enthusiastic M.L.A.


During 1980 – 1990 he was an M.L.A. as member of opposition party. He was also the president of youth front of Janata Dal. He tried to raise various issues of common people and tried to give justice to ordinary people through his strong leads.

Then he joined Congress Party along with 11 M.L.A.’s of the Janata Dal. He became the Home Minister for State level in 1999 in Mr. Sudhakarraoji Naik’s Ministry of Maharashtra. He tried to give full justice to people through his portfolio. He also visited Denmark for studying advance research and technology introduced in Dairy farming. Then he laid the foundation of Saikrupa Dairy for various milk products.48

7.4.3 Unique Record-

Record of contesting election on different emblems (Symbols)

Mr. Pachpute contested the elections of M.L.A. consecutively for eight turns from 1980 to 2014. He has won the election for 6 times and lost twice. He created a record for contesting election on separate or different emblems each time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Emblem</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Umbrella</td>
<td>Own Victory</td>
<td>M.L.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Janata Party</td>
<td>Farmer with the hoe</td>
<td>Victory</td>
<td>M.L.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td>Wheel</td>
<td>Victory</td>
<td>M.L.A. Home Minister State Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Emblem/Symbol</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>Hand Palm</td>
<td>Victory</td>
<td>M.L.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Nationalist Congress</td>
<td>Clock</td>
<td>Defeated</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Pressure Cooker</td>
<td>Own Victory</td>
<td>M.L.A. Minister for Forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Nationalist Congress</td>
<td>Clock</td>
<td>Victory</td>
<td>M.L.A. Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)</td>
<td>Lotus</td>
<td>Defeated</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Amin Shaikh, Bhumi Putra, Visheshank)

Thus Mr. Pachpute contested 8 consecutive elections for M.L.A. on seven different emblems or symbols. Won for 6 times and lost twice. The different emblem is a unique record in the politics of Maharashtra State.

### 7.4.4 Role as a Regional President of Nationalist Congress Party

The dispute and conflict between Mr. Sharad Pawar and Mrs. Sonia Gandhi became severe in 1999. After the dissolution of twelfth Lok Sabha Mr. Pawar declared that Mrs. Sonia Gandhi can remain the president of Congress Party, but she can't become the Prime Minister of India, as she is not born in India. The person who is born in India can only become and is eligible of being Prime Minister of India. Mr. P. A. Sangama & Tariq Anwar supported Pawar. It was highly essential to discuss the issue in the executive council of the party, instantly it was published through media. So Mrs. Gandhi resigned, Mr. Pawar, Mr. Sangama and Mr. Tariq Anwar were expelled from the party. Mrs. Gandhi had withdrawn the resignation and the Nationalist Congress Party came into existence on 10th of June, 1999.

The Party was strongly supported by the senior leaders like Vasantrao Naik and Vasant Dada Patil. It was also whole heartedly welcomed by common people as well as co-operative sugar lobby in Maharashtra. The party succeeded in winning 8 sets of M. P.s
and 58 seats of M.L.A.s in the election of 1999. Party president Mr. Pawar succeeded in forming the coalition govt. along with Congress party in Maharashtra.50

7.4.5 Manifesto of the Party-

Party President Mr. Sharad Pawar declared its Manifesto on 23rd August, 1999. The General Secretary of the party, Mr. P.A. Sangama declared that Nationalist Congress party is the real heir or inheritor of congress party which was based on Gandhian principle. It is totally democratic, secular and loyal to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's view and vision.

1. The person who is born in India shall be eligible for honoring the highest position e.g. Prime Minister to make necessary legal changes accordingly.

2. Provision of separate satellites for necessary information regarding defense & security.

3. A separate pay commission for military soldiers & officers.


8. Rail security commission to avoid accidents.

9. Laws for Biotechnology and intellectual resource patents etc.

10. Commission for code of conduct of corporate companies.

11. Priority to productivity and job opportunities.


13. Independent authority for foreign commodities in Indian markets for time bound use of technology.

The party President Mr. Sharad Pawar has organized party meeting on 16th November, 1999 in Pune for the selection of Regional President of the party for Maharashtra. The party was in search of young, enthusiastic, dynamic and devoted leader
for strengthening the party in the State. The leader must be well experienced, balanced, having excellent oratory working with missionary zeal. Mr. Pawar declared the name of Mr. Babanrao Pachpute to shoulder the responsibility of regional presidentship.  

Mr. Pachpute worked with full devotion, dedication and discipline for strengthening the party. He tried his level best for increasing the popularity of the party to the grass root level. He succeeded in building rapport amongst the common people. He organized each and every activity systematically.

