

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH HINDU NATIONALISM?

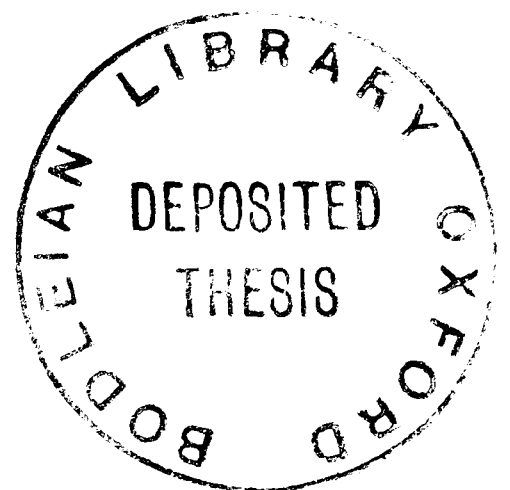
Examining Gender Relations in the Shiv Sena

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Oxford

by

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School of Geography and the Environment
Trinity Term 2005



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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores whether women and men can be empowered through cultural nationalism based on religious/ethnic identities. Religious fundamentalism is typically not associated with women's empowerment. As a patriarchal, Hindu nationalist party that advocates violence, the Shiv Sena is also an unlikely agent of women's empowerment. Yet, the Sena has been attracting numerous women who claim to have gained confidence through the party. Using the Shiv Sena as my case study, I interviewed four male and seven female Shiv Sena members using the biographic narrative method. By examining their biographic narratives and interviews of their families and colleagues, I was able to delineate the different empowerment cycles for men and women in Shiv Sena and determine each participant's level of empowerment.

The empowerment framework defined by Jo Rowlands (1997), which distinguishes between personal, collective, and relational empowerment, serves as the basis of my assessment of women's and men's empowerment. As violence is generally disregarded as a means of empowerment, I discuss it in relation to the construction of empowering cultural identities. While establishing theoretical frameworks regarding empowerment, cultural identity and gender, I also examine the disempowerment of Maharashtrians (whom Shiv Sena originally represented) by the socio-economic and historical conditions of Bombay, India. I then demonstrate how Shiv Sena, led by its Chief, Bal Thackeray, has constructed a new hegemonic masculine identity for Maharashtrian men as a means of empowerment. In the final chapters, I examine Shiv Sena's impact on the lives of individual women and men. This analysis revealed that despite the patriarchal constraints imposed by the Sena, women were becoming personally empowered in both the private and public spheres. In contrast, while Shiv Sena men were achieving collective empowerment in the public sphere, they had more difficulty becoming personally empowered in both the home and workplace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While many feminists assert that 'the personal is political', researching and writing about women's politics became a deeply personal process for me. Not only were the questions I asked relevant to my previous life experiences, but they also gave me perspective on personal events I experienced in the process of answering them. I decided to research the impact of cultural identity on women because of the difficulties I faced in corporate America as a Hindu, Japanese-Indian-American woman. The automobile accident I experienced in the middle of my fieldwork in India intensified the personal aspect of my academic research. Returning to Mumbai afterwards in my cervical collar and concerned about the welfare of my fiancé recovering in Germany, I felt that my life reflected that of my research participants whose lives had been altered by illness and other uncontrollable events. As one female research participant, who experienced the collapse of her home and death of her husband, said to me, "You may be getting a PhD in Geography, but in life you are in kindergarten and I have the PhD." And so I must thank the women and men who participated in my study first. In sharing their lives, they not only helped me understand how cultural identities can be constructed as a basis for empowerment, but they taught me valuable personal lessons about courage in the face of tragedy and perseverance in the face of uncertainty. During my own personal difficulties I experienced after the accident, I drew on their strength and models to continue with my DPhil and complete it. I deeply and sincerely thank the women and men of Shiv Sena. I would also like to thank Anuja, Shekhar and 'Bhau' Purandare for opening their home to me yet again, and assisting my research through their advice, insight and contacts. I would not have been able to complete my research after the accident without their support.

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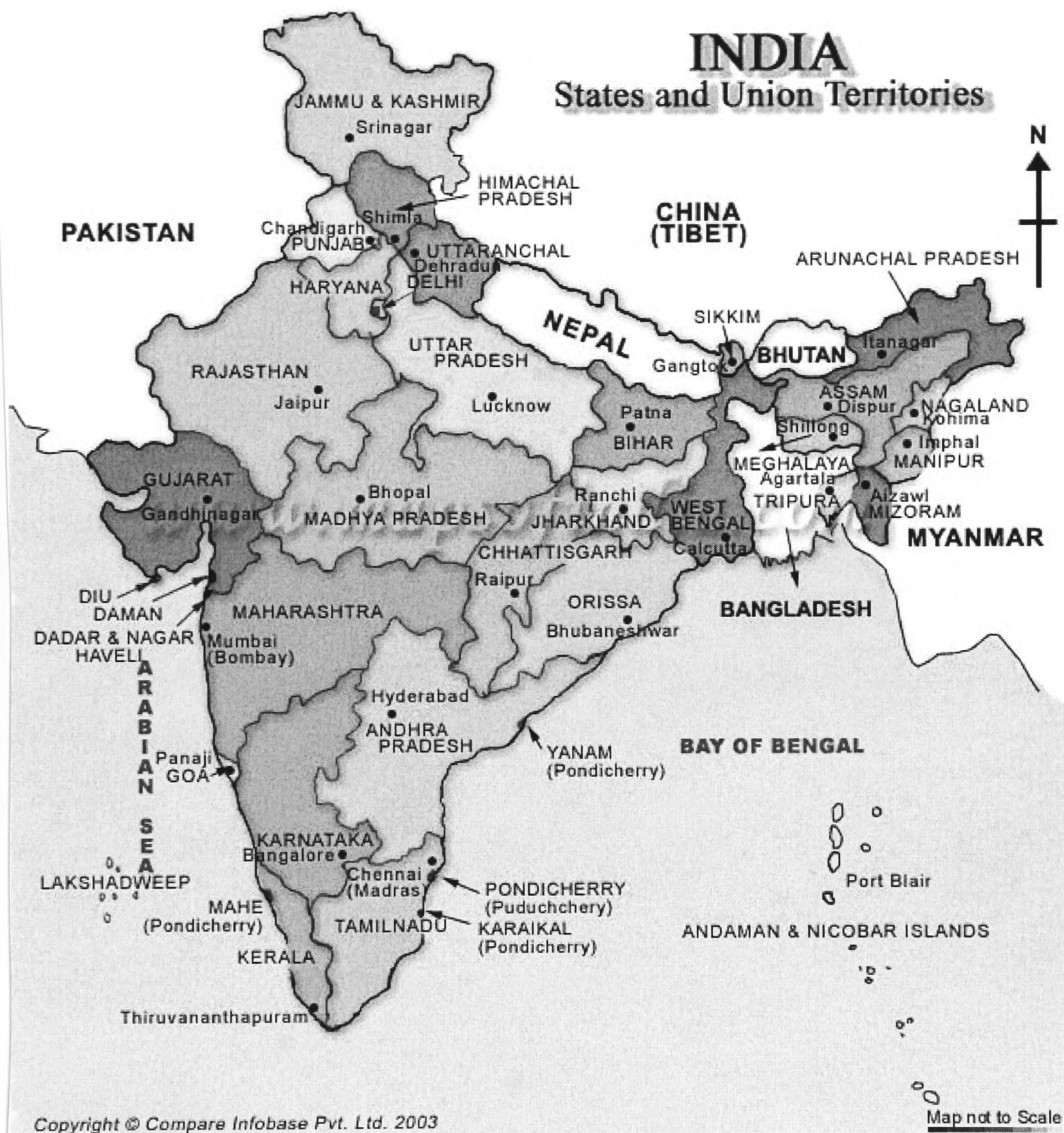
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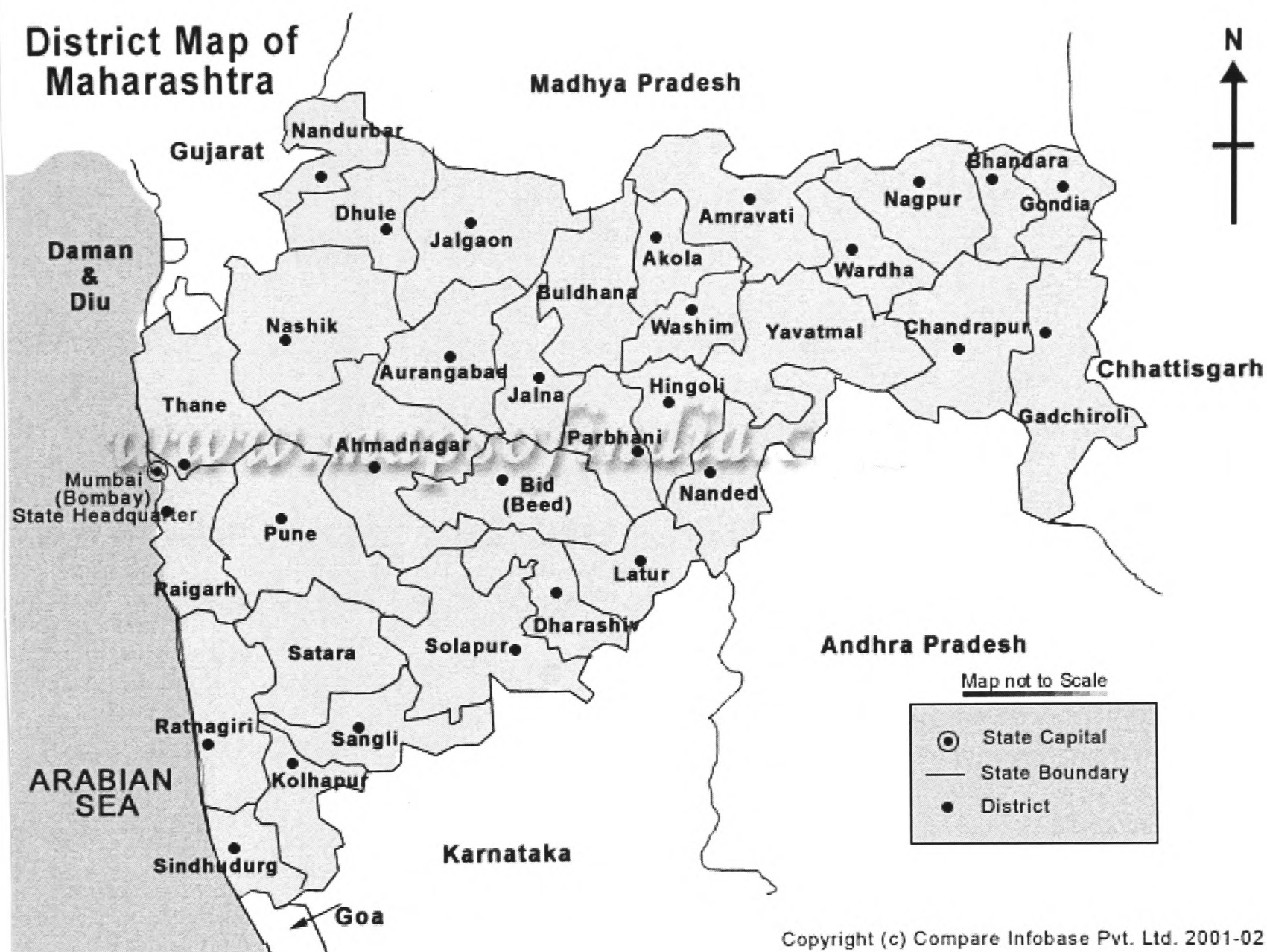
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INDIA

States and Union Territories

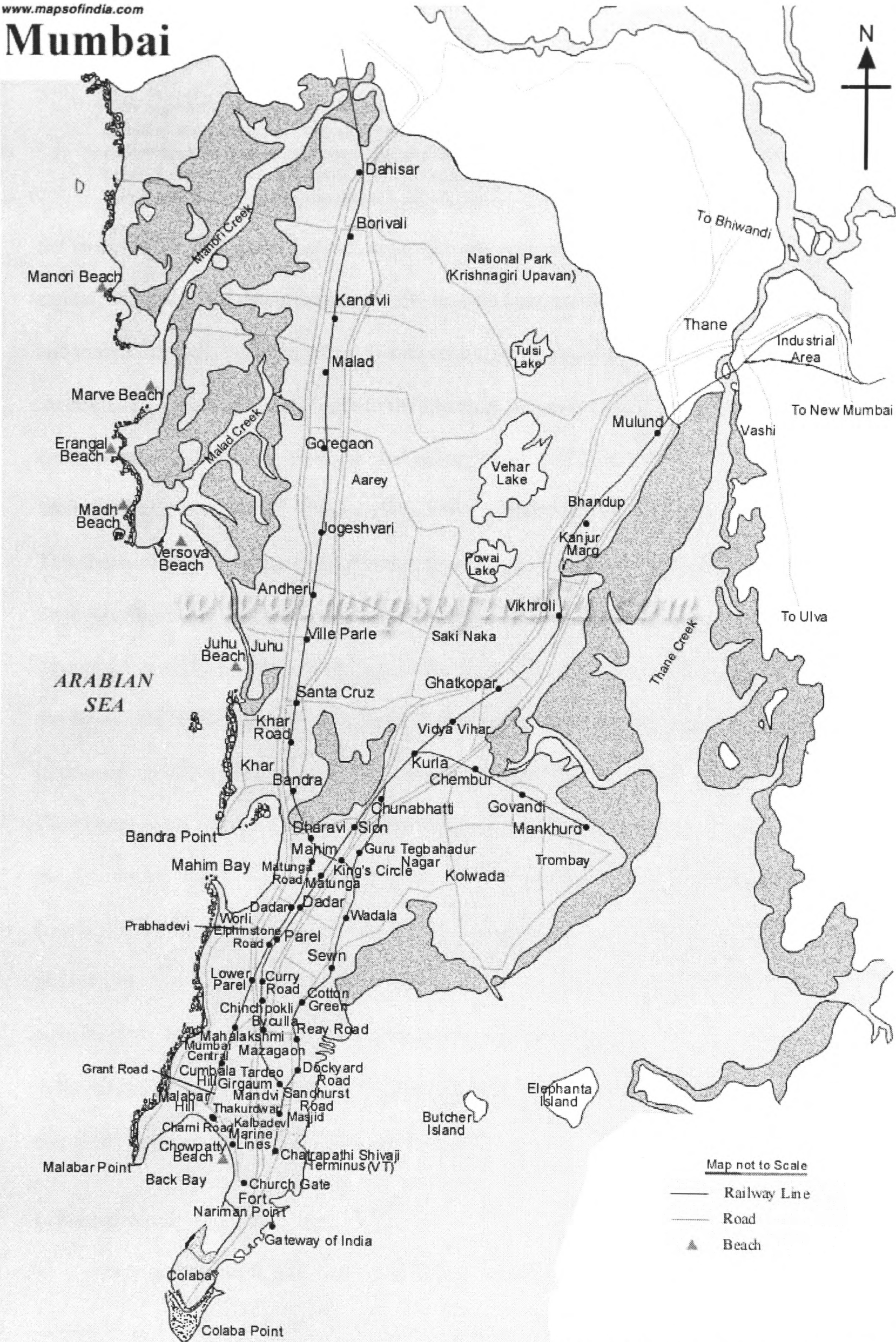


District Map of Maharashtra



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Mumbai



CHAPTER 1: Introduction & Methodology

I. Introduction

Very aggressive. Go getters. [Women in Shiv Sena], They're not afraid of anyone. They're not afraid to use violence to achieve their aims to gain whatever they want to gain. They are very independent women. At the same time they are at the core very traditional. Traditional in the sense that they consider the family to be a very important constituent in their lives.
– Interview with Vaibhav Purandare (July 20, 2000)

Set in the right-wing Hindu politics of gender and regional nationalism in India's business capital, Mumbai, this thesis examines how women have used the apparatus of a revanchist and male chauvinist political party, to subvert its patriarchal ideology and empower themselves. As such, it contributes to the literature of gender and geography, which has enriched human geography over the past twenty years (McDowell 1999, 1997, 1996, 1994; Momsen 2002, 1993, 1991; Massey 1996, 1994; Bowlby 1999, Whatmore 1995, 1991). This thesis makes an original contribution to women's studies in geography because while there have been studies on women in the financial sector of metropolitan centres in the developed world (e.g., McDowell on women in the City of London) and industrial regions of the developed world (Massey on women in coal mining areas and in the textile regions) and in peasant agriculture in the developing world (Momsen on women small farmers in the Caribbean), there have not been studies on women in politics in the metropolitan centres of the developing world. While there have been studies of violence against women (Crawley-Lyons 1999) there have not been studies on women's active participation in the politics of racism and violence. Since this thesis opens up both a neglected region (India) in contemporary human geography and a methodology (life histories), which is also unfamiliar in the discipline, its frame of reference is somewhat different from those of other studies which are largely situated within Western contexts.

1. Background

A colonial creation, Mumbai is the largest¹ and arguably most cosmopolitan city in

¹ The 2002 estimated population of Mumbai is 12.1 million people.

India. As a colonial city, its sphere of influence was superimposed across the cultural geography of western India. It extended in a semi-circle incorporating Gujuratis in the north and Konkanis in the south as well as Marathis in the centre and interior in which Mumbai itself was set. Under British control, the Gujuratis, who had always been India's premier group of traders, dominated the commerce of the city. After India's Independence, Mumbai (then Bombay) became the capital of Maharashtra². The Marathis thus found themselves dominated in their own city by outsiders. Worse still, they began to face competition for employment from South Indian migrants in the 1960s. The result was political resentment from the Marathi common man, the *manus*, against outsiders. This resentment coalesced into the violent Marathi nationalist movement, the Shiv Sena (Shivaji's army).³

Based in Mumbai, Shiv Sena started in 1966 as a social movement asserting the political and economic 'rights' of Marathi-speaking men as the 'sons of the soil'⁴ in their state, Maharashtra. Using intimidation and force, the Sena forged a militant, masculine identity to address their marginal political and socio-economic position in Mumbai. Shiv Sena's women's wing, the Mahila Aghadi, has adopted the violent vigilante approach of its parent organisation by actively protesting price rises, throwing stones at city buses and beating abusive husbands. By aggressively asserting their cultural identities, women in Shiv Sena are actively participating in local politics. Drawing courage from the collective actions of the Mahila Aghadi and the Sena's intimidating reputation, female Shiv Sainiks claim to have gained confidence and efficacy in society. Male Shiv Sainiks regard this as a threat to their public domain and have attempted to limit women's political participation by emphasising their importance in the home as mothers and wives.⁵ Shiv Sena's patriarchal ideology and male Sainiks' resentment towards their female colleagues, raise questions

² The linguistic state of Marathi-speakers.

³ Shiv Sena is named after the 17th century founder of the Maratha Empire, Shivaji Maharaj

⁴ The expression refers to Shiv Sena's nativist platform of 'Maharashtra for Maharashtrians'.

⁵ Shiv Sainik, Shivaji's soldier, refers to both male and female members of Shiv Sena.

regarding the extent of these women's and men's empowerment in society, Shiv Sena and the home.

Using Shiv Sena as my case study, I explore the relationship between cultural and gender identities and their roles in the empowerment processes of men and women. As an American-educated Hindu woman with relatives in Mumbai, I have a unique 'insider-outsider' position in relation to Shiv Sena. As a Maharashtrian, and by conducting fieldwork in 2000 for my MPhil thesis entitled, "Empowering Women of the Hindu Right: A Case Study of Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi," I also gained the trust of some Shiv Sainiks who then provided more open and in-depth responses in 2002 for my DPhil research. While my MPhil thesis focused specifically on women's collective empowerment, this DPhil thesis examines women's empowerment in relation to men's empowerment in both public and private spheres. This study also relies on the humanistic research approach of the biographic narrative method which I elaborate upon in the methodology section. Using the biographic narrative method, I have constructed the life histories of seven female and four male Sainiks. On the basis of these life histories, I have assessed whether individual men and women were empowered by their participation in Shiv Sena and compared their empowerment processes.

2. Conceptions of Empowerment

Broadly defined, empowerment is a process by which women and men become aware of their own interests and develop means to relate those interests to others and take action. According to Jo Rowlands (1997), whose framework of empowerment I utilise in my analysis, empowerment can be achieved personally, through a collective, as well as 'in relation to others'. Personal empowerment is derived from an individual's sense of self-worth; collective empowerment is generated from a group identity or group action. Empowerment 'in relation to others' is considered the most difficult as it comes from creating more equal relations with others such as family members. This requires changing the attitudes and behaviour of those who are close to the individual. In my MPhil thesis, I

focused on women's personal and collective empowerment through Shiv Sena. In this study I also include empowerment 'in relation to others' in my analysis of male and female Shiv Sainiks' empowerment.

Feminist scholars in India such as Tanika Sarkar and Pusha Bhave discount the empowerment of women through Hindu Right organisations. While Sarkar recognises that Hindu Right women's wings offer degrees of empowerment and a sense of confidence to conservative middle-class women, she does not regard them as part of the women's movement or as contributing to women's overall emancipation. Sarkar states,

We know the costs only too well...Political involvement has reached its culmination in an authoritarian Hindu right that promises no liberation...and accepts final commands from an all male leadership that refuses any debate on Hindu patriarchy (Sarkar 1993a:43).

These feminists believe that Hindu Right organisations' espousal of patriarchy and male dominance undermine women's empowerment. Patriarchal norms that delegate women to the private sphere as wives and mothers are regarded as obstacles to women gaining power and autonomy in the public sphere (Sarkar 1995; Setalvad 1995; Banerjee 1995). For these scholars, personal empowerment within the family is a prerequisite for participation in public life (Banerjee 1995). While Sarkar and Bhave regard women's empowerment through the Hindu Right as limited at best, the feminist activist Flavia Agnes posits that by participating in politics, these women eventually will question patriarchy and women's subordination. Emphasising the role of public participation in the empowerment process, Agnes does not view empowerment through the Hindu Right as limited, but as a more gradual process.

Despite emphasising the importance of empowerment in the private sphere, Sarkar and Banerjee examine only the public activities of Hindu Right women. While many feminist geographers criticise women's designation to the private sphere as 'natural' and its consequent 'inferior' importance (McDowell 1999; Mitchell 2000; Women and Geography Study Group 1984), few studies on the Hindu Right closely examine actual gender relations in the home. The designation of home and family as 'private' and 'sacred' may cause

researchers to divert their gaze from these personal interactions. In fact, research participants themselves may refuse to discuss their relationship with their spouse and children, considering the subject private and confidential. Yet, in order to evaluate whether women and men are achieving empowerment 'in relation to others', it is necessary to observe these family relations. Using the biographic narrative method, I was able to reveal family histories and cross-gender, intergenerational relations that undermine certain assumptions of male dominance in the private and public spheres. By researching men's and women's empowerment in the home and society, I give equal importance to the private and public spheres. This contributes to efforts in feminist geography to breakdown the separation of public and private spaces based on gender, which remains salient in the Hindu Right (Women and Geography Study Group 1984: 65).

3. Thesis Overview

The empowerment processes for men and women in Shiv Sena are influenced by many factors at multiple levels. The primary factors I focus upon are: the context of Bombay (Mumbai); cultural identities (ethnic and religious); gender identities; and violence. The interplay between these factors produces different levels of empowerment for male and female Shiv Sainiks in society, in the party and in the family. The relationship between ethnicity and gender are especially significant as a 'nation' is generally defined in terms of links between a territory and its peoples and in opposition to 'others' (McDowell 1999: 170). By constructing an identity based on ethnic and religious nationalism, Shiv Sena generates a collective empowerment for its members and legitimises its use of violence to demand its rights in relation to the state and in opposition to a constantly changing 'other'.

To analyse the empowerment process through Shiv Sena, I first provide a theoretical framework on empowerment and present definitions of 'power' established by Jo Rowlands (1997) in Questioning Empowerment. Empowerment is further defined within the context of economic development and the autonomous women's movement in India. Issues regarding

empowerment achieved through the use of violence and within a patriarchal structure are raised. A particularly salient critique by Yuval-Davis (1994) suggests that the empowerment of a group can lead to the disempowerment of an individual or another group.

Within the feminist literature on the relationship between gender and the nation-state, delineated by Linda McDowell (1999:170-172) in Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies, this chapter and the next draw on literature concerning the state as an arbiter between its citizens through its distributional and coercive policies. While rights-based politics are initially discussed, these chapters primarily address politics organised around questions of identity.

In chapter three, the reasons for the 'disempowerment' of the Marathi *manus* (common man) is sought in the history, politics and socio-economics of 'Bombay'.⁶ The city of Bombay is the public sphere in which ethnic and gender groups contest access to jobs, housing, rights and power. Chapter four presents Shiv Sena's attempt to remedy the marginalised status of Marathi-speaking men in Bombay by constructing a Maharashtrian identity based on a violent hegemonic masculinity. Providing a theoretical examination of identity construction based on ethnicity and gender, this chapter draws on a multi-disciplinary literature concerning gendered imagery of nationality and links the social construction of ethnic nationalism and cultural identities with gendered ideologies (McDowell 1999:172-3).

Chapters five and six then focus on the empowerment process of men through participation in the Hindu Right and Shiv Sena in particular. I outline and examine the elements that contribute to enhancing Shiv Sainiks' masculinity and consequently increasing their confidence and power in the public sphere. Chapter six looks at the actual lives of five

⁶The naming of the city is also culturally contested. Shiv Sena claims its original name is Mumbai, named after the local goddess Mumbadevi. Thomas Blom Hansen (2001: 1-19) provides an excellent discourse on the contestation of the name. I use the name 'Bombay' and 'Mumbai' according to their historic usage. For the period before 1996, I use the name Bombay. After 1996, I use the name Mumbai.

male Shiv Sainiks, their reasons for joining Shiv Sena and the political party's impact on their lives and self-image in society and in relation to their families.

In chapter seven, the role of patriarchy and Hindutva in the empowerment process of women in the Hindu Right is examined within the context of the RSS's Samiti⁷ and Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi. The Mahila Aghadi is situated within the context of Shiv Sena's organisational structure and ideology. Presenting the perspective of Shiv Sena's male leadership and male Sainiks, chapter seven demonstrates how the Sena's definition of power and promotion of patriarchy has resulted in attempts to curtail women's political participation and power within the party, a public sphere with private aspects. The Shiv Sena's Supremo⁸ Bal Thackeray has been particularly instrumental in placing limits on women's participation in activities outside the home by glorifying motherhood as well as commanding female Sainiks to attend to their duties at home first, and only then participate in 'social work'⁹ or politics. Ironically, this glorification of motherhood also enables more women to join the Sena since lower levels of commitment are expected from them.

In chapter eight, I use the biographic narratives of seven female Shiv Sainiks and my MPhil case study of the Opera House Mahila Aghadi to demonstrate how different types of women have attained varying levels of empowerment despite Shiv Sena's patriarchal constraints. While many women circumvent the Sena's strictures by loosely interpreting them, group and individual interviews suggest that women are also beginning to resist these constraints and question their cultural and patriarchal rationales. Actively participating in politics, these women construct their own identities in the public sphere based on their association with Shiv Sena. The public recognition they gain also impacts their position in their homes and their relationship with their family. In the conclusions, I compare women's empowerment processes with those of men in Shiv Sena and assess whether individual men

⁷ RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) is the main propagator of Hindutva. The Samiti is its women's wing.

⁸ 'Supremo' is the title of the Chief of the Shiv Sena, Bal Thackeray who is its founder and sole ideologue.

⁹ Within the Sena, the term 'social work' is used to connote community service and social activism

and women have achieved empowerment in both the public and private spheres, and the social implications.

II. Methodology

My DPhil thesis is based on two phases of fieldwork occurring in 2000 and 2002. The first phase was conducted for my MPhil thesis from July to September 2000 in Mumbai, India. This general study of Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi entailed:

- Researching archival documents on Shiv Sena
- Collecting 90 questionnaires from Mahila Aghadi members across Mumbai
- Conducting semi-structured interviews with Shiv Sena's top leadership, branch leaders and common members
- Conducting focus group interviews in individual *shakhas*
- Using participation observation when attending Shiv Sena meetings and events.

To understand how women were affected by joining Shiv Sena, I did a case study of the Opera House district of South Mumbai. I interviewed women members of the five *shakhas* (Khetwadi, Mumbai Central, Gamdevi, Girgaum, Chirabazaar) in this area. The second phase of fieldwork occurred from July to October 2002 and primarily entailed in-depth interviewing based on the biographic narrative method. I re-interviewed many of the research participants from the first phase of fieldwork as well as their family members. The two-year interval also enabled me to observe how participation in Shiv Sena had affected their lives by comparing their attitudes and circumstances between 2000 and 2002.

While I used ethnographic methods such as participation observation and semi-structured interviews, I did not use questionnaires, formal interviews or focus groups again. From the first phase of field work, I found that these methods usually provided superficial and brief responses to my questions. The women did not regard the questionnaires as opportunities to express their individual (potentially differing) opinions, but as 'exams' that required 'correct' answers. They sometimes copied others' responses or conferred their answers with others. In focus groups, the women were also too conscious of the group dynamics and saw them as forums for demonstrating their oration skills. Responses during focus groups tended to be full of bravado without much substance. Finally, in formal

interviews both men and women provided brief and careful responses, wary about being recorded on tape. My questions seemed to restrict or shape their responses. Research participants were more responsive when I turned off the tape recorder or when we conversed informally. Therefore, I decided to find an interviewing method for my DPhil research that would reproduce the openness of informal conversations, but also provide a means to test the validity of their responses.

1. Biographic Narrative Method¹⁰

The biographic narrative method developed by Rosenfeld and Wengraf consists of two parts: the interview and the analysis. The life-history interview enables the research participant to present and structure her/his 'life story' with minimal influence from the researcher and her biases. This entails asking the research participant a broad initial question such as, "Can you tell me your family history or life story?" and allowing her/him to speak without interruption. This initial narrative interview is followed up with semi-structured interviews that allow the researcher to: 1) clarify points made in the initial interview 2) ask questions regarding issues not raised in the initial narrative. This interviewing technique encourages the research participant to produce a long narrative about their lives including events and themes that are significant to them, not simply answers which conform to the interviewer's expectations. As a result, the research participant raises issues and themes that may go beyond the interviewer's hypotheses and questions. The interviewer in the third phase of interviewing can still ask particular questions relating to her research which have not been addressed by the narrative. Therefore, the interviewer can achieve greater openness in the interview as well as structure.

The life-history interview provides a qualitative sociological method for revealing process and change. Focusing on the interview participants' perspective, the researcher attempts to reconstruct the participants' action patterns in their community and their social

¹⁰ The description I provide on the Biographic Narrative Method is based on the presentations and writings of Lisanne Ackermann, my tutor on the subject.

structures. Analysing life-history interviews informed by participant observation elucidates the interview participants' life processes. From the subjective life-history, the researcher attempts to gain insights into the life experiences of the interview participants and how they interpret their own lives and their social world. These narratives are also 'told events', which implies personal selection as well as subjective analysis. Told events are heavily influenced by cultural conventions of story-telling, by the audience, by the social context and by the interaction between the researcher and the interview participant (Rosenthal 1995: 65). The life-history can also focus on a specific period relevant to the research or on a particular topic the researcher is interested in. The topical life-history is partial as the interview participant orients the narrative towards the topic. The life-history does not focus exclusively on the individual, but takes into account the historical dimension. A historical reconstruction of the interview participant's particular biography can be used to understand the person's involvement in her/his surrounding social world. This lends transparency to the interconnectedness between the single life-history and the history of a particular society (Plummer 1983: 69).

In the 1980s, life stories were used as sources of information about a reality outside the text. In West Germany, the life story itself was regarded as a social construct in its own right and increasingly became the focus of social scientific research. Martin Kohli, Fritz Schütze and Wolfram Fischer-Rosenthal developed empirically founded concepts and programmatic outlines of biographical theory (Rosenthal 1995: 59). According to Kohli (1986), biography as a social construct comprises both social reality and the subject's experiential world. The objective of biographical research is to encompass the total life of an individual, not provide a review of every life event, but the *Gestalt*. The *Gestalt* is a comprehensive pattern of orientation that is selective, separating the relevant from the irrelevant. The narrated life story represents the biographer's overall construction of his or her past and anticipated life. Biographically relevant experiences are connected in a temporally and thematically

consistent pattern (Fischer 1982). This biographical construct influences the way the biographer (interview participant) reconstructs the past and selects which individual experiences are relevant and included (Rosenthal 1995: 62). The biographer reconstructs his/her life history by connecting and relating single events, actions and experiences with other events according to a pattern that may not be linear or based on objective time, but subjective time (Rosenthal 1995: 63). As a result, the biographical construct embeds the individual's experiences in a coherent, meaningful context.

A case history of a family can also be constructed by collecting narrative accounts of persons belonging to several generations of the same 'family'. Each family member is asked to talk about their own life history and experiences as well as about those of other family members. Individuals comment on their relations with other family members. Case histories of families not only reveal information about family life, but also gender relations and how they have changed historically. For example, through particular actions of ordinary women, the researcher can understand how practices of raising children vary within a select milieu, or how they differ from one social milieu to another (Bertaux 1995: 75). As I am interested in the private sphere and gender relations within the families of Shiv Sena members, I constructed family case histories to an extent. Multiple generations within families were not always available, so I interviewed mostly members of the nuclear family. The biographical narrative interview method was generally not successful when interviewing children, who required direct questions. Children under the age of eighteen were generally unable to maintain a narrative and were prone to answering questions with short answers.

2. Interview Procedure: Main narration, internal and external questions

Since data collection and its analysis are closely linked, reconstruction of the biographical case requires conducting the narrative interviews in a specific manner. A 'Principle of Openness' is adopted to provide the biographer the space necessary to reconstruct past events in the sequence they choose and in coherence with their experiences.

Gabriel Rosenthal (1995: 186-200) highlights the importance of this space for developing *Gestalt* and encouraging the process of remembering and articulating sensitive themes. According to this principle, the researcher postpones theoretical structuring about the research topic until the biographers develop their own structure of the topic. The researcher should not have pre-established hypotheses. Along these same lines, the researcher should view data collection as a communicative act. Thus, the participant's style of communication and the topic they set, not the researcher's scientific orientation, should guide the interview.

Adhering to this principle is difficult, given that they are at odds with the *modus operandi* of doctoral research which requires the presentation of theoretical hypotheses prior to commencing fieldwork. Yet, the openness of the main narration question (which will be discussed in detail) frees the interview from the constraints of the researcher's preconceived hypotheses. The researcher can encourage openness also by developing the skill of attentive active listening; asking sensitive and narrative-generated questions; and prompting memories by evoking scenes and contexts mentioned by the biographer.

The biographic narrative interview consists of three parts.

1) *Main Narration*: The main narration is the first and most important part of the interview since the biographer develops her/his *Gestalt* here. The researcher attempts to trigger a narration from the biographer with a single, initial question. This single initial question is posed in an open and general way to elicit a long main narration. For example, the interviewer might say,

I would like you to tell me your life story, all the events and experiences which were important to you. Start wherever you like. Please take the time you need. I'll listen first, I won't interrupt, I'll just take some notes for afterwards (Wengraf 2001: 119; Rosenthal 1995: 187).

As mentioned earlier, the initial question can be less general and focus on a specific life phase, an incident in the history of a community or the person. After the initial question, the biographer then proceeds uninterrupted until the biographer indicates the end of the initial narrative. The biographer defines the themes she/he wish to narrate. The interviewer does not interrupt the narration with further questions, but encourages the main narrative through

non-verbal and paralinguistic expressions of interest and attention such as "mhm". The biographer will hopefully give a full narration, not an argument of theoretical exposition. This main narration often lasts hours and should be concluded by the biographer. The main narration immediately ends the moment the interviewer interrupts. If the biographer requires clarification regarding the initial question, the interviewer should simply attempt to paraphrase the question in another way, not provide examples. The biographer should determine the themes to be addressed, how they present their life story, in what sequence and to what level of detail.

2) *Internal Questions*: The main narration is followed by a second interview in which the interviewer asks 'internal questions', questions relating to information already presented by the biographer. The purpose of this questioning is to encourage the biographer to provide more detailed narratives. This questioning can be particularly useful when the single question does not elicit a long, detailed narration. At times, the biographer is not comfortable with the lack of structure and rather than providing a narration of their life story, they will provide a brief account of life events in chronological order. Often, the biographer provides a few life stories mixed with theorising and rationalisations of their life. The internal questions encourage the biographer to elaborate on the existing narratives or produce a narrative from the historical events mentioned. These narrative questions should be open-ended, using the biographer's terms, and should 'allow for' a narrative or change of subject.

For example:

"Can you remember any event involving your father?"

"Can you remember an incident that occurred while you were living on the farm?"

"You said you were expelled. Can you remember how that came about?" (Ackermann Tutorial 2002).

The internal questions should not introduce subjects not previously mentioned by the biographer. The order of the questions also maintains the original sequence of the main narration. In other words, the questions are asked in the order their themes were originally raised. In this manner, the interviewer attempts to retain the integrity of the biographer's *Gestalt* and encourage narratives on topics and events already mentioned (Rosenthal 1995:

60). If new narratives are evoked, then this second part of the interview may last as long as the first. Usually, the interviewer will ask for a short break between the first and second parts of the interview. During this time, the interviewer can review her notes and decide upon which themes she would like elaboration. It is best to ask the internal questions during the same session while the memory of the main narration is fresh in both the biographer's and interviewer's mind.

3) *External Questions*: The third part of the interview introduces external questions, and can therefore occur a few days or a week after the first interview session. During this period, the interviewer transcribes the main narration and formulates questions based on the narratives. At this point, interviewers can ask questions on themes which interest them and which the biographer has not yet mentioned. External questions, like internal questions, are asked with the purpose of generating a narration. The interviewer should refrain from asking 'why' or 'what for', which could provoke argumentation, not narratives. Requests to hear more about a specific theme might be phrased as, "Perhaps you could tell us something more about your school years?" When the biographer has trouble remembering, the interviewer can also use 'scenic memory' techniques that put the biographer into scenes in the past. After reconstructing the scene, the interviewer asks, "What do you see? Who are you standing next to? What do you hear?" This allows the biographer to extricate scenes blocked from their memory (Rosenthal 1995).

3. Five-Step Analytical Procedure

The Biographical Case Reconstruction used to analyse the biographical narratives consists of five analytical steps.

1) *Lived Life*: The first step, called Biographical Data Analysis, enables the analysis of transformation processes in life histories. Events and lived experiences are reconstructed with reference to both their temporal order and their meaning for the biographer at their time of occurrence. A series of lived experiences and life/historical events are extracted from the

interview transcript, with the help, if necessary, of outside sources such as archival material and notes from ethnographic fieldwork. Each experience or event should be an objective fact (e.g., birth date, birth of children) that is potentially verifiable and free from the biographer's own interpretation and self-presentation. Often, these life facts are not presented by the biographer in chronological order, so that they need to be rearranged; the resulting biographical data chronology forms the basis for the ensuing analysis. Each life fact is then interpreted independently from the biographer's own interpretation and without knowledge of the 'told story'. This is possible by using a research panel. A panel of two to six people are gathered to develop hypotheses about the possible meanings of: 1) a single event in the past 2) patterns of action and behaviour in interrelated sequences and 3) turning points in the biographer's life. The hypothetical reconstruction of someone's life in a specific society or culture requires that panel members have good background knowledge. This generates more accurate and appropriate hypotheses.

The researcher, acting as the moderator of the panel, presents each chronological datum from the biographer's lived life and then poses questions to the panel to generate hypotheses. A question for the first datum of the biographer's lived life might be, "Into what family situation was the biographer born? What future options will therefore be open to him or her?" With regards to subsequent data points, Breckner suggests the following questions:

- 1) How could this event be experienced in relation to the context of age, personal development, family, generation and milieu?
- 2) How could this sequence of events shape the lived life? (Breckner 1998: 93).

According to Rosenthal, the generation of hypotheses and the negation of incorrect ones enable the panel to reconstruct the context of an event the biographer faced at the time it occurred. At the end, the panel decides upon a structure hypothesis that refers to the overall pattern or *Gestalt* of the lived life. The purpose is to reconstruct the biographical meaning of experiences at the time they happened and the chronological sequence of experiences (Rosenthal 1995: 61). The researcher and focus group imagine what options were potentially open to the biographer in a particular situation. They then look at the actual

choice the biographer made to determine to what extent certain potential options tend to be systematically excluded. This first analytical step also reveals the biographers' pattern of action, orientation and the turning points in their lives. Within the context of the biographical case reconstruction, the biographical data analysis has two functions: 1) provides a foil for the text and thematic field analysis (second analytical step) 2) prepares for the reconstruction of the case history (third analytical step).

2) Text and Thematic Field Analysis (Told Story Analysis): Whereas the first step of analysis reveals how the biographer experienced life events in the past, thematic field analysis is used to see what meanings the biographer attaches to told events and experiences today. The focus of this analysis is the biographer's present perspective on past experiences, how the biographer presents herself and the reason for her self-presentation. The underlying structure of the biographer's interpretation of her life may go beyond her intentions (Rosenthal 1995:218). The analysis is focused on understanding the mechanisms guiding the biographer's selection of stories (or textual elements) in relation to the overall thematic orientation of the interview (Rosenthal 1995:61).

In preparation for this analysis, the interview text is broken up into segments wherever there is a change of speaker, theme or text type (e.g., report, narrative, argumentation, and description). The original order of the interview text is maintained, in contrast to the chronological rearrangement undertaken in the first analytical step. At this point, single discrete segments are presented to the panel for analysis without revealing the subsequent segments. The researcher/moderator asks the guiding questions to elicit hypotheses.

Rosenthal suggests the following:

1. Is the biographer generating a narrative or being carried along by a narrative flow in the story-telling?
2. How much is the biographer oriented to the relevance system of the interviewer and how much to his or her own?
3. In which thematic field is the single segment embedded: What is the hidden agenda?
4. Why is the biographer using this specific sort of text to present the experience or theme?
5. Which topics are addressed? Which biographical experiences, events and periods are covered and what is left out? What comes up in the second part of the interview (after further questioning by the interviewer) that had been omitted in the first part, the 'main narration' (after the initial question)?

6. In which details are the single experiences or themes presented and why? (Rosenthal 1993: 69/70)

Guided by these questions, the panel generates hypotheses and follow-up hypotheses that are then tested against subsequent text segments. The panel attempts to interpret the nature and function of the presentation of the interview, not the biographical experiences themselves (Rosenthal 1993: 70). From this interpretation, the researcher derives the biographers' present perspectives and the meaning of a particular story segment in their present lives. This step shows which biographical events the biographers elaborated upon, how this was done and in what sequential order (Rosenthal 1995: 217).

3) *Reconstruction of the Case History*: In the third analytical step, the researcher brings together the results from the first two steps, reconstructing both the past and the biographical meaning that past experiences had for the biographer. In the first step of analysis, a wide range of possible actions is hypothetically formulated without the knowledge of the biographer's interpretation. Now, the researcher views the biographical data through the perspective of the biographer's told story. The life history (experienced, lived life) and the life story (narrated life story) are dialectically linked and produce one another. Therefore, it is important to consider the function and meaning of a biographical experience for the whole *Gestalt* of the lived life, to avoid fragmenting the latter into single biographical experiences (Rosenthal 1995: 61, 220).

The researcher reconstructs the case history without the assistance of the panel. First, the researcher examines the life history (lived life) constructed from the biographer's interview and other sources. The researcher then contrasts the lived experiences in the past with the present perspective of the biographer. Doing so may reveal the viewpoints the biographers have of their lives. By reconstructing the lived life through the present perspective, the researcher can show why a particular event is considered a turning point and understand why the biographer removes particular lived experiences from her/his memory. It is essential in this step that the researcher does not adopt the biographer's structure of the

accounts, but rather reconstructs what was left out. Thus, the researcher attempts to discover the hidden biographical layer that may have played a decisive role in subsequent life phases.

4) *Microanalysis*: Microanalysis is a tool that the researcher uses to get a better understanding of particular text segments. While it is best employed after the reconstruction of the case history, it also can be used outside the five-step analytical framework on semi-structured interviews or written autobiographies. Microanalysis entails the detailed analysis of small segments of text extracted from the interview transcript. The researcher employs it at this point to check hypotheses from the first three analytical steps and to clarify uncertainties. Microanalysis takes into account the biographical meaning of events and the present viewpoint of the biographer. In microanalysis, the researcher isolates narrative segments that are unclear. The researcher then focuses on particular words and presents them to a panel that suggests hypotheses regarding why a particular word was used by the biographer.

5) *Case Structure*: Though it is the final stage in the analysis of the biographical narrative, developing the case structure is not another analytical step, but a summary of the relationships between different theoretical and structural elements. The case structure is produced by comparing and contrasting the lived life with the told story. This process reveals how the structure of the biographer's self-presentation develops and identifies lived experiences that played a decisive role in his/her life. In building the case structure, the researcher asks which biographical experiences determine the biographer's presentation and what function this presentation performs for the biographer. Bringing together all the analytical steps, the case structure shows how past events are significant for the present and how the present perspective and future expectations determine the presentation of past events (Breckner 2001:206). By taking into account these different temporal perspectives, the researcher is able to cross-check and triangulate data from the narrative interview and produce generalisations from the case study.

4. Application of Biographic Narrative Method

Using the biographic narrative method, I have interviewed four different types of female and male Shiv Sena members and created a biographic narrative for each of them. These Shiv Sainiks fall into four categories: 1) Top leader 2) Branch leader 3) Active member 4) Inactive member (see chart below).

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS ¹¹ BY TYPE		
TYPES	MEN	WOMEN
Top Leader	Chandrakant "I work very hard and sincerely for my constituency" -- Age: 66 -- Member of Legislative Assembly, Girgaum -- Joined Sena in 1966 -- Former laundry man -- Married, 2 children. -- Wife is a housewife	Vishakha Raut "Sena has taught me to become tough and how I should fight against injustice." -- Age: 40 -- Member of Legislative Assembly, Dadar -- Joined Sena in 1985 -- Owner of a travel agency -- Married, 2 children Meenakshi Kolgergonkar "I can face any calamity. I have no fear." -- Age: 51 -- Joined Sena in 1991 -- Uppa Vibagh Pramukh, South Mumbai -- Nurse -- Married, 2 children
	Dilip Naik "It is because of Balasaheb's [leader of Shiv Sena] blessings that we have grown up." -- Age: 45 -- Former Corporator (city councillor) & <i>Shakha Pramukh</i> (branch leader), Girgaum -- Joined Sena in 1975 -- Unemployed, former bank clerk -- Married, 2 children -- Wife is a housewife	Surekha Ubale "After becoming <i>shakha pramukh</i> , I felt like I became somebody." -- Age: 40 -- <i>Shakha Pramukh</i> , Khetwadi -- Joined Sena in 1999 -- Housewife -- Widow, 2 children Jayashree Ballikar "I'm not scared of anything." -- Age: 34 -- <i>Shakha Pramukh</i> , Mumbai Central -- Joined Sena in 1985 -- Receptionist & Owner of Food stall -- Separated from husband, 1 daughter
Active Member	Sameer Vedak "I am lonely." -- Age: 30 -- Girgaum <i>shakha</i> (branch office) member -- Joined Sena in 1992 -- Unemployed (performs odd jobs) -- Unmarried, lives with parents	Anuradha Navalkhar "I don't like [people to say] I'm 'poor'. I'm strong!" -- Age: 47 -- Girgaum <i>shakha</i> member -- Tutor -- Widow, 3 children Nita Kanade "I can save myself, I can go anywhere." -- Age: 38 -- Mumbai Central <i>shakha</i> member -- Housewife -- Separated from husband, 2 children

¹¹ I refer to the male participants by their last name and the females by their first. This reflects the names I used when interviewing them as well as my respective formal and informal relations with each group

Inactive Member	Jagdish Purandare "I am the loser." -- Age: 45 -- Former Central Communications Manager -- From Girgaum area -- Joined Sena in 1966 -- Manager of bank cricket team -- Married, 2 children -- Wife works in furniture store	Jaya Goythale "Women can do each and every thing. We can do it. With the help of the men we can do it." -- Age: 41 -- Former Corporator, Girgaum -- Nursery school teacher -- Married, 2 children

Source: Interview Transcripts 2002; Note: Ages of participant in 2002

In order to get a full understanding of these members and verify the information they provided, I also interviewed significant members of their household: spouses, parents, in-laws and children. These interviews were more fruitful with regards to the female members, whose political participation affected the household more closely. Through these semi-structured interviews, I attempted to ascertain how they feel about their household member's participation in the Sena, how they support that member and how they have changed as a result. I also interviewed male and female members of their Shiv Sena branches to see how they perceive their colleagues. These interviews were semi-structured ones relating solely to the Shiv Sainik I was researching. Finally, I regularly attended Shiv Sena meetings and visited my interview subjects in their homes. Using participant observation, I attempted to understand how men and women interact in the Sena and whether women's empowerment has affected gender relations in the *shakha* (branch office) and in the families.

In the case of my research, I wanted to assess how the lives of women and men have changed as a result of joining Shiv Sena. By asking them broadly about their life history, I could see what their life experiences were before and after joining, as well as what importance they place on the Sena. (For example, some of the women I interviewed did not mention the Shiv Sena at all in their initial narrative). In this manner, I hope to understand whether and to what extent these women and men are empowered through participation in the Sena. The biographic method is helpful for this purpose since it enables me to look at their life in total and detect changes that have resulted from participation in the Sena versus other influences. Analysing these narratives, I could identify the different routes to empowerment for women versus men and compare their empowerment processes.

5. Problems with the Biographic Narrative Method

The biographic narrative method is a powerful tool that enables the researcher to tap into information that research participants (biographers) have hidden even from themselves. By allowing the research participant to define the boundaries of the interview, the researcher is not limited by her own limited knowledge of the subject, which can lead to inappropriate questions when using other methods. While my experience using the biographic narrative method was positive overall, I faced some difficulties applying it to an Indian context.

The main issue I encountered related to language. While I understand Marathi, my ability to speak Marathi is limited. As a result, I conducted my interviews in English, occasionally accompanied by an interpreter. Most of my research participants could understand English and many were able to respond in English. In some cases, I asked the questions in English and they responded in Marathi which I later translated from the taped interview. While the fluent English-speakers responded well to the open-ended question for the main narrative, those who were not as proficient in English gave very short main narratives. They required more guidance with specific questions. They found the concepts of a 'life story' or 'family history' unfamiliar and vague. By 'history', they thought I wanted a chronology of their lives or curriculum vitae. In addition, they would only include living family members in their family history or discuss the present occupations of those living. For example, they would not mention their father's former profession if he was presently retired. I had to ask them specific questions about such matters.

Women seemed to respond better than men to the open-ended initial question. Women were able to discuss at length their personal lives and thoughts. Men required more structured guidance or direct questioning. In response to the initial question, they usually provided a summary of their educational and professional careers, perhaps because they were more guarded and did not want to expose themselves and give too much information. The men also seemed less comfortable discussing their personal lives and appeared caught

off-guard when I asked for specific details about their childhood or families. Two of my male participants became so choked by emotion when I asked about their personal lives that I had to stop the interview and change the line of questioning. While I was not able to get a verbal response from these men, these episodes in and of themselves were very telling and will be examined in chapter six.

I also had difficulty scheduling interviews due to the urban context of my research participants' lives and cultural practices. Unlike people in highly industrialised countries, my research participants did not follow a strict schedule and their lives were very hectic and changeable. I would often arrange an appointment for an interview only to have it cancelled at the last minute because an aunt was ill. Since it often took weeks to even see someone for the initial interview, I simply conducted all three interviews in one meeting.

Due to my research participants' lifestyles, it was also very difficult to conduct the interviews without interruption or in private. Most of my research participants belong to Mumbai's lower middle class. They live in one-or two-room *chawls* with their family of four. These *chawls* are open to the comings and goings of all of their fellow *chawl* residents. Thus, I often conducted the interviews in the presence of the research participants' family or neighbours. The presence of this extra audience influenced the research participant's responses and orientation of their narrative presentation. Unfortunately, it was not possible to meet with them in private outside of their homes. The women in particular were very busy with housework, jobs and family responsibilities and could only manage to meet me in the presence of their family.

Finally, I found that the five-step analytical method was not entirely appropriate for the interviews I conducted. Since the research participants responded in English, not their native language, I do not think analysing specific word selection in their interview is very fruitful. Therefore, I have used the analytical method only to a limited extent. I found the preparation for the first two steps very helpful: 1) Extracting the objective life experiences from the

interview and participant observations and placing them in chronological order; 2)

Segmenting the told story based on changes in subject and text types and noting the length of these segments and intermediate pauses. Comparing the lived life with the told story is also an excellent means of identifying what information was included and excluded and hypothesising the biographer's intentions for doing so.

Conclusion

The biographic narrative method provides a powerful interviewing technique that reveals life processes and changes. The focus on the research participant's viewpoint and orientation frees the interview from the researcher's biases and preconceptions. As a result, it is an ideal interview technique for observing how the lives of men and women have changed from their participation in the Shiv Sena. From the lived lives, the researcher is provided with objective life facts for assessing their level of empowerment or life changes from joining Shiv Sena. The told story also informs the researcher about the participants' sense of confidence as well as the importance they place on Shiv Sena in affecting their material lives and perspectives. The analytical steps can also be very revealing, though their usefulness is limited in my case due to language differences. Using the biographic narrative method, I have been able to construct comprehensive portraits of different lives of men and women in Shiv Sena. By comparing and contrasting these lives and examining the interplay of masculinity, violence and ethnic nationalism in the Shiv Sena, I have attempted to assess the potential of empowerment for men and women through Hindu nationalism.

CHAPTER TWO: The Potential for Empowerment¹

Introduction

Co-opted by the women's movement, the concept of empowerment often refers to women's empowerment in relation to men. While empowerment as an objective for a population is rooted in community empowerment, much of the recent empowerment literature speaks from the perspective of women. Yet, men can also be the subjects/actors of empowerment. In addition, the empowerment of women implicitly involves power relations with men and vice-versa. Though designed with women as the subject, the empowerment framework as outlined by Jo Rowlands is equally applicable to marginalised men. In accordance, I will use this empowerment framework to examine the empowerment of men as well as women in Shiv Sena.

In this chapter, I first explore definitions and theories of power and empowerment. I then contextualize the concept of empowerment in the women's movement of India, where it represents one path towards women's liberation. In the final section, I discuss the present controversy amongst feminists in India regarding the potential for empowerment through Hindu Right women's wings. It is this question which this thesis primarily addresses.

I. Theories of Empowerment

1. Defining Power and Empowerment

Assessing the empowerment of women in the Hindu Right requires an understanding of the concept of 'empowerment'. A dynamic and enabling process, empowerment is rooted in different notions of power. In order to build a theoretical framework of empowerment, one must first examine and define 'power'. In Questioning Empowerment, Jo Rowlands (1997) describes various forms of power and their translation into conceptions of empowerment. Using Nancy Hartsock's (1985) contrasting definitions of power as 'obedience' and 'energy', Rowlands categorises power as either dominating or generative

¹ This chapter was presented chapter 1 of my MPhil thesis in Development Studies, "Empowering Women of

(Rowlands 1997). Power understood as obedience is an externally imposed force, while power as energy is generated within an individual or group. Defining power as obedience or domination results in a 'power over' understanding of power relations in which one party is able to control the actions or options of another. Exercising 'power over' another party may in the extreme entail the use of violence (or the threat of it) or other forms of force. For example, resources may be offered or withheld in exchange for compliance or co-operation (Rowlands 1997). As Steven Lukes (1974) argues, power also can be exercised in 'unobservable' ways, by preventing people from even thinking of resisting. In Power: A Radical View, Lukes queries:

...is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial? (Lukes 1974:24).

Thus, power wielders can exercise 'power over' the marginalised ideologically using cultural and religious paradigms. Emphasis placed on women's cultural roles by the Hindu Right to control their activities exemplifies this point.

Defining power as 'energy' obviates the need for it to involve domination. Instead, it can be generative, stimulating activity in others and raising their morale. In this case, an increase in one person's power does not necessarily diminish that of another (Rowlands 1997:12). Power is not an attained status or finite force to be distributed among parties, but a process. Derived from the definition of power as energy, three additional forms of power which are described by Rowlands – 'power to', 'power with' and 'power from within' – suggest alternative means towards empowerment. 'Power to' is a productive or generative power that enables new opportunities and engenders new actions. 'Power with' describes the force of strength produced through group unity – "a sense of that whole being greater than the sum of the individuals" (Rowlands 1997:13). 'Power from within' suggests an inner strength generated by an individual. Based on self-acceptance and self-respect, this power

extends to respect and acceptance of others. 'Power from within' also enables individuals to maintain a stance despite risks or potential opposition (Rowlands 1997).

Conceptions of Empowerment

According to the concept of 'power over' described above, power is a finite entity; if some people have more, then others have less. Within gender relations, this would mean that women can only gain power at the expense of men. Therefore, women's empowerment would be inherently threatening to men. Not only would men lose power, but women could also wield 'power over' them (Rowlands 1997:11).

The empowerment approach based on 'power over' effectively defuses this perceived threat to men by merely incorporating those previously excluded into power structures. This approach emphasises participation in political structures, formal decision-making, and income generation that allows participation in economic decision-making (Rowlands 1997). Thus, women's empowerment entails giving women the opportunity to occupy economic and political positions of power in society. Yet, this view of power as a privilege granted to the marginalised, produces a limited empowerment that does not change the structure of power relations. Though the marginalised are included in power structures, they remain subordinate to the power wielders who bestowed power upon them. By preserving power relations, this approach mitigates the threat women's empowerment poses to men.

Empowerment as 'power to', 'power with', or 'power from within' entails a process by which people become aware of their own interests, develop means to relate them to others, and act upon them. This enables the individual to participate from a position of greater strength in decision-making, as her power is generated rather than granted. From certain feminist perspectives, the 'power to', 'power with' and 'power from within' models offer more than 'power over' in terms of women's empowerment. Feminist interpretations of power go beyond the formal and institutional definitions and incorporate the idea of 'the personal as political' (Rowlands 1997:14; McDowell 1999; Women and Geography Study Group 1984).

Empowerment is not just participation in public decision-making, but also includes processes that lead people to perceive themselves as *able* and *entitled* to make decisions and demand resources. Instances of increased 'power to', 'power with' and 'power from within' are manifested in women increasing their ability to act, to perceive themselves as capable, to have opinions, to use time effectively, to control resources, to interact with others, to initiate activities and to respond to events. Thus, through 'power to' and 'power from within', an individual may no longer feel constrained by socio-economic structures. In this way, empowerment enables women to see themselves as having the right and capacity to act, influence decisions, and achieve their full potential.

Personal, Collective and Relational Empowerment

Viewing empowerment as a holistic process, many feminists recognise three dimensions of empowerment for women: personal, collective and 'in close relationships' (Rowlands 1997). 'Personal empowerment' entails developing self-confidence, a sense of agency and a sense of 'self' in a wider context. It involves the individual overcoming the constraints of her internalised oppression. Personal empowerment may entail leaving the house unaccompanied or taking on a position of active leadership in an organisation. 'Collective empowerment' results from individuals working together to achieve a greater impact than each could have alone. A woman can derive collective empowerment from a group identity or a collective sense of agency. Relationships within the collective as well as between the collective and the wider community may at times enhance or inhibit the empowerment process of the group or individuals (Rowlands 1997). Finally, empowerment 'in close relationships' involves the ability of the individual to negotiate and influence the nature of her close relationships and the decisions made within them. This entails communicating one's needs to, garnering support from, and defending one's person or one's rights with regard to close family members. This is often the most difficult type of empowerment because it involves changing the behaviour of her partner or close family

members, not just her own self. For women, empowerment 'in close relationships' has a marked impact on other aspects of their lives. Often it determines the extent to which a woman can participate in a group or make decisions for herself (Rowlands 1997:125).

2. Realising Empowerment

After this theoretical outline, we may now examine some more concrete views of empowerment within defined parameters. These views incorporate the concepts of 'power to', 'power with' and 'power from within', and emphasise different dimensions of empowerment such as personal and collective empowerment. Bringing together and articulating these conceptual elements into models of empowerment, the following theories provide a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of empowerment.

Contextualizing Personal Empowerment

McWhirter (1991) provides a personal counselling definition of empowerment that is useful for social contexts as well. According to McWhirter, empowerment is a process by which people, organisations or groups who are powerless:

- a) become aware of the power dynamics in their life context;
- b) develop the skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives;
- c) exercise this control without infringing upon the rights of others;
- d) support the empowerment of others in the community (McWhirter 1991:224).

Thus, empowerment entails recognising inequalities and working towards their removal.

This can be achieved on a small scale by linking people who share similar situations through self-help, education or social action groups; or on a larger scale through community organisation and policy formulation.

This view of personal change as empowerment is embodied in Caroline Moser's 'empowerment approach'(1993), whereby women organise themselves in order to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their right to make choices, and to control resources that will enable them to challenge and eventually eliminate their subordination (in Rowlands 1997). Yet, for Janet Price (1992), empowerment entails more than personal change and

growth. An individual must also question her personal power in relation to broader social structures. Thus, Price sees participation in politics and a woman's identification of her own needs and priorities as essential components of the empowerment process.

From Personal to Collective Empowerment

Based on her work on women's organisations and collective activities in Latin America, Hazel Johnson (1992) presents an approach to empowerment in which personal and collective empowerment intermingle and enable one another. Like Price, Johnson recognises that personal growth is insufficient and must lead to the exercise of power in society. According to Johnson, empowerment entails taking collective public action beyond the individual on the basis of collective class, gender or another identity. This process of personal and collective empowerment can result in public actions that challenge existing power structures as well as identify different development priorities. Johnson's model recognises that empowerment is a process that may begin as personal empowerment, but then evolves into collective empowerment that affects social structures. Acknowledging the importance of meeting women's particular needs, Johnson admits that collective action may initially be based on family survival rather than women's subordination directly. As a result, she also recognises that this process of self-discovery and development of a collective identity may be slow and gradual.

From Collective to Personal Empowerment

Emphasising the importance of building upon 'power from within', Naila Kabeer (2000) suggests personal empowerment can be achieved through the collective. To Kabeer, elements such as self-respect and a sense of agency are fundamental to empowerment processes. 'Power from within' enables women to improve their ability to control resources, to determine agendas and to make decisions. According to Kabeer, 'power from within' can be encouraged by actions and by the collective:

From a state of powerlessness that manifests itself in a feeling of 'I cannot', empowerment contains an element of collective self-confidence that results in a feeling of 'we can' (Kabeer quoted in Rowlands 1997:22).

'Power from within' need not be self-generative, but can be inspired by or initially built upon a collective empowerment. Through the collective, a woman can gain social networks, organisational strength and analytical skills which result in new forms of consciousness that contribute to her personal empowerment.

3. Questioning Empowerment

Srilatha Batliwala (1994) and Niral Yuval-Davis (1994) raise critical issues with certain approaches to empowerment and question whether women are actually being empowered. Batliwala particularly criticises approaches to empowerment that view women's powerlessness as arising from their weak economic position. According to Batliwala, the solution – greater economic participation – merely adds to women's work burdens. This critique can be made of any empowerment approach that increases participation without changing social structures or relations. While becoming more politically or socially active certainly enhances one's 'power from within' and 'power to', it can also create a double burden of responsibilities. For example, a woman may become personally empowered by earning her own living or joining a political organisation. Yet, if she also continues to carry the full responsibility for domestic duties, including childcare, her 'empowerment' has actually increased her burden. Often a woman will resolve this problem by devolving work onto another woman, commonly her eldest daughter (Rowlands 1997). Thus, Batliwala emphasises the importance of beginning with 'the woman's own experiences and realities' to understand power structures and to identify important issues.

Yuval-Davis (1994) raises the issue that empowerment for one group may result in the 'disempowerment' of another. Conflicts of interest may result in a 'power over' situation where achieving the needs of one group results in the loss of power for another. Yuval-Davis is particularly wary of constructions involving specific 'identity politics' which

homogenise and naturalise social categories and groupings (Rowlands 1997). Such groups can deny shifting internal boundaries, power differences, and conflicts of interest. In such a situation, collective empowerment can result in disempowerment of internal groups such as women.

Violence and Empowerment

Objections to empowerment through religious fundamentalist groups are also based on the rejection by many feminists of their advocacy of violence. As a movement for secularism, democracy and human rights, the Indian women's movement does not support organisations that preach bigotry and foster violence (Calman 1992:162). Violence is the trademark of Hindu Right groups such as the Shiv Sena and its women's wing the Mahila Aghadi. Though these women claim to have gained confidence and exhibit characteristics associated with empowerment as defined above, many feminists do not consider their use of violence as a legitimate means of empowerment. No theories appear to exist on empowerment through violence in the literature on women's empowerment. References to violence generally relate to violence *against* women rather than violence *by* women. Battered women need to be empowered to help them stand on their own feet psychologically and financially (Calman 1992:139).

While violence is regarded as bringing about the need for empowerment and recognised as a method of exercising 'power over', it has been discounted as a means of empowerment. Maintaining that the exercise of power should not infringe upon the rights of others, McWhirter (1991) does not recognise 'power over' as a means of empowerment, though she does encourage the 'powerless' to take action and gain control of their lives. If the removal of inequalities is defined as an objective of empowerment, then the use of violence to dominate others, which generates new inequalities, is considered counterproductive (Rowlands 1997). Liz Kelly (1992) also views 'power to' as the only legitimate basis for empowerment, which she believes is achieved by increasing one's ability

to resist and challenge 'power over'. The refusal to consider 'power over' methods like violence as a means of empowerment, because they do not conform to liberal conceptions and objectives, demonstrates the potential utopian nature of the approaches these empowerment theorists espouse and suggests a gap in the literature. Though these theorists do not regard violence as a legitimate means towards empowerment, women in the Hindu Right have apparently used violence to initiate the empowerment process for victims of domestic violence and women in other 'power over' situations. While this does not mean that violence is not problematic, particularly as violence often breeds more violence (e.g., riots), it may be that in certain circumstances, after non-violent channels have been pursued, violence is necessary. Also, violence is not the only means of empowerment potentially offered by Hindu Right women's wings; participation in politics and social activism are in fact more common. Therefore, the empowerment of women through the Hindu Right should not be dismissed or discounted solely based on its association with violence.

II. The Women's Movement in India

1. The Autonomous Women's Movement

To understand the empowerment of women in India, the concept of empowerment must first be set within the context of the autonomous women's movement. Empowering people socially and politically, social movements like the women's movement act as a bridge between state institutions and those who lack access to political power or a political voice (Calman 1992). Participation in movements also increases social consciousness and can provide a new supportive community which transforms political, social and economic aspects of people's lives. As a vehicle that empowers those who lack the power to make decisions which affect their own lives, movements are ideal vehicles for bringing women into the mainstream of Indian political life.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the autonomous women's movement in India developed as a political force focusing on women as subordinate partners within domestic

and social relationships (Agnes 1995:137). Angry with the Indian government's failure to protect women from violence, the women's movement (consisting primarily of liberal, educated women from the upper classes) began to take shape around the issues of dowry deaths² and rape (Agnes 1994:1123). The objectives of the women's movement were the protection and enhancement of women's rights as well as their social and economic empowerment. Through agitation and legislation, the movement has mobilised women to transform power relationships in their social and political lives.

2. The 'Rights' and 'Empowerment' Wings

Through the so-called 'rights' and 'empowerment' wings, the women's movement has taken a two-pronged approach to improving the lives of women in India. The 'rights' wing is focused on state and legislative intervention. Recognising the government's unique resources and powers to create and enforce laws and to allocate funds, the rights wing's approach tends to rely primarily on effecting change through the government. The rights wing focuses its efforts on urging the state to:

- 1) Pass laws that give women equality in family matters such as inheritance, marriage, divorce and child custody;
- 2) Improve women's health and access to education;
- 3) Promote equality in employment;
- 4) Pass and implement legislation with regard to rape and dowry that will free women from violence (Calman 1992:12).

While legislative changes may legally expand rights and opportunities for Indian women in general, they do not necessarily translate into concrete improvements in the lives of actual women. Often, laws are not implemented at the ground level, or women lack the awareness, confidence or ability to take advantage of them. Though effecting legislative change is essential, it can be limited and has proven insufficient as the sole approach to improving the conditions and position of women in Indian society.

² Dowry deaths, in which young brides are murdered by their husbands and/or in-laws, occur in the thousands each year. The murder is often preceded by demands for increased dowry payments; a dowry death may also result from a husband's desire to marry again and thus obtain a new dowry (Calman 1992:56).

For the 'empowerment' wing, the empowerment of women is the primary means by which women will attain economic and social rights, "the right to a livelihood and ability to determine their own future" (Calman 1992:15). Economic power is considered particularly critical in enabling women to exercise power within their families and communities. As a result, empowerment organisations often focus on assets, economic resources and income generation activities to mobilise poor women to expand their economic opportunities. Material problems such as poverty, malnutrition, illness and illiteracy are viewed as potentially limiting women's participation and keeping them politically and socially marginalised (Calman 1992:10). Thus, attacking these material and developmental problems is regarded as a prerequisite for women's political empowerment.

Though recognising the importance of meeting practical needs, the empowerment wing does not regard the delivery of services to poor women as enabling the sustained transformation of their lives. Interested in women's empowerment rather than their uplifting, the empowerment wing attempts to empower women personally and collectively through participation in the women's movement itself. Organisations are self-consciously created to enable women to develop the capacity to make important decisions in their own lives and thus become psychologically and socially empowered. Participation in women's associations fosters the growth of consciousness and confidence. The process of regularly working and meeting together helps create a sense of unity and mutual aid among the women. Often, through these organisations, women are linked for the first time to people outside their families (Calman 1992). Meetings provide a space where women can express their ideas and in which their opinions count. Providing women emotional and practical support, the group is also a forum in which women share their personal and business problems. In identifying problems and generating strategies to confront them, they realise that they have a shared interest with other women and that the poverty, violence or discrimination they experience as women are neither justifiable nor inevitable. Women also gain skills in management and

decision-making in the process of discussing, organising and implementing various income-generating and social welfare schemes. Some learn to exercise leadership initially within the group and eventually gain greater responsibilities in the organisation or community.

Empowerment organisations also serve as forums for educating women about broader political and social issues. Women are brought into regular contact with a wide range of public institutions and officials (e.g., the police, local public officials, law-makers and courts). A greater understanding of the political process facilitates their participation in organised political activities such as lobbying and demonstrating for policies that directly impact them (e.g., ending police harassment). Thus, empowerment organisations not only serve as support-groups that emotionally and intellectually empower women, but also provide access to local political participation (Calman 1992:16). In this way, the women's movement acts as a first step toward women's empowerment in civil society and toward a more powerful engagement with the state.

3. State Recognition of Women's Issues

Due to the increased prominence of the women's movement in the 1980s, the state and political parties were forced to publicly address women's issues. Successful protests and media campaigns raised issues like rape, dowry, child molestation and wife battering in the national consciousness. Women's issues were placed on the agenda of state-sponsored development schemes, social work programmes and sociological research. The government established anti-dowry cells to help victims of domestic violence and made efforts at legislative reforms (Agnes 1995). The autonomous women's movement continues to push the state apparatus and political parties to pay attention to women's rights and women's participation in government. For example, the women's reservation bill is attempting to increase women's participation in parliament and state assemblies through a 33% reservation of seats for women. While this bill faces tremendous backlash, it has forced parties to increase women's participation in an effort to cultivate women candidates.

The success of the autonomous women's movement in the 1980s resulted in the formation or activation of women's wings by most political parties, including Hindu Right organisations. Both the BJP³'s Mahila Morcha (1980) and the Shiv Sena' Mahila Aghadi (1985) came into existence in the 1980s. While the RSS's Samiti⁴ was formed in 1936, it became more visible and politically active in the 1980s (Setalvad 1995). Initially, these organisations refrained from raising issues of domestic strife and male dominance in their women's wings (Agnes 1994:1124). Yet the growing awareness among urban, educated, middle class women of their rights and status, forced the women's wings of these parties to take cognisance of these issues (Setalvad 1994:237). As a result, even Hindu nationalist parties were compelled to give public recognition to their women's wings and acknowledge social issues related to women.

III. Feminist Critiques of the Hindu Right

While feminists in the autonomous women's movement effectively put women's concerns on the national agenda and brought women's participation to the forefront of Indian politics, Hindu Right women's wings have proven more effective in the mass mobilisation of women⁵ (Setalvad 1994:237). Thanks to their parent organisations, the women's wings of the RSS and Shiv Sena have an extensive reach at the grass roots level and are able to attract women from diverse backgrounds. Recruitment is facilitated by the fact that leaders of the wings live among the members and generally come from the same socio-economic background. Sharing the same problems and constraints as the members, women leaders are viewed as more accessible and effective than feminist activists from the upper social classes.

According to feminist activist Teesta Setalvad, Hindu Right women's wings are also less demanding ideologically than feminist groups, making them easier to join. Speaking

³ The BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) is the Hindu nationalist political party that led India's coalition government from 1998-2004. The Mahila Morcha is the BJP's women's wing.

⁴ The RSS (Rashtra Swayamsevak Sangh) is the most prominent Hindu nationalist organization in India. Its branches include the BJP, VHP and Samiti (the women's branch). A detailed account of the Samiti will be provided in chapter 7.

only of publicly visible issues such as dowry deaths and rape, they refrain from challenging the patriarchal structures most women live under. For example, the BJP's Mahila Morcha promises women the ability to participate politically and socially without risking their married domesticity or their dignity within the community. The struggle towards Hindutva, which is considered a just and moral cause due to its religious and patriotic connotations, provides women with a respectable space within the community to act as leaders and fulfil their political aspirations. On the other hand, the autonomous women's movement focuses on issues (e.g., women's subordination) which challenge patriarchal power structures. Women are forced to not only ask inconvenient questions, but also to take risks that challenge their family and social structures. Thus, from the perspective of feminists like Setalvad, Hindutva provides women an easier transition from the domestic sphere to the more public domain since they retain the support and consent of their families.

Despite the increasing commitment to and growth in membership of Hindu Right women's wings, Indian feminist scholars like Pushpa Bhawe⁶ and Tanika Sarkar (1995b) question whether this movement authentically expresses the empowerment of women or is a manipulated and constructed 'false consent and intentionality'. Sarkar does concede that women participating in Hindu Right organisations do experience some sense of empowerment:

Yet among women of a specific conservative milieu it certainly has bestowed a degree of empowerment and a sense of confidence and larger solidarities. It has brought them into activist, public roles and has thereby probably increased their bargaining power within their home as political activism invariably does to some extent. It has allowed them to go beyond a purely domestic and feminine identity (Sarkar 1995b:210).

But she and Bhawe both see this empowerment as limited, as well as dangerous, since it leads women into "a complicity with fascist intolerance and violence, toward the creation of an authoritarian, anti-democratic social and political order" (Sarkar 1993:24). Sarkar sees this as leading these women to work against rights and justice for their own sex. Thus, Sarkar does not believe that any feminist could argue that "the Hindu Right movement can

⁵ The BJP alone claims 1,300,000 members (Setalvad 1995:235).

contribute anything to the broad rights of women"(Sarkar 1995b:210). She also sees their empowerment as being limited by the respect for religious tradition, patriarchy and masculinity implicit in the ideology of Hindu nationalism. Each of these aspects will be discussed in turn.

1. Respect for Religion

Though the autonomous women's movement recognises religion as a source of solace and support as well as a space for personal expression and interaction with other women, it is fundamentally wary of all religious ideologies. For a movement committed to social change and to fighting gender injustice, the tendency of religion to legitimise the existing social order and to justify women's subordination, is problematic (Poonacha 1993:438). Religion and family are viewed as institutions that construct culture and which limit women's ability to make meaningful decisions regarding their own lives. The women's movement seeks to transform women's social consciousness, which entails identifying and analysing women's inferior status and power (Calman 1992:10). The personal empowerment of women within the family in particular is viewed as a prerequisite for their participation in public life. In order to develop economically and politically, women must have some autonomy and power within their families and communities, as well as the capacity for community participation and decision-making. This requires that they have control over their lives, personal efficacy and some freedom from physical violence. Social, cultural and religious structures are seen as confining women's personal autonomy by dictating a customary social subservience to men. Therefore, the movement considers undermining patriarchal institutions as essential to promoting women's status and power (Calman 1992:11).

⁶ Interview on August 2, 2000

2. The 'Patriarchal Bargain'

Deniz Kandiyoti explains the particular constraints of patriarchy on women's personal empowerment through her 'patriarchal bargain' concept. A patriarchal bargain is a set of prescribed and normative rules within a society which regulate its members' relative bargaining power, which in turn determines their ability to exercise agency. Patriarchal bargains influence a woman's active or passive resistance within a patriarchal system. Kandiyoti (1998) classifies patriarchy in India as 'classic patriarchy' in which girls are typically married into patrilineal households where they are subordinate not only to the men, but also to the more senior women, particularly their mothers-in-law. Generally lacking claim to her father's patrimony, the young bride establishes her place in the patriline only by producing male offspring. Valuing sons over daughters as a means of improving her position, she thus perpetuates the subordination of women within the 'classic patriarchy'.