1. He organized camps, workshops and seminars for enlightening and training activists.
2. Organization of health camps for public health.
3. Appointed observers at district and Tehsil level.
4. For the active participation of common people in party programs, he created an excellent networks of various cells e.g. Kisan Bharati, Physically Handicapped persons Cell, South Indian Cell, North Indian Cell, Cell for NT & DNT, Gujarathi, Sindhi, Banjara, Goldsmith Cells, B.C. Cell, Industrial Cell, Doctor Cell, Legal Cell etc. He opened the doors of the party for laymen and workers, activists, women etc.
5. He created confidence in the minds of voters through incorporation of several secular leaders, thinkers, well-wishers and visionaries in the party.
6. He created challenges to congress party leaders through planned and excellent political strategies.
7. He successfully organized public relations campaign of 45 days for public awareness regarding party policies. The campaign started on 26th March, 2009. The leaders, activists and workers of the party met the people personally and tried to find solution for their problems. They organized corner meetings and enlightenment camps for activists. Also marched & rallied for voters, inspired activist through personal meetings. He succeeded in creating confidence in ordinary people regarding party. The campaign conducted on 8th May, 2001 on Agriculture in the presence of party president Mr. Sharad Pawar, millions of people attended this conducting session. Mr. Pawar whole heartedly congratulated Mr. Pachpute for his grand success of the campaign.
8. The campaign succeeded extremely well, in securing positive response of common people. The party became number one party in Maharashtra by winning the highest seats in Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samitee elections, held in February, 2002. The
party also succeeded on a grand scale in the election of Municipalities and Corporations. Thus the party succeeded in creating its good check or control on rating congress party through its victory and popularity.  

9. In order to keep the party active and dynamic, publication of the mouth piece named 'Raashtravadi' started for enriching the rapport with voters.

10. He organized divisional camps, oratory training workshops, revision meetings, conferences for women, career guidance camps, contemplation seminars etc. for the strengthening the party.

Thus Mr. Pachpute's contribution as the regional president of the party is extremely extraordinary and astonishing.
7.4.6 Remarkable Contribution as Ministers

1. During 1980 – 1990 Mr. Pachpute was an M.L.A. of opposition party. His struggle and conflict against the ruling party for giving justice to common people on various issues is highly appreciable.

2. He joined congress party along with 11 M.L.A.s of Janata Dal in 1991. Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Mr. Sudhakarraoji Naik offered him the responsibility of Home Minister (State Level). His progress through conflict to development started rapidly.

3. He created his own image through his discipline in administration and through excellent decision making.

4. He has taken some important decisions regarding police force and concentrated in maintaining peace and law and order in the state.

5. He visited Denmark as a delegate for the study of advance research & technology in dairy industry & implemented this high technology in creation of excellent network of dairy in his constituency.

6. In 2004 Shrigonda constituency has got reservation seat for Congress Party, Mr. Pachpute controlled the election as an independent candidate. He won the election then he joined Nationalist Party and became the Minister for the portfolio of forests.

   Forest resources are highly valuable for human beings but due to rapid industrialization and urbanization deforestation has taken place on a very large scale. It has raised several environmental problems viz global warming, decreasing rainfall, soil erosion, heavy floods, problems related to wild life and herbal plants etc. These problems are becoming severe.  

   The percentage of forest cover in Maharashtra was 22%, which is decreasing at an alarming rate. Rapid protection and conservation of forest resources, afforestation is highly essential. This is the responsibility of forest dept. and ministry or portfolio of forest and forestry. This portfolio was one of the most neglected and less important portfolios Mr. Pachpute has paid full attention to various problems related to forestry and tried to find excellent solution to them.

1. Mr. Pachpute succeeded in building rapport amongst the forest officers, employees and social workers. He tried to understand their problems and solved them with practical solutions.
2. The highest percentage of forest cover is in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. There was lack of good communication because there was no divisional administrative office. He erected divisional office at Nagpur. He organized more than 40 meetings and tried to give justice to various pending issues.

3. Then he successfully completed more than 70 forest land projects viz Gondia, Surtoni, Nagpur, Dhaga, Bajargaon, Chandrapur, Bhandara, Jawahar etc.

4. Organized divisional workshops, seminars for inspiration and guidance to forest officers and workers.

5. He inspired the officers for participation of local people in the joint forest management projects for maintenance of forest, afforestation and protection of wild life, for building water resources and forest lakes, water conservation, preservation of herbal plants etc.

6. Due to active participation of local people, the problems like smuggling of sandalwood, hunting & killing of wild animals reduced rapidly. Due to water conservation in the catchment area the level of underground water increased the forestation & soil erosion also was controlled because of active participation of people.

7. On the occasion of Forest Day celebration the following projects were undertaken for social awareness.

   a) Organization of wild life protection week.

   b) Rural development through forest management.

   c) Various project completions for public awareness and valuable contribution for public awareness about forest resources and their conservation.

   d) Conversion of negative thinking into positive thoughts through “One Village, single Holi Festival” for reduction in burning fuel, wood etc.

   e) Prohibition of non-veg. food and consumption of wine, alcohol, liquor etc. at forest rest houses. Slogan of “Live and let live” for the protection of animals.

   f) Friendship with the snakes because they are the friends of farmer.
8. Honest efforts for maintenance and development of sanctuaries, zoos, herbal gardens etc.

In this way Mr. Pachpute has left no stone unturned for the conservation of extremely valuable forest resources through his various projects.\textsuperscript{55}

Thus his contribution as the minister of various portfolios is unique, remarkable and outstanding.