A woman's life-cycle within the classic patriarchy entails deprivation and hardship as a young bride, later superseded by control and authority over her own subservient daughter-in-law. The cyclical nature of women's power in the household, and their anticipation of inheriting the authority of senior women, encourage internalisation of patriarchy by women themselves. In 'classic patriarchy', the control a mother-in-law has over her daughter-in-law offsets women's subordination to men. The cyclical nature of women's power position results in women's active collusion in the perpetuation of their own subordination within a patriarchal structure. Antagonism between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is aggravated by the mother's dependence upon her son for social security in her old age. In order to maintain her son's primary allegiance, a mother has a vested interest in keeping the conjugal bond secondary. Therefore, in their attempts to maximise their welfare and security, women use interpersonal strategies such as manipulation of their sons' and husbands' affections. While these tactics potentially enable an individual woman to improve her own life, they do little to alter the structurally detrimental terms of patriarchy.

Kandiyoti argues that women strategize within the set of concrete constraints which constitute the 'patriarchal bargain'. Within the Indian 'classic patriarchy', women have little space to bargain. They are initially dependent upon their fathers, then upon their husbands and sons. They risk losing economic support by questioning the authority of those upon whom they depend. They gain more by working with tradition than by questioning the relationships and situations that oppress them. By enabling women to participate politically and socially without questioning patriarchy, Hindu Right women's wings seemingly enable the perpetuation of the patriarchal bargain and women's subordination within it.

3. Masculinity in the Hindu Right

Promotion of masculinity within Hindu Right organisations also potentially limits the autonomy and empowerment of their women members. Social changes, the changing role of women in families and women's employment potentially threaten men's sense of power and control, resulting in a 'crisis of masculinity' (Gooptu lecture 2000). Resenting proactive state promotion of women's rights and orientation of development policies to meet women's needs, men of the Hindu Right attempt to buttress patriarchy as a means of contravention. Hindu nationalism places a significant emphasis on maleness, masculine virtues, machismo and a martial ethic – qualities deemed necessary to govern a strong state (Hansen 1996). This promotion of masculine qualities leads to male chauvinism and the devaluation of women within Hindu Right organisations. The importance granted to men in the Hindu Right fosters resentment toward women for their increased participation in politics and society. This resentment also threatens to undermine women's personal and collective empowerment. This will be discussed further in the chapters on the Hindu Right.

4. Empowerment through the Hindu Right?

While feminists like Sarkar and Bhave see the empowerment of the women in the Hindu Right as limited and potentially false, women's rights advocate Flavia Agnes believes

that despite the present limitations, participation in politics will eventually result in the questioning of patriarchy by these women. Rather than being limited, their empowerment according to Agnes occurs gradually, through different means. Agnes states:

...as large numbers of women enter the public arena under the banner of communal forces, slowly but steadily the older and conservative notions about women's role and status in society will give way to a struggle for equality within the organisational structure (Agnes 1994:1126).

To Agnes, exposure to women's issues and participation in politics are sufficient catalysts for women's empowerment, and the collective empowerment resulting from participation in politics will engender personal empowerment. Furthermore, exposure to women's issues (e.g., social inequality, domestic violence) will cause women to question the limitations of patriarchal structures. They will also begin to demand more recognition and responsibility within the organisation and society. The apparent demands for broader representation within the BJP by its women's wing seem to corroborate Agnes' position (Agnes 1994:1126).

Conclusion

Are the women of the Hindu Right to be viewed in antithesis to the women's movement? Or do they simply propose a different means towards the common goal of women's empowerment? The positions of Sarkar and Setalvad are based on a general view of Hindu Right women's wings. However, there are differences between these wings in terms of activities, class, and their relationship with their parent organisations. As a result, processes of empowerment for their respective members differ. While the organisation may present a collective position, its individual members are not necessarily in accordance.

Using the Shiv Sena in the Opera House district of Mumbai as a case study, I will examine how and to what extent its women members have been empowered. I will try to assess whether or not the empowerment they are experiencing is in fact limited, or merely a gradual or specific type of empowerment. Adopting Rowlands' empowerment framework, I will examine the situation of women in the Shiv Sena in terms of personal, collective and relational empowerment. While personal and collective empowerment are largely

subjective, and can be established by interviewing individual members and observing their behaviour, empowerment in relation to men requires an examination of the Shiv Sena as an organisation, and of the empowerment of men. Therefore, before I examine the Shiv Sena's women's wing, I will place these women in the context of Mumbai, the Shiv Sena as a whole and the dominant male membership of the organisation. In the following chapters, Shiv Sena women will not be distinguished from the men. They will be included in the male-biased term, Marathi *manus*, which refers to ordinary Maharashtrians in Mumbai. While the term actually means the common Marathi *man*, Shiv Sena women identify with this identity and share the plight of unemployment and 'disempowerment' of the men in their community. As the Shiv Sena was formed to specifically address the unemployment of Marathi men, I will first examine the attraction of the Sena from this male perspective and establish whether it has empowered the Marathi *manus*. This process of empowerment of men through the Shiv Sena will serve as a benchmark against which I shall then compare and contrast the empowerment of Shiv Sena women in the final chapters.

CHAPTER THREE: Disempowerment in Bombay

Introduction

Considered the consummate cosmopolitan metropolis, Bombay seemed an unlikely setting for the emergence of the Shiv Sena with its agenda of ethnic and religious chauvinism. Yet, rather than an anomaly, the rise of the Shiv Sena is a direct outgrowth of Bombay's historical processes and socio-economic conditions. In this chapter, I argue that the political, social and economic conditions of Bombay have resulted in the 'disempowerment' of the Marathi *manus* which the Sena articulates and promises to rectify. An historical process, this 'disempowerment' is a matter of perception and social construction. It entails a perceived sense of: inefficacy, deprivation due to discrimination and entitlement to social status, economic privileges, and political power. This chapter examines the history, socio-economic conditions and ineffective government of Bombay.

Evidence of Maharashtrians' historical deprivation lies in Bombay's colonial history. After Independence, the expectations and aspirations of the Marathi *manus* were raised by the movement to create the linguistic state of Maharashtra. From the 1960s, the socio-economic conditions of Mumbai engendered frustration and further reinforced a sense of material deprivation among Maharashtrians. Finally, the government's inability to meet their socio-economic expectations that had been raised caused the common man to seek new arbiters of power and resources. This combination of rising expectations in the midst of unchanging socio-economic conditions produced a sense of frustration that the Sena has articulated as discrimination and the emasculation of men. Shiv Sena derives its appeal from this perceived inequality between Maharashtrians and other ethnic groups in Bombay.

I. Bombay: Joining Maharashtra

1. Cosmopolitan Bombay

In December 1992 and January 1993, communal riots erupted in Bombay in reaction to the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Demonstrating the extent to which identities had

become linked with community and religion, the riots symbolised the demise of Bombay's 'cosmopolitanism' (Sharma 1995: 269). This cosmopolitanism reflected the environment of tolerance engendered by Bombay's historically rich ethnic and religious diversity. Bombay has attracted migrants of a wide variety of linguistic and cultural communities who have been competing for political power and educational opportunities since the 19th century (Dobbin 1972: 217-46).

Yet Bombay's cosmopolitanism is problematic for Bombay's Marathi residents (Katzenstein 1979: 40). Though it is now the capital of Maharashtra and contains more Marathi-speakers than any other ethnic-linguistic group, Bombay is not a Maharashtrian city. Pune, in the interior, is the centre of Marathi culture and politics. From its inception, Bombay has been a foreign city in the land and the embodiment of imperial culture and modernity for Marathi-speaking intellectuals (Kosambi 1995). Yet the desire to domesticate Bombay within a Marathi social and linguistic world has been strongly expressed since Independence and fuels the political imagination today (Hansen 2001: 37). Since the 1960s, the Marathi-speaking population has argued that Bombay belongs to Maharashtra and that the native Marathi-speaking people have special rights within it. They also insist that Bombay residents should speak Marathi as a second language. Bombay's identity crisis as a cosmopolitan versus Maharashtrian city is a product of Bombay's colonial history and lies at the crux of the disempowerment of the Marathi *manus*.

2. Colonial Bombay

Though geographically Bombay belongs to Maharashtra, it has been peripheral to this region both politically and economically since the 16th century. While the Marathi-speaking Koli (fisher folk) are considered the original inhabitants of the islands that comprise Bombay, as a leading port it has attracted and been controlled predominantly by foreign forces.¹ Ceded to Portugal by the Sultan of Gujurat Bahadur in 1534, Bombay was later

¹ Bombay attracted Arab, Abyssinian, Persian, Jewish, Portuguese and British traders (Dobbin 1972).

presented to Charles the II of England in 1661. In 1668, Bombay was transferred to the East India Company until 1857, when the British government took over its administration with the fall of the Peshwa government in Maharashtra (Katsenstein 1979: 41)². The East India Company's interest in Bombay stemmed from its proximity to Surat, which could guarantee trade; its insularity further ensured security and independence. Providing safe anchorage in all seasons, Bombay's natural harbour facilitated trade between Gujurat and Britain. As a result, Bombay became the leading commercial centre of British India in the 19th century on the basis of overseas trade and, later, its textile mills.

Even before the British, Bombay was a city built and developed largely by a non-Marathi industrial and commercial bourgeoisie comprising Parsi, Gujurati, Hindu and Muslim communities who earned their wealth on the extensive Arabian trade (Chandravarkar 1994: 21-70 in Hansen 2001: 38). With the growth of Bombay's importance as a port, these non-Marathi trading communities moved into Bombay to establish a central position in its commercial enterprises. The economic pre-eminence of these non-Maharashtrians became especially pronounced in the mid-19th century (Dobbin 1972: Katzenstein 1979; Desai 1995), when the remaining Marathi-speaking elite were displaced by non-Maharashtrian merchants and industrialists who owned most of the capital and dominated the business community.

Within colonial Bombay's occupational hierarchy, each ethnic/religious community had its niche. The British retained positions of power but were also merchants, administrators, military officers and soldiers. The Portuguese were landed gentry and heads of Roman Catholic orders. Among the "indigenous" communities, the Parsis, a Zoroastrian community from Persia, were the most influential and loyal supporters of colonial rule. Their non-Indian origins and early adoption of a Westernised lifestyle brought them closer to the European community, as middlemen brokers, agents and contractors (Desai 1995: 94).

² The Maratha Empire was governed by the indigenous Peshwa government and thus remained independent from British colonialism until 1802. This is particularly significant in terms of the Marathi identity; the

As a result, they eagerly promoted the cosmopolitan, modern and non-Marathi character of Bombay. Among the other non-Marathi groups, the Gujarati mercantile communities also attained pre-eminence through wholesale trade, banking and money lending. Their prominence made Gujarati the lingua-franca of Bombay. Finally, Marwaris from Rajasthan gained economic clout with their capital and entrepreneurial skills in the textile industry.

In contrast, Marathi communities in Bombay followed occupations outside the commercial and industrial sector. While Pathare Prabhus and Marathi Brahmans occupied key administrative and clerical positions under the British, only Sonar (goldsmiths) and Kesar (jeweller) castes approached the wealth and economic status of Gujarati merchants. Most Marathi castes from Ratnagiri and the Deccan served as labour for Bombay's industry or as servants (Desai 1995: 96). Towards the end of the 19th century, a large number of Marathi labourers came from the Deccan (the interior) and Konkan (the coastal belt south of Bombay) to work in the textile mills. This reinforced the image of Maharashtrians as primarily labourers (Katzenstein 1979: 44). Until the 1940s, Marathi-speakers accounted for about half the city's population and held mostly manual and unskilled jobs. Thus, while Bombay became India's industrial and financial capital through its textile industry and overseas trade, native Maharashtrians gained little economic power or social clout (Katzenstein 1979: 45).

The 19th century commercial clout of non-Maharashtrians in Bombay deprived Maharashtrians of a dominant role in Bombay's politics. Under the British, suffrage was limited to taxpayers; this made wealth rather than numbers the determinant of political strength. Though Maharashtrians outnumbered other communities, their limited involvement in trade resulted in the historical dominance of Bombay's economy and politics by non-Marathi communities particularly Parsi, Marwari, Muslim and Gujarati merchants and industrialists (Katzenstein 1979: 45). However, with the increasing migration of Maharashtrian labourers and educated Saraswat Brahmans and Pathare Prabhus (scribes of

Maratha Empire was considered the last bastion for Indians against foreign forces, both Mughal and British.

the Peshwas) into Bombay, the city began to acquire a more Maharashtrian character (Gupta 1982: 47). The continued domination of non-Maharashtrians in Bombay's economic, intellectual and political spheres resulted in feelings of estrangement among the Maharashtrians in Bombay, especially the educated and literate.

3. Samyutka Movement: Creating a Marathi Identity

Efforts to create a State of Maharashtra in the 1920s, resulted in a unified Maharashtrian identity. The reorganisation of the Congress Party in the 1920s along linguistic lines began this process by making regions important loci of political identity and mobilisation. In the 1930s, the need for a unified Maharashtrian identity became imperative as activists from the non-Brahman movement in Maharashtra moved toward the Congress Party. According to Hansen (2001: 41), a new "syndicated" version of Maharashtra identity and ethno-history emerged, which attempted to transcend caste divisions. Shivaji Maharaj no longer represented the ethos of just the Maratha caste, but of all Maharashtrians³. The successful preservation and expansion of the Maratha Empire under Shivaji had made it the bastion of Hinduism and last haven in the indigenous peoples' struggle against the alien Mughals and the British. The downfall and dismemberment of the Maratha empire became a shared trauma for all Maharashtrians, who felt deprived and who longed for a united Maharashtra and for their former greatness (Gupta 1982: 41). Based on this new Marathi identity, Marathi leaders in the 1920s and 1940s championed the creation of the State of Maharashtra.

A product of this new Maharashtrian consciousness, the Samyutka Maharashtra Sabha was formed in 1939 by a group of writers and intellectuals including K.S. Thackeray.⁴ Spanning the political spectrum, right-wing intellectuals joined with prominent Communists to assert the need for a unified Marathi-speaking state to bring an end to the deprivation of

³ Shivaji Maharaj built the Maratha Empire in the 17th century. From the Maratha caste, Shivaji had been primarily a hero for people of the Maratha caste until the late 19th century.

⁴ Father of Bal Thackeray, founder and leader of the Shiv Sena.

Marathi speakers. The Samyukta movement regarded the formation of linguistic states as essential for the advancement of social democracy by enabling anti-caste regional integration based on cultural identity and language. Emphasising cultural identity, the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti (SMS), which formed in 1946, saw monolingual states as the way to ensure social mobility and a public presence to non-Brahmans. The "alien" Gujarati money lenders replaced Brahmins as the primary enemy of the common Marathi-speaker. The Marathi language provided an uncontroversial basis for a Maharashtrian cultural identity and united Brahmins with non-Brahmins (Hansen 2001: 42).

By the mid-1950s, a heated debate arose regarding the reorganisation of the Bombay State, especially the inclusion of Bombay in a prospective state of Maharashtra (Katzenstein 1979: 46). Bombay had the unique position as a city of national importance with geographical ties to Maharashtra, but close economic ties to Gujarat. The Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti asserted that Bombay should be included in the State of Maharashtra. Though Marathi-speakers were not the majority there, at 43% they were the largest linguistic community in the city (Gupta 1982: 47). SMS fought for the creation of a state of Maharashtra with Bombay as its capital, on grounds of emotional and linguistic affinity. They further argued that Marathi-speaking castes were the true natives of Bombay and that its wealth was built on the backs of Maharashtrian labour (Katzenstein 1979:47).

For their part, the city's economic and political elite feared that Bombay would decline under a state government committed to developing the rural hinterland (Hansen 2001: 42). In this way, the struggle for Bombay became a conflict between dominant interests in agriculture (wealthy farmers in Maharashtra) and industry (non-Marathi commercial and industrial capital) (Lele 1995: 187). To protect their interests, industrialists argued that Bombay was a commercial centre of the entire country, not exclusively of Maharashtra. Contesting the dominance of the Marathi presence in Bombay, the opposition argued that Marathi-speakers were not the majority and that their proportions had been falling. Finally,

the opposition emphasised the fact that Bombay had never been a part of Maharashtra and that Bombay had been developed by the capital and managerial skills of non-Maharashtrians (Katzenstein 1979: 46).

Pressured by these business interests, the government of India decided to grant Bombay the status of Union Territory to prevent it from joining a monolingual state. However, the Congress Party leadership in Bombay underestimated the force of the popular sentiment that would erupt in response. On January 16, 1956, Nehru's declaration that Bombay would be a Union Territory resulted in large demonstrations. A series of riots lasting several days erupted in response to police firing at demonstrators protesting the arrest of SMS leaders. The more than 80 people killed by police gunfire in the "Battle for Bombay" were considered *hutatmas* (martyrs) for the Maharashtrian cause. Forming a united political front with almost all the non-Congress parties, the SMS launched a campaign for a monolingual state that lasted over three years. Using cultural populism as its main platform, the SMS portrayed the heated struggle as Maharashtrians (Marathi-speakers of all castes), the upholders of Hindu culture against Bombay's Westernised and decadent urban elite (Hansen 2001: 43). While the SMS succeeded in making Maharashtra a unilingual state with Bombay as its capital, the Marathi Congress Party had to guarantee national leaders that the interests of capital would be safeguarded, and that dominant rural interests would be given no more than their appropriate share of state resources (Lele 1995: 187).

The five-year struggle for a monolingual state of Maharashtra provided a focal point for the Maharashtrian consciousness. Successfully tapping the latent energy of Marathi regionalism, the SMS was able to mobilise masses and sustain the popular, cultural struggle. Through intense mass activity, violence and riots, the Samyukta movement legitimated the notion that Maharashtrians were deprived by outsiders and culturally alienated in Bombay. Conscious of their deprivation, Maharashtrians came together as a single community and became aware of their potential power (Gupta 1982: 44).

This sense of deprivation heightened Maharashtrian chauvinism. Maharashtrians began emphasising the superiority of their culture and traditions to counter their political and economic deprivation. Invoking the glorious days of Shivaji and the Maratha Empire, the SMS bolstered pride among Maharashtrians. As former Chief Minister Sharad Pawar stated:

One must remember that after the decline of Moghul supremacy it was Maratha who established Indian self-rule... The Maratha power sought to establish a central Hindu *Padshahi* or empire in Delhi controlling all other rulers... and to retrieve as much land as possible from the Muslim (Ravindranath 1992: 23-24 in Hansen 2001: 44).

This narrative not only emphasises the theme of independence from 'alien' oppression, but also provides the religious supplement (Hindu and anti-Muslim) to the regional/linguistic construction of the Maharashtrian cultural identity.⁵ It also enabled Maharashtrians to view themselves as a superior community with an exemplary history and culture who had been unjustly discriminated against by the central government and exploited by migrants from other states (Gupta 1982: 45). While this cultural populism united Maharashtrians to achieve statehood, it was never organised into a permanent institution, since its cohesion depended on resistance to the political establishment (Hansen 2001: 43).

While the Samyukta movement consolidated the Maharashtrian consciousness into a group identity, the formation of Maharashtra as a monolingual state raised expectations about the prospective position of the Maharashtrian community in Bombay (Katzenstein 1979: 40). Independence in 1947 and the division of the old Bombay State into the separate states of Gujarat and Maharashtra in 1960 suddenly boosted the political status of Maharashtrians. The creation of Maharashtra generated tremendous enthusiasm among Marathi-speakers who believed that the city of Bombay, as their new capital, would become a Marathi cultural space in which they could enjoy economic prosperity and social mobility. Arguing that Bombay now belonged to Maharashtra, Marathi-speakers asserted that they had

⁵ While this narrative enabled a more inclusive Marathi identity, merely evoking deep historical rifts between the concept of the Maratha and Brahman persisted and could not be overcome by exhortations of the new Maharashtrian spirit (Hansen 2001: 44). In addition, higher caste intellectuals feared the consequences of management of political affairs by Maratha politicians from the rural hinterland. They believed that politics would become unruly and slip out of control as peasants and lower-caste politicians entered the public sphere (Hansen 2001: 45).

special rights within it and demanded that the other residents speak Marathi as their second language. Rejecting the residential definition of the *Bombaywalla*, and the notion of Bombay as a cosmopolitan city, Marathi-speakers sought to turn it into a Marathi city where 'belonging' was based on ethnicity (Desai 1995: 279).

As a result, Maharashtrians began to question their economic position in Bombay. While gaining instant control of the state government, Maharashtrians did not become dominant economically. Marathi-speaking migrants to Bombay from the hinterlands felt uneasy with urban life. Arriving in the 1960s, these first-generation Marathi-speaking migrants were at the bottom of the labour market, competing with skilled communities from other parts of India (e.g., literate South Indians whose English skills gave them access to clerical jobs) (Hansen 2001: 45). The Marathi-speaking middle class in Bombay, who were strong supporters of the SMS, faced similar competition and saw little improvement to their job prospects. As the social scientist Sudha Gogate noted in Rise of Regionalism in Bombay City, "the frustrating feeling...of being nobody, though felt earlier too, was more poignant now because Bombay was no longer just another metropolis but a capital of their own state" (in Katzenstein 1979: 78). As a result, though the political status of Marathi-speakers in Bombay had improved significantly at the state and municipal levels by the early 1960s, many Maharashtrians felt the community had not received its share of power⁶. The enhancement of Maharashtrians' political status made the community's continued economic difficulties particularly glaring. In light of the raised hopes of the 1960s, the increased number of educated job seekers experienced a renewed sense of frustration. Given the discourse of the Samyukta movement that had drawn distinctions between Marathi-speakers and aliens, the blame for the middle class' continued economic hardship could be easily projected onto non-Maharashtrians (Hansen 2001: 45).

⁶ While in 1873, 12% of the representatives in the municipal council were Maharashtrians, that proportion had risen to 43% in 1961. At the state level, Maharashtrians monopolized ministerial posts and legislative assembly seats. Universal suffrage in 1948 and the creation of the Maharashtra state helped raise the number of Maharashtrians in political office in Bombay.

II. Urban Conditions: Overcrowding and Scarce Resources

The deteriorating urban conditions in Bombay from 1960 have nurtured the sense of deprivation among Maharashtrians whose origins we have just outlined. The rapid growth in Bombay's population has put pressure on employment, housing, and municipal services and resources such as water and electricity. These shortages have led to fierce competition between individuals and groups, and have generated a feeling of frustration. Due to their raised expectations, Maharashtrians in Bombay have been particularly frustrated by the deterioration of their conditions and the stagnation of their socio-economic position.

1. Population

In the decades following Independence, Bombay experienced a rapid growth in population. From 1951 to 1971, the population more than doubled to approximately 6 million, making greater Bombay the subcontinent's largest urban area (Hansen 2001: 40). Bombay's population had already doubled to 2 million in the much longer period from 1900 to 1941. Migration of Maharashtrians from the Deccan and Indians from other states account for most of this rapid growth.

This rural-urban migration is typical of India, where industrialisation developed in the confines of a colonial system that created large urban metropolitan centres surrounded by areas of poverty and backwardness. Under colonialism, little was done to develop the hinterlands. With its high investment rate and development as a major industrial centre, Bombay attracted migrants from rural areas of Maharashtra who found work as labourers (Gupta 1982: 53).

As a national cosmopolitan city, Bombay experienced a high incidence of immigration from other ethnic regions and low emigration of Maharashtrians to other areas of India. Generally, this provides a powerful stimulus for interethnic tensions and nativist conflict (Katzenstein 1979: 58). Yet, Katzenstein argues that these demographic factors do not explain the emergence of nativism in Bombay. She notes that ethnic chauvinism or nativism

has not emerged in many regions with high rates of immigration and low rates of emigration (Katzenstein 1979: 61). Though Katzenstein argues that nativism arose in Bombay in the absence of any sudden alteration in percentage or ratio of migrant versus native population, I argue that population growth is a contributing factor in evoking a sense of deprivation and frustration, which contributes to the emergence of ethnic chauvinism. According to the majority of Planning documents, the 'pressure of population' in a limited land area is the main cause for the deterioration in living standards, the decline in the quality of city life and the inefficiency of the urban economy (Desai 1995: 108). Demographic pressure puts heavy strains on civic facilities and creates a sense of scarcity and competition for resources that often manifests itself in interethnic conflict. This is particularly the case in terms of employment, housing and municipal resources.

2. Unemployment

By 1967, the economic conditions in Maharashtra began to decline. While employment declined by 50%, the cost of living rose by more than 60% compared to 1965 (Gupta 1984: 57). Unemployment, which began in the 1960s, accelerated in the 1970s with the decline in the organised textile mills (Sharma 1995: 271). Mill owners' unwillingness to invest in modernising resulted in the shift of production from the organised sector to the informal and unorganised sector. From the late 1970s, industrial growth began in small flexible industries in Bombay and the nearby town of Thane (Harris 1995: 52). In this informal sector, industries could avoid trade unions and labour regulations, as well as evade tax requirements. The 1982 textile strike accelerated the decline of the formal sector and the power of unions. The 18-month long strike was broken when the mill owners refused to bend and instead closed their units. This resulted in widespread unemployment that reduced thousands of workers to penury (Sharma 1995: 271). During and after this strike, small labour-intensive power loom industries proliferated, employing short-term hired labour on insecure contractual terms and with very low wages. This savage labour exploitation

enabled the power loom industry to offer lower prices, greater flexibility and rapid delivery that enabled the trimmed textile mills to attain satisfactory profits (Hansen 2001: 40). Retrenchment in chemical, engineering industries and textile mills due to greater investment in capital-intensive industries in Bombay has greatly reduced employment opportunities.

While reductions in labour have enabled industries to secure high profits in protected markets, the resulting severe unemployment and inflation have made life difficult for the lower and middle classes (Gupta 1982: 57). Maharashtrians were particularly hard hit, since other communities had longer traditions of self-employment (Sharma 1995: 273). The growth of the informal sector contributed to the increasing instability and insecurity of life in Bombay. Not only were people no longer guaranteed a livelihood, but those employed were under constant threat of becoming redundant (Pendse 1995: 8). The weakening of unions and the unregulated nature of the informal sector meant that workers had little leverage regarding wages, working conditions, security of tenure or rights to healthcare or pensions (Patel 1995). As first-generation migrants, many labourers also felt social and cultural displacement that exacerbated their feelings of insecurity and inefficacy.

Although scholars agree that job competition was a contributing factor to the increasing salience of ethnic chauvinism and rise of the Shiv Sena (Katzenstein 1979; Gupta 1982; Desai 1995), its specific impact and importance is slightly contested. In Ethnicity and Equality, Katzenstein (1979) argues that job scarcity rather than immigration accounts for the emergence of 'nativism' in Bombay. While Katzenstein (1979: 63) recognises that the presence of a large population of 'outsiders' contributed to the formation of the Shiv Sena, she identifies the competition over jobs between middle class Maharashtrians and non-Maharashtrians as the critical force giving rise to the Shiv Sena's sons-of-the-soil movement in Bombay.

Examining the initial emergence of Shiv Sena and its nativist platform, Katzenstein regards the unmet middle class aspirations of Maharashtrians as the actual point of tension.

According to Katzenstein, although there was growth in job opportunities (despite a recession in 1966) there was also an explosion of qualified (educated) job applicants in Bombay in the 1960s. During the 15 years leading up to 1966, Bombay experienced an explosion in educational enrolment, so that 43% of the male population aged 13 to 15 was enrolled in school in 1965, versus 22% in 1950 (Katzenstein 1979: 78). The increased number of matriculates resulted in more people looking for white-collar positions. Getting clerical or office jobs was the first priority of Marathi youths whose fathers were labourers and who were the first in their family to get a secondary education. Due to their aspirations for social mobility, these newly-educated Marathi youths were unwilling to accept jobs as manual labour. The overwhelming number of applicants created a tight job market that left many Marathi youths unemployed.

Katzenstein (1979: 69) supports the assertion made by the Shiv Sena that economic competition from 'outsiders' contributed to unemployment among Maharashtrians. In competition for office jobs, non-Maharashtrians, particularly South Indians, were more successful in the 1960s and 1970s. According to Bombay-lore, Maharashtrians have difficulty competing because South Indians only hire from their own community, speak English better, and are better typists and stenographers than Maharashtrians (Katzenstein 1979: 65). Katzenstein presents data on relative occupational status of different linguistic communities in Bombay that shows Maharashtrians' perceptions of competition from 'outsiders' were realistically based (Katzenstein 1979: 65). Maharashtrians during this period were economically behind many other communities in Bombay. They were particularly underrepresented in higher status jobs (i.e., administrative, professional and clerical) (Katzenstein 1979: 67). This economic competition confronting middle class Maharashtrians was particularly distinct in newer industries of Bombay such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals, insurance and other service industries. While Maharashtrians were represented in the management of old and declining industries such as textiles, they were

excluded from such jobs in newer industries (Katzenstein 1979: 69). Thus, Katzenstein does not regard general unemployment as the impetus behind nativism in Bombay. She more specifically identifies middle class competition in Bombay as the reason for the rise of Shiv Sena and its initial 'sons of the soil' movement. Katzenstein argues that South Indians, rather than Hindi speakers, were the target of Shiv Sena's ire because they held jobs that Maharashtrians desired, while Hindi speakers were labourers and did not compete with the Maharashtrian middle class. It was the non-Maharashtrian middle classes and industrial magnates who stood between Maharashtrians and the jobs they desired (Katzenstein 1979: 80). As a result, Shiv Sena's assertions that Maharashtrians' ambitions were stymied by 'outsiders' who usurped white-collar jobs won widespread sympathy in the Maharashtrian community (Katzenstein 1979: 63).

Dipankar Gupta in his book Nativism in a Metropolis argues that competition for jobs was merely one aspect of a more general socio-economic disparity between Maharashtrians and outsiders which gave rise to ethnic chauvinism among Maharashtrians. Slightly misreading Katzenstein, Gupta claims that she views job competition amongst migrants and natives of Bombay as unimportant. This is based on her statement that Maharashtrians hold white-collar jobs and lower class jobs in fair proportion with their population. He asserts that she does not take into account the overrepresentation of South Indians in white-collar jobs (Gupta 1982: 61). While Katzenstein has clearly stated that job competition is a critical force, she in fact agrees with Gupta's emphasis on the general socio-economic disparity as a factor.

Though Katzenstein may provide the more accurate explanation for the middle classes' initial attraction to the 'sons of the soil' movement, I agree with the importance Gupta places on the general socio-economic circumstances in Bombay, particularly in light of Shiv Sena's longevity and its appeal to working classes as well as middle classes. As Gerard Heuze argues, Bombay's social world is increasingly divided between an aspiring middle class

striving for social mobility and ideals of social order, and the socially marginalised working classes living in slums who want better living conditions and basic civic services such as access to water (Heuze 1995: 235-36). Katzenstein's focus on the middle classes indeed neglects the lower classes who became a larger contingent of the Sena from the late 1970s. Published in 1979, Katzenstein's study does not take into account the decline in the Shiv Sena's popularity among the middle classes that occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Though Katzenstein's analysis is helpful in understanding the initial appeal of the Sena, she does not account for its sustained appeal, particularly among the lower classes. More important than actual circumstances of Maharashtrians is their perception of their socio-economic condition in relation to others. Thus, the tense employment situation where jobs are scarce and migrants appear more successful than the natives in securing them, generates a feeling among Maharashtrians that migrants are stealing jobs which are rightfully theirs. Rising unemployment and long waiting periods between graduating from school and finding employment leads to frustration which is exacerbated by declining living conditions and competition for other resources. From its inception, Shiv Sena has served as a vehicle for furthering the interests of lower-and-middle-class Maharashtrians who face economic insecurity and hardship.

3. Overcrowding: Housing Shortages and Deficiency in Services

Despite being the financial and commercial capital of India, Bombay has not been given the investment and attention of New Delhi. Bombay's deteriorating infrastructure and buildings have greatly lowered the standard of living for all of its inhabitants. The rapid growth of the population in conjunction with this deterioration has resulted in shortages in housing, overcrowding in the centre, scarcity of resources and deficient provision of basic civic services (i.e., garbage disposal, medical assistance, law and order). While unemployment and job competition may have served as the original impetus for Shiv Sena's

formation, the pressures on resources and general deterioration of services has enabled the Sena to build its strong grassroots network.

Overcrowding in conjunction with rent control laws have resulted in great housing shortages and the extreme deterioration of existing buildings. Seventy-five percent of central Bombay's housing stock consists of *chawls* (Desai 1995: 146). The lowest form of multi-family housing, *chawls* consist generally of single rooms (100 square feet), occasionally two rooms, served by common toilets, washing areas and water taps for all tenants. *Chawls* were designed to house a large number of labourers as cheaply as possible (Desai 1995: 146). Built in the 19th century, these buildings fell into great disrepair after World War II.

As mentioned earlier, Bombay's population after World War II doubled, partially due to the influx of refugees created by Partition. Though rents were frozen to pre-war levels under the Rent Restriction Act, the price of building materials rose, making it uneconomical for landlords to maintain their buildings. Although a Housing Repairs Board was established to repair buildings neglected by landlords, every year many buildings collapse due to bureaucratic delays. Although many buildings have outlived their useful lives and are beyond repair, they are still lived in due to the acute housing shortage. By 1965, this dearth of housing had produced 3,000 slums and over 1 million slum and pavement dwellers, approximately 20% of Bombay's population (Desai 1995). While the liberalisation of rent control in 1987 enabled landlords to increase rent for repairs and renovations to buildings, poor *chawl* dwellers could not afford these new rents. Thus, they were, and remain, trapped in intolerable housing situations (Desai 1995: 118). Living in the densely populated workers' quarters, the lower classes lack open space and facilities for leisure activities, creating a sense of cultural deprivation (Pendse 1995: 8).

For slum-dwellers, living conditions are far worse. The vast size of the slum population poses operational and financial difficulties in the provision of services and

maintenance. Firstly, most slums are not recognised and, therefore, not provided with services. Yet, even in registered slums, slum-dwellers with identity cards find it difficult to obtain permission for repairs and renovations to their dwellings. Construction or renovation of even the simplest structure requires the applicant to engage an engineer capable of manoeuvring around the red tape. Until recently, even public housing agencies required two years to get building permission for low income housing schemes (Desai 1995: 117). Due to the difficulty of recovering services charges, once facilities are provided, no monitoring is done to ensure proper maintenance. Therefore, as the population increases in an improved slum, a proportionate increase in facilities does not occur (Desai 1995: 127). As a result, existing services in slums are overburdened.

The housing crisis in Bombay affects not only the poor and working classes, but also the middle classes. More recently, the inadequate policies governing the real estate market and a fit of speculation have produced extremely high housing prices (Hansen 2001). The Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act (ULCR) limited the supply of land to be built upon, resulting in higher prices and an increase in illegal structures (Desai 1995: 126). High land prices make extensive housing projects almost impossible in central Bombay, where they are needed. Due to what Appadurai calls a "housing-related hysteria," even the most modest accommodation is beyond the reach of the common man (Appadurai 2000 in Hansen 2001: 71). Speculators have made Bombay's suburbs prohibitively expensive for the middle and lower middle classes as well (Desai 1995: 127). As a result, the middle class residential areas have expanded along the railway lines into Thane District north of Bombay, where the middle classes have attempted to escape Bombay's high rents, slums and congestion. Yet living on the city's outskirts entails paying high transportation costs to and from workplaces. Many people find themselves paying half of their salary on transportation alone and spending four hours a day commuting (Desai 1995: 114). For women with children and household duties, commuting may not be feasible.

Unable to meet its burgeoning population's housing demands, Bombay also lags behind in the provision of basic municipal services. The main complaints of Bombay residents relate to problems with infrastructural services such as water supply, sewage disposal, drainage, garbage collection, electrical connections and street lighting. For example, *chawl* dwellers have a limited amount of time in which they can collect their water, usually two to four hours daily. Since women generally collect the water, their complaints tend to centre on this arrangement and the resulting restrictions on their mobility (Desai 1995: 185). Communal toilets in *chawls* and slums are also poorly maintained and insufficient in number, due to the rising number of households.

In new slum colonies, provision of basic amenities may not exist at all. Since these slums are not 'regularised', the government has no obligation to provide services. Violent fights often result from struggles for water. Older slum colonies generally have some facilities, as well as experience in dealing with the government. Politicians often have their bases in these older slums. Composed of displaced families from central Mumbai and other parts of the state, the newer slums lack cohesion. Often a local thug will establish control through intimidation and get basic amenities for the community (Sharma 1995: 270).

In addition to failing to provide basic amenities, the municipal government has not maintained the standards of special services. For example, ration shops have deteriorated in quality over the years. Ration shops are government stores where the poor can buy rice, sugar, wheat, kerosene, and oil at subsidised rates. Due to an IMF loan and other structural reforms in the 1980s, these subsidies have been cut. As a result, prices have risen by 30% or more and the quality of rice and wheat, which are the staples of the poor, have declined (Desai 1995: 185). Although treatment is free for the poor at government hospitals, the quality of care is so low that the poor must turn to private practices. The small amount of public spending tends to be used on expensive curative medicine and urban hospitals rather than preventive medicine, clean water and sanitation (Desai 1995: 186). The regional

government claims that the large population, limited space and economic attractiveness of Bombay make it impossible to maintain decent standards of livelihood. The regional plan argues, "...more industries create more job opportunities and invite more job-seeking migrants, straining further the already deteriorated civic services" (in Desai 1995: 108). Such an argument implicitly contends that no redistribution of resources or institutional changes can improve the problem.

For women, the lower classes and slum-dwellers, the general deterioration in urban conditions, in conjunction with unemployment has compelled them to support the Sena's nativist agenda. While unemployment affects men directly, it generally affects housewives only indirectly. However, the unemployment of men means that housewives need to supplement the family income or become the breadwinner. Increasingly today, many university-educated women are also having difficulty finding jobs in their trained profession. Thus, job competition with individuals from other ethnic groups now affects them more directly.

While housewives in Bombay are usually only indirectly affected by unemployment, they are more directly impacted by the deterioration of urban conditions and poor municipal services. As Pendse argues, women suffer more intensely from a lack of space. He claims that the urban space is primarily a male domain that gives men recourse to public space – greater contact with the larger space of the city, neighbourhood or locality (Pendse 1995: 15). Since a housewife's time is not purchased in the formal labour market, it is deemed expendable. As a result, she is on the job all day with no time off except for serious illness. It is often not recognised that her productivity is diminished by poor municipal services. Standing in lines for water makes it more difficult for her to perform her household duties (i.e., cooking and cleaning). The extra time she expends due to these municipal failings makes participation in community activities or employment virtually impossible (Pendse 1995: 20). Strongly affected by the lack of basic amenities, lower class housewives in

Bombay have joined Shiv Sena recently to improve these urban conditions (Deshpande 2001). Thus, to discount the role of Bombay's urban conditions in Shiv Sena's rise neglects the longevity of its attraction to women and lower classes.

III. Government Inefficacy

This third section argues that, in the historical and socio-economic context described above, an ineffective government at the national, state and municipal levels has exacerbated the growing sense of frustration among Maharashtrians and Bombay residents in general. Failing to respond to the socio-economic needs and aspirations of its citizens, the government has forced the common man to seek other means of addressing his political and economic disempowerment. In this section, I examine the de-institutionalisation of the government at the national level, the specific inefficacy of Bombay's municipal government, and the implications of the government's failure to meet Maharashtrians' expectations.

In most developing countries, public investment in urban infrastructure and services are either inadequate or non-existent. The inability of the public and private sector to respond to these needs results in large slums lacking piped water systems, electricity, sewers and paved roads. The government authorities responsible for investment in and maintenance of infrastructure lack the power and resources to deliver (Desai 1995). Liberalisation policies that reduced government intervention effectively shifted responsibility for service delivery and infrastructure provision onto low-income households and community organisations (Desai 1995: 204). In India specifically, policies for economic and social planning are co-ordinated at the national level by the relevant ministries within the framework of a 5-year plan. The resources for implementation are devolved to the states. The formulation and execution of schemes and policies for human settlements falls within the purview of state governments that mobilise the resources necessary for implementation. Final implementation and regulation of housing, urban development, water supply and other civic services depends on the municipal council. The de-institutionalisation of the Congress

Party in the 1960s and 1970s broke the necessary channels between the national level of policy-making and implementation at the grassroots. While some unique features of Bombay's municipal council account for its inefficacy, de-institutionalisation at the national level accounts for governmental malaise at all levels.

1. The Failed Development State

By the mid-1960s India's political economy began to experience a malaise. The years between 1961 and 1966 were marked by slow growth in national income, dramatic price increases, shortages of raw materials and idle capacity in industry due to low demand. In 1966, there was rising unemployment, stagnating per capita growth, declining per capita availability of food grain imports, shrinking budgetary resources, and strains on the balance of payments (Lele 1995: 190). From 1965 to 1970, India experienced an acute recession.

The Congress Party had failed to consummate the agenda of the Indian government at the time of Independence. Its goals included economic development, social equality, the national integration of diverse groups and the consolidation of multiparty democracy. Behind the rhetoric, economic development and equality was belied by the reality of elaborate patronage networks, corruption and increasing economic misery and vulnerability amongst the poorest sections of society. The Congress government largely directed its policies in favour of upper caste industrialists and rural dominants, providing little material or social relief to the most underprivileged segments of society.

An interventionist welfare state, the Indian government controlled the allocation of society's economic resources. Thus, in India the state was the agent not only of political order but also of socio-economic development. As a result, access to state power was bitterly contested, not only for political ends of exercising power, but also as a source of livelihood and upward mobility. Democratisation made it more difficult for the interventionist state to meet the needs of the additional and more diverse interests represented by an expanding and diversifying electorate. According to Kohli,

Electoral competition has mobilised many formerly passive socio-economic groups into the political arena. Given the state's limited capacity for redistribution of wealth, these mobilised and dissatisfied groups have further contributed to the growing political turmoil (1997: 389).

Thus, the recognition that a political identity enhances the potency of one's vote led to the creation of new interests and the aggregation of common political interests to obtain resources from the interventionist state. For example, religious groups and castes such as Scheduled Castes became more organised as self-identified 'backward' castes in order to form majority-yielding coalitions with tremendous electoral strength (Kaviraj 1997). Political democracy also encouraged greater pressure for state subsidies from unionised workers and small traders, who demanded more, based on their large numbers. As the number of politically vocal groups with conflicting interests grew, it became more difficult for the Congress Party to build consensus among them.

2. Crisis of State Legitimacy

Although democratisation, the rise of new interest groups and factionalism began to undermine the one-party dominance system, Indira Gandhi's de-institutionalisation of Congress through personality politics and plebiscitary democracy is largely responsible for the ultimate 'decline' of Congress dominance. On one level, the one party dominance of Congress refers to the party's two decades of uninterrupted rule in the central and state governments of India. Thus, one can mark the beginning of its end with the 1967 General Election, where Congress lost eight states in north India and its parliamentary majority was reduced to 54% (Mitra 1992). On a more significant level, the one party dominance system refers to processes and institutions within Congress that enabled it to 'dominate' political parties from across the spectrum because of its ability to incorporate or at least mediate their different interests. Though opposition parties did not alternate with Congress in controlling the government, they played an essential and instrumental role in the Congress system and influenced government policy indirectly. Operating outside Congress, opposition parties acted as 'parties of pressure', constantly pressuring, criticising, and influencing the different

factions within Congress. These factions encompassed regional, parochial, secular and modern pressure groups. A wide ideological spectrum was also represented within Congress, ranging from conservatives to Communists. Thus, according to Kaviraj (1997), the one-party dominance system made ideological opposition unnecessary, since these factions within Congress articulated the interests of both the left and right.

In 1966, Indira Gandhi was made Prime Minister by the state party bosses, who believed that as Nehru's daughter she would attract votes, but would not challenge them since she lacked an electoral base in the Congress Party. To free herself from these state party bosses, Indira Gandhi split the Congress Party in 1969. Afterwards, she led a minority government that relied on opposition party support and personal appeal. In order to retain Congress' dominance nationally and thus preserve her own position, Indira Gandhi called for mid-term elections in 1971 that de-linked parliamentary elections from state assembly elections. This helped nationalise parliamentary elections, effectively liberating them from local notabilities. Mrs. Gandhi's impressive personal victory in the 1971 elections allowed her to discredit her Congress opponents and substitute plebiscitary national outcomes for intra-party deliberations (Rudolph 1987).

By consolidating her position through processes of centralisation, Indira Gandhi destroyed the institutions that had previously enabled Congress to build consensus in its one party dominance system. Plebiscitary politics based on single platforms such as 'Abolish Poverty', opened direct relations between Indira Gandhi's personalised leadership and individual voters, rather than issue-oriented politics that mobilised classes and interests in support of Congress programmes and candidates. Having destroyed the earlier organisational structure based on local party bosses, she failed to build a new structure that linked the centre with the local party units. State representatives were appointed directly by Mrs. Gandhi rather than democratically elected through party organs. Nominating chief ministers to states based on their personal loyalty to her rather than on their support in state

assembly parties and Congress committees, she further impeded Congress' ability to govern well in the states. State and national representatives were no longer accountable to their electorate. This produced corrupt and incompetent Congress chief ministers who were more concerned with pleasing Mrs. Gandhi than serving their state constituency or specific state interests. By de-linking the state and national elections, Indira Gandhi effectively bifurcated the state and national political systems.

The lack of democracy within the Congress Party and the simultaneous repression of democracy at the local state-level produced a sense of exclusion from state processes. This de-institutionalisation of the Congress Party by Indira Gandhi meant that factional interests could no longer influence Congress, or the government, through institutional channels. Frustrated by their lack of representation and the failure of Congress to address their needs, counter-aspirants and other minority interests began to engage in 'New Social Movements' (NSMs) in the 1970s. As a result, discontent emerged across India over food shortages, rising prices, growing income disparities between classes and asset disparities between regions (Lele 1995: 190). In the 1970s, this discontent was expressed by labour strikes, student demonstrations, popular protests, and violent attacks on institutions. These NSMs created a prevalent sense of social instability, particularly among the middle classes. In this way, NSMs questioned the legitimacy of the secular developmental state and its ability to incorporate disparate interests. NSMs also introduced the notion of cultural rights/politics, making the use of culture in defining the nation more prevalent.

3. Bombay Municipal Corporation

At the local level, the government's inefficacy resulting from de-institutionalisation is reflected in the deteriorating performance of the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC). Recently renamed the BrinhanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the BMC has been considered the most affluent and efficient local body in India. Its scale of investment is the highest in the country for a municipal body. The BMC provides a wide range of services

including public transport, electricity, medical aid, education and other municipal services such as water supply and sewage. Until 1984, the BMC could not be overruled by the state government. This accounts for the BMC's elected councillors' fierce sense of independence and autonomy. This elected body saw itself as an independent actor in its own right, not an agent of the state government (Desai 1995: 115). While basic concerns of the city such as industrial policy, structural policies, finances, transport and development plans remain in the scope of the state government, the Corporation is responsible for implementation at the civic level (Thakkur 1995: 253). The Corporation and the Municipal Commissioner, when of different political parties, can be at loggerheads over contracts for basic amenities (e.g., drainage). Consequently, many civic projects have been delayed in bureaucratic processes. A survey conducted by two journalists in September 1989 showed the number of civic projects held in abeyance since 1986. Of 454 projects, 202 were pending with the Standing Committee; 184 with the Improvements Committee; and 68 with the Education Committee (Glen D'Souza and Hemant Basu, IP: 17 September 1989 in Thakkur 1995: 257). Unfinished projects litter Bombay as concrete displays of the waste of public money.

According to Thakkur, the yielding of civic concerns to city politics is also related to the de-institutionalisation of the Congress Party. The split of Congress in 1969 and Indira Gandhi's personality politics affected municipal governance by shifting politicians' focus from solving civic problems to generating popular slogans. As former Municipal Commissioner J.B. D'Souza describes the situation,

For emerging victorious, the candidate has to merely win over a few *basti* (slums) which he can do by holding a Ganapati festival. The number of goons entering BMC will increase and problems will centre around building one pipeline instead of improving the city's water works (I.E., 28 Feb 91 in Thakkur 1995: 255).

Corruption and cronyism, the practice of giving election tickets based on loyalty, have transformed the BMC into a giant welfare system for its 130,000 employees and 170 Corporators (Thakkur 1995: 255). To win votes, these politicians regularise slums instead of

providing the poor with adequate housing. Rather than performing constructive work to secure electoral support, this new breed of politicians largely appeal to populist aspirations.

The BMC is also deeply involved in the development of the city through various agencies responsible for land and construction, such as the Housing and Urban Development Corporation. The limited land of Bombay, the constant influx of population and the enforcement of the Urban Land Ceiling Act has resulted in the escalation of land values and increasing demand for housing in the island city. The awarding of contracts for the costly operation of creating land by filling the sea has opened the floodgates to corruption and scandals. Questions raised about the professional standards of the city's engineers suggest a nexus between contractors, officers and councillors with the power to award contracts (Thakkur 1995: 25). Thus, the drastic deterioration in municipal administration and political life in Bombay can be traced to the rampant corruption and lack of accountability of corporators.

This political climate from the late 1960s to the present day has helped Shiv Sena acquire its mass appeal and instant popularity. The continuance of corruption and a sense of 'political vacuum' in India and Maharashtra has enabled Shiv Sena to maintain its popularity from the mid-1960s into the mid-1990s. Amidst the political chaos and corruption, the Sena in 1966 stood for order; and, to an extent, it still does. Compared to the Congress's political degeneracy, it was the champion of ethical conduct. Shiv Sena came from outside the political structure to fill the 'vacuum' (Gupta 1982: 58).

4. "Disempowerment"

Observing the corruption of civic politics, Bombay residents of the middle and lower classes feel powerless. Poverty, unemployment and unhealthy living conditions make the daily life of the common man arduous and frustrating. Deprived of political power, slum dwellers regard themselves as helpless in relation to the bureaucratic apparatus. For years, relations between government agencies and slum dwellers have been governed by a

condescending paternalism. Described by Gerard Heuze as *ma-baapism* (mother-father), this system affirmed a hierarchical and unequal distribution of socio-economic resources. *Ma-baapism* did not seek to change social conditions, but merely to ameliorate the prevailing condition by extending benefits to the poor through a network of local brokers (Hansen 2001: 71). Slum dwellers depended on community leaders to gain basic services from the administration. Thus, while officials were aware of the need for adequate water for domestic use, there were no plans to meet it. Slum-dwellers simply waited and hoped the officials would eventually provide an adequate water supply (Desai 1995: 236).

India's democratic revolution has gradually undermined the patronising practices of *Ma-baapism*. The authority of politicians, government institutions, the police and the judiciary have been questioned due to their real and perceived corruption and criminalisation. In Bombay's slums and working class neighbourhoods, socialist ideology, espoused by the formerly powerful trade unions, have firmly rooted the paradigm of rights vis-à-vis the government. These 'rights' are not civic rights, but entail entitlement to services, protection and care from the government. Slum-dwellers demanded and expected political concessions, basic foodstuffs and civic amenities (Hansen 2001: 71). The previous unarticulated social resentment and frustrated hopes for social mobilisation among Bombay's poor have turned into anger and defiance of authority (Hansen 2001: 72).

Discontent also characterises the middle classes – squeezed between the wealthy and the poor. Their dreams of becoming white-collar professionals controlling the city have remained unfulfilled. Instead, they face precarious jobs and the declining purchasing power of their incomes. Unemployment for educated lower middle class youths undermines their self-esteem and their masculinity. Without a job, they are not able to marry and become heads of households in their own right. For women, unemployment of husbands and fathers means they need to earn money and manage the household, all the while struggling with inadequate civic services (Patel 1995). With their masculinity already impugned by

unemployment, men do not assist with household chores which are deemed women's work. Thus, women are left with a double burden. Despite diversity in occupations, age and residential location, the middle classes feel uncertain and powerless regarding the future.

The sense of multiple deprivation – socio-economic, political, spatial, and cultural – has produced feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, resentment and anger. Corruption in the government further compounds this sense of deprivation with the collapse of values and ideals. The erosion of collective identity for the working and middle classes causes individuals to strengthen their traditional ties and cultural identities. Neighbourhood solidarities also come into existence and dominate. The collective cultural identity is asserted through the occupation of public space through religious festivals or through defiant coercion in the form of demonstrations and riots. Collective power is also realised in the denial of space to competitors or rival groups (Pendse 1995: 16). In asserting cultural identities, traditional patriarchal relationships are reconstituted and reinforced so that gender relations remain unequal (Pendse 1995: 17). In this attempt to compensate for material deprivation with a collective cultural identity, Maharashtra and Hindutva serve as operative identities. Nativism and Hindutva provide values and a purpose around which Maharashtrians in Bombay can rally. The assertion of cultural values or a cultural identity provides a sacrosanct justification for the use of violence and rioting to attain material needs (Pendse 1995: 25). Thus, by turning to a collective cultural identity, a group no longer regards its deprivation as warranting charitable consideration, but as an intolerable injustice (Gupta 1982: 21). This perception of their situation causes individuals to act in revolt or join together in a social movement such as the Shiv Sena.

Conclusion

The Shiv Sena's immediate popularity and longevity is largely derived from perceptions of relative deprivation and misery among Maharashtrians based on the creation of the state of Maharashtra, stagnant socio-economic conditions and the government's

inefficacy at the national and municipal levels. More than actual conditions, it is the attitude adopted towards these conditions that matters: thus, a sense of deprivation arises when raised expectations are not met by socio-economic conditions, especially when these 'raised expectations' are linked to a group's identity. Feelings of relative deprivation are generated through comparison with other groups in the present and reconstructed past. With regards to Maharashtrians in Bombay, the formation of a group identity through the SMS raised expectations for Maharashtrians' political, social and economic status in the city. In the decades that followed, despite the change in their socio-economic conditions, deteriorating living conditions contributed to a perception of relative deprivation.

CHAPTER FOUR: Shiv Sena's Turn to Cultural Nationalism

Introduction

Though Shiv Sena's popularity has fluctuated during its almost forty years of existence, the social movement turned political party is still ubiquitous in Mumbai today. One cannot help passing a Sena *shakha*, often overflowing with some of its 40,000 hard core *sainiks*. Even in the first-class compartment of the *Deccan Queen* from Pune to Mumbai, one encounters South Indian businessmen who count themselves among the Sena's 200,000 or so sympathisers (Heuze 1995: 214). Consisting of 210 *shakhas*, 1,000 sub-*shakhas* (*gata shakhas*) and affiliated organisations including youth clubs, a women's wing, and a trade union, Shiv Sena has expanded tremendously since its inception. This expansion reflects the broadening of the Sena's ideological platform and the expansion of its political ambitions. Though the Sena's central character or general ethos has remained constant over the years, the subtle shifts in its priorities and ideology not only account for the organisation's longevity, but also reflect the Sena's dynamic identity.

Presenting theories on ethnic identity formation, I suggest in this chapter that the Sena's initial and continuing appeal lies in its dynamic and, arguably, empowering cultural identity. In the first part, theories of ethnicity provide a framework for understanding ethnic identity in the Shiv Sena. The second part outlines the process by which the Sena's cultural identity was constructed. Here, I argue that the Sena's Marathi/Hindu identity is an essential cohesive element within the organisation. In the final part, I explore theoretical concepts of violence to explain its role in the formation of Shiv Sena's cultural identity.

I. Understanding Ethnicity

A highly contested subject, ethnic nationalism is explained by various divergent theories. Two theories dominate the discourse on ethnic nationalism – 'Instrumentalism' and 'Primordialism'. 'Constructivism', a third theory, provides a compromise that recognises the validity of the two dominant theories, yet criticises both as ahistorical. A fourth socio-

psychological approach links the three theories in its explanation of cultural identity formation. Of the four theories, I shall argue that constructivism, supplemented by the psychological approach, provides the most insightful and comprehensive explanation for the formation of Shiv Sena's cultural identity, its continual reformation, and enduring appeal.

1. Primordialism

Primordialists define ethnicity as a fixed and innate aspect of a group. A 'primordial' characteristic, ethnicity is regarded as an identity that is natural and unconscious. Therefore, ethnicity cannot be created or constructed, but is awakened. According to primordialists such as Moynihan (1975), ethnicity exists and age-old hatreds between groups explain ethnic conflict. Underlying this conception is an assumption that cultures are based on a set of stagnant 'natural' characteristics with deep social, historical, and genetic foundations. Change and the presence of other ethnic groups are viewed as threats to ethnic solidarity and prompt ethnic groups to mobilise collectively to defend their cultural sovereignty. Accepting the categorisation of people as 'us' and 'them' as natural, primordialists accept ethnic conflict as inevitable.

2. Instrumentalism

Rather than natural and immutable, instrumentalists regard ethnic identity as constructed and variable. Formed in the process of political mobilisation by elites, ethnicity's variability is based on its instrumental use. Taking a secular view of ethnic conflict as based on purely social-structural considerations (i.e., politics and economics), instrumentalists regard ethnicity as a construction created and used by the elite to secure greater social and economic power. Power-seeking leaders create ethnic differences between groups in an attempt to divide and conquer. Highly malleable and adaptive, ethnicity is constantly shifting its boundaries as individuals move in and out of community membership when it is to their economic, political or social advantage. Regarding ethnic conflict as

rooted in the political economy, instrumentalists view economic development as the solution to ethnic conflict in developing countries. Some primordialists, such as Sudhir Kakar, take issue with the primacy of political and economic structures in shaping a group's consciousness. Kakar asserts that ideologies based on ethnicity and religion have a line of development separate from the political and economic systems of society (Kakar 1995: 252).

Castles(1998) defines three types of ethnic identity according to their instrumental ends – legitimisation, resistance and cultural politicisation. Politicians, intellectuals and local leaders create these identities within a historical and emotional context that will mobilise the group to act. Ethnic nationalism is aroused by dominant institutions of society (e.g., government) to legitimise their actions and dominate society. Opposition and subaltern groups create resistance identities to oppose dominant institutions in society. This new identity serves to transform the social structure, thereby redefining the group's societal position. Ethnic identities created for cultural politicisation use culture as the basis for excluding 'outsiders'. This ethnic identity is based on distinctions between outsiders/them and insiders/us. By identifying the 'other' (i.e., immigrants), politicians strengthen the cohesion between dominant institutions and opposition groups in society.

3. Constructivism

"For the constructivist approach...ethnicity is not a fixed condition or essence, but a historical process that can only be studied in specific contexts" (Turton 1997: 86).

Constructivism provides a compromise between primordialism and instrumentalism by combining aspects of both. Constructivists believe that ethnicity may be constructed by a group, but consists of elements that exist (e.g., history). Emphasising the importance of particular historical circumstances for the emergence of ethnicity, constructivists criticise both primordialist and instrumentalist views for being ahistorical. Though recognising that ethnicity derives its power to influence and legitimate by being perceived as a 'primordial' or 'natural' property of a group, constructivists share instrumentalists' belief that ethnicity is not a natural, biological element itself. According to constructivists, an ethnic group comes into

being through the recognition of cultural differences with another group. Cultural differences are created and maintained through contact with another group and cannot develop in isolation. In this way, ethnicity is defined as a subjective reality that has a strong potential to mobilise and motivate collective behaviour.

Constructivism's comprehensive perspective on ethnicity makes it a useful tool for analysing the relationship between shifts in the political economy on the one hand and ethnic/religious nationalism on the other. Constructivists such as the anthropologist David Turton (1997) identify three factors in the construction of ethnicity: 1) Historical circumstances 2) Politicians 3) Symbols. Analysing these three factors in specific cases allows one to understand the emergence of an ethnic consciousness that results in group conflict. For constructivists, ethnicity does not emerge suddenly and spontaneously, but results from specific historical circumstances. Competition for resources in conditions of scarcity provides a material incentive for creating ethnic distinction. Ethnic groups begin to compete for resources via idioms of ethnicity particularly when a centralised state is responsible for distributing resources. They are more likely to mobilise when there is a strong sense of socio-economic disadvantage between one group and another. Urban settings contribute to the emergence of ethnic groups by bringing them together and into contact with other groups.

While history and current socio-economic conditions create ethnic groups, ethnic conflict results from their manipulation by the political elite. According to constructivists, political leaders and intellectuals construct an ethnic 'play' using historical circumstances. They represent ethnicity as a natural or 'age-old' phenomenon to legitimate ethnic claims. By constructing a group history that separates it from specific 'others', political leaders establish the group's rights to special status or treatment (Turton 1997: 82). Fabricating a history of real and imagined domination of one group over another, the elite generate hatred between neighbours and former friends. Through the media, current events are misrepresented and

history redefined to reinforce ethnic divisions. Strategically dividing groups based on ethnicity, politicians can blame ethnic groups for the failure of policies rather than taking responsibility for their mismanagement. Thus, ethnic politics distract the electorate from the government's inability to solve socio-economic problems.

Symbols also play a powerful role in constructing ethnic group identity. Representing different things to different members, symbols allow for individualism within a group whilst providing it with cohesion. Through symbols, the elite can unite individuals who may otherwise be divided by class, gender or political conviction. Smoothing over group differences, ethnic symbols mobilise people into action. Paradoxically, the symbolism of ethnicity which obscures the group's material interests, effectively mobilises groups around common material interests (Turton 1997: 82). Therefore, constructivists argue that ethnicity's instrumental (material) aspects and primordial (cultural) aspects must both be considered, since its efficacy in advancing group interests depends on being perceived as 'primordial'.

4. Social Psychological Explanation

Although Sudhir Kakar is a self-proclaimed primordialist, his views on cultural identity and, in particular, the complementary relationship he establishes between primordialism and instrumentalism are more akin to constructivism. Coming from the psychological sciences, Kakar has a unique representation of ethnicity among primordialists. Ethnicity becomes salient when a group perceives a threat to its integrity (Kakar 1995: 192). By explaining ethnicity in terms of individual and group psychology, Kakar is able to relate ethnicity to violent behaviour and violence, which is relevant to the Sena.

Regarding ethnicity holistically, Kakar uses the term 'cultural identity' instead of 'ethnicity'. This allows him to include religious and linguistic identities in his analysis. For Kakar, cultural identity is a group's fundamental way of organising its experience through its myths, memories, symbols, rituals and ideals (Kakar 1995: 183). Socially produced and

subject to historical change, cultural identity is not static – though not invented. Kakar sees bonds among group members as 'ties of love' which result from their emotional bond with the leader. Members identify with one another by putting the same object in place of their ego. For cultural groups, the shared ego can be historical or mythical figures from the group's traditions, ideals, social values, and intellectual traditions. According to Kakar, the group can have a profound effect on the consolidation of an individual's 'sense of identity'.

Kakar's psychological concept of cultural identity also explains how material threats become cultural threats. Kakar posits that cultural identity becomes salient when threats to the identity arise. These threats can be material as well as symbolic. Dangers to individuals' material existence (job and housing threats), perceived discrimination by the state, disregard by political authorities of a group's interests and disrespect for cultural symbols may result in social-psychological threats to an individual's identity (Kakar 1995: 241), making cultural identity more salient to a group made up of such individuals. Modernisation and globalisation cause changes such as dislocation and rural-urban migration. Such changes result in the separation of families, overcrowded living conditions in urban conglomerates, the obsolescence of traditional roles and skills and loss of ancestral values and ideals, which create a sense of loss and helplessness. The loss of efficacy resulting from the increasing complexity of bureaucratic structures and the marginal position of developing countries in international economics and politics creates a sense of being a victim rather than an active agent. These threats create a heightened sense of group identification and provide the basis for a social cohesiveness that will safeguard the individual's economic interests. Cultural-religious groups provide a haven for hurt egos as well as a vehicle for redressing their material grievances and lowered self-esteem.

Drawing on the constructivist framework of ethnicity and Kakar's social-psychological approach, I shall examine the cultural identity constructed by Shiv Sena. While cultural differences exist, they can be manipulated for material ends. As a result, cultural identities

have the potential to change and evolve in short periods. Alternately asserting ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences, the Sena has created an evolving cultural identity that provides the group with cohesion and promotes its material advancement.

II. The Rise of Shiv Sena

In June 1966, Shiv Sena appeared to arise suddenly with the gathering of thousands of Maharashtrians in central Mumbai's Shivaji Park. Yet the Shiv Sena was the product of a long-standing historical process that has been captured and manipulated by the Sena's Supremo, Bal Thackeray. From its inception to the present, the organisation has capitalised on the feelings of discontent arising from the city's historical and socio-economic conditions. Through the creation and promotion of a Maharashtrian/Hindu cultural identity, the Shiv Sena arms its followers against Bombay's disempowering environment.

1. Creating a Collective Identity

The initial formation of Shiv Sena articulated the stress and frustration of living in Bombay as a specifically Maharashtrian problem. Publicly questioning the community's continued economic difficulties, Shiv Sena served as a conduit for Maharashtrians' sense of 'disempowerment' and resulting aggression. The Sena expressed their fears regarding unemployment, crime and housing pressures. More importantly, the Sena provided an explanation for Maharashtrians' continued economic backwardness, namely the influx of South Indian immigrants. The Sena's initial charge in 1966 that Maharashtrians (40% of the population) were being excluded from jobs by the incursion of South Indians (10%), struck a common chord among lower middle class Maharashtrians aspiring to attain white-collar jobs. According to Gupta's study in 1974, Maharashtrians primarily joined the Sena because they felt oppressed economically and culturally by outsiders (Gupta 1982: 188). Expressing their desire for respectability, security and upward mobility as well as explaining their

economic deprivation, Shiv Sena with its Maharashtrian cultural values and ethos gained instantaneous popularity and mass appeal (Gupta 1982: 63).

Besides articulating the problem, Shiv Sena in the 1960s and 1970s proposed an ethnic-linguistic Marathi identity as the remedy. In discussing the cultural deprivation of 'toilers', Pendse (1995) observes that, paradoxically, this deprivation forms the basis upon which the 'toilers' can build a new, collective identity which can become the basis for asserting strength and confidence. Similarly, the Marathi identity initially asserted by the Sena was built upon a sense of relative deprivation. Expressing the symbols and beliefs of Marathi culture and separateness and providing organisational structures, Shiv Sena enabled the uniting of Marathi people in Bombay.

Rooted in the Samyukta linguistic movement in the 1950s, the Shiv Sena's Marathi identity became central to the affirmation of Bombay's lower middle and working classes in the 1960s and 1970s. Based on this Marathi identity, the Sena claimed a political voice that allowed them to gain a public presence and to assert 'property rights' to the city (Hansen 2001: 69). Supported by its numerical strength and supposedly purer Mahharashtrian culture, this Marathi-identity affirmed Maharashtrians right to 'belong to' and to dominate Bombay. As the bastion of Marathi-culture, the Shiv Sena claimed it would, "...secure the legitimate needs and interest of the Maharashtrian in their own state..." (Gupta 1982: 137). Socio-economically, this entailed advocating the Maharashtrian cause in the conflict over access to public resources with other groups.

While the Marathi identity promoted by the Sena was later superseded by Hindutva, common culture remains *the* point of cohesion for the collective. Initially, the Marathi identity served as a dramatic basis for the mobilisation of Maharashtrians in Bombay. Yet, as the social movement became a political party, its agenda began to change in order to attract new members. The Marathi identity was not as effective in neighbourhoods with different ethnic groups. Though the Marathi element in the Shiv Sena's collective identity

has been de-emphasised, its cultural aspects has been fused with the Sena's more encompassing Hindu identity. Amidst the ambiguity and vacuity of the Sena's shifting agenda, this cultural identity brings together Sena supporters and members who hail from different castes and classes and therefore have different political agendas.

2. Bal Thackeray's Role

The charismatic appeal of the Shiv Sena's founder and leader, Bal Thackeray, was cited in Gupta's 1974 study as another very important element in motivating members to join (Gupta 1982: 188). Bal Thackeray, referred to affectionately as 'Balasaheb' and respectfully by his title 'Supremo', plays a fundamental role in creating and shaping the Sena's collective identity. He does this as a political actor who gauges popular sentiment and manipulates the perception of situations through his speeches. His tremendous charisma enables him to play an extremely influential role.

By raising Maharashtrians' awareness regarding their socio-economic deprivation, Bal Thackeray has positioned himself as the champion of the Marathi *manus*. A cartoonist and journalist by profession, Bal Thackeray mobilised the Marathi-speaking population in Bombay through his political cartoons in his weekly *Marmik* (Satire). Through *Marmik*, Thackeray made the point that Maharashtrians were deprived of jobs and economic opportunities in Bombay by non-Maharashtrians (Gupta 1982: 39). In doing so, he articulated Maharashtrians' discontent in a manner that raised their ethnic consciousness and incited them against 'outsiders'. Under the heading *Vacha ani Thanda Basa* (Read and Sit Silent), Thackeray began to publish lists of leading executives in well-known firms and public undertakings, to demonstrate the lack of Maharashtrian names and the predominance of non-Maharashtrians (Hansen 2001: 46). Out of 1,500 executives, only 75 were Maharashtrians (Katzenstein 1979: 51). Changing the heading to *Vacha ani Uta* (Read and Rise), he began to urge Maharashtrians to protest against what he presented as open

discrimination. In June 1966, *Marmik's* readership of lower middle class Maharashtrians responded to Thackeray's call to meet in Shivaji Park and act (Katzenstein 1979: 51).

Through *Marmik* and his famous speeches, Thackeray has shaped the Marathi identity and incited his followers to perform acts of violence for the Maharashtrian cause. Thackeray's cartoons and initial list not only articulated Maharashtrians' deprivation, but also served to further humiliate or shame Maharashtrians. Accusing them of simply watching and sitting silent, Thackeray implied that they were impotent and 'disempowered'. This shaming tactic was meant to arouse their pride and goad them into action. In his cartoons, Thackeray inflated the danger of South Indians by presenting a future in which Marathi is a dead language and Bombay is dominated by South Indian culture. He suggested that South Indian economic domination would lead to their cultural dominance and the extinction of the Marathi *manus*. Therefore, Maharashtrians must act, not simply for socio-economic reasons, but to preserve their way of life and culture.

After shaming Maharashtrians for their inaction and inciting them to act, Thackeray provided them with an enemy to attack. The creation of an effective 'other' or enemy served two purposes. First, it relieved Maharashtrians of the blame for their own condition and provided a focus for their frustration. Secondly, it helped define and unify the collective Maharashtrian identity. Maharashtrians, like any ethnic/linguistic group, are stratified along many different divisions – class, caste, and religion. A common enemy serves to de-emphasise these differences, thereby creating what appears to be a unified Marathi identity and united front. The 'People of Bombay' are constructed in opposition to 'outsiders' (Heuze 1995: 217). Thus, in defining the 'other', Thackeray effectively defines who 'we' are.

Thackeray created this 'other' by presenting a discourse of historical myth mixed with present day deprivations. In Shiv Sena, the figure of Shivaji Maharaj and the history of the Maratha Empire in the 17th and 18th centuries serve this purpose. The Maratha Empire dominated western India and extended to India's east coast. While the Mughals and British

ruled much of the subcontinent, the Marathas were fighting both of these foreign forces. The successful preservation and expansion of the Maratha Empire made it the bastion of Hinduism – the Hindu *pad padshahi* [empire]. For Hindus, the Maratha Empire represented the last haven in their struggle against foreign forces (Gupta 1982: 410). The wars between the Marathas and Mughals, epitomised in the struggle between Shivaji and Aurangzeb, were depicted as religious conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. More broadly, the military campaigns between the Maratha Empire, the Mughals and British were presented as the indigenous people of India fighting against the dominating 'outsiders'. The final downfall and dismemberment of the Maratha Empire by the British in 1818 was used to remind Maharashtrians of their defeat and the consequences of foreign dominance. By adopting the symbols of Shivaji and the history of the Maratha Empire, Thackeray claimed a continuity between Shivaji and the Shiv Sena (Shivaji's Army). In doing so, he strengthened the Marathi identity by providing it with historical roots and proof of Maharashtrians' intrinsic greatness.

Conflating South Indians with the British and Muslims with the Mughals, Thackeray construed the contemporary disadvantaged situation of Maharashtrians as their continued persecution by 'outsiders'. Initially, South Indians were the primary targets because they held positions which Maharashtrians coveted. By calling them 'yandugundu walla', a derogatory name referring to the 'foreignness' of their language, Thackeray tried to disassociate Maharashtrians from South Indians linguistically. In addition, South Indians were accused of communalism in the form of only hiring other South Indians. Making South Indians the 'other' served to justify the violence the Sena enacted against them. Thus, attacks on South Indian restaurants and assaults on South Indian businessmen were regarded as retaliation against the injustices they themselves had enacted (Gupta 1982: 129). By arguing that Maharashtrians faced more injustice than they meted out, Thackeray justified Shiv Sena's call for special privileges for Maharashtrians and antipathy towards 'outsiders'.

3. Shiv Sena's Shifting Ideology

From its inception to the present, Shiv Sena's outlook has expanded from parochial and local issues to Hindutva and all-India nationalism. The group's initial nativist agenda reflected the social movement's limited scope and the specific interests of the Marathi middle classes in Bombay. As the social movement gained political success and evolved into a political party, its ideology and agenda became more comprehensive and ambiguous in order to include a larger constituency and expand beyond the city. While the Sena's agenda fluctuates according to popular sentiment and Thackeray's dictates, the general ethos of the organisation remains constant. This ethos, which combines the Sena's Marathi/Hindu identity with activism and violence, serves to bring members together and smooth over inconsistencies. As the Sena's essence, this ethos allows the party to adopt new agendas without completely renouncing old ones. As a result, though the Sena's nativist program is not its main thrust today, it remains a compelling position for many Sainiks.

Shiv Sena began simply as a nativist or 'sons of the soil' movement that assured the political, social and economic dominance of the 'natives' of the city. According to Katzenstein, 'sons of the soil' movements embody a form of ethnic politics whose principal aim is social and economic equality for their ethnic group. As the ethnic group is originally disadvantaged, this equality is to be gained through preferences and quotas in jobs and educational institutions (Katzenstein 1979: 25). Weiner (1978: 293) further adds that "Nativism tends to be associated with a blockage to social mobility for the native population by a culturally distinguishable migrant population." This migrant population or 'outsiders' are perceived as remaining oriented towards their region of origin and simply economically exploiting their adopted region (Desai 1995: 278). Natives who are committed to the advancement of their region resent these outsiders, who are regarded as controlling the opportunity structure and thus blocking their advancement.

In the late 1960s, Shiv Sena's agenda and demands reflected this nativist attitude. Asserting that Marathi Koli were the islands' original inhabitants and that Maharashtrians were the largest ethnic group, Shiv Sena argued that Bombay 'belonged' to the Marathi people, who deserved special rights and privileges in their city, the capital of Maharashtra. For its limited constituency, namely Marathi speakers in Bombay, Shiv Sena proposed a simple programme centred on jobs and migration, which were viewed as linked. Demonstrating the deprivation of Maharashtrians in the upper echelons of the economy in *Marmik*, the Sena demanded that 80% of jobs and economic opportunities be reserved for Maharashtrians as 'sons of the soil'.

Regarding unemployment as the result of migrants 'stealing' jobs from Marathi people, the Sena also advocated the curtailment of migration from other Indian states. Migrants from South India were represented as being in a conspiracy to exploit the native Maharashtrian. The Sena attributed the increase in crime and emergence of Bombay's underworld to South Indian migrants as well. As a result, South Indians became the scapegoat for unemployment and crime – the source of Maharashtrians' deprivation. Thus, the Sena's solution to all of Bombay's problems was to eliminate the South Indian immigrant, the 'outsider'. With this initial agenda focused on employment, the Sena attracted industrial workers, office employees and unemployed youths hoping to benefit materially from the displacement of migrants who occupied positions they desired (Heuze 1995: 214).

Though initially the Marathi identity dominated, since the 1980s Hindutva has been the dominant ideology of the Shiv Sena. After 1968, the Sena's attacks on South Indian migrants began to subside. From 1968 to 1973, the Sena had a strong presence in Bombay's municipality. Interacting with a larger cross-section of the population, Shiv Sena began to modify its ideology. Seeking legitimacy in an attempt to broaden its base, the Sena transformed its xenophobic, anti-migrant, anti-South Indian position into one of nationalism.

Communists and Muslims, whom the Sena claimed owed their primary allegiance to foreign governments, became the new enemy (Katzenstein 1979: 34).

Yet, by the mid-1970s, the popularity of the Sena had started to fade, partly due to the '*goonda*' (criminal) image the Sena had developed. The Shiv Sena was seen as a network of gangs involved in extortion, drug trafficking and illegal dealings in construction. This image resulted in the decline of support from the white-collar middle class whose sensibilities were offended by this criminalisation (Lele 1995: 1524).

In the 1980s, the Sena began to shift from its Maharashtrian chauvinist programme to incorporate strands of Hindu nationalism. Hindutva offered the Sena a means of changing its '*goonda*' image and regaining its middle-class support. In an attempt to appeal to the middle-class bourgeoisie, the Sena's turn towards Hindutva was accompanied by an emphasis on cleanliness in the city and on security (Heuze 1995: 215). Due to Bombay's economic growth in the 1980s, which compounded urban housing and unemployment pressures, the middle classes became very receptive to Shiv Sena's promises of order and heavy-handed governance (Hansen 2001: 71). The benefits of this shift to Hindutva were reaped in 1985 when the Sena won 70 seats in the Bombay Municipal Corporation, up from 21 in 1978 (Katzenstein et al. 1997: 7). This exploitation of Hindu nationalism also enabled the Sena to broaden its reach to rural Maharashtra, where the Sena's original focus on nativist issues had limited political appeal. Thus, the Sena's turn to Hindutva was primarily an instrumental political strategy that improved its electoral success.

Shifts in the Sena's ideology and political ambitions have been accompanied by shifts in the perceived 'other'. Gauging the mood of 'the people', Thackeray over the years has devised a changing range of effective 'others' or enemies (Hansen 2001: 74). South Indians were used as the initial threat, followed by communists and the city elite. With the shift towards Hindutva, Muslims at present are the effective 'other'. Despite the Sena's transformation from an organisation that protested the incursion of non-Maharashtrians to

one that promotes the restoration of a Hindu political order, the remedy remains the same, though the 'other' changes. To the unemployed lower caste/lower class Marathi *manus*, the South Indian or Muslim 'other' equally serve as objects of hatred; but the Muslim 'other' also appeals to a broader Hindu identity. Due to the electoral purpose of the Muslim 'other', the Sena in its recent attempt to appeal to Muslim voters has identified the Muslim 'other' as foreign or having foreign allegiances. The Sena claims that they are not anti-Muslim, but are against anti-nationalist Muslims who have "their heart in Pakistan" (Lele 1995: 1525). In this way, the Sena justifies its communalism as patriotism against seditious Muslims who do not identify with the Indian nation.

While the Sena's political platform and agenda changes according to political expedience, it has maintained a general ethos that has remained constant. This ethos is 'general' because it is not particularly distinct and is widely accepted. Therefore, though members may disagree with particular Sena actions, they can always support these general principles. Elements of this general ethos include: idolisation of Shivaji, patriotism, justice and 'action'. Most of these elements are rather banal and characteristic of any Maharashtrian regardless of political affiliation. As a result, a *Sainik* will remain loyal to the Sena despite disagreements with its changing agenda or particular actions. Only the last element 'action' is unique to the Sena in its definition, in its role within the organisation and its relevance to the identity of the Shiv Sainik. Let us examine these four elements in more detail.

The idolisation of Shivaji is rampant throughout Maharashtra, where his bust adorns traffic circles in many cities. For the Sena, Shivaji symbolises the past and potential power of Maharashtrians and the superiority of Marathi culture and Hinduism. Shivaji's rule is touted as a golden age in which the common man was treated fairly and revered. Claiming to restore Shivaji's rule, the Sena has overlaid the legend of Shivaji and the Maratha Empire's grandeur on its own actions and ideology (Gupta 1982: 40).

Linked to its creation of the 'other', the Sena's patriotism is a fundamental element of the Sena identity. According to the Sena, a man's supreme duty is towards the nation; no other country or power should have precedence over one's own. This patriotism entails pride in one's culture and traditions. Regarding India as a Hindu nation, the Sena's patriotism is linked with Hinduism, which it asserts should be the dominant culture in India. Therefore, to be a patriot, one should consider oneself a Hindu, or at least accept the dominance of Hinduism in India despite one's actual religious beliefs. By equating pro-Hinduism with patriotism, the Sena justifies its communalism as patriotism.

Justice is another apparent platitude that finds resonance among Shiv Sainiks who use it to justify their often questionable means. The Shiv Sena claims that true justice can be rendered if everyone is treated equally. Though this principle appears uncontroversial, it is used by the Sena to attack claims by minorities such as *Dalits*¹, Muslims and women for special privileges. It is also used to defend and promote the use of violence for 'just' causes (Gupta 1982: 122).

Enacted in the name of 'justice' and 'patriotism', 'action' within the Sena ranges from community service to street demonstrations and even to violent communal riots. Linked to militant Maharashtrianism, 'action' has become an integral element of the Marathi/Hindu identity the Sena has created. Many people are attracted to the Sena for its various forms of action that may be viewed as effective and non-bureaucratic or, alternatively, as threatening. Some join the Sena to become associated with its acts of violence, hoping to benefit from the Sena's reputation. The Sena unabashedly uses physical violence including arson, stone throwing and looting to win political power. Many sympathisers come to the Sena as a means of last resort, to finalise a divorce or address a municipal problem. As former Shiv Sena Councillor (1972-1973) Bhai Shingare states,

Shiv Sena's capacity for violence increases their bargaining power and they are able to negotiate from a position of strength (Gupta 1982: 173).

¹ A term meaning 'the oppressed' which refers to members of Scheduled Castes, also known as 'Untouchables'.

While 'action' can be used for achieving legitimate political ends, it is often simply extortion and hooliganism. Nonetheless, the action is generally accepted and defended by the party. In this way, action also serves as a common bond between Shiv Sainiks. As another Shiv Sena leader, Datta Pradhan, explains,

It gives our *Sainiks* some satisfaction that they are doing something when they agitate on the streets. It binds them closer to the organisation (Gupta 1982: 171).

The unconditional acceptance of 'action' lends the Sena's otherwise nebulous program and "disjoined understanding of causes of perceived injustices" (Lele 1995: 193) some clarity and enables the party to overcome its internal contradictions (Heuze 1995). The role of action and violence in cultural identity formation will be examined in the next section.

III. Violence and Cultural Identity

Metaphorical as well as instrumental, violence plays a fundamental role in defining Shiv Sena and its members. As T.B. Hansen demonstrates in Wages of Violence(2001), violence is not always enacted, but is often implied in the spectacles and street demonstrations of the Sena. The Sainik proudly and glibly mentions 'hitting' someone who has perpetrated an 'injustice'. Broadly defined, acts of 'injustice' according to the Sena include denying Maharashtrians jobs, torturing daughters-in-law for insufficient dowry and insulting Bal Thackeray. While Sainiks derive pride from their violent actions, these evoke a wide range of reactions from the public, ranging from vilification to admiration. As we have seen, many feminist scholars discount the potential empowerment the Sena offers women because they do not regard violence as a legitimate means of empowerment. And while the public may derisively call Sainiks '*goondas*', most Mumbaikers remain at home when the Sena declares a city *bandh* (strike). The critical role violence plays in the identity formation of Sainiks and in how the public perceives them, makes 'violence' a key concept in understanding the Sena. To understand violence within the Sena and Mumbai, it is necessary to explore the concept theoretically. This entails first understanding violence from

sociological, anthropological and psychological perspectives. These theories on violence will then be linked to the theories on ethnic nationalism explored in the first section. In establishing these links, I shall attempt to explain the role of violence in the cultural identity propagated by the Sena.

1. Conceptualising Violence

A contested concept, violence is viewed differently in various disciplines and contexts. Although intractable differences exist regarding the nature and definition of violence, it is generally understood as "the intentional rendering of physical hurt on another human being" (Riches 1986: 5). The psychological sciences often regard violent behaviour as a 'pathological deviation' that is biologically innate or imprinted in the human subconscious; while certain branches of sociology have defined 'violence' very broadly, often taking metaphorical uses of violence as literal. For example, Bourdieu's 'symbolic violence', which regards violence as, "the capacity to secure a lasting hold over someone through economic means or manipulation of affective obligations," represents a broad reading of 'physical hurt' (1977: 191). Thus, a wide range of social acts may be considered 'violence' across the social and psychological sciences.

Many anthropologists and sociologists consider political violence a normal phenomenon that contributes to the maintenance of societal equilibrium (Gurr 1969). Categorised as a social act, violence is assumed to be designed to make an impact on the social environment and to promote a shared understanding between an act's perpetrator, recipients and witnesses. As a result, when examining violence, an anthropologist will focus on the social ideas that make sense of the violent images and acts that evoke such exceptional social reactions (Riches 1986: 5).

Regarding violence as a social act, social anthropologist David Riches treats violence as a strategic and consciously employed social and cultural resource (Riches 1986: 12). As such, Riches views the performers' actions through concepts of 'strategy' and 'meaning'; he

considers the 'practical' and 'symbolic' goals people achieve by behaving violently as well as the reasons violence is chosen rather than alternative means (Riches 1986: 5). Fulfilling both instrumental (practical) and expressive (symbolic) functions with equal efficacy, violence has the potential to transform the social environment. Violence's expressive function capitalises on its visibility and the potential for both sides to draw a common (cross-cultural) understanding from the acts (Riches 1986: 12). Instrumentally, violence advances a group or individuals' political or social position. Thus, violence can literally transform society as well as dramatise important social ideas (Riches 1986: 25). While expressive ends such as asserting one's worth are important, instrumental aims (e.g., advancing social status) are considered more fundamental since, according to Riches, violence would not be performed otherwise. Requiring little in terms of assets and knowledge, violence is universally accessible to all members of society. Thus, Riches suggests that violence may be a strategy basic to social interaction (Riches 1986: 25).

By defining violence as a social act, Riches refrains from passing judgement regarding its legitimacy. Yet this is perhaps its most contestable aspect. Fundamental to an act of violence's legitimacy is the perpetrators' perspective as opposed to that of the victims'. As Edmund Leach (1977) states, each side represents the other's act of physical force as barbarism, but considers its own heroic. In accordance, 'violence' is a word used by those who witness or who are victims of certain acts, rather than those who perform them. For the victim, violence is an illegitimate action, not merely a social act causing physical hurt. In contrast, the performer argues for the act's legitimacy. Both sides appeal to social rules and values to uphold their position and claim that justice lies with them (Riches 1986: 5).

The potency of violence arises from this apparent paradox regarding its legitimacy. Both sides decide what is acceptable/unacceptable in violence and establish a line of legitimacy. By stepping beyond the line of accepted behaviour, the perpetrators attain their practical (instrumental) ends and communicate their symbolic (expressive) ends more

forcefully and efficiently. Though perpetrators step beyond the line, they remain within certain limits, since they do not seek complete political dissociation from the group (Riches 1986: 14). Their intention is to signal political opposition and to improve the political balance in their favour. Thus, the perpetrated violence must be considered illegitimate by the opposition, but not completely 'beyond the pale' of society (Riches 1986: 15).

The power positions of the perpetrator and victim are also essential in determining the legitimacy of violence. Recognising this, Weber has defined the state as "the rule of men over men based on the means of *legitimate*, that is allegedly legitimate violence" (in Arendt 1970: 36). Radcliffe Brown also acknowledges the source of power behind acts of violence and defines the physical force employed by the state as government, not as violence (in Riches 1986: 4). From this perspective, the legitimacy of violence stems from the legitimacy of the power behind it. Thus, physical force asserted by the state is considered legitimate because the state's authority or power is considered legitimate.

Is violence then "nothing more than the most flagrant manifestation of power" (Arendt 1970: 35)? Arendt disagrees and emphasises the need to distinguish between 'power' and 'violence'. For Arendt, power cannot legitimate violence because violence can never be legitimate, though it may be justifiable. Instrumental by nature, violence, like all means, requires guidance and justification from the end it pursues (Arendt 1970: 51). According to Arendt, its justification becomes progressively weaker as its intended end recedes into the future. Thus, the use of violence in self-defence is never questioned, because the danger is evident and the end justifies the means immediately. On the other hand, power can be legitimised by the support of a group of people. Power arises whenever people join together and act in concert (Arendt 1970: 52). Arendt emphasises the importance of the group; she assigns power to the group and claims that power exists only as long as the group remains together. Therefore, an individual 'in power' is empowered by a group of people to act in their name.

Discounting the possible legitimacy of violence, Arendt regards power and violence as opposites; violence arises when power is in jeopardy.

...every decrease in power is an open invitation to violence – if only because those who hold power and feel it slipping from their hands, be they the government or the governed, have always found it difficult to resist the temptation to substitute violence for it (Arendt 1970: 87).

Violence is a means used by those who lack the power (or the legitimacy to rule) that would enable them to achieve the same ends through different means. Arendt considers bureaucracy the penultimate manifestation of a powerless and illegitimate government. She considers bureaucratic rule the most tyrannical government since "...no men, neither one nor the best, neither the few, not the many can be held responsible – [this] could properly be called rule by Nobody..." (Arendt 1970: 38). In a bureaucracy, there is 'nobody' to whom one can present grievances or apply pressure. When the state machinery blocks or violently suppresses just and legitimate demands, people become militant and use violence to counter state violence (e.g., physical force used to maintain order) which they perceive as illegitimate. Thus, as public life becomes more bureaucratic, the use of violence becomes more frequent.

Though Arendt states that violence can never be legitimate, she does not regard it as irrational or pathological. Arendt recognises that circumstances arise in which the inherent immediacy and efficiency of violence makes it the only appropriate remedy. As she states,

Under certain circumstances violence, acting without argument and without counting the consequences, is the only way to set the scales of justice right again (Arendt 1970: 64).

Violence is justifiable when one has reason to expect conditions to change, but they do not. Offending one's sense of justice, such a situation evokes a rage that leads to justifiable violence. While Arendt also notes the danger of violence overwhelming its end, resulting in more violence, she argues that extreme actions are often necessary to attain moderate reform. Quoting William O'Brien, the 19th century Irish Agrarian and nationalist agitator, who wrote that, "Sometimes violence is the only way of ensuring a hearing for moderation" (in Arendt

1970: 79), Arendt recognises the justifiable use of violence to initiate social change. Thus, while violence can never be legitimate according to Arendt, certain conditions may justify it.

Rather than seeing violence as a by-product of urbanisation, industrialisation and bureaucratisation, Tilly regards violent protest as the struggle for new contenders to establish places in the existing power structure. Tilly states,

Collective violence clusters in those historical moments when the structure of power itself is changing decisively – because there are many new contenders for power, because several groups of old contenders are losing their grips or because the focus on power is shifting from community to nation, from nation to international block or in some drastic way. Violence flows from politics and more precisely from political change (Tilly 1969: 41).

While Arendt correlates violence with increasing bureaucratisation characterised by systemic stagnation, Tilly claims it is provoked by political change resulting from shifts in the power/social structure. Examining political violence in developing countries, theorists such as Khan (1981), Gurr (1969) and Subramanian (1992) place greater emphasis on the role of economic inequality and relative deprivation. According to Gurr's hypothesis,

...the potential for collective violence varies strongly with intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of a collectivity (Gurr 1969: 360).

Relative deprivation is the perceived discrepancy between a person's value expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations include living conditions and goods to which people believe they are rightly entitled. Value capabilities are living conditions and goods people think they are capable of attaining given the social means available to them. Social means include power and status as well as economic welfare (Subramanian 1992: 2). The relative deprivation theory of violence places emphasis on perceived material conditions versus group expectations. The use of violence is considered when a large gap exists between expectation and gratification, resulting in a sense of oppression and inequity.

According to Arendt, violence emerges as a result of a bureaucratic government's inability to reduce the gap in real economic and social terms. Speaking of inequality in the United States, Arendt explains the conditions that lead to violence:

...while boycotts, sit-ins and demonstrations were successful in eliminating discriminatory laws and ordinances in the South, they proved utter failures and became counterproductive when they encountered the social conditions in the large urban centres – the stark needs of the

black ghettos on one side, the overriding interests of white lower-income groups in respect to housing and education on the other...all it did was bring conditions into the open, into the street, where the basic irreconcilability of interests was dangerously exposed (Arendt 1970:76).

Arendt recognises that while non-violent methods such as boycotts and sit-ins coerce governments to create more equitable laws, they lack the wherewithal to realise true equity. Raising consciousness with regards to inequality, but incapable of changing the situation, social movements heighten tensions by raising expectations and widening the gap of relative deprivation. Violence erupts when groups realise their interests are irreconcilable.

The idea of relative deprivation is particularly pertinent in the context of development, especially in conjunction with Tilly's idea regarding the role of political change. A combination of Arendt's bureaucratic government with Tilly's period of historical change and Gurr's relative deprivation provides a comprehensive explanation for the rise of violence in developing countries, particularly in India from the 1970s. Constrained resources in terms of jobs, housing and access to food, in India and other developing countries, heighten people's sense of relative deprivation. This is exacerbated by an ineffective bureaucratic government that fails to deliver civic services (e.g., water, proper sanitation). This sense of inefficacy created by bureaucratised governments causes citizens to turn towards non-governmental channels to communicate their grievances and effect change.

Manor (1988) identifies the de-institutionalisation of Congress as a primary factor in the intensification of conflict and violence in India. De-institutionalisation (the erosion of institutional channels of dealing with electorate demands) and social tension, meant that the Indian government was unable to respond adequately to pressures from groups competing for social and economic resources and political influence (Subramanian 1992: 34). Finding the government unresponsive, interest groups that had developed around religious and ethnic identities increasingly came into conflict. Lacking the institutional channels to reconcile their conflicting interests, these groups often turned to violence towards one another as well as the government (e.g., *Dalits* vs. upper castes/landowners, Sikhs vs. Hindus, Hindus vs. Muslims). While violent conflicts exist along many divisions (i.e., caste, religion, class,

etc.), religious divisions have become the most prevalent. The next part will examine the salience of ethnic/religious nationalism as a justification for violence to maintain and gain economic, social and political resources.

2. Dynamics Between Violence and Cultural Identity

Violence often accompanies the heightening of ethnic and religious nationalism. Limited in scope, this section does not attempt to establish a correlation between the two. Instead, it will explain the dynamic and reinforcing relationship between ethnic/religious nationalism and violence. In doing so, I will suggest that the salience of ethnic/religious nationalism partially arises from its instrumental use as a justification for violence in the competition for resources. Accepting the definition of violence as a strategic human and social resource, I view violence as an instrumental means used to attain economic resources and political power; in other words, ethnic/religious nationalism provides a convenient justification for violence.

In 'Understanding Ethnicity' (Part I), on the basis of a constructivist perspective influenced by Kakar's social-psychological analysis, it was suggested that cultural identity becomes a salient feature of a group when individuals feel their material or symbolic existence is threatened. These threats come in the form of bureaucratic and unresponsive governments that discriminate or neglect the group's needs, or of structural changes resulting from modernisation and globalisation. Cultural-religious groups are convenient vehicles for redressing these material and cultural threats. Violence serves both instrumental and expressive functions for these groups. In turn, cultural-religious groups provide justification for the use of violence based on the emotive force of cultural traditions and the group's existence. Thus, violence and cultural identity appear to have a mutually reinforcing relationship.

Serving both practical and symbolic ends, violence is a potential resource for cultural-religious groups seeking to assert their unique identity and to meet their members' material

demands. Violence is an extreme means of expressing cultural identity. Violent images are understood across major ethnic and cultural divisions (Riches 1986: 13). For witnesses on either side, the violence perpetrated symbolises the existence and integrity of an alternative way of life (Riches 1986: 13).

Cultural identity contributes to the use of violence by exacerbating a group or individuals' perceived sense of deprivation. As we have seen, according to Gurr, the level of collective violence depends on the group's sense of relative deprivation – the gap between its expectation and gratification. By raising members' self-esteem and articulating their ambitions, cultural identity raises their expectations in terms of living standards, employment, social status and political power (Riches 198: 23). Cultural identity also creates a sense of deprivation by making it easier to compare the relative social position of two groups.

Cultural identity and cultural-religious groups may be constructed to justify violence used to achieve material and other ends. As Arendt cynically states,

Since violence always needs justification, an escalation of the violence in the streets may bring a truly racist ideology to justify it (Arendt 1970: 77).

To justify violence, a cultural identity is either inflated by ideas of superiority or denigrated to portray the group as a victim. In the first case, the cultural group creates a self-image of burgeoning greatness and righteousness that raises the group's expectations and ambitions. This cultural pride or religious righteousness serves as a cause to 'fight for' or defend. As long as rioters maintain their religious commitment, they need not feel guilt or shame for acting violently (Kakar 1995: 247). This is similar to violence justified by patriotism or by 'national security' (Riches 1986: 205). Thus, religion and ethnicity legitimise violence much as the state or nation does.

A constructed image of victimisation from historical and current socio-economic or political conditions also justifies violence as self-defence. Distinguishing the cultural group, a cultural identity transforms generalised oppression into discrimination and injustice

towards its members. This deprivation justifies the cultural group's use of violence to redress its oppression. The discriminated group, attacked physically or metaphorically through economic deprivation, claims that it is acting in self-defence.

Group leaders may also evoke violence by stoking existing persecutory anxieties and creating a fear of annihilation of the group identity (Kakar 1995: 247). This persecution anxiety weakens the group members' individual sense of identity (Kakar 1995: 251). The individual identity is then strengthened by the shared belief in the superiority of the group's culture and ways. As a result, the individual identity becomes consolidated around the religious-cultural community (Kakar 1995: 251). According to Kakar's social-psychological analysis (1995), when the group feels humiliation or its ambitions are blocked, regression occurs in the group just as it does in the individual. The group's hidden feelings of worthlessness and inferiority come to the fore. If no possibilities of self-assertion are available, then feelings of helplessness and vulnerability arise. This regression most clearly manifests itself as group aggression.

Finally, the existence of the 'group' itself justifies violent acts committed in its name by its members. Kakar suggests that implicit in the formation of a 'group' is a self-assertion of 'we are', with the potential for confrontation with other groups. Thus, the group is "inherently a carrier of aggression, with fear of persecution and attended by a sense of risk and potential for violence" (Kakar 1995: 243). Building on cultural traditions such as myth, history, ritual and symbols, the psychological development of 'we are' makes the community a firm part of personal identity. As a result, individualism disappears and a strong group coherence is created. The immersion of the individual into the group may lead to heroic self-sacrifice as well as brutality (Kakar 1995: 215). Committed by the group to further its own interests, violent acts are justified by the group's existence. Individual members are absolved of guilt since the violence was done for the greater good of the group. Another

interpretation by Arendt regards the group as serving to absolve individuals of responsibility for their actions, rather than justifying the actions directly.

Where all are guilty, no one is; confessions of collective guilt are the best possible safeguard against the discovery of culprits, and the very magnitude of the crime the best excuse for doing nothing (Arendt 1970: 65).

The group provides anonymity for the individual actors whose actions have merged with the larger group. Violence is not justified, but cannot be accounted for because there is no one to take responsibility. The existence of the group absorbs individual actors' responsibility. The anonymity of the group makes it easier to commit acts of extreme brutality. Thus, the group itself facilitates the use of violence.

Conclusion

While the existence and promotion of cultural identities need not be associated with violence, certain characteristics of violence make it effective in the promotion of cultural identity and the ends of cultural-religious groups. Violence is strategically and consciously employed by individuals and groups to achieve social, economic and political goals. Both instrumental and expressive, violence is particularly useful to marginalised cultural-religious groups that wish to express the importance of their unique identity and gain recognition or autonomy. For marginalised cultural-religious groups without economic or political assets, violence is the ideal means to assert their identity. Enacting violence does not require privileged knowledge or financing; it only requires the willingness to perform an act of physical force that crosses the boundaries of legitimacy. Thus, violence is an accessible resource equally available to the poor, women, and students who as an angry mob can effectively achieve their goals. The marginalised and disempowered need only become mobilised to make use of violence. Finally, the physicality of violence makes it a cross-cultural means of expressing opposition and a forceful way of asserting alternative values. In turn, cultural identity manifested as ethnic or religious nationalism provides a compelling justification for violence. Violence is viewed as an act of self-defence – preserving the

integrity and rights of the cultural-religious group. The individual performs violent acts to preserve the group and promote its interests. Drawing their identity and strength from the group, individuals acting violently are justified by the group's legitimacy. In the following chapters, links between violence and cultural identity are examined more closely in the context of the Shiv Sena. This entails looking at violence's role in the identity formation and empowerment processes of men and women in Shiv Sena.

CHAPTER FIVE: Empowering The Marathi *Manus*

Introduction

Shiv Sena provides a formula for empowering the Marathi *manus* that includes the use of violence in the name of the Marathi people. Through their violent spectacles, the Sena holds captive the city that disempowers them. When the Sena declares a *bandh*, no one leaves their home. If they do, they risk being attacked by roaming Shiv Sainiks, who cannot be held accountable. Often referred to as '*goondas*', Sainiks are openly feared and secretly admired by many citizens of Mumbai. After the theoretical chapters which precede, I begin my study of the Sena by looking at this 'power' of intimidation of male Shiv Sainiks to establish a benchmark against which to compare women's experience in the Sena, and also because the women partially derive their 'power' from the men's intimidating reputation.

This chapter begins by exploring theories of masculinity and of its association with violence. The Sena's attitude towards violence and 'action' is contrasted with that of RSS, the most prominent Hindu Right organisation in India. I will then explore how a masculinity generated through violent and spontaneous action results in the perceived empowerment of male Shiv Sainiks overall. Elements contributing to increased self-esteem of Shiv Sena men and the creation of a new masculinity are analysed in detail: Bal Thackeray's leadership, Shiv Sena's community network, 'action', and cultural identity.

I. Theories on Masculinities

However masculinity is defined, it must always be understood in relation to femininity. The status of women in society often reflects how men perceive their masculinity. Defining masculinity in opposition to femininity implies defining, i.e. limiting, the social roles of women and men. According to social activist – Bhasin (2002:1), masculinity as defined by patriarchy not only harms women, but also reduces men's choices, putting them into dehumanising 'straight jackets'. Therefore, while it was necessary in an early phase of gender studies to focus exclusively on women as agents, because of their subordination in

patriarchal structures, today masculinity and men need to be examined in order to make gender relations more equal. Presenting the evolution of gender concepts, the next section provides a theoretical framework for understanding masculinity in the Shiv Sena and its implications for women.

1. Sex Roles

Constrictive definitions of masculinity and femininity are based primarily on previous notions of set sex roles. According to sex role theories, individuals' psychological traits and social responsibilities are determined by their sex. Being a man or woman entails enacting a general set of characteristics attached to one's sex. The male role prescribes men to be active, aggressive and competitive. Traditionally in western societies, men were responsible for the economic support of families and only certain forms of housework (Pleck 1977:181). The female role prescribes women to be nurturing, warm and altruistic; a woman has primary responsibility for childcare and household work (Pleck 1977:182). Masculine and feminine are interpreted as the internalisation of sex roles resulting from socialisation. First-generation sex role theorists believed that roles were well-defined and considered sex role socialisation a positive social phenomenon. The internalisation of sex roles was thought to contribute to social stability, mental health, and the performance of necessary social functions (Connell 1995: 23). Based on Functionalist Theory, sex role norms were assumed to be in accordance with actual personalities and social institutions.

Sex role theory is criticised for being constrictive, inflexible to historical change, and an inaccurate representation of gender relations. Feminists generally view sex roles as oppressive to individual personalities and role internalisation as responsible for women's subordinate social position (Connell 1995: 23). Since the 1970s, historical changes resulting in women's greater participation in the workforce also challenge the validity of defined sex

roles.¹ Sex roles no longer correspond adequately to social institutions and personalities, as was assumed by early sex role theorists. As a result, individuals who violate traditional sex roles feel personally inadequate and insecure (Connell 1995: 25).

While the oppression of individuals is a concern, sex role concepts are primarily criticised for representing sex roles as reciprocal. Roles are defined by expectations and norms according to biological status, without analysis of power. Assuming men and women's roles as complementary, sex role theory underplays the social inequality and power relations between the sexes. Therefore, 'sex roles' is an inappropriate metaphor for gender relations (Connell 1995: 25).

Role differentiation does not adequately explain the position of men versus women in society. This underplays violence in gender relations and the issue of coercion. Attributing roles based on biological difference impedes the ability to adjust roles to institutional and societal changes. The influence of social structures and gender dynamics on the definition of sex roles must be recognised. As Pleck (1977:198) points out, it is social structures which generate limitations on sex role identities, not the psychological or biological nature of men and women. A woman's role is not limited by her psychological ambivalence, but by the absence of support for change in her workplace and home. Men do not have an innate need for dominance, but are socialised to have such a sex role identity by the current institutionalised structure of the workplace. Recognising societal and institutional effects on sex roles results in an understanding of role norms as social facts that can be changed by social processes. Therefore, new sex role models can be created by changing expectations through agencies of socialisation such as the family, school, and mass media (Connell 1995: 23). Though sex role theory has been largely rejected, sex role norms continue to influence how men and women view themselves in most societies and impede the transformation of gender identities.

¹ Over the last thirty years, married women in the U.S. increasingly hold paid jobs as well. Generally, however, these are relatively low-paying and low-prestige jobs.

2. Gender Relations

Most theorists today are careful to distinguish 'sex' from 'gender'. Sex is exclusively the biological distinction between men and women, while gender is a socio-cultural construction of male and female identities (Kull 2001). Masculinity and femininity are considered relational constructs whose definitions depend on one another. They are also socially constructed within an historical context of gender relations. Historically derived definitions of masculinity and femininity reproduce those power relations. Thus, masculinity is associated with traits of authority and dominance, while femininity connotes passivity and subordination (Kimmel 1987:12). Kimmel (1987:14) further suggests that masculinity is historically reactive to changing definitions of femininity and varies along lines of class, race and age lines. Since masculinity and femininity are relational constructs, the attempt to redefine femininity to include active public participation in education, religious institutions and social reform has called into question traditional definitions of masculinity. This 'masculine reactivity' has a political component as well. In societies where men have institutional power over women based on inherited definitions of gender, they are unlikely to change these norms or call them into question (Kimmel 1987:21).

Kimmel is criticised for portraying masculinity and femininity as polarised opposites that only change in relation to each other. His emphasis on the relational construction of gender is deemed limited since gendered identities are judged only from one perspective. Cornwall (1994:18) suggests that Kimmel ignores the ambiguities and contradictions involved in gendering human beings. Connell places greater emphasis on the politics or conflicts of interest embedded in gender relations. In a gender order where men dominate women, they naturally constitute different interest groups, the former concerned with the defence of gender identities and the latter advocating change. Connell argues that in any structure of inequality, groups are defined by those who will gain or lose in different ways by sustaining or by changing the structure. These groups exist regardless of whether men as

individuals believe in equality or whether women are pursuing change (Connell 1995: 82).

Thus, masculinity is a social construction generated within a gender order that defines masculinity in opposition to femininity to sustain power relations between men and women as groups (Cornwall 1994: 198).

Four tenets dominate the modern sociology of gender and contribute to the social construction of masculinity and femininity. Firstly, gender is not fixed but is constructed through social interaction. The construction of gender occurs in everyday life. Through everyday interactions, notions of gender are constantly created and transformed. Power relations are constituent parts of these interactions (Cornwall 1994:10). With regards to masculinity, its production is characterised by the hierarchical, competitive structure of the institution. Secondly, economic and institutional structures are important in defining and changing gender identities, directly shaping masculinities and indirectly affecting femininity. Thirdly, different masculinities and femininities exist among classes within the same cultural or institutional setting. Since gender is a means of structuring social practice, it is enmeshed in other social structures. Gender constantly interacts with race, class, nationality and place in the world order. Therefore, the masculinities of white men are not only constructed in relation to white women, but also in relation to black men (Connell 1995: 75). Finally, three types of relations are built between these different masculinities and femininities: alliance, dominance and subordination. These relations produce the contradictory and dynamic character of gender (Connell 1995: 26). Relations constructing masculinity and femininity are dialectical and created through practices that exclude, include, intimidate and exploit.

From these tenets, Connell identifies three defining structures of gender: power, production, and sexuality. Power relations between men and women are fundamental determinants of gender identities. Despite social reforms and resistance, women's subordination and men's dominance resulting from patriarchy persists. Changing power relations remain the main point of contention in efforts to change gender identities. Through

gender divisions of labour, production relations also define gender identities. Social constructions of masculinity (e.g., men defined as breadwinners) result in unequal wages and the control of major corporations and private fortunes by men. Finally, sexuality determines hierarchical social positions. For example, men's position of social dominance is related to heterosexuality (Connell 1995: 74). These structural factors generally result in unequal incomes, childcare responsibilities and access to social power between the sexes.

Alterations to these structural factors of gender have caused crises in the gender order and, consequently, changes in gender identities. The global movement for women's emancipation and patriarchal power's loss of legitimacy have challenged men's dominance over women. Divergent masculinities are being reconfigured in response to feminism. Massive institutional changes have also transformed production relations over the last fifty years. These changes include the post-war growth of married women's employment in developed countries. While women are increasingly entering the workforce, unemployed men are not taking on household responsibilities. Finally, sexual freedom has threatened men's control over women and resulted in defensive strategies to preserve traditional social orders (Connell 1995: 85). These shifts in power, production and sexual relations have eroded the collective construction of masculinity characterised by the authority of older men, the subservience of 'lads' and the exclusion of women.

3. Masculinities

In the previous sections, masculinity was examined in relation to femininity and gender relations in general. Focusing on masculinity, I now present the different types of masculinities and how they impact men. Masculinity is conventionally represented as an essence or measurable commodity that can be possessed or lost (Cornwall 1994: 12). As discussed previously, masculinity is produced through interactions among men as well as between men and women. Multiple gender identities or masculinities are created from different contexts and specific relations between the actors and audience (Cornwall

1994:10). Hegemony, subordination, complicity and marginalisation are different types of relations among masculinities. I shall focus on hegemonic and marginalised masculinities, which are the most prevalent types and the most relevant to Shiv Sena.

Hegemonic masculinities typically define the successful way of 'being a man'. As a result, other masculine styles are considered inadequate or inferior (Cornwall 1994).

Hegemonic masculinity asserts the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. Derived from Gramsci's analysis of class relations, hegemony refers to the cultural dynamic through which a group claims and sustains a leading position in society.

Hegemony is established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideals and institutional power. Regarding hegemonic masculinity, the association between 'men' and 'power' are made to seem natural. It provides men with the authority to control resources and to perpetuate that control (Cornwall 1994: 20). While discourses of hegemonic masculinity may suppress contradictory subjectivities, they never totally censor them. Within the overall hegemonic framework, there are specific gender relations of dominance and subordination, such as political or cultural exclusion and economic discrimination (Connell 1995: 80).

The destabilisation of traditional masculinity has increased the prevalence of marginalised masculinities. Traditional hegemonic masculinity primarily depends on dominance in production relations – being the breadwinner – and is therefore dependent on employment. Men in depressed economies often feel they are less than 'real' men if they cannot find jobs. In many societies, a man is more masculine if he has a job and can demonstrate his self-sufficiency and independence from charity (Buchbinder 1994: 11). Massive unemployment and urban poverty are the principal generators of marginalised masculinities. Institutional racism exacerbates the marginalisation of men belonging to certain ethnic/racial groups (e.g., African-Americans). These men are marginalised in society overall due to poverty and unemployment, as well as in relation to men of dominant classes or ethnic groups (Connell 1995: 80). Various categories of men experience

subordinated masculinities, including the working class, homosexuals and men in developing countries (Cornwall 1994: 199). A preoccupation with proving or improving their masculinity compels men to maintain or achieve community status through symbolic gestures of manliness (e.g., entertaining friends lavishly, upholding patriarchy). Marginalised men seek confirmation and male companionship outside the home to combat their marginalised social status and resulting domestic alienation.

Masculinity and Violence

In chapter four, I examined concepts of violence with reference to power and ethnic identities. Violence is more commonly associated with masculine identities. Violence is a part of systems of domination such as the gender order as well as a measure of their imperfection. Legitimate hierarchies generally do not require the use of violence to intimidate, though the threat is always present (Connell 1995: 84). Implicitly gendered, violent altercations are directly relevant to the negotiation of masculine identities. Usually, violent incidents are transactions among men, such as military combat and armed assault. In group struggles, violence is a means of claiming or asserting masculinity. For example, gang violence in the inner city demonstrates the assertion of marginalised masculinities against other men, in line with the assertion of masculinity in sexual violence against women (Connell 1995: 83). Ironically, women also use violence to associate themselves with masculinized power (Cornwall 1994:23).

Interpretations of violence depend on perceptions of legitimacy and provocation. Violence is considered acceptable when it is justified; it is always justified when the other party begins the fight. There is a positive obligation to reciprocate violence, partly as defence but also in order to 'save face'. Such altercations involving honour are confined to men. Women are presumed to be unable to compete in the masculine world of violence (i.e., military combat) and are not legitimate participants in the exchange of physical aggression. Honour is not gained from fights with women (Connell 1995: 99). As Kantikar points out,

to attain masculine attributes, the act of violence is not so important as the style of the confrontation (in Cornwall 1994: 14). Displays of violence can serve as markers of masculinities in different ways. Whether a man fights, runs, cries or refuses to fight when confronted, the masculinity of one or both parties is enhanced or diminished. As a result, resorting to physical violence can be viewed as potency, but also as brutish ignorance or pathetic fragility (Cornwall 1994:15). Individuals' reactions to violence are not necessarily constant, but vary according to the context and the identities of the actors. Thus, each violent episode is part of a continuing process whereby men negotiate their relative positions of power as individuals and representatives of social categories based on gender, age, class or ethnicity (Cornwall 1994: 15).

Violence towards women can be regarded as a characteristic of both hegemonic and marginalised masculinities. In the case of hegemonic masculinity, the privileged group uses violence to sustain its dominance. Women are intimidated from challenging men's domination through office harassment, domestic assault, rape and even murder by patriarchal men. Men's use of violent force is a means of asserting their supposed 'biological' dominance (e.g., physical strength) over women. Violence also serves to physically and psychologically prevent women's public participation. For unemployed, marginalised men who are excluded from occupational participation, violence becomes the only means of asserting their domination over women. Their subordination in relation to hegemonic men creates a greater need to assert their masculine potency by subordinating women (Connell 1985: 111). Lacking real resources for power, they create a façade of 'hegemonic masculinity' using violence. This tendency also occurs in men working in professional settings who lack social authority from wealth or corporate power (Connell 1995: 165). They feel resentful since, despite attaining formal education, their power position in society has not changed.

Limitations of Masculine Identities

Despite theoretical shifts from 'sex role' to 'gender identities' in sociology, in most societies masculinity and femininity still operate as sex roles. Changing such perceptions is a gradual process. The women's movement has forced the change worldwide in the political and legal spheres, yet on the interpersonal and cultural levels, change has met with resistance. Men often resist the changes to concepts of masculinity resulting from redefining femininity. Yet, as Bhasin argues in her treatise, "It is Time We Looked Also at Men and Masculinities," men have much to gain from new gender identities.

Bhasin (2002) argues that men also suffer from the imposition of hegemonic masculine identities in many societies. Boys and men are forced to fit into definitions of masculinity that are limiting and often do not correspond to individual personalities. Hegemonic masculinity entails wielding power over others. By definition, men are expected to be strong, daring and aggressive; women are weak, submissive and fearful. Therefore, men who surrender or are not aggressive are considered 'women'. In contrast, women who are in control are complimented as being as good as men (Bhasin 2002:8).

Gendering characteristics and stereotyping the sexes confine and limit the choices of boys and men, not just girls and women. Indian men are expected to be the heads of households and breadwinners, and they have in addition the great responsibilities of supporting their parents and younger siblings. While men benefit from hegemonic masculinity by gaining power, privilege and prestige, they also experience the stress and pressures of the responsibilities which come with being in command. Men are also expected to carry out their responsibilities without the expression of emotions. They cannot show weakness or admit fear (Bhasin 2002:5). Yet most men cannot live up to the notion of hegemonic masculinity, especially in countries of high unemployment. Lacking a job, many men cannot even become heads of the household since they cannot find wives. Men with gentle and caring personalities or who are unwilling to be aggressive are ridiculed as being

'effeminate' or 'sissies'. These men can be bullied or sexually exploited by stronger, macho men. Finally, excessive emphasis on virility and male sexual performance generates insecurities and feelings of inadequacy for many men. A man who cannot perform sexually is called 'impotent' and is considered weak, powerless and non-male (Bhasin 2002:7). Thus, men who cannot live up to valorised notions of masculinity suffer emotionally and socially.

The 'breadwinner' identity, strongly associated with hegemonic masculinity, can be particularly harmful to men. Most men are defined by and define themselves by their job, position and achievements. As a result, when they retire, become ill, or lose their jobs, their entire identity falls apart. This limited definition of masculinity causes men to become uni-dimensional. They are only able to do their paid jobs. Often they are unwilling and unable to look after children, cook, clean or care for their homes. Working in the home is considered women's work and is, therefore, beneath these men.² Without their position or job, they seem to have no identity and no meaning in society. Thus, during economic crises, many men commit suicide (Bhasin 2002:5).

Many men are facing identity crises due to changing gender roles. Widespread unemployment of men deprives them of the privilege of being providers for their family. In some parts of India, as many as 40% of households are female-headed. The government is also increasingly taking over traditionally male roles in communities, such as meting out justice. This erosion of men's economic and social power in households and communities has undermined their masculine identities. As mentioned in the previous section, many men try to regain their lost power through violence against women. Many turn to alcohol and drugs for solace, while others join fundamentalist groups or the underworld, seeking meaning, an identity or simply a means of venting their frustrations (Bhasin 2002:3).

Bhasin argues that 'masculine thinking' also results in a greater use of violence. She explains that the Hindu Right and Muslim fundamentalists have adopted a hegemonic

² For many women, men's inability to cook and care for the household is a means of controlling their husbands who are dependent on them for these things.

masculinity that entails no talks or negotiations, simply the use of violence against their enemy. She claims that those who are powerful and want to remain in power do not need to talk, they need only to use guns and bombs (Bhasin 2002:10). This is because talking, listening, negotiating are considered signs of weakness. I disagree with Bhasin on this point and see the use of violence by the Hindu Right, at least, as a sign of the erosion of their power. As I shall argue, proponents of the Hindu Right resort to violence because they believe they have no other means of communication. It is their perceived lack of power that results in their use of violence. Bhasin also attributes the subordination of blacks, *Dalits*, the elderly and women to their inherent 'weakness'. She argues that masculine thinking abhors weak elements in society and considers them dispensable. I do not think this explanation is correct with regards to masculinity in the Hindu Right. These socially weak elements such as *Dalits* and women are disregarded not because they are dispensable, but because they are considered competition. In fact, they were made 'weak' by social structures precisely in order to reduce competition for the best resources in society. Women and *Dalits* are confined to lower positions in society so that they do not compete for jobs and positions that hegemonic men desire. Competing with other hegemonic men, they do not want more competition from other quarters.

Despite disagreeing with Bhasin's characterisation of masculinity regarding the Hindu Right, I agree with her conclusion that men and women will both benefit from changing gender identities. The women's movement has been trying to create a new woman who is empowered, active, and supportive of other women. Now, we need new models of men and masculinity that allow different behaviours and emotions. Encouraging men to care for children will broaden their identities so they are not just economic fathers. Broader identities as that of social and emotional fathers will give men a more stable social identity to carry them through difficult economic times. Also, as women are increasingly entering public spaces and assuming responsibilities, it has become a necessity for men to enter the

domestic space and share home management and childcare responsibilities. In order for this to happen, women must also release the power over men which they derive from controlling household knowledge, just as men must adopt new masculine identities that are not based on power differentials or domination over women or other men (Bhasin 2002:14).

II. Masculinity and the Hindu Right

Masculinity in the Hindu Right is rooted in the patriarchal system these organisations espouse. As a result, the steady erosion of patriarchy in India has led to in the negotiation of masculine identities in the Hindu Right. While the Hindu Right may uphold an idealised vision of masculinity reflecting the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, many men of the Hindu Right in reality experience a marginalised masculinity. As a result, I argue that Hindu Right organisations are presently re-negotiating masculine identities; they are attempting to restore hegemony through Hindu nationalist politics. This said, masculinities among men of the Hindu Right are not all the same, nor are their visions of hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, before examining masculinities and empowerment through the Shiv Sena, I will discuss masculinities in another Hindu Right organisation, the Rashtra Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

1. RSS and Hindutva

Established in 1925, the Rashtra Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteer Organisation) has been the primary propagator of Hindutva in India. A conceptual expression of common Hindu affinities, Hindutva has gained momentum in Indian politics over the past thirty years. According to the RSS, all Indians by virtue of ancestry are Hindu; those who refuse to acknowledge the primacy of the Hindu vision of nationhood should be excluded from the nation. The RSS, like Shiv Sena, promotes the formation of a strong paternalistic state in the form of the Hindu *rashtra* or nation (Basu 1993:4). A tightly organised and disciplined organisation, the RSS 'Combine', in which the RSS is the central

body, promotes its vision of Hindutva through its educational/cultural revivalist branch, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) and its political branch, the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party) which formed the coalition government of India from 1998 to 2004.

While Hindutva represents the *raison d'être* of the RSS, it merely represents the Shiv Sena's most recent (though most effective) means of mobilising support for the organisation. Both the RSS and Shiv Sena view Muslims as the 'operational other' that has impugned Hindu masculinity and hampered the development of the Hindu *rashtra*. Yet, while the RSS espouses the cultivation of upper caste virtues to strengthen the Hindu nation, Shiv Sena promotes physical violence (Hansen 1996:165). These different approaches reflect the different characters and constituencies of the Sena and RSS. Though the RSS deems physical strength necessary, it places greater emphasis on character development. According to the chief RSS ideologue M.S. Gowalkar (1966) in his Bunch of Thoughts:

We have to be so strong that none in the whole world will be able to overawe and subdue us. For that we require strong and healthy bodies...[but] character is more important. Strength without character will only make a brute of man. Purity of character...is the real life-breath of national glory and greatness (Gowalkar cited in Hansen 1996:145).

This physical and spiritual strength is achieved systematically through the RSS *shakha* (daily meeting), which impart a national spirit in *swayamsevaks* (male members) through physical exercise and the inculcation of ideals and norms of good and virtuous behaviour (*sanskars*) (Hansen 1996:147). Thus, the nation is strengthened by an internal process of self-development of individuals through the RSS collective.

2. Shiv Sena and Violence

In contrast, Shiv Sena is characterised as a 'plebeian' organisation of aggressive, unemployed young men asserting themselves through physical violence in the modern economy of Mumbai (Hansen 1996). For the Sena, strength or *Shivshakhti* (Shivaji's power) is attained through external actions, often involving physical violence and conflict. Unlike the RSS, the Sena has no interest in social transformation that creates a new society through

self-improvement and character development (Hansen 2001). The Sena does not expect Sainiks to change themselves, but encourages them to be proud of who they are, believe in themselves and assert themselves as Hindus. Shiv Sena *shakhas* are branch offices where Sainiks meet to fraternise; they do not offer systematic ideological or physical training. A Sainik's strength is not derived through self-development, but through his/her association with the Sena's violent image. Shiv Sena encourages Hindus to act assertively and even violently, while providing them the support of a massive army of fellow Sainiks. The Sena encourages spontaneous action that allows men to express their "justified anger, to protest and to demand their due" (Hansen 2001:52). The construction of the Sainik as an assertive male is expressed by the following statement by a longstanding male Shiv Sainik, Satish Pradhan, whom Hansen interviewed in 1992:

A Shiv Sainik is not a man that if someone comes up to him and slaps him, then he will not simply show the other cheek...If someone enters my house and runs away with my *roti* then what should I do? I have to slap him and take the *roti* away because that is my *roti* and not his (Hansen 2001:50).

Violence is justified as self-defence and preserving what is yours. For the Sena, violence is a means of self-assertion through which a person becomes confident and gains self-respect. As a result, violence is central to the Shiv Sena as "a rhetorical style, as a promise of strength, and as actual practice" (Hansen 2001:48). It is a means of restoring masculinity to the Marathi *manus* and purifying society (Hansen 2001: 88).

3. Conflicting Masculinities

The RSS and Shiv Sena share the belief that activism, unity and discipline are qualities necessary to recover Hindu masculinity. Yet the RSS offers harmony, cooperation, collective organised activism, while the Sena promises violent strife and conflict. According to Sudhir Kakar, the main difference between the RSS and Shiv Sena at the ideological level is their different attitudes toward the ambiguities of male sexuality in India. Kakar argues that male sexuality exists in a void between the notion of controlling women's sexuality and the Brahmanical idea of sexual abstinence and sublimating sexual desire into spiritual energy

as the highest level of masculinity (Kakar 1989). According to Hansen (2001:93), this paradox of male sexuality may be especially relevant to higher caste Hindus of the RSS. The RSS accepts the latter notion of sexuality and prescribes organisational discipline under the RSS' moral guidance to control it. The RSS's patriarchy provides moral order and laws in response to eroding traditions and family authority.

Shiv Sena attempts to expand the boundaries of male sexuality, drawing on the masculine Kshatriya tradition and emulating the image of strong, active, conquering Muslim men. Masculinity is derived from annihilating and humiliating the Muslim 'other' who has deprived Hindus of their masculinity. Regaining masculinity does not come from ideology, internal development or organisational discipline, but from performing acts of violence. Sainiks are attracted to Shiv Sena's political pragmatism and egalitarian discourse, which only requires adopting an assertive and self-confident public attitude (Hansen 2001:195). Free from the high-caste notions of the RSS, the Sena offers ordinary people a simple formula towards self-respect and social mobility. While both organisations attempt to preserve patriarchy, the Sena offers a more accessible masculinity for the 'common man.'

III. Shiv Sena's Formula for Empowerment

Shiv Sena was created primarily as a response to the 'disempowerment' of the Maharashtrian *manus* in Bombay. Following the incorporation of Bombay into the state of Maharashtra, Maharashtrians expected an improvement in their political, social and economic status in 'their' state capital. In terms of masculine identities, the Sena wished to transform the Maharashtrian *manus*' marginalised masculinity into one of hegemony – cultural domination over Bombay. Unlike the RSS, which is trying to maintain the hegemony of high-caste Hindu men in India, the Sena is attempting to create for lower-caste Hindu men a hegemonic masculinity which they never possessed. Hegemony requires institutional power, which the Sena initially lacked. However, Shiv Sena has had from the start the support of masses of young Marathi men – Shivaji's army. Using its perceived and

actual numbers, Shiv Sena has enabled the collective and individual empowerment of its members. Four factors have been particularly instrumental in empowering Maharashtrian men in Bombay. These include Bal Thackeray's charismatic authority, the community network of *shakhas*, the manifestation of the Sena ethos of 'action', and the successful promotion of a Maharashtrian/Hindu cultural identity. Through these means, Shiv Sena has taken ownership of the city it has renamed Mumbai (Hansen 2001) and enabled their members to take up space and control it. This part explores in detail how these factors contribute to the empowerment of Shiv Sena members.

1. Bal Thackeray's Leadership

The charismatic leadership of Bal Thackeray is both Shiv Sena's principal attraction and Sainiks' main source of confidence. A role model to Shiv Sainiks, Bal Thackeray serves as a source of empowerment in many different ways. Firstly, Bal Thackeray is the primary authority and representative of Shiv Sainiks. By becoming a Shiv Sainik, a member publicly accepts his dictates and opinions. 'Balasaheb' acts and speaks on their behalf, representing who they aspire to be.

Most Shiv Sainiks derive a sense of collective empowerment from Bal Thackeray's public presence and fiery, controversial statements. Shiv Sainiks often cite his charismatic speeches as the reason they joined. Thackeray's speeches, which are given primarily in Marathi, have a conversational style and simple argumentation that make them socially and intellectually accessible to the common Marathi *manus*. Hearing their grievances expressed by Thackeray, they feel justified and self-righteous. They need not change themselves, they are not the problem; it is the 'other' that oppresses them. Thackeray simply tells them to assert themselves, to be proud of being Hindu men based on their numbers and superior culture (Hansen 2001:87). The bold and sometimes offensive style of his speeches also serves as a metaphor for how Sainiks should behave. Imbuing Sainiks with confidence in

Thackeray and in themselves, Thackeray's speeches create a self-righteous, masculine Marathi ethnic identity.

Evoking Shivaji Maharaj, Thackeray constructs a heroic history and a martial culture. He often refers to the numerous battles between the Mughal emperors and the Maratha Empire (Hansen 2001:91), casting the Sena in the role of cultural defender. Continuing Shivaji's mission, Shiv Sainiks derive pride from the mythical past Thackeray creates, and collective empowerment from this Marathi identity.

Shiv Sainiks also admire Thackeray's wealth, social status and political prominence. Thackeray is frank about his admiration for 'Bollywood' films, beautiful women and a life of luxury. He and his family are often photographed socialising with film stars and other celebrities who pay obeisance to Thackeray. In accordance, the Sena promotes a lifestyle of conspicuous consumption, unlike the asceticism of the RSS. Sena leaders imitate Thackeray's style, dying their hair, wearing ostentatious gold necklaces and watches, sporting mobile phones and sunglasses. In this way, Shiv Sainiks live vicariously through Thackeray. Local Sainiks' prestige depends on the Sena or Thackeray's larger public image. Thackeray's prominence in the media transfers to his followers. The more important he becomes, the more prominent they become in their neighbourhoods.

The transfer of power from Thackeray to his Sainiks comes from their unconditional acceptance of his leadership and submission to his authority. In doing so, Shiv Sainiks regard Thackeray as the 'patriarch' of their political lives. He can command them to enact a *bandh* or attack his designated enemies. A demanding patriarch, Thackeray expects loyalty and submission. To disobey or publicly disagree with Thackeray is to no longer be a Sainik. He rules his Sainiks by instilling anxiety and insecurity in them. Intermediate leaders are especially controlled by insecurity, as they credit Thackeray with making them into 'somebody' and giving them power and respect. According to Rajan Vichare, a Shiv Sena *shakha pramukh*,

...Shiv Sena is everything to me. I am there because Shiv Sena is there. If you remove the last four words from my name (Rajan Vichare, Shiv Sena *shakha pramukh*) my value is zero. I am recognised only as a Shiv Sena man (Hansen 2001:111).

Vichare regards his membership in Shiv Sena as altering his life – making him into a powerful *shakha pramukh* in his ward. He derives his entire identity from Shiv Sena.

The power relationship between Thackeray and his followers is symbiotic.

Thackeray's command over thousands of loyal young men gives Shiv Sena prominence; and each young man is taken seriously due to his association with Thackeray (Hansen 2001: 59).

Thackeray's power comes from his ability to incite his masses of Shiv Sainiks to wreak havoc on the city of Mumbai – stop train service, block traffic, destroy public property.

Thackeray's unique position as patriarch and his resulting control over his unpredictable and violent Sainiks allows him to exercise a sort of sovereignty within the state (Hansen 2001:220). Competing with the government's authority, Thackeray's sovereignty is bolstered by his followers who desire an alternative. The Indian government has failed to protect their interests. They regard Thackeray as protecting them against Muslims during riots as well as in the competition for jobs, education and space in the city.

Hansen regards the self-respect and freedom that Sainiks derive from membership as illusory. He regards their confidence as tenuous since it is attained only through submission to Thackeray's patriarchal and unpredictable dictates. Indeed, most Sainik leaders and legislators simply imitate both Thackeray's style and themes (Hansen 2001: 85). When they attempt to act independently, they are decisively removed from their position. Power within the party is based primarily on proximity to Thackeray, not personal achievements. This results in the proliferation of lackeys in the party, jostling for positions closer to Thackeray (Hansen 2001:59). Are Sainiks merely Thackeray's puppets or do they derive self-confidence and empowerment from their membership as well? Biographic interviews of individual Shiv Sainiks in chapters 6 and 8, will address this question.

2. Creating a Neighbourhood Network

Creating neighbourhood networks is the second way Shiv Sena promotes empowerment. Shiv Sena creates these neighbourhood networks through the influence of *dadas*, local leaders, and their ubiquitous *shakhas*. The *dadaization* of neighbourhoods replaces a previous clientelist relationship between politicians and slum-dwellers in Mumbai referred to as *Ma'Bapism* by Gerard Heuze. *Shakhas* on the other hand build on and complement traditional associations such as *mitra mandals* (friends' clubs) and *akhadas* (gymnasiums). *Dadas* (literally 'big brothers' in Marathi) and *shakhas* contribute to the empowerment of Shiv Sainiks in different ways. *Dadas* serve as local representatives of Thackeray, who address the problems of local inhabitants in exchange for their loyalty, votes and support. In this way, *dadas* enhance a person's sense of efficacy and give them a sense of being cared for. By becoming *dadas* themselves, young men can increase their local power. *Shakhas* further provide Sainiks a sense of belonging to a group and a place. The activities of the *shakha* give young men and women opportunities to develop their skills and display their courage and abilities, which are essential to personal development and empowerment.

Rise of Shiv Sena *Shakhas*

Shiv Sena *shakhas* have been the backbone of the organisation and can be credited for the party's longevity. Their ubiquitous presence throughout Mumbai provides an easily accessible locus for Shiv Sainiks to congregate. Though *shakhas* appear to be an organisational innovation of Shiv Sena, they are based on and complement longstanding traditional associations in Maharashtra: *mitra mandal* and *akhadas*. Most Shiv Sena *shakhas* resemble one or the other or are a combination of both. *Mitra Mandals* (Friends Association) are prominent institutions throughout Maharashtra as well as Bombay. These informal youth clubs serve as a meeting place for young men in Bombay. *Akhadas* are traditional gymnasiums and body-building clubs. In urban areas of colonial India, *akhadas*

were important meeting places for men where they cultivated a sense of community and a fighting spirit (Alter 1994 in Hansen 2001:73). While Shiv Sena's *shakhas* are similar to *mitra mandals* in providing a welcoming, informal, family atmosphere; the Sena places greater emphasis on action (Heuze 1995: 220). Drawing on the traditions of the *mitra mandal* and *akhada* traditions, Sena *shakhas* provide a meeting place for young men to read newspapers and discuss politics. Larger *shakhas* also provide gymnasiums for body building and computer facilities where classes are held. Mostly young men gather in the gymnasiums while men of all ages meet daily in the *shakha*. Here a male environment is cultivated and networks are created.

With over 200 *shakhas*, one in every municipal ward, Shiv Sena has a unique neighbourhood presence. The extensive network of *shakhas* has enabled Shiv Sena to maintain a prominent organisational and spatial grid. Citizens need only walk a few minutes to visit their local *shakha* and report problems in their ward. Since the 1960s, these local *shakhas* have served as a network of self-help organisations in Mumbai. *Shakhas* claim to be open all year, Monday to Saturday between 7 and 9 pm. During these hours, the *shakha pramukh* (branch leader) receives local complaints regarding garbage disposal, sewage, water shortage, road repairs, corrupt officials, landlord harassment of tenants, neighbourhood and family quarrels, etc. (Hansen 2001:54). The *shakha pramukh*, corporator, and Sena workers address these problems by reporting them to the ward office or pressuring local politicians and authorities.

In performing this 'social work', ordinary members enhance their own self-esteem. For unemployed men, this social work gives them an occupation and identity. Identifying themselves as 'social workers', they help others resolve their civic problems and gain recognition in their wards. Since women members usually have no public identity, they find this aspect especially valuable. The process of resolving problems is also a learning experience for both young men and women. They learn how their municipal government

operates and become personally acquainted with local authorities and politicians. This allows them to build personal networks of contacts that increase their efficacy and importance in their ward. Regarding themselves as unofficial representatives of their neighbourhood, they gain confidence and develop skills that enable their personal empowerment. As a result, this network of local welfare strategies based on Shiv Sena *shakhas* may be more beneficial to the Shiv Sena 'social workers' than to those they attempt to assist.

Many observers of the Shiv Sena, from Katzenstein to V.S. Naipaul, credit the *shakha* network for the Shiv Sena's enduring presence and success in Mumbai. It is thought to be the heart of the Sena. Many left-wing activists also regard Shiv Sena's grassroots outreach through its *shakhas* as the reason for its success – enabling the kind of identification, loyalty, and communication that leftist parties have never achieved (Hansen 2001: 55). Shiv Sainiks' claims to their own ability to 'get work done' and to communicate instantaneously through the blackboards in front of every *shakha* and informal networks has generally been accepted at face value (Eckert 200:64 in Hansen 2001:55). Yet, as Hansen argues, the Sena's networks are often overestimated by Sainiks and observers (Hansen 2001: 48). For one thing, the Sena is not the only organisation to provide such civic and social services in Mumbai. In addition, the *shakhas*' ability to provide services is somewhat exaggerated. According to Hansen, *shakhas* are not in fact active throughout the year, but observe their daily opening hours, only before and during the festival season from August to October. In addition, infighting and envy among Sainiks over leadership positions and authority often impede the *shakhas*' ability to function (Hansen 2001:56).

While I agree that many *shakhas* are dysfunctional, I have found that they still provide a valuable presence for Shiv Sainiks as well as for the people in the vicinity. The *shakhas* I frequented from July to October in the Opera House District were all open daily from 7 pm until 9 pm. It is true that the activity I witnessed in July 2000 and July 2002 may have been

related to special occurrences at those times. In July 2000, Bal Thackeray was threatened to be arrested, and in July 2002 Shiv Sena had begun a membership drive. Though there was not always much activity, there was always a representative present to receive complaints. In my experience, the *shakhas* were less active or even closed, during the festival season, as Sainiks were busy organising events and visiting friends and relatives. The *shakhas* appeared most useful to people when they had nothing to do and were bored. Many members came simply to fight their loneliness and depression. Those with physical disabilities or no family also frequented the *shakha*, where they were warmly welcomed.

Communications in the *shakhas* varied from extremely efficient to non-existent. Dictates from Thackeray were generally spread through the Samna, the official Shiv Sena newspaper, and members were contacted through a phone chain to attend protests. Yet, for smaller events, communications were selective and certain people were intentionally excluded due to infighting. Social programmes were also often cancelled without notice, and the attendance of social workers was not reliable. Despite these problems, the Sena has a strong local presence. Active Sainiks establish this presence in their locality through their social work. Rather than going to the *shakha*, locals will go directly to the Sainiks' homes with their grievances.

3. Action

'Action' functions within the Sena in multifarious ways and primarily manifests itself in the form of violence and 'social work'. This double strategy – "one ostensibly benevolent and committed to social improvements, the other violent and aggressive" – is the source of Shiv Sena's power (Hansen 2001: 62). Though 'violence' and 'social work' appear to be contradictory actions, within the Sena they complement each other and serve the Sena's goal of gaining respect in Mumbai. While violent street politics have made Shiv Sena infamous throughout India and enabled the party to intimidate citizens of Mumbai, the genuine

voluntary service of Shiv Sainiks in the slums and lower-middle class neighbourhoods acts to remove this 'stain of violence' (Hansen 2001:199).

3.1 Violence

Violence, both metaphorical and literal, is the heart of the Sena; the Sena thrives on its violent reputation and on its protests, spectacles and violent beatings. At the local level, the Sena is an informal and open organisation that only began recording membership in July 2002.³ Until then, ordinary members had no official identification. While today Shiv Sena provides membership cards, members still visit the *shakha* only rarely, e.g., when they have free time or when a program is advertised. As a result, the Sena is sustained mainly by its past reputation and by present emergencies (Hansen 2001: 56).

In the face of entropy within the party, violent outbursts enable the Sena to maintain its cohesion. Though open at the local level, the Sena's central administration has become bureaucratised and highly structured. Ordinary members can no longer meet Thackeray personally to discuss a problem. They must go through their *shakha* or *vibagh pramukh* (regional leader) who will accompany them or make the request for them. Violent street-level agitation allows the members to free themselves from this bureaucracy and 'break rank'. In the midst of a *bandh*, they come together as a united organisation. Infighting and internal rivalries are quelled momentarily as they fight against their common enemy. Thus, within the party, violence creates and affirms the Sena community by reinforcing shared values among the members.

Sovereignty

Violence is also the basis of Shiv Sena's power in Mumbai. An upstart social movement representing a marginalised linguistic ethnicity in Mumbai, the Sena initially had no basis for its authority. Its followers had no political clout or wealth, only their physical

³ At that time, the Election Committee required the Sena to give the exact number of its membership in order to participate as a party in the municipal elections. This has resulted in the enrollment of sympathisers and those who want some favour from the Sena.

strength and numbers. The Sena's unpredictable acts of violence and intimidation serve as the basis for the party's sovereignty in Mumbai and the means of enforcing its authority and dictates. On February 2, 1969, Thackeray expressed this sentiment with regards to the inclusion of Belgaum in Maharashtra:

We care about neither *lathis* nor bullets... We don't wish to take the law into our hands, but if just demands are killed unjustly, we'll retaliate strongly. Shiv Sena leaders may be put into prison. But if that happens, Shiv Sainiks will be furious, and the police force will prove inadequate (Hansen 2001:64).

Despite Thackeray's claims of wishing to be law abiding, he challenged the government that wanted to exclude Belgaum from Maharashtra. The Sena's demands are asserted as 'just' in opposition to the 'unjust' actions of the government, which is threatened with the fury of the Sainiks. Thus, the Sena's willingness to fight gives Thackeray the authority to oppose the government.

Hansen explains the Sena's assertion of authority based on violence within a context of the shift from sovereignty to 'bio-politics'. According to Hansen, systems of governance and claims to sovereignty in contemporary Mumbai are highly fragmented. The state does not command an obvious monopoly on violence and therefore, lacks the authority to enforce the law. Instead, there are competing centres of power consisting of the police, the "underworld" and the Shiv Sena – each exercising competing claims to sovereignty (Hansen 2001:217). These claims to sovereignty are based on their different capacities for violence. Hansen argues that a fascination exists for those who "assert their own law, their archaic claim to sovereignty which they perform through acts of violence..." (Hansen 2001: 219).

Hansen's 'archaic claim to sovereignty' is based on Foucault's classical notion of sovereignty – "the right to take life or let live." Transgressing the law of the traditional master could result in a punishment of death (Foucault 1984: 259 in Hansen 2001:216). With direct control over the offender's life, the traditional master wields an external and extractive power – the ability to take whatever he wants. Hansen regards modern forms of power as regulative and inseparable from society at large. Transgressions of law are viewed

as symptoms of a larger social ailment requiring treatment rather than punishment.

'Criminal' elements must be contained, treated or removed. For the sake of the body of society, diseased elements represent a "biological danger" and must be removed (Hansen 2001: 217).

According to Foucault, the institutionalisation and routinization of governance result in the move from sovereignty to bio-power. Hansen gives more importance to the role of public spectacles in the construction and transformation of sovereignty into its modern form of rule by law. He believes the Foucauldian view underestimates the continued importance of violence in the reproduction of legitimacy and obedience to the law, and also in claims to sovereignty. Despite his critique, Hansen recognises that modern bio-political governance has produced greater clarity in terms of ethnic and religious categorisation. Within democratic politics, ethnicity and religion are the bases of demanding rights for the collective well-being and group entitlements. (Hansen 2001: 218). The Sena has drawn on this bio-political rationale as the basis of its sovereignty. Through its violent actions, Shiv Sena claims its sovereignty as the defender of Maharashtrians and Hindus in Mumbai.

Control of the City

Bal Thackeray's Shiv Sena had realized its potential. It had completely disrupted normal life in Mumbai for close to five days, and it had paralysed the entire state machinery. Mumbai slipped over the edge, but till the Shiv Sena chief issued his diktat, the authorities could do nothing...

-- Vaibhav Purandare (1999: 121) commentary on Shiv Sena's opposition to the separation of Belgaum from Maharashtra

As the basis for the Sena's claim to sovereignty, violent actions allow its members to 'take control' over Mumbai. This sense of owning and controlling the city enables common Maharashtrians to overcome their inferiority complex after decades of ridicule from more wealthy ethnic communities. Since the majority of Maharashtrians in Mumbai are fisher folk, dock workers and domestic servants from the villages, other communities insult all Maharashtrians as unsophisticated, uneducated, rustics or *ghatis*. Frustrated with their lower social status and dismal employment prospects, even after getting an education, Shiv Sainiks

embrace the image of the ordinary man and encourage him to demand his due, not through strategically planned campaigns but through 'action'. The Sena tells the ordinary man that changing his situation *is* in his hands. Though he may be ordinary, he has two hands that can throw stones or hit his opponent and achieve his goal. In such frustrating situations, Thackeray frees his Sainiks from social and legal conventions and allows them to act without bounds – to be themselves (Hansen 2001: 200).

This image of Sainiks as violent, aggressive defenders of the common man, using the common man's strength in numbers and the language of fists, has made Sainiks popular brokers and protectors. Sena leaders repeatedly claim that, "being a Shiv Sainik means half the job is done." This refers to the power of the Sena's intimidating reputation for violence that enables Sainiks to get what they want even without using violence. People give them what they want, or at least listen to them, fearing the consequences of not doing so. The elite, which once shunned the Sena, now approach Thackeray and their local *shakhas* to solve their bureaucratic problems expediently. This recognition contributes to ordinary Sainiks' sense of self-respect and confidence. Thus, the Sena has converted the 'stain of violence and the slums' from a source of shame into a tool of intimidation and a source of power over the upper classes in Mumbai (Hansen 2001: 199).

Criminality

While every Sainik carries this stain of violence and its benefits, even without ever acting violently, criminal elements do exist in the party. Threats of attacks on property have become a means of collecting protection money used to finance *shakha* activities or enrich leaders. Sainiks have become hit men for hire, settling scores between business rivals (Heuze 1995: 195). The Sena has also used its political clout and coercive powers to acquire lucrative building contracts and to profit from real estate investments. Sainiks have been accused of murdering tenants who impinge on their real estate dealings by refusing to evacuate. Finally, it has long been suspected that the Sena uses its ambulances for

smuggling and transporting weapons during riots. While some members and leaders profit royally from these activities, most Sainiks disassociate themselves from this criminal or *goonda* image (Heuze1995: 226).

3.2 Social Work

Social work is another category of 'action' essential to the Shiv Sainik's identity. Though their social work may be ineffective or fleeting, the spectacle of doing service is important in and of itself. All Shiv Sainiks identify themselves as 'social workers' and their primary activity in the organisation as 'social work'. This 'social work' is the Sena's term for community service or political activism. Even acts of violence are presented in the guise of social work, claimed as the means to a 'good' social end. This social worker identity allays their conscience and provides them with a genuine sense of self-worth as we shall see in subsequent chapters. Thus, social work may be the most important source of empowerment for Shiv Sainiks and contributes to the Sena's power over the city.

The performance of social work by the Sena also counterbalances its prominent 'stain of violence' in the eyes of the public. Though the Sena's violent street politics are necessary to attract young, aggressive and frustrated men, its social service prevents the complete alienation of its middle-class supporters and gives the party some social respectability (Hansen 2001: 62). For slum-dwellers and lower middle classes, the social work by individual Sainiks in their area compensates for their violent methods in other matters. According to a poor OBC (Other Backward Caste) woman, the Sena provides practical and essential assistance,

They clean the gutters, get water connections, get us released from police custody; and sometimes Anand Dighe sends his men to force the employer to pay the regular salaries. Anand Dighe is fighting injustice on the poor people...Shiv Sainiks sold sugar and potatoes cheap. Dighe also gave a cricket set to the children each year. And they stopped the black market racket in edible oil and sold the oil cheap (Hansen 2001: 117).

The Sena is valued for its assistance with the practical problems of everyday life. People living in the *chawls* are concerned with food prices, hygienic conditions and access to water.

When a person needs assistance, he can go to the *shakha* and discuss matters with the *pramukh*. Though the Sena may not be able to help, the people feel some relief in having someone listen to their problems. In their eyes, the party is absolved from any scrutiny for criminal activities because it is 'fighting for them'.

Finding immediate (though temporary) solutions to civic problems is easy and provides good publicity. According to Hansen, this is an example of the Sena's 'performative politics'. They deal with everyday problems rapidly and visibly with some immediate effective, though rarely transforming institutions or practices. Thus, rather than making the police force more efficient to prevent crimes and road accidents, the Sena provides blood donations and ambulances (Hansen 2001: 116). Performative politics allow the Sena to appear as if they are 'solving problems' and sustain its image as a protest party working for the people.

Most Shiv Sainiks are very sincere about performing social work, which becomes a genuine source of self-esteem for them. Most local members are not involved in violent conflict, but are obsessed with charity, social services and bureaucratic management of these services. The regular program of Shiv Sena *shakhas* revolves around organising cultural activities, providing assistance for the poor and disabled, and creating activities for youths (Heuze 1995: 225). At the beginning of every school year, the Sena provides free notebooks for poor children. While some *shakhas* may make this a photo opportunity by organising a presentation, others will distribute the notebooks in a systematic manner. Local *shakhas* also organise 'eye camps' where doctors give free eye examinations and distribute donated eyeglasses. Sports activities, cooking and drawing competitions are also organised for women and their children around holidays such as Navrati. Finally, active Shiv Sainiks visit their ward office to report civic problems of their neighbours and constituency.

Ordinary Shiv Sena members are transformed by participating in these social works. By organising cultural or philanthropic events, they learn new skills and discover hidden

talents. In the party, they are recognised for these abilities and are then given greater responsibility. Addressing everyday civic problems is also very educational. First, they are exposed to the most pressing problems the 'common man' faces in Mumbai. They then learn how to solve them through the proper municipal channels. Thus, they become familiar with the operation of the Municipal Corporation, their local ward office and local authorities and politicians. This knowledge and political network expose them to new opportunities. Their self-confidence grows as they become known in their neighbourhoods as well as in the ward office. They no longer fear the government or the police who previously seemed daunting and impervious. Thus, in the process of 'helping others' most Shiv Sainiks actually improve their own skills and gain power from the social and political networks they develop. As Lele argues, these mutually supportive activities in poor neighbourhoods give Sainiks a sense of direction and control in their otherwise chaotic existence (1995: 195).

Social work also enables Shiv Sena to reclaim public spaces and 'own the city'. For example, for years the seafront was inaccessible to the middle classes due to pollution and the presence of 'undesirable' elements. The middle classes now feel that these spaces are 'clean' and 'safe' and increasingly use them (Heuze 1995: 288-36; Hansen 2001: 69). This 'reclamation' has extended to slum rehabilitation and the cleansing of immoral practices in the city. For example, former Cultural Minister Pramod Navalkar had couples (even married ones) arrested for kissing in public. Thus, the Sena not only reclaims physical spaces, but also controls behaviour in these areas. For Sainiks and their sympathisers, the Sena is making the streets safe and civilised for the 'good people' to whom the city belongs.

3.3 Public Spectacles

Through public spectacles, Shiv Sena combines violence with community service and provides its members with a forum for asserting their masculine identities. Of course, enacting political spectacles in public arenas and defying the law are not unique to Shiv Sena. Public and political spectacles were pioneered in Gandhi's civil disobedience

movement. Today India's unpredictable and excitable political society consists largely of collective performances and protests of ritualised violence in public spaces, often involving destruction of public property (Hansen 2001: 230). Through such actions, groups express their dissent towards the government, police, other communities or political parties. These political spectacles are not attempts to generate new rules, but to create a sense of community or to make a cause visible in order to claim benefits, public services and entitlements. Shiv Sena performs political spectacles to establish itself as a public force. The primary purpose is to create a collective Indian identity (based on Hindu culture). To this end, the Sena has attempted to create a unified Hindu cause and public cultural tradition through festivals and riots.

Through festivals, Shiv Sena reaffirms its presence in Mumbai. By controlling the festival, the Sena is able to control the city. The invasion of parades, resulting in the closing of streets, and the loud music force Mumbaikers to either participate or remain prisoners in their homes. Shiv Sena also builds and strengthens its hold over a neighbourhood during the preparation for the festival. Young men from the *shakhas* collect funds from local businesses using a mix of threats and promises of patronage. In areas where the Sena dominates the Municipal Corporation, these methods are especially effective, since they can potentially influence the issuance of business licenses and construction permits. Many shop owners regard these donations as protection money and the means of maintaining good relations with the Sena (Hansen 2001: 106). Commanding respect in a local neighbourhood requires repeated displays of one's power, status and influence; and festivals provide such opportunities.

Through festivals, the Shiv Sena has attempted to create a collective Hindu identity that overcomes divisions among Hindus. Divided by caste, class and language, Hindus traditionally have different practices for celebrating religious holidays. In Mumbai, the Sena has contributed to the creation of public and participatory versions of Hindu holidays for

everyone. Preparation and participation in these religious festivals create a sense of belonging to a neighbourhood as well as a community identity. From the formation of a collective identity arise claims to entitlements for the group (Hansen 2001: 54).

The Ganapati festival in Mumbai is a prime example of the reformulation of a regional holiday. Ganapati Chaturthi is celebrated primarily in Maharashtra and signifies the annual earthly visitation of the elephant-headed god Ganesha. In the 19th century, it was celebrated on a small scale, in private homes. At the beginning of the 20th century, Lokhman Tilak made the holiday a large-scale public spectacle as part of the anti-colonial movement. In the 1970s, Shiv Sena contributed to the aggrandisement of the Ganapati festival. The Sena has made the festival a means of asserting both a Marathi and a Hindu identity in Mumbai. During the festival, Mumbai is a Maharashtrian and Hindu city as the sounds of the festivities for Ganapati invade every home. The procession of Ganapatis over 10 feet tall, accompanied by young men dressed in saffron and dancing in the streets, is a visible display of the common Hindu Marathi *manus'* strength in numbers. This sense of belonging to the Hindu community and owning the city through the festival, encourages Hindus and Maharashtrians to demand benefits and rights, not just space in their city. Orchestrating these festivals, Shiv Sena demonstrates its control of these Hindu masses and their votes, thus gaining political clout.

Riots represent another type of public spectacle used by Shiv Sena, combining violence with ostensible 'social service'. Participating in violence against Muslims, Shiv Sainiks claim they are the defenders of the Hindu community against the offending Muslim community. Many middle-class Hindu sympathisers claim that Shiv Sena makes the streets safe for them and believe that the Sena protected their lives and property during the riots. Thus, while ordinary Shiv Sainiks gain respectability through participation in riots, the middle classes vicariously gain a 'sense of empowerment' from their actions (Lele 1995: 205).

During the large-scale riots and tensions in 1993, Shiv Sena successfully represented themselves as the protectors of Bombay's Hindu population. Riots erupted all over India when angry Muslims began to demonstrate against the RSS-led demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. In Bombay, the police reacted with considerable brutality, resulting in extremely violent confrontations. According to Jayant Lele (1995: 205), the riots gave active Hindu participants a 'sense of power'. They were able to transcend their lives of subservience and uncertainty by taking control of forbidden areas. The support of the Hindu-biased police increased the attackers' sense of impunity and reduced the risk of Muslim retaliation. The participation of Shiv Sena legislators and corporators lent further legitimacy to the violence. These factors gave Sainiks and sympathisers license to use violence against Muslims and their property under the rationale that they were spontaneously acting out of moral anger.

Bombay's elite primarily blamed the Sena for the violence, not without reason (Hansen 2001:124). However, in response, Thackeray claimed that the riots were 'justified self-defence' expressing the 'spontaneous anger' of Hindus. Denying any premeditated organisation of the violence, Thackeray claimed to be simply defending Hindu interests. Thackeray absolves his party of responsibility and guilt by presenting the violence of the riots as 'self-defence' and a service to the Hindu community.

While the elite and many public figures mourned the shattering of their image of Bombay as a modern and cosmopolitan city of secular identities, large sections of the Hindu middle classes and slum-dwellers felt a sense of triumph. The state of war during the riots had enabled a rebuilding of unity among the Hindu middle classes who viewed Shiv Sena as their only defence against Muslims. Shiv Sena's *goonda* image had been confirmed, but was no longer regarded with distaste. As a Hindu journalist stated, "They are bastards, but they are our bastards" (Hansen 2001: 124). The educated middle class secretly applauded Thackeray when he said during the riots,

We will never respect the Muslims if they do not respect the country. Ask them to respect the national anthem and we will allow them to put up loudspeakers on their mosques. This is our civilization, Hindu civilization... (Hansen 2001: 103).

Many Hindus believed that the Sena restored their national pride and masculinity through the riots. Amidst this violence, a collective Hindu identity emerged which transgressed class and caste.

4. Cultural Identity

Finally, through public spectacles and Thackeray's speeches, Shiv Sena has created a collective Hindu identity that serves as a cultural source of authority, as opposed to the state's sovereignty. Resistance to state power based on community and cultural ethics has its historical roots in the anti-colonial movement and is a common stance in contemporary India (Hansen 2001:229). Originally lacking socio-economic clout, Shiv Sena has drawn on Marathi and Hindu cultural values as the basis of its power and authority in Mumbai. In the 1960s and 1970s, Shiv Sena claimed a political voice and 'property rights' to Bombay, based on the numerical and cultural superiority of Maharashtrians (Hansen 2001: 69). Shiv Sena posed as the defender and voice of ordinary, culturally conservative Hindu families who desired order and respectability. Thackeray encouraged lower and middle class Maharashtrians to be proud of their heritage and enabled them to speak their language in the political sphere.⁴ Imbuing Maharashtrians with confidence in their cultural heritage, Shiv Sena tells them to make their own law and proudly enforce it. They need not abandon their traditional customs or ethnic/religious identities to participate in and dominate Mumbai's modern political society.

According to Shiv Sena, legitimate citizenship in Mumbai is based on acceptance of and assimilation to Maharashtrian culture. People from other communities may immigrate to Mumbai, and even join Shiv Sena, as long as they respect and accept the dominance of

⁴ Although people from other communities have joined Shiv Sena, the language of the *shakha* is still Marathi. Maharashtrians from lower and middle classes feel comfortable going to the Shiv Sena *shakha* to report their grievances or to request assistance because they can speak in Marathi there.

Maharashtrian cultural norms (Heuze 1995: 234). Immigrants have a choice between complete integration and total exclusion. Those who refuse Shiv Sena's influence and cultural-populist values (e.g., reverence for Shivaji) are targeted for exclusion as the new 'other' (Heuze 1995: 234). Although many Shiv Sainiks originally came from other parts of India, especially from the neighbouring state of Goa, they speak Marathi and call themselves Maharashtrians.

The cultural identity promoted by Shiv Sena has increasingly become more inclusive as Hindutva becomes more central to the party agenda. Though the Maharashtrian identity and 'sons of the soil' cause was resurgent in 2000, Hindutva and a broad Hindu identity now dominate the organisation. Through the figure of Shivaji, who fought against the Muslim emperor Aurangzeb, Shiv Sena has been able to equate Marathi chauvinism with Hindu nationalism. By emphasising the dominance of Hindu culture, Shiv Sena is able to include Hindus from different communities. By inventing new public Hindu practices and emphasising commonality, the illusion of a Hindu community is created. The creation of a Hindu community is very useful in Mumbai's competitive market for jobs and other resources. Hindus are told to unite to revive their ancient traditions and rebuild a hegemonic masculinity based on Hinduism. Drawing power and authority from their traditions, people begin to demand rights and entitlements and take initiatives against exploitation and injustice (Desai 1995: 194).

Conclusion: Generating a New Masculinity

Shiv Sena has transformed the marginalised masculinity of frustrated youths into a new 'popular' hegemonic masculinity. Many of the youths who participate in Shiv Sena are frustrated by their desire for respectability and social mobility in the face of diminishing opportunities in the formal economy and institutions. Despite attaining graduate qualifications, the waiting period between finishing college and attaining gainful employment is quite long (Desai 1995: 195). They resent the minority populations such as

Dalits and Muslims for whom there are reserved posts in college and government employment. These disenchanted youths were drawn to Shiv Sena because it blames their unemployment and low social standing on alien 'others'. Thus, the frustration of these youths is directed away from themselves and towards immigrants and Muslims.

The hegemonic masculinity propagated by Shiv Sena glorifies the plebeian youth. Since the late 1960s, Shiv Sena leaders have been young men from slum areas or lower-middle-class backgrounds with limited education (Hansen 2001: 68). For the Sena, what they lacked became their virtue. Lacking social status and responsibility, these youths had nothing to lose and could defy public authority and become soldiers in Shivaji's army. The Hindu man regains his masculinity when he begins to speak frankly, to act aggressively and violently and to express his will in a collective (led by Thackeray) and as an active individual (Hansen 2001: 92). To achieve the Sena's new popular masculine hegemony, he need only be aggressive and willing to fight.

The perceived mediocrity of Maharashtrians – their low status in education, wealth and power, their lack of eloquence and political influence – became their most valuable virtue. The Sena valorised the martial qualities of Maharashtrians, arguing that these physical qualities of strength, energy and courage were essential to the nation. Intellectualism and sophistication were attributed to the feminine and ineffective Communists and Congress Party. Instead of eloquent speeches, Shiv Sena offered frank speeches and immediate action to resolve the grievances of these disgruntled youths. Through his person, Thackeray projects himself as a man of common sense who is fearless and full of self-respect and confidence – "not because of his manner, education or money but because of his strength and will to use force" (Hansen 2001: 59). He promotes a simple moral code that his followers regard as 'natural justice'.

In turn, Thackeray's followers attempt to emulate him by acting violently without fear. By joining the Sena, they are able to transform their sense of powerlessness into self-respect

and strength. In the *shakha* or with friends at Sena rallies, they feel stronger, more self-assured and manly (Hansen 2001: 60). Although they may still be unemployed and are attracted to a hedonistic lifestyle of crime and alcohol, their former feelings of guilt are absolved by their involvement in Shiv Sena.

Yet this popular hegemonic masculinity is problematic precisely because it is dependent on Shiv Sena. While Shiv Sena exhorts Sainiks to fight corruption and bureaucracy by defying state laws, Sainiks must remain completely loyal to Thackeray. Their masculinity is based on this devotion to Shiv Sena's objectives and a "willingness to do any sacrifice" for their nation (Hansen 2001: 201). It is only under Thackeray's leadership that they can assert themselves and subvert the state's authority. Shiv Sena protects them from retaliation and punishment. It is only through blind loyalty and obedience to Thackeray's commands that they can affirm their manliness and attain power, money and status. Though a Sainik may rise in social and political status, he remains beholden to and controlled by Shiv Sena's leadership. He recognises that without his association with Shiv Sena he would have remained a 'nobody' – a frustrated, unemployed man. Thus, while men gain confidence and self-respect through Thackeray's patriarchal leadership and Shiv Sena's comforting collective, their empowerment appears limited by this lack of personal will and responsibility.

Are Sainiks empowered as individuals if they are merely drones in Thackeray's army? These limitations to personal empowerment for male Sainiks cannot be explored in a generalised manner but must be examined in the lives of individuals within the party. In the next chapter, the lives of four Shiv Sainiks will be examined to assess whether they have been empowered.

CHAPTER SIX: Case Study – Lives of Four Shiv Sena Men

Introduction

In chapter five, I argued that Shiv Sena offers the Marathi *manus* a new 'hegemonic masculinity' based on cultural identity and action. Joining Shiv Sena, men become more confident as a result of their association with Bal Thackeray and the organisation's violent reputation. This collective empowerment, as discussed in chapter two, potentially leads to the personal empowerment of individuals as well as their empowerment in relation to others. Yet collective empowerment may also result in the disempowerment of individuals who are unwilling or unable to conform to the collective ideology. Determining whether collective empowerment results in personal empowerment or disempowerment requires a close examination of the lives of individual men.

On the basis of my MPhil fieldwork conducted in 2000, I selected four men from the Girgaum area of South Mumbai to interview for my case study on men's empowerment through Shiv Sena. I chose these men based on their position within the Sena and their current level of activity in the party. In this chapter, I briefly portray each man and then demonstrate how their lives follow a similar pattern of initial disempowerment, collective and personal empowerment, and finally disillusionment.

I. Portraits of Four Men

Shiv Sena has evolved as an organisation since its inception, and this is reflected in its membership. In the 1960s and 1970s, when Shiv Sena was still a social movement burgeoning into a political party, Shiv Sena members were young, middle-class men aspiring to hold white-collar employment. They were almost entirely Maharashtrian Hindus whose fathers were blue-collar workers who migrated from the Konkan and other surrounding areas. These men were willing to fight for their rights as the 'sons of the soil'. They believed they were using violence for a just cause.

The Sena began to lose popularity in the late-1970s when its violent tactics increasingly attracted criminal elements. To change its 'goonda' image, in the early 1980s the Sena shifted to its Hindutva platform which had a wider appeal and attracted more members. By the 1980s, Shiv Sena was no longer a social movement, but a full-fledged political party. As a result, it attracted men and women who were interested in gaining political clout by running for office. This trend continues today as Shiv Sena actively recruits educated women from the Congress party by offering them election tickets.

The four men in my case study reflect this evolution in Shiv Sena's membership. While they all live in Girguam, each one represents a different level of hierarchy and activity in the Sena: top leader, local leader, active member and inactive member. Chandrakant Padwal joined the Sena in the late-1960s and is now a top leader, holding the position of Member of Legislative Assembly. Dilip Naik became active in the 1980s and was formerly the Girgaum corporator. Sameer Vedak is an active member who joined the Sena's youth wing in college. Like Naik, he is part of the new generation of Sainiks. Finally, Jagdish Purandare is an inactive member who joined Shiv Sena in the late 1960s. A member of the old guard, Purandare resents the new generation of leaders who have neglected the original 'sons of the soil' platform. While Padwal and Purandare represent the old guard, and Naik and Vedak the new generation, the four men have all experienced a similar type of collective empowerment. Yet each man's personal empowerment varies according to his individual life experiences.

I chose men from these four categories of Shiv Sainiks in order to compare their experiences. Men and women in leadership positions generally have different perspectives and backgrounds from ordinary members. They are usually more supportive of the party-line. In contrast, ordinary members may provide a more critical outlook on the organisation and reveal the party mechanics. Inactive members are especially important since their lack of activity indicates a conflict between themselves and the party. This conflict may be

systemic or due to specific experiences. Comparing the experiences of inactive members with the other three categories reveals these conflicts within the party. Below I briefly present the life stories of each of these men as a context for the subsequent analysis.

1. Top Leader

For Chandrakant Padwal, life began when he joined Shiv Sena in 1966. A Maharashtrian of low caste origins born in the village of Dapuli in Konkan, Padwal began his career as a laundry man. Today, at the age of 66, he is a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), one of the highest elected positions in the state government. Padwal has held a political position as a Shiv Sena representative since 1973 when he was first elected as a corporator. When I asked about his life story, he simply handed me a newspaper article summarising his political career. From 1973 to 1984, he was a corporator. Then, in 1988, he became mayor of Bombay for one year. He then ran for the MLA position in Girgaum, an area that was new to him. This election proved to be a challenge since constituents in Girgaum were educated, white-collar workers. Despite his blue-collar background, he was elected and retains this office today.

With his dyed black hair, tinted glasses, gold chains and white *kurta-pyjama* (loose-fitting shirt and trousers), Padwal imitates Bal Thackeray's 'angry young man' style. While Padwal loyally attributes his success to Thackeray, he also asserts his independence from Shiv Sena. In Girgaum, Padwal holds court in his own small office, which is not affiliated with Shiv Sena and lacks the usual Sena iconography – pictures of Thackeray, and his family. Padwal has intentionally created this neutral space to avoid alienating his constituents from different political and religious backgrounds. Affectionately known as 'Bapu', he has a close, avuncular relationship with his constituency. He can always be found in his office between 9 pm and 11 pm to address their problems. Due to his hard work, he has been elected MLA twice in Girgaum, a record of which he is very proud.

2. Branch Leader

Like Padwal, Dilip Naik credits Shiv Sena for making him into 'someone'. Without the Sena, Naik claims he would just be a 42-year old husband and father of two sons. The youngest of eight children, Naik came from a modest background. His father was a tailor who migrated as a child to Bombay from the neighbouring state of Goa. Though his family is from Goa, Naik claims to be 'Maharashtrian', which he defines as living in Maharashtra for over 15 years.

Since Naik's mother died when he was seven years old, he was greatly influenced by his older siblings. His elder brother, the Girgaum *shakha pramukh* in 1972, introduced him to the Sena as a child. As a result, Naik was raised in a militant Sena environment imported into his home by his brother. Naik received his B.A. in Commerce and joined the State Bank of India as a clerk with Shiv Sena's assistance. In 1984, Naik became the Girgaum *shakha pramukh* and was subsequently given the ticket to run as corporator. Elected in 1986, Naik held the position until 1996, when Girgaum became a ward reserved for women. Unfortunately, in 1992, Naik was forced to resign from the State Bank, since a new regulation prohibited employees of government banks from being corporators. Thus, when Girgaum was reserved for women, Naik found himself both unemployed and without a position in the Sena.

From 1997 to 2000, Naik patiently waited for the women's reservation to be removed. When this did not occur in 2001, Naik ran for corporator in a neighbouring ward. Unknown in this ward, Naik lost the election. When interviewed in 2002, he claimed to be self-employed, though it is unclear how he earns a living. Based on Vedak's interview, Naik seems to earn an income using his influence as a former corporator. Local citizens pay him a small fee to handle their municipal problems. Naik resents the women's reservation of his ward, but continues to work for Shiv Sena, hoping that the reservation will be lifted. Despite lacking a position, he still attends the *shakha* daily and is heavily involved in Sena activities.

3. Active Member

The youngest of the four men at thirty, Sameer Vedak's life history is just beginning. Nonetheless, his present situation illustrates Shiv Sena's attraction. Vedak joined Shiv Sena's youth branch in university, holding the position of treasurer. Despite receiving his bachelor's degree in law (L.L.B.) seven years ago, he has never been formally employed. As a result, he has not been able to arrange a marriage. He continues to live with his parents, who support him financially. Attending the *shakha* every evening, Vedak hopes his participation will lead to a full-time job. In 2000, he was a loyal follower of Jaya Goythale, the then corporator. Upon her advice, he took a computer course in which he performed well. Nonetheless, Goythale was unable to find him employment. In 2002, with Goythale out of office, Vedak found a new patron in Dilip Naik. Working for Naik, Vedak earns fees for assisting citizens with municipal problems. Thus, through Shiv Sena, Vedak gains self-esteem, a place to network, and an income.

4. Inactive Member

Born fatherless in the village of Madwa in Konkan, Jagdish Purandare migrated to Bombay with his mother at the age of five. The youngest of eight children, Purandare lived with his mother in the home of a married older sister. A year later his mother, an elderly woman who had fought for India's independence, died. Although his older siblings lived in Bombay, none were willing to adopt him. As a result, he moved to Girgaum to live with his maternal uncle as a servant. Sleeping on his uncle's doorstep, Purandare cleaned pots and performed menial tasks for his 'room'. As an orphan, he received a scholarship that enabled him to attend the local municipal school. He received his SSC (high school diploma) at the age of twenty-one, five years later than most students. In 1966, he joined Shiv Sena, hoping to improve the socio-economic conditions of Maharashtrians and his own. A skilled cricket player, Purandare made many friends in the lane where he played. These friends gave him money for food and clothes. Cricket also allowed him to meet his wife, an avid fan. After

completing her SSC at sixteen, she took a full-time job and married Purandare. Though primarily supported by his wife, Purandare found employment, with Shiv Sena's assistance, as a cricket player for the Bank of Baroda. In 1976 and 1982, the Purandares had two sons, Vaibhav and Kunal.

Active in Shiv Sena's central administration, Purandare was mostly involved in the Sthanik Lokadhikar Samiti, the Sena's employment branch. Within the Bank of Baroda, he was chairman of Shiv Sena's union. Through his position, he actively recruited Maharashtrians and protected their rights as workers. Purandare served as the Sena's Communications Manager for the 1996 elections, in which the Sena gained control of Maharashtra's state government. A long-standing member, Purandare had close-ties to the Sena's top leadership. Until recently, he coached Bal Thackeray's grandson in cricket. Yet, after the Sena formed the government of Maharashtra, Purandare became disillusioned with the party. Having waited 30 years for the Sena to come to power, he expected the party to restore order and uplift Marathi-speakers. When no change occurred, Purandare began to criticise the Sena for abandoning the 'sons of the soil' platform. Purandare finally began to withdraw from Sena activities in 2001 after his son, Vaibhav, was brutally attacked by a Sena mob during a city *bandh*. A journalist, Vaibhav was covering the *bandh* for Asian Age. Although he displayed his press credentials, the mob beat him, claiming to recognise only the Sena newspaper Samna. In 2002, Purandare left his position as the chairman of the Sena union in the Bank of Baroda. Though no longer an active leader, 51-year-old Purandare still participated in the Sena's union activities at the time of the interview.

The four men in my case study represent different categories of Shiv Sainiks. Today Padwal is a successful politician who made his fortune through Shiv Sena. Naik earns a living on his prestige as a former corporator as he waits for another political opportunity. As an active member, Vedak serves different patrons hoping his loyalty will one day lead to white-collar employment. Finally, Purandare represents the idealistic old guard, who

devoted their lives to the 'sons of the soil' cause, only to be abandoned by the party. Despite different life histories and status, the four men's lives follow a similar pattern which reflects the male experience in the Sena.

II. Becoming Empowered

The four preceding life histories were constructed using information from: participants' biographic narratives, family interviews and observations during my fieldtrips in 2000 and 2002. This section draws from my analysis of each man's 'life story'. Whereas the life history provides factual information about their lives that can be corroborated, the life story is their interpretation of their lives from their present and past perspectives, as indicated by their interview narratives. From these life stories, I will present the progression of their empowerment.

1. Disempowering Origins

Bombay's disempowering effects on the Marathi *manus* and the rise of Shiv Sena in reaction, was discussed in detail in the previous chapters. Like the majority of Shiv Sainiks, the four men in my case study joined the Sena to rise above their marginalised existence in Bombay. Having received higher education than their fathers, they wanted clerical positions in companies, not to remain craftsmen and labourers. While their fathers had been limited by colonialism and their inability to speak English, they were hopeful that they would be able to attain higher social positions.

Old Guard: Padwal and Purandare

Both Padwal and Purandare came to Bombay from villages in the Konkan coastal region as children. While Purandare was an orphan and Padwal's father was a laundry man, both men experienced difficult childhoods on the economic fringes of society. As migrants, their childhood entailed surviving in a new city where they lacked useful social and family

networks. In his life story, Padwal's life before the Sena consists of only four sentences. He says,

My name is Chandrakant Shankar Padwal. My date of birth is the 19th August 1937. I was born in my native place Dapuli, just near Ratnagiri. I am married one. I have three children.

While he goes on at length about his political life in the Sena, he is not interested in his childhood or his past. By not mentioning his life before 1966, Padwal indicates his desire to de-emphasise or forget this period when he was just a lowly laundryman from a village.

Purandare explicitly states his feelings of disempowerment in his youth. Expecting questions about his political career, Purandare was taken aback when I asked him to tell me his life history from his childhood to the present. With a blank stare, he started,

I was an orphan. My mother died when I was six. I stayed with my *mama* (maternal uncle) nearby. My childhood was very hard and sad. I don't want to remember it.

Remembering his painful childhood, Purandare became emotional and could not continue with his narrative. After composing himself, he was able to provide further details about his childhood, in response to specific questions.

It was a tough job. Yeah. So everything I have to do. Work and school. So school there was a scholarship, free scholarship because I did not have parents and all these things. I was struggling a lot. Late night studying on the road, all these things.

I slept on the street under a veranda. I only had one set of clothes. One shirt, one pair of pants, one pair of *chappals* (sandals). I would wake up early and wash them. Then I would go to school and go to work. When my *mama* wasn't home, I would go out and play cricket. I couldn't afford equipment.

Study, my friends in the *wadi* (building) were helping me. They used to give me books, they used to give me clothes, everything during my life. I used to help other people, they used to give me food. I would get food from someone one day and then 15 days would pass before I ate again.

So that part I don't want to remember again. Really tough job. Very tough. All the way thinking of my future. Sitting alone in the night.

As Purandare explicitly states, he does not want to remember his 'hard and sad' childhood.

He does not want to recount this period in which he was totally alone, abandoned and mistreated by his family. Purandare's father died before his birth. Eventually, he migrated with his mother to Bombay, where his older siblings lived. After his mother's death, none of his siblings adopted him, fearing he would disturb their family life. Occasionally, they invited him for a meal. His maternal uncle allowed him to sleep on his doorstep, sheltered

by the veranda above. Purandare was not given food and had to work in his uncle's home like a servant. He depended on the charity of friends and neighbours for food, clothes and books. When neighbours did not have odd jobs for him to do, he would go hungry. In addition, his uncle physically abused him. From the age of 5 to 21, when he married, Purandare lived on charity. His only solace was playing cricket when his uncle was not home.

Purandare describes his youth as 'very tough'. He was 'struggling' to survive. Without his parents, he had to 'do everything', he had to feed, educate, clothe and shelter himself. Sitting alone at night under the veranda, he worried about his future and wondered how he could change his life. Though his uncle abused him, he had nowhere else to go since his siblings had abandoned him. He had no one to give him guidance, encouragement or confidence. As an orphan who migrated from a rural village, Purandare belonged to the most vulnerable and disempowered groups in Mumbai.

The New Generation: Dilip Naik and Sameer Vedak

As members of Shiv Sena's new generation, Dilip Naik and Sameer Vedak did not experience the same extent of disempowerment as Padwal and Purandare. While Padwal and Purandare were the original 'angry young men' who built Shiv Sena, Naik and Vedak merely entered the ranks of an established political party. Yet they also experienced personal difficulties that led them to join the Sena.

Like Padwal, Naik presented his life as a linear path towards political prominence. In the initial narrative, he hardly mentioned his life before the Sena or his family. With his jovial manners and ready smile, Naik glosses over difficult moments in his life. He regards his life as an easy one in which everything came to him. Yet, when I asked him specifically about his childhood, he unwittingly revealed more about himself and suggested certain difficulties. He did not explicitly state his difficulties, but his moments of silence and emphasis are telling. He began by saying,

I was born in Mumbai in '57. November '57. Where I am living now, I have been living right from my childhood. We live in the same place. At the same address, the same two rooms are there. *Chawl*. We stay in a *chawl* and my father had a shop.

In this first segment, Naik tries to convey that nothing has changed since his childhood. He emphasises the fact that he still lives in the same 2-room *chawl*. While this expresses a sense of stability, it also reveals his socio-economic circumstances. *Chawls* are old, dilapidated buildings where the lower middle classes live in cramped rooms without privacy. Sporting a mobile phone today, he portrays himself in the *shakha* as an affluent politician. Here he reveals that he still lives in the same *chawl* rooms in which his father settled. Despite living in Mumbai his entire life, Naik has not been able to leave this *chawl* or build upon what his father procured over fifty years ago.

In the second segment, Naik discusses his family, focusing the discussion on his father. This reveals the family's economic circumstances during his childhood.

He is no more now. We had a shop, tailoring shop. He had a shop opposite and of course, my mother was not working. She's also no more now. He was the only person to earn in our family and we were 5 brothers and 3 sisters. [laughs] We were a very big family. Of course that time every family was like that. Average 4 to 5 children were there. We had some extras. [laughs].

Naik's father was a tailor with his own shop. His mother was a housewife who raised their eight children. Though Naik does not mention any economic hardship, it appears that the family had economic constraints, since his father provided the only income for the large family. If financial resources were not a problem, then certainly they would have had more than two rooms. Thus, there was also a problem of space – accommodating eight people in two rooms that served as the kitchen, dining, living and sleeping areas. Thus, there must have been pressure for the older children to marry and move out of the house. Laughing about the size of his family, Naik does not dwell on these constraints which did not press upon him. As the youngest, he was not as affected.

Continuing on the subject of his family, Naik provides more details. Again, this history centres on his father.

We are Goans. We are from Goa. My father came in the year 1920s, I suppose. 1920, long back. He was some 8 to 9 years of age. He came from Goa to Mumbai and he

settled here. So right from that time we have been living in Mumbai in the same place for the last 60 odd years. We are living in the same place.

Until this point, Naik has always declared that he is a Maharashtrian – mandatory in the Sena; but here he identifies his family as Goan. He then adds that his father migrated from Goa in the 1920s as a child. While it is unclear whether his father came alone, the fact that Naik's family still has a house in Goa suggests that his father came as an economic migrant. If so, Naik's father must have sent remittances back to his family in Goa, in addition to supporting his eight children. While Naik identifies his family as Goan, he also emphasises that they have been in Mumbai since 1920 to establish his legitimacy as a Maharashtrian.

In remembering his father's migration, Naik is reminded of his father's death. This evokes memories of his mother. Naik speaks mostly of his father and only mentions his mother as a housewife. He then states,

He passed away long back. He passed in 1985 and my mother passed away I think I was in the first standard [grade]. I was very small. I was not knowing anything. 34- 35 years back. She passed and uh...

I was the youngest. So I was little bit lucky, I used to get more things.

Naik speaks mostly about his father and not his mother because she passed away when he was about six or seven years old, at the age when he first started school. In speaking about his mother's death, Naik says he was "very small" and "not knowing anything." He expresses a sense of confusion, ignorance and inability to understand what happened. This was a point in his life when he felt helpless and insignificant. Naik starts to elaborate on her death but stops himself. He breaks the narrative saying, "She passed and uh..." and then changes the subject to being the youngest. Rather than dwelling on the loss of his mother at such a young age, Naik claims to be "lucky" to have been the youngest. Receiving "more things" may reflect the family's improved economic situation once older siblings moved out, and also the result of his family compensating him materially for the loss of his mother.

Changing the subject from his mother's death, Naik describes his family's present success. He presents his family as well-educated and employed in professions.

And education, all of my brothers and sisters were nicely educated. One of my brothers became a mechanical engineer. He was. He retired as a manager, sales, purchase manager in Voltas. Voltas company. My other brother works for State Bank. He's General Secretary of that Union, All-India Vice-President of State Bank staffing. Other brother, fourth one took over the father's shop. He's looking after the tailoring business. And one of my brother's shifted to Goa. He's looking after the native place. Someone has to look after it.

To demonstrate his brothers' success, he first mentions his brother who was a mechanical engineer. Every Indian family aspires to have a child become an engineer or doctor. Thus, this brother is the pride of the family. All the family resources went into his education so that he could get a well-paid and prestigious job. Naik emphasises that this brother was a manager in the company Voltas. The second brother joined Shiv Sena and attained an important position in the State Bank. The third brother was given or forced to take on the family tailoring business and the fourth returned to Goa to care for the Naik homestead. From this description of Naik's brothers, one notes Naik's absence from the list. While he was a cashier in the State Bank and the Shiv Sena corporator in Girgaum, today he has no political position or job title. In addition, though Naik could stay in the family's *chawl* rooms, he had to find his own career in the shadow of his two older brothers. Unlike the other two brothers, he did not have the option of taking over the tailoring business or inheriting the house in Goa, which were already taken.

Naik concludes his narration on his family by asserting that they are a happy family with no problems.

So all family gathers around and everyone is self-sufficient. This is not our bread and butter. Everyone is self-sufficient. Everyone has own means of livelihood. My eldest son is also working, earning his living through private tuitions, private classes. Younger child is in 9th, so next year passing SSC. So we have a peaceful life.

Our mother and father had hard work and we are reaping the fruits of that hard work. Hard pains they have taken.

Naik wants to emphasise that all of his siblings are successful and self-sufficient, including himself. He praises his son who earns a living as a tutor. Yet finally, in his last statement, he acknowledges his parents' hard work and pains. While Naik presents his life as 'lucky' and 'peaceful', he recognises that his parents, as migrants from Goa supporting eight children

on a tailor's income, had to work very hard and endure deprivation and pain. To compensate for their hardships, Naik wants to be successful and prove that their efforts were not wasted.

Unemployed and unmarried, Vedak is presently in a disempowered condition. This condition began after he completed his university degree in 1995. When I first met Vedak in 2000, he was frequenting the Girgaum *shakha* daily. After introducing myself, I asked him about his job, wife and children. He was embarrassed to tell me that he was unemployed and had been for the last five years. He suggested that he could not marry due to his unemployment. The corporator at that time quickly chimed in that Vedak had recently completed a computer course and that the Sena would find him a job soon. Yet, two years later in 2002, Vedak was still unemployed.

For Vedak, a person is measured by his or her accomplishments. These include awards, university degrees and, most importantly, employment. Thus, in Vedak's short first narrative, he speaks only about his family's accomplishments.

My father was an assistant manager in the Velco company and retired and prepares Ganpatis [statues of the god Ganesha]. Two brothers and one sister. Sister works as an officer in Bharat Petroleum. Brother works in a film studio as a sculptor. My other brother is mentally retarded but he is a good athlete and won a gold medal in the Special Olympics. I graduated B.Com and LLB. We are settled in Mumbai for generations.

Like Naik, Vedak compares himself to his father and siblings. Since they are the people he is closest to, he measures his progress against theirs. Vedak only describes his family in terms of their jobs, awards and degrees. He does not mention his mother at all, presumably because she has none of these things. The order in which he mentions his family members seems to reflect their standing in the family based on their accomplishments. Vedak proudly mentions that his father, who is at the top of the hierarchy, was an assistant manager in a private company. His sister, who is an officer at Bharat Petroleum is mentioned next. Vedak is at the bottom of the list, with his university degrees earned seven years ago as his only accomplishments. Vedak even ranks his mentally disabled brother higher, since he won a gold medal in the Special Olympics. Valuing only publicly recognised accomplishments, Vedak does not mention his participation in Shiv Sena since he lacks a

title. Thus, Vedak regards himself as 'behind' his father and other siblings. Unlike them, he has not distinguished himself or found a white-collar job.

In the second part of his interview, Vedak attempts to justify his long period of unemployment. He explains,

I completed a 6-month course in computers. I received an A-grade. Someone told me I would get a job. But I didn't get a job. I am working in the sculpture factory. It's not an official job, that's why I have time for social work.

To prove himself, Vedak mentions his "A-grade" in a computer course. He also wants to show he has the necessary skills for an office job. Thus, it is not his fault that he did not get a job. By mentioning the 'someone' who told him he would get a job, he seems to further absolve himself of responsibility. Though he works in a sculpture factory, he discounts this work as 'not an official job'. This job does not count because it is part-time and involves working for his father. In addition, it involves manual labour and does not utilise his training as a lawyer or his other white-collar job training. Finally, Vedak mentions his involvement with Shiv Sena as 'social work' that he performs in his ample free time. He seems to suggest that if he had a full-time job he would no longer participate in Shiv Sena. Thus, social work justifies his marginalised condition as an unemployed, university-educated, thirty-year-old man.

In response to my questions, Vedak finally expressed his disappointment with his present marginalised condition. Throughout Vedak's biographic narrative he avoided mentioning events around 1995, when he completed his education. In his initial narrative, his life seemed to end after receiving his university degrees, although seven years had passed since then. Thus, in the last part of the interview, I ask Vedak more direct questions.

[Can you describe what happened after 1995?]

After graduation, I joined a law college. I completed my graduation in 1993 and finished my LLB. After 1995, I took CS exam but there I got fail. I got fail. Then I took written exam on tax inspector and I got negative results on that.

And then I'm busy with all these politics. From 1990, I'm doing BMC [civic] work. BMC means I'm doing job of people with the help of the corporator. And there are some people come, who needs license and all these things. "I will pay you something." OK, I will do it. Do this work for Rs. 100. I'm also getting benefit for that.

[Are you married?]

No. I'm lonely.

Vedak explains that after secondary school, he entered a college to study law. After receiving his law degree (LLB), he failed the professional exam (CS) to practice law. When he could not become a lawyer, Vedak tried to become a tax inspector. Again, he failed the licensing exam. Here Vedak finally recounts the two failures that blocked his professional progress. Repeating the phrase 'I got fail' twice, Vedak seems to regard himself as a failure. His unsatisfactory performance on these exams weighs upon him and lowers his self-esteem.

Compensating for his failure to become a professional, Vedak again mentions his involvement in Shiv Sena, saying, 'And then I'm busy with all these politics'. To give himself more importance, he describes his Shiv Sena activities as 'work' and a 'job', and mentions his affiliation with the 'BMC' and the 'corporator'. He changes the subject from his failures to his informal accomplishments, asserting that he knows important people and that he is a community leader. People in Girgaum know him and pay him for his services.

Despite his political involvement and social work, Vedak still feels a void in his life. He ends his narrative by stating 'I'm lonely', in response to my question about his marital status. Without a full-time job, Vedak has not been able to marry. No Maharashtrian family wants their daughter to marry a man who is unemployed. Unable to get a job and marry, Vedak feels emasculated and expresses this when he says he is lonely.

In conclusion to this section, we may note that each of these four men has experienced disempowerment in a different way. As an orphaned migrant, Purandare was the most disadvantaged. Lacking family support, he had to rely on himself for his basic necessities. While Padwal was also a child migrant to Bombay, the greatest barrier to his social mobility was his status as a low-caste, blue-collar labourer with little education. Thus, the old guard members began their ascent on a much lower social rung than the new generation. They had greater personal and social obstacles to surmount.

The new generation's disempowerment results from greater competition for jobs and resources in an increasingly crowded city. Naik and Vedak received the education and material resources that the old guard had to struggle to attain. They benefited from their parents' hard work and sacrifices, made in the hope that their children would become professionals or white-collar workers. Yet these benefits were negated by the increased number of university-educated Mumbaikers. Unable to compete successfully, they turned to Shiv Sena as an alternate path to social mobility and to repairing their assailed masculinity.

2. Paths to Empowerment

Despite their different personal backgrounds, these four men have a common identity as 'ordinary' Maharashtrian men. As a poor orphan or children of migrants and labourers, they share the same marginalised masculinity. They all aspire to become 'someone' in society through employment. In a highly competitive job market, Shiv Sena offers them the hegemonic masculinity that appears out of reach. Bal Thackeray tells them that despite lacking economic and social resources, they deserve to and can gain power in Mumbai, which belongs to them. While the Sena offers men hegemonic masculinity based on ethnic/religious chauvinism and violence, it is unclear whether this 'power' is empowerment. The individual experiences of Padwal, Naik, Vedak and Purandare reveal the contributing factors in each man's development and potential empowerment.

Top Leader

Padwal presents his life as a 'rags to riches' success story. He is proud of his ascent from laundry man to MLA. His political career is his life, and he discusses in depth his rise through Shiv Sena's ranks. He clearly regards joining Shiv Sena as the turning point in his life. As we have seen, Padwal describes the thirty years of his personal history before the Sena in four lines. He then discusses his political career in 31 lines – 88% of his narrative. He begins as follows.

First I joined the Sena in 1966. At that time I was only as a Shiv Sainik [ordinary member]. Then I have been elected as *shakha pramukh* in my area. I first contested elections in 1968. My chief [Bal Thackeray] has given me the ticket but unfortunately, in the 11th hour, there was a BJP-Shiv Sena Alliance, so I had to give back. Then again in 1973, I contested elections. And since 1973 onward today, 1973, 1978, 1985, 1990, and 1999. I have been continuously elected. Altogether 6 times, I have been elected. Thrice as a corporator.

First, I was the education committee chairman, then standing committee chairman, then leader of the House Municipal Corporation. Then the highest seat in the Corporation. Ambitious seat – that is the Mayor of Mumbai in 1988-89. I was the mayor.

The benchmarks in Padwal's life are the election years that mark his rise from ordinary Shiv Sainik to a *shakha pramukh*, corporator, chairman of various committees and Mayor of Mumbai. In describing his early career, he gives recognition to his 'chief', Bal Thackeray, for giving him the election ticket. Unfortunately, at the last minute his first ticket was rescinded due to an alliance with another party. Despite not contesting the election, Padwal regards receiving the ticket in 1968 as significant. Only two years after Shiv Sena was formed, Thackeray had regarded him as worthy of contesting elections. This was his first opportunity to leave the margins of society as a labourer and enter Mumbai's mainstream politics, competing with educated people from higher classes and castes. Though Padwal's next opportunity came five years later, he emphasises the fact that since his first actual election, he has held an office continuously for the last 26 years. For Padwal, being re-elected six times proves his worthiness and negates his first aborted election. By becoming a Shiv Sena political representative, Padwal gained great influence and widespread recognition in Mumbai, particularly as Mayor. From 1968 to 1988, Padwal experienced collective empowerment from being in Shiv Sena and from his perceived support from Bal Thackeray.

Having described his ascent in city politics, Padwal continues his narrative regarding his ascent in state politics. After becoming Mayor of Mumbai – the pinnacle of city politics – he reached another turning point.

When I was mayor-retired, I contest from this Girgaum area as MLA, Member of Legislative Assembly. At that time, this area was *totally* new to me. I knew nothing about this locality also. But my chief Balasaheb Thackeray had given his blessings so I contest from this area and I elected with margin of round about 8,550 the first time.

Then again in 1995, I contest election from the same constituency. At the time, I won by a margin of 20,000. Then again in 1999, by a margin of 5,000. So thrice I have been elected and made an authority.

As the 'mayor-retired', he needed to either enter state politics as an MLA or return to his life as an ordinary citizen. The prospect of losing political power and becoming a non-entity made this a challenging period for Padwal. Rather than returning to his old constituency where he was a corporator, Padwal had to contest elections in Girgaum, which was 'totally new' to him. Though he lacked an electoral base, he won the election due to Shiv Sena's reputation in the area, as is suggested by his mentioning of Bal Thackeray's 'blessings'.

In the next segment, Padwal begins to show signs of his own personal empowerment. In 1995, he was re-elected as MLA by a large margin of 20,000, but this was reduced to only 5,000 in 1999. In the 1995 elections, Shiv Sena had reached its political climax and formed the government of Maharashtra. Naturally, in that year, Padwal would have won by a large margin. In the 1999 elections, Shiv Sena's popularity was waning and the party lost power. Yet Padwal was still re-elected, though by a narrower margin. While he acknowledges his chief, he knows that he was re-elected for his own personal qualities, not the Sena's reputation. As a result, he begins to assert his independence from Shiv Sena and his personal empowerment.

Padwal asserts his own personal qualities and abilities by explaining the unique characteristics of Girgaum as a constituency.

My constituency is such [unique]. There is a back post history of this constituency. Normally, all these [slums]. There are no *zopadpatti* [slums] and nothing. All the common men and educated persons, those who are working in the offices, intelligent peoples they are working there. Hardly...educated persons in my area. So in this area you can't...you won't compare with other constituencies. This is a peculiar constituency in Maharashtra.

Unlike most Shiv Sena constituencies, Girgaum does not have slums. It is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious ward with educated, white-collar workers, not illiterate, blue-collar labourers. Therefore, a politician cannot use typical election tactics, such as bringing in water tankers before an election or promising to legalise slum dwellings. In addition, though it was once a Marathi stronghold, Girgaum now consists mostly of Gujuratis who are

not Hindu, but Jain. Therefore, Padwal cannot use Marathi or Hindu nationalist propaganda to appeal to his constituency. For this reason, he says at the beginning of his narrative, "I know all three languages including Marathi, Hindi, English and Gujarati." He realises that his continuing success as a politician is due to his ability to communicate and meet the needs of the different ethnic and religious groups in his area.

In the final segment, Padwal further explains how he personally has met the needs of his difficult constituency.

So you see the total history of this Bombay are...of this Assembly you will find out. Since the Maharashtra constituency, in this constituency, my people...no one else has been elected twice...at all. There are big giants like Parawat Kishatray, Maratha. Then my leader Pramod Navalkar and Jayavinda Mehta. Now she's an MP and he's a Minister. But even those people have never been elected again.

But [pause] I work very hard, sincerely, I take into confidence with my Shiv Sainiks, my *shakha pramukh*, my ladies worker. And all these things. I worked *so* hard in my constituency, so I done a miracle in this constituency. These last thirty years, I have made a history. So I have been thrice elected. Now I can proudly say...

So I'm working very hard. I'm taking confidence to all. I'm taking people's questions and all this.

Padwal realises that he is unique and has been re-elected for his personal qualities and hard work. He compares himself to important figures in Shiv Sena like Pramod Navalkar and Jayavinda Mehta, who were, respectively a state minister and a Member of Parliament. Though they attained higher political positions than he, they were never re-elected in Girgaum. Due to his hard work and ability to include ordinary Shiv Sena workers, he has gained the confidence of his constituency. He describes this accomplishment as a 'miracle' and claims he has 'made history'. Sitting in his non-affiliated office in the middle of Girgaum every night, Padwal fields questions and meets the needs of his constituency. Their confidence in him, demonstrated in his re-election, has given him personal empowerment independent of Shiv Sena.

Associated with Shiv Sena since his childhood, Dilip Naik has experienced empowerment in stages and through various factors. Naik initially experienced collective empowerment through Shiv Sena's network and Bal Thackeray. Having received assistance

from the Sena to gain employment, Naik was able to marry and have a family of his own. Through his job at the State Bank, he gained empowerment in relation to people in his community and family. Finally, as a corporator, Dilip Naik began to experience personal empowerment. Analysing Naik's narrative, I explore how each factor contributed to Naik's empowerment process, and the importance he attributes to each.

While Padwal mentions Bal Thackeray's 'blessings', he does it as a formality. In contrast, Naik places great importance on Thackeray's inspirational speeches and presence.

We are fond of Balasaheb. Right from the beginning, his speech, his oratory. It's just simply magic, you know. Even you might have observed also, whenever he speaks, he just utters the first words. Thunderous applause throughout the crowd. Then, that shows its charging. It's just charging everyone -- the people who are at the rally.

With childlike admiration and affection, Naik discusses 'Balasaheb' and his influence. For Naik, Thackeray's speeches are 'magic' and 'charging' to 'everyone', not just to him. Naik suggests that Thackeray has god-like qualities and gives life or power to those who hear his words. Mentioning the 'crowd' and its 'thunderous applause', Naik evokes the power of the collective joined together by Thackeray's charismatic speech. United under Thackeray's leadership, they are transformed from the marginalised masses into Shiv Sena workers 'charged' with the power to act.

Naik continues his narrative by emphasising Thackeray's fundamental importance in his life and to the Sena.

Only Balasaheb. People only know Balasaheb. He is not there to work. We only consider ourselves lucky that we have the blessings. We have his blessings and we are able to work. Because of the chair he has given us.

Otherwise, we are very ordinary persons. Like that I would have had my married life. My wife would have been there and my two kids. Why a girl all the way from the United States, Ms. Chitra Deshpande, would come here for my interview, for no reason? This is the basic reason you have come here. I am a very ordinary person, working in a very ordinary capacity. But he has given some bit capacity to us. Otherwise, except Balasaheb, everything is zero.

Saying, 'Only Balasaheb. People only know Balasaheb,' Naik equates Shiv Sena with Thackeray. Due to Thackeray's prominence in Mumbai, Naik and others receive recognition and the authority to act in society as his workers. Without Thackeray's prominence and

authorisation, Naik believes he would be an ordinary person, a 'zero'. He regards his social recognition as stemming from Thackeray's power.

Though attributing great importance to Thackeray's charisma, Naik also recognises how the Shiv Sena network practically facilitates empowerment.

90% of Shiv Sainiks are middle class Maharashtrians. People on Chowpatty are not sainiks. They don't need the Sena's help. They have connections with big people. If they have a problem, they can use their influence and talk to people in their clubs to get things done. Many turn to the Sena as a means of gaining connections.

Naik recognises that Shiv Sena members are 'ordinary' Maharashtrians from the middle classes. They are not the wealthy Mumbaikers who live near Chowpatty beach. Owning corporations, hospitals and buildings, the residents of Chowpatty have the social and business connections to solve their own problems. They also have the wealth to bribe politicians to achieve their ends. People who join Shiv Sena lack influence, social networks and money. By joining Shiv Sena, they gain political networks and influence over Shiv Sena's political representatives. These corporators, MLAs and Ministers use their influence to help Sainiks acquire school admission, permits or jobs.

In addition to networks, Shiv Sena gives ordinary men opportunities to participate in politics and mainstream social activities.

In Sena, everyone is having capacity, but if you're not given the opportunity. See, you have a unique capacity. You are coming here on your own. But we don't have. It is because of Saheb's blessings we have grown up. We should not feel, I have grown up on our own. It is because of the organisation. It is because of Balasaheb everything is happening. It would have not been possible. He has made big leaders literally of who was not-existing, including myself. We are not existing except for the husband of a lady. We could not have been able to do anything, but a simple clerk in a bank. What can we have done? What more? Nothing, except for his blessing it was not possible.

Naik recognises that every person has capabilities and potential. Shiv Sena gives them an outlet for their capabilities and access to opportunities to develop these abilities. Stating that 'it is because of Saheb's blessings we have grown up,' Naik attributes this development to Thackeray. Like a father, Thackeray gives Sainiks the support and guidance necessary to build their capabilities. Before joining Shiv Sena, even 'big leaders' who became MPs and Ministers were 'non-existing'. Thackeray, with his god-like powers, gives them 'life' – a

social identity and influence in Mumbai. Though Naik had a biological father, he regards Thackeray as the father who gave him prominence in society. In his own family, Naik was motherless and neglected by a father supporting eight children. Instead, Naik was raised by his Shiv Sena family and became more than a husband and bank clerk.

However, Shiv Sena also assisted Naik in becoming a clerk at the State Bank in 1978. Though finding employment in the 1970s was challenging, Naik did not mention in his initial narrative how he was hired. For Naik, this was not a turning point in his life. Yet, when I asked him about his job, he spoke in great detail about Shiv Sena's assistance.

[You mentioned your job at the State Bank. Were you also in the Sena?]

Aah! I should have told you correctly that because of the Sena *only* I got the job. Because that time, I told you, many agitations were held for Mumbai that employment should be given to the locals. We are local people. So many people staying in Maharashtra for the last 15-20 years are local people.

As you know, I was a graduate. Because of that only I was able to apply, but then if Shiv Sena was not there, I would not have been able to get a job at State Bank. Like me, lots of people have been employed in banks, insurance companies. These Air India and Indian Airlines and all that. People previously hard if we go to the list of employment at that time. Hardly people, Maharashtrians were employed in this. It was only because of Shiv Sena, it happened and then we got the opportunity to work. We had the capacity, we had the necessary qualifications, but we were denied. At the cost of the people just coming here, influx, influx population.

That time the movement was very strong because of the sons of the soil theory. Shiv Sena many times used to take out the delegation to the management, the *morcha*. See there is recruitment in your office, give advertisement to the local paper. They used to give advertisements in the Times of India. So who will read Times of India. You read, not ordinary people. They will never read. So they were made to give advertisement in the local paper. And made Marathi language compulsory for applications and all those.

And subsequently there was a common entrance exam to everyone. Only then can you apply. Those who were going to appear for the exam in the month, for them, we used to conduct classes in Shiv Sena Bhavan. In the local area, even in our area, we used to conduct classes. So you get this idea of what sort of papers – because the education given in schools and college is different and these exams are different – multiple choice type. It is based on IQ. Anyone if you study, some guidance should be there. Without guidance you will not know anything. And it's not possible for you to know anything and everything.

So in that way, I passed. All people passed in that way. It was Shiv Sena people who conducted the classes and it is the best coaching I received. And because of the coaching, I was able to pass the exam and subsequently I was recruited.

Like me, lots of people were recruited in various government jobs, banks, BEST [bus company]. It is because of *that*, not because of some academic. This had nothing to do with it. Some co-ordination should be there.

Though Shiv Sena directly helped him get a job, his description is general rather than personal. On the other hand, he repeatedly discusses how he, as corporator, has helped

orphans and the poor. He is no longer used to being part of the marginalised who require Shiv Sena's assistance. As a result, he recounts how the Sena confronted job discrimination against Maharashtrians as if he were providing the assistance. He uses the pronoun 'we' when mentioning the preparation classes offered by Shiv Sena for the entrance exam. He also generalises his recruitment into State Bank by mentioning that 'lots of people' were recruited. This de-emphasises his individual need for assistance to get a job.

Naik does not give much importance to his job as a clerk at the State Bank. Perhaps he was disappointed that after receiving his B.A. in Commerce he could not get a better job in a private company. Compared to his three older brothers who were managers and leaders, being a clerk was not an impressive accomplishment. Yet, after being employed, he married in 1981 and had his first son in 1982. Finding employment allowed him to create his own family in which he was the head. Supporting his father, who lived with him, Naik may have also gained some respect from his siblings and father. From being the head of his household, he began to hold positions of leadership within the Sena. In 1982 he became the *uppa shakha pramukh* and then *shakha pramukh* in 1984, and finally corporator in 1985. Thus, by gaining employment, Naik became empowered in relation to his family and his community.

Similar to Padwal, Naik attributes greater importance to his political career than to his family life. As corporator, Naik established a political identity in Mumbai. Thus, he provides a detailed outline of his political ascent as a Shiv Sena representative.

So in 1982, I was ele-selected. We don't have elections. Those selections where Balasaheb just gives opportunity. Then subsequently I was working in capacity of *uppa shakha pramukh*. Then in the year 1984, I was promoted to the rank of *shakha pramukh*. The subsequent year in 1985 we had the corporation elections. And so, there was the policy of the party that whosoever was *shakha pramukh* for the area would be given the preference to contest the elections. And I was lucky enough, because of that policy I got the ticket in 1985. So 1985, I won by a margin of 3,000 votes first. And then subsequently, I was made Chairman of Education Committee. Then again in 1992, we had elections for Municipal Corporation. Again, I was given the ticket and I won by a margin of 4,000. And then subsequently all those 12 years, I was working as a municipal councilor.

During this time, I was given the opportunity to work for the organisation to jumpstart this work with the Mumbai Unit at Satar district for 5 years. And previously to that also I was working in Goa for one and half years. I had to coordinate the work with the Goa

Shiv Sena unit and Mumbai head office. So in the years 1990 and 1992, I was with Goa Shiv Sena unit. From 1992-1998, onwards I was working with Satara district. I was in charge. Chief Coordinator for the Satar Unit of Shiv Sena, Satara district.

Had I not been a Shiv Sainik, I would have been a husband to my wife and father of two children. Except I would have no position in society. So 99% are like that only except there are some few people are something in society. Others remain at the back door. They don't like to mix up. Others don't even know also because life is so fast.

In Naik's initial narrative, he mentions 1982 three times. He regards 1982, the year in which Thackeray selected him to be a *uppa shakha pramukh* (vice branch leader) in Girgaum, as the turning point in his life, when he was transformed from an ordinary man into 'someone'. Naik places emphasis on this year for two reasons. Firstly, 1982 marks the beginning of his political ascent. Secondly, in being selected by Thackeray, Naik was singled out and given his first opportunity of responsibility and leadership. Due to this public recognition, Naik gained confidence in himself and the respect of his community. His subsequent appointments and successful elections further substantiate his worthiness. Thus, while Naik was born in 1957, he experiences his 'second birth' as a politician in 1982. So ingrained is Naik's political identity as an elected representative that he begins to say 'elected' and then corrects himself by saying 'selected'. For twelve years, Naik was a successful corporator who was involved in expanding Shiv Sena into Goa. He is proud of those twelve years because during that period he was among the 'few people' who are 'something in society'. By being a political representative, he gained personal recognition in society and transformed his marginal masculinity into a hegemonic one.

Ordinary Members

Although Sameer Vedak and Jagdish Purandare have not held political positions, the public recognition for their work in Shiv Sena has enhanced their self-esteem. For Sameer Vedak, performing 'social work' in Shiv Sena is his only source of self-esteem. Without a job or wife, Vedak is in the process of becoming empowered. Through his 'social work', he is slowly transforming his marginalised masculinity. Responding to my question about his family's views on his involvement in Shiv Sena, he describes this transformation.

[Does your family support your involvement in Shiv Sena?]

My father was a worker and believed in the Communist Party in those days. Mother votes for Sena. That's it. They glad I'm doing social work. Mature. People gave me respect.

I don't do any specific work for Sena. It is all decided by Balasaheb and he tells what work. We are liaisons between people. Civic work or any personal work or paper work done at the government level.

I was working with Bharatiya Vidya Sena [youth branch] where I held a position as Treasurer. I go to the people to resolve family problems. Family court due to my knowledge of law. Hospitalising sick people. These are the works I carry out.

I go to the health department. Many people with their works regarding water connections, updating rents and electricity connection. These problems come under BMC. And BMC has been controlled by Sena for so many years. People come to the *shakha*. Sometimes there are queues which intimidate people. So we can get the work done through acquaintances.

I was approached by another student organisation, but I joined the Bharatiya Sena because of the charisma of Balasaheb Thackeray. During school ending, there was a gathering and I was asked to speak. It was the first time I spoke in front of more than four people. This has helped especially when Dilip Naik asked me to speak on social matters.

Also, if I did some good social work a decade before, they remember me and come to me. The word spreads. Tell another ten people who ask for work and advice. Not all the work can be done, but if it is done then they give respect for me on the street. Then seeing each other, friendships develop.

Shiv Sena reaches the common man's doorsteps. They know Shiv Sena is there for them for hospitalisation or even social occasions. People take for granted that Shiv Sena will help.

I live as one of them. They consider me as one of them and depend on me for doing their work. I live in Girgaum with them.

Vedak's response touches on themes also mentioned by Naik, such as Thackeray's charisma, having a position, the value of the Sena network and public recognition for 'social work'. Like Naik, Vedak accepts Thackeray's leadership and exchanges his individual autonomy for subordination to Thackeray. Inspired by Thackeray's views, Vedak gains a purpose in life by working in the Sena. In addition, his involvement has enabled his personal development. As Treasurer in Shiv Sena's youth wing, he gained leadership skills and insight into financial management. He particularly notes how giving a speech at a school gathering on Hindutva gave him his first opportunity to speak in public. This experience has been useful in his present work with Naik.

Attending the Girgaum *shakha* every evening, Vedak seems to value Shiv Sena's grassroots community network the most. The *shakha* not only provides Vedak with a place to go when he does not have a job, but it also allows him to meet people from the community and Shiv Sena leaders. In 2000, Vedak hoped that his affiliation with the corporator Jaya Goythale, would help him get a job. Now that she is out of office, Vedak has affiliated himself with Dilip Naik. Vedak transports Naik on his scooter to various municipal offices. Vedak and Naik help people in Girgaum with their civic problems. Vedak describes these tasks in detail. Using his knowledge of law, he helps people attend family court. He submits paperwork and applies for permits regarding electricity, water and rent. Often, people pay him for these services. From his involvement in Shiv Sena, Vedak has acquired the personal connections and government knowledge necessary to manoeuvre effectively through Mumbai's municipal bureaucracy. He also benefits from Shiv Sena's political dominance of the BMC. Thus, Vedak experiences a collective empowerment as a result of Shiv Sena's political influence.

As a result of collective empowerment, Vedak has begun to experience empowerment in relation to others and some personal empowerment. Vedak mentions that he has gained respect from people in his community and his family through his social work. Regarding his parents' support Vedak says, 'They glad I'm doing social work. Mature. People give me respect.' Vedak suggests that his parents are proud of him for doing work for the community. This seems to compensate for his unemployment. They also think he has become mature. Vedak's neighbours also have respect for him. He notes that people give him recognition for his good work and recommend him to others. Through this public recognition, he has developed his own personal network, apart from Shiv Sena. He feels proud when people recognise him and come to him for help. This raises his self-esteem and enables his personal empowerment. Through this network, he has also been able to earn an income from his social work.

While I categorise Jagdish Purandare as an inactive ordinary member, this only reflects his present status in Shiv Sena. For thirty years, Purandare was an extremely active member, holding various leadership positions within Shiv Sena's central organisation. Purandare was particularly active in the Staniya Lokhadikha Samiti, the Shiv Sena branch dedicated to improving employment conditions for Maharashtrians in Mumbai. Until 2001, Purandare was chairman of the Shiv Sena union in the Bank of Baroda. After his son Vaibhav was attacked by a Sena mob, Purandare resigned from his leadership positions. He remains a loyal, but inactive member of Shiv Sena. He disassociates himself from Shiv Sena's *shakha* activities, claiming to never attend the *shakha*

Though Purandare presently categorises himself as an inactive member, he has been an influential leader and therefore shares very little with Sameer Vedak. I have included Purandare primarily for his 'inactive' status. As an inactive member, Purandare's narrative differs from the others and raises issues regarding empowerment through Shiv Sena.

Like Naik, Jagdish Purandare's empowerment occurred in stages, starting from adolescence. Yet Purandare does not attribute his initial empowerment to Shiv Sena, but to his wife. According to the panel analysis, Purandare's talent playing cricket was his primary source of empowerment. When his uncle was not home, Purandare would play cricket in the neighbouring lanes. This provided him with some relief from his loneliness as an orphan and his harsh living conditions as a servant. As a talented cricket player, Purandare had many admirers who became his friends. In a conversational interview with Purandare and his wife, they recount his early days.

[Jagdish Purandare]

My friends gave me books, clothes and food. I had many friends who loved me because of my cricket. When I married, one friend gave me clothes, a ticket to Mahabuleshwar [holiday hill station] and a suitcase. We had many good friends. We had simple wedding. Just a *mangal sutra*. I remember it cost Rs. 900.

[Mrs. Purandare]

I lived in the nearby building. I loved cricket. I used to watch him play from my balcony. He would play matches against the nearby *galis* [lanes]. From 14, I started working at the [furniture] showroom. I would go to school and then work. I would give him my money so he could buy food in hotels.

[Jagdish Purandare]
I am everything because of my wife.

[Mrs. Purandare]
When I finished SSC at 16, I married him. We fell in love and I married him because he was poor. I wanted to help him.

So I only told my parents that we planned to marry 8 days before so they wouldn't have time to find out who he was. So they couldn't object. They said, "Why do you want to marry so young? You don't know how to cook even." I told them, "I can work and support us." My friends all laughed and said, "How can you marry him, he has nothing." I said, "I have a job and I can support him."

[Jagdish Purandare]
So after we married, we took a loan and got an apartment in Malad. It was far. So we had to take the train – leave early and come home late. Then we got this place after Vaibhav was born.

[Mrs. Purandare]
When I married, my boss at the furniture store said, "You are like my daughter. Marry him and don't worry." I've worked there for thirty years. It is not a job. It is my showroom. My boss was like my father. I only get Sundays off and 2 days for Ganpati. I don't even get Independence Day or Republic Day. When Vaibhav was small, I left him with my parents who lived next door. I would come home and help them with homework and then cook dinner.

[Jagdish Purandare]
Everything is because of my wife. My life changed after I married her.

Through the network of friends Purandare made through cricket, he was able to feed, clothe and educate himself. More importantly, this network enabled him to meet his future wife. This joint narrative reveals how the friendship between Purandare and his wife developed from her admiration for his cricket skills. An avid cricket fan, Mrs. Purandare would watch him play and give him money to buy food in restaurants. After completing her education, she decided to marry him and support him with her wages from the furniture store.

Purandare's marriage to his wife is the turning point in his life, if not his initial point of empowerment. A unique woman, Mrs. Purandare married him 'because he was poor'. Despite derision from her friends who said 'he has nothing', she confidently says, 'I have a job, I will support him'. At the age of sixteen, Mrs. Purandare married and supported Jagdish Purandare, an orphan with few prospects. With her income, they were able to get a loan and rent an apartment. Purandare's prospects changed dramatically after marrying his wife. He was no longer a servant living under a veranda. He had a home and family for the

first time since his mother died. After they married, he was able to complete his education and get a job.

Mrs. Purandare's willingness to marry someone with no credentials and financially support him changed Purandare's life. Their marriage not only changed his material conditions, but also transformed him from an orphan into a husband, the head of the household. This gave him a social position as well as self-confidence and family responsibilities. Mrs. Purandare continues to provide a steady income, cook and raise their children. As a result, Purandare attributes 'everything' to her. He recognises that his life changed because of his wife.

While marriage was the turning point in Purandare's life, cricket remains an enabling factor. After Purandare joined Shiv Sena, his talent for cricket led to unique opportunities.

I joined Shiv Sena when I was 20. I was having all the ideas of bringing these Maharashtrians all together. So, some friend said to me that there was a meeting in Shivaji Park. I said how will I go there. I don't have the money for the train fare. "I'll give you. You go." I found Balasaheb's speech inspirational. So I joined.

I never went to *shakha*. My activities were through the bank. I finished my SSC and immediately got the job at the bank, playing cricket. We married and then Vaibhav was born.

I played cricket and later managed the team. I was even Udhav's [Bal Thackeray's son and heir] son's coach. I used to spend eleven hours a day with Udhav.

While Shiv Sena activism in the 1970s made jobs in banks available to Maharashtrians, Purandare's skill as a cricket player gave him the advantage necessary to get a bank job. Bank and corporations have cricket teams composed of employees who play in a city league. Bank of Baroda hired Purandare for his cricket skills, not for his 10th grade education. Though Shiv Sena was instrumental in providing the opportunity to apply for the job, in the end his cricket skills secured him the position. As a result, Purandare's career at Bank of Baroda has consisted of playing cricket for the team and managing the team. He does very little work related to banking. Within the Sena, Purandare's cricket skills also gave him personal access to the leadership. Purandare proudly mentions how he used to coach Bal

Thackeray's grandson. Through this coaching, he became a close associate of Udhav, Bal Thackeray's son and the future Shiv Sena Chief.

Purandare often negates the importance of Shiv Sena in his life due to the attack on his son. Yet, despite his criticism of Shiv Sena, Purandare openly expresses admiration for Bal Thackeray. Like Padwal, Naik and Vedak, Purandare finds Thackeray inspirational and tries to emulate him. With his sunglasses and gold watch, Purandare imitates Thackeray's dress and behaviour. In discussing Thackeray, Purandare begins to reveal how the Sena has influenced his life.

[What impressed you in that first meeting?]

His aggressiveness, boldness and he wanted to bring all the Maharashtrian people together. That was the main part of the impression which I...

But during that period, all these South Indian lobbies were working in Mumbai. All the institutes and all the sons of the soil issue, the job issue. I got my job because of Staniya Lokhadika Samiti and all these things because they used to help us, Maharashtrian *Mansa* [men]. And uh, I joined as a cricketer for the Bank of Baroda. During that, my first 6 months probation period I saw that so many South Indian lobbies were harassing Maharashtrians.

Now these north people are most powerful persons in banking. Because Jaswant Singh was the Finance Minister. He brought all the north people to top rank of Indian banks so they wanted to bring their lobby in Maharashtra.

So we are opposing everywhere. Last year also, I got the charge sheet. I asked one of the General Managers why you are harassing Maharashtrian people. Still, this is my first meeting with you, I'm leaving you on warning. So they have given me a charge sheet. Still the inquiry is going on. Harassment, to harass me because I am the leader of Shiv Sena in Bank of Baroda. Most powerful leader in the Bank of Baroda.

So I'm fighting accordingly. I'm attending inquiry to all these things. So I don't get any facility from bank from last year till today. So there is a strike on the 27th. All-India strike is there. Bank of Baroda. Today, that human chain was there, today. You must have seen it. Human chain from Church Gate to Malad Station. So that agitation programme is going on.

There are so many problems, but my problem will be one of them. So there will be next week, or next coming week, there will be a big *morcha* of Shiv Sena. Maybe. Not sure. If they withdraw my charge sheet, then there will be no problem. Then we'll withdraw. Otherwise, that agitation should be there. After the 27th, there will be a big agitation and we are going on indefinite strike till October.

[Are you worried?]

No, I'm not worried. Because my two children are good and I'm fighting for the genuine cause. I am not fighting for my own, my own problem. I'm not fighting for my facility. I am fighting for my people, Maharashtrian people. That is my *right* and I will *fight* till my death. There will be no compromise. There will be no compromise as far as my opinion is concerned.

[What inspires you about Balasaheb?]

His frankness. He is a very frank person. Whatever he is having in mind, he tells everybody. He opens his mind in front of all. He's not hesitating. Whatever decision he takes, we believe that is correct. The staunch Hindu...

We believe that. I believe in revolution. I don't believe in *shanti* [peace] and all these things. I'm a revolutionary person. Because my parents were freedom fighters. My father was a freedom fighter, my mother was a freedom fighter. So, that has come in my blood. During Saitya Maharashtra, my mother was in jail for two, three days. It has come in my blood, in Vaibhav's blood only.

The conviction and enthusiasm Purandare expresses during this narrative demonstrates how Shiv Sena is an integral part of his identity. While Purandare's wife fulfilled his material needs, it may have impugned his masculinity to have his wife support him financially. In her own initial narrative, Mrs. Purandare asserted her importance as homemaker and breadwinner. Through Shiv Sena, Purandare attained a job and leadership positions which bolstered his masculinity. More importantly, Shiv Sena provided him with a cause to fight for. Fighting discrimination against Maharashtrians enabled Purandare to globalise his personal problems. Then in sharing a collective problem, Shiv Sainiks alleviate their individual shame in being unemployed or undereducated. Rather than being a personal failure, unemployment is regarded as a systemic problem or injustice against an ethnic group. Fighting for the rights of Maharashtrians has given Purandare's life meaning. It enables him to deal with the problems he faced alone as a youth in a constructive and collective manner. Thus, Purandare experiences a sense of purpose and personal empowerment from the fight for Maharashtrians' collective empowerment. This is evident in his discussion of the recent charges against him. He asserts that his problem is one of many. He also claims that, 'I am not fighting for my own, my own problem. I'm not fighting for my facility. I am fighting for my people, Maharashtrian people.' Purandare feels justified in staging a strike because it is not just for his own benefit, but for the Maharashtrian people.

Purandare's fight for Maharashtrians also makes him feel connected to his parents. He mentions that 'fighting' for rights is in his blood and that his parents were freedom fighters. His mother was even in prison for protesting. Thus it seems that, as a Shiv Sainik,

Purandare is continuing his parents' fight. Shiv Sena's fight for Maharashtrians' rights makes the party his ideological family. Having lost his father before his birth, Thackeray also becomes his ideological father. Through the Sena, Purandare restores the family he lost as a child. He gains a sense of collective empowerment from his Shiv Sena family.

Purandare's collective empowerment from his Shiv Sena family also allows him to become empowered in relation to his blood relatives. According to Purandare's son Vaibhav, his brothers, who abandoned him as an orphan, now ask favours from him.

Vaibhav states,

And I have seen his relatives behaving atrociously badly. And, uh, my mother tells me, his relatives avoided him like the plague when he didn't have a house. And now that we have a proper house and we are doing not too badly, they have started coming to us. And my uncles' children come to him asking for a job and he's even given a job to one of my cousins, in his own bank through the Sena Union. You know, I'm disgusted by what these people do and his entire family. I hate his family profoundly. But I admire him because he stood alone.

Through Shiv Sena, Purandare has gained tremendous political influence. As the chairman of Shiv Sena's union in Bank of Baroda, he influences who is hired. Therefore, Purandare's brothers, who previously abandoned him, now ask him to get their children jobs. While Vaibhav feels only enmity towards his father's relatives, Purandare welcomes their contact. By finding his nephew a job in the Bank of Baroda, Purandare demonstrates to his brothers that he is 'someone' – important and influential. More importantly, Purandare has earned the respect of his own son, Vaibhav. Purandare's involvement in Shiv Sena inspired Vaibhav to write the book The Sena Story in 1999. Yet, quite apart from Purandare's Shiv Sena membership, Vaibhav expresses his admiration for his father who managed to rise above his circumstances with no help from his family.

III. Disappointment

All four men experienced a collective empowerment that entailed exchanging their individual 'marginalised' masculine identities for Shiv Sena's hegemonic masculine group identity. Though they have gained public recognition as Shiv Sainiks, absolute loyalty to

Thackeray has its costs. This loyalty to Thackeray requires renouncing their personal autonomy and following the orders of Shiv Sena's leaders which often involve acts of violence. Purandare and Naik are willing to make this exchange due to their devotion to Shiv Sena's purported cause – fighting discrimination against Maharashtrians. Yet this devotion to Shiv Sena can be debilitating to an individual when the interests of the collective no longer coincide with his personal interests. As a result of changes in Mumbai's political and economic conditions and in Shiv Sena's organisation, such a divergence of interests has indeed occurred for Naik and Purandare. For them, collective empowerment through Shiv Sena may potentially cause their personal disempowerment.

1. Dilip Naik: Loss of Political Power

Dilip Naik's empowerment resulted from holding public office. After twelve years, Naik lost his position as corporator of Girgaum when the ward was reserved for women candidates. In his narrative, he mentions this moment after relating all of his achievements as a corporator.

And in the year 1997 our constituent ward was reserved for ladies. So naturally, I was left with no other choice than to keep quiet. Subsequently, also, there were no chances for myself in working capacity.

While Naik's political career began its ascent in 1982, 1997 marks its decline. Up to this point, Naik had been a successful corporator, leading Shiv Sena's expansion into Goa.

When Girgaum was reserved for women and he could no longer contest elections, Naik states that, 'I was left with no other choice than to keep quiet'. By saying he had 'no choice', Naik expresses his loss of control and efficacy. The phrase 'keep quiet' suggests a loss of voice and ability to act in society. As a result of the women's reservation, Naik not only lost his political power, but also his opportunity for employment. He says 'there were no chances for myself in a working capacity'. Expecting a lifelong career as a Shiv Sena politician, Naik left his job in 1992 because he could no longer be both a corporator and State Bank clerk. Therefore, when Girgaum became reserved for women, Naik lost

'everything': his political power, his source of income and his only public identity as corporator.

Though 1997 was a downward turning point, Naik does not dwell on his disappointment. Instead, he emphasises his activities since 1997.

But as a Shiv Sainik, our past experience, I was working and all this hard work brought me a ticket in the other constituency in 2002. Just now some 6 months back we had the elections. Because this time also our constituency was reserved for ladies OBC (Other Backward Castes). So, I had no chance again. But all these years without any post I had worked. And my superiors or my boss or Shiv Sena Chief gave me the ticket in the adjoining constituency. But for some reasons I lost by a very narrow margin.

Naik does not describe any hardships between 1997 and 2002. For five years, Naik patiently waited for the women's reservation to be lifted from Girgaum. Having given up his job, Naik has only his political identity left. Therefore, he is desperate to become a Shiv Sena corporator again. Unfortunately, the women's reservation was not lifted, but was further restricted to women from other backward castes. Yet, according to Naik, he was given an election ticket in a neighbouring ward in recognition for his hard work. Unknown in the new ward, Naik lost the 2002 elections. Nonetheless, Naik remains loyal to Shiv Sena.

Although Naik only briefly mentions the period after 1997, his eldest son Shirish suggests the family suffered greatly when his father lost his position. According to Shirish,

[Clears his throat] It was a pretty *tough* time. We found it very tough so he must have found it really tough. For being in power for 12 years and suddenly you don't have power. It makes a person very...even if you call him...he could have been frustrated also many times, but he never showed it...Now then, to account for it...[Cries uncontrollably for 5 to 7 minutes]

Apart from whatever is done, he has recovered from it. The way he has been able to maintain his cool and his calm, we appreciate it. That has given us the energy to do something else. Otherwise, we would have been...just because he wasn't in power we would have been lost. [Cries] It was very essential to give us support. If he was also disturbed in that period...[Cries]

As things changed...when the ward got reserved I was in my 10th, so that was my last year of school. When I entered my college, she [Mrs. Naik] explained to me that now you have to work on your own. It's not that...the reservation may be there for the next five years also. So, you have to do your own things, set up your own things. Your father is there to help you. He's there to manage things for you. You have to, you need to be, you need to do something for your own. We'll be there for the support but try...Don't feel that you're an ex-corporator's son and that everything will go smoothly for you. That won't happen.

At 20, Shirish Naik is a serious and confident young man with a professional demeanour.

Therefore, his emotional response was surprising. His sobbing expressed the fear and

suffering he experienced as a fifteen-year-old when his father lost his position as corporator. Just completing secondary school, he was about to enter junior college – a stressful period for Indian adolescents and their parents. Naik had been corporator for most of Shirish's life. The loss of Naik's income and influence was very destabilising for the family and especially for Shirish.

While Dilip does not dwell on the difficulties, Shirish calls the period after 1997 a 'pretty tough time'. Though his parents supported him emotionally, his father could no longer provide for him financially. Therefore, Shirish suddenly felt the weight of adult responsibility. He is told by his mother to 'work on your own' and 'set up your own things'. Previously, as a corporator's son, Shirish had benefited from his father's influence. He felt confident about his future and his family. His mother undermined his childhood confidence by telling him that the reservation may last longer than five years, and adds, "Don't feel that you're an ex-corporator's son and that everything will go smoothly for you. That won't happen." From Shirish's narrative, it appears that since Naik lost his position, everything has not gone smoothly for his family. Ashamed of these difficulties, Naik does not mention it at all.

The loss of income from the corporator position also undermined Naik's position as family patriarch. The deterioration of the family's finances caused Shirish to seek employment at the age of sixteen. Below, Shirish explains how he began his tutoring business four years previously.

[How did you start your tuition business?]

In the 12th, I wanted to be an engineer after 12th. I took science so I could do engineering and maybe I could join some profession then. But I couldn't get more percentages so I had to do a course where I had more percentages or else pay for a seat. I felt it was not correct for me, just because I did not study properly that my father should have to pay some fifty-thousand rupees – he could have paid. He could have taken a personal loan. So he would have managed to have taken the finances. But I was not willing to take the finances. So I took the BSc degree as the last alternative.

But what else could I do? How can I support my family, how can I support myself? How can I support my education? Because he had been a support since my childhood till 12th. I felt, I am an adult now, I should earn my own money and fund my education.

Shirish felt a responsibility to help his family by becoming a professional. Lacking the required marks, Shirish decided to do a B.Sc. instead of paying 50,000 rupees for a 'paid seat' to study engineering. Since his father did not have an income, Shirish did not want to burden him with a personal loan. Shirish also did not want his father to think that he had lost confidence in him, and asserts that Naik 'could have paid'. Yet, in effect, Shirish had lost confidence in his father's ability as a provider. He expresses this when he wonders, "How can I support my family, how can I support myself?" Shirish felt responsible for supporting, not just himself, but also his family. Feeling confused by his father's loss of power, Shirish decided to 'earn his own money' and help the family.

While Shirish's tutorial business enhances his self-confidence, it challenges Dilip's position as head of the household. In his narrative, Shirish recognises this conflict with his father and explains how they have resolved it.

The first year of teaching, I had 6 students. It started with 2 students. At the end of the second year, I had 22 students. By the third year, I had 44 students and today I have 70 students. Over the 4 years, I have developed a lot.

But over the period, he [Dilip Naik] had initially opposed my decision to take tuitions. Because he felt...he felt, I would say, he is not up to his mark. He felt that way... He felt, *ki*, I am not satisfied with the way he was dealing with problems. That is what he felt.

But I explained, no, I should earn my own money now. I should stand on my own feet. He understood things. He helped me a lot. He taught me how to manage things. How to manage finance. How to save money. Then he helped me with this place we are occupying.

We have only two rooms and I used to occupy the entire hall. He used to wait outside with his friends and his people. Then when our relatives would come they sat in the kitchen. I used to not like it, even he used to not like it. So we/he talked to somebody and got a place to rent. He paid the rent. In spite of me, he paid the rent. Then the place was not sufficient for us. So he talked to one of his friends and he said, *ki*, fine. My place is not being used, you can use my place.

Shirish diplomatically explains how the success of his tutorial business injured his father's self-esteem. While his father had lost his job and political influence, his son's part-time business was flourishing. While Dilip was feeling useless and marginal, his son was developing and gaining recognition in their community. As a result, Dilip 'initially opposed' his son's tutorial business. This conflict between the declining father and rising son exposed Dilip Naik's injured ego. He felt that his son started a business because he lacked

confidence in his ability to provide for the family and was "not satisfied with the way he was dealing with problems."

Naik viewed his son as a competitor within the household. Shirish mentions that as his business grew, he occupied more space in the house. Teaching his students in the family's main room, Shirish forced his father to meet his friends in the corridor of the building. Since Shirish was earning the only income in the family, Naik was forced to conduct his social work 'outside' his home. Naik felt embarrassed to meet his friends in the corridor and admit that his son had usurped his space in the house. Remaining respectful to his father, Shirish also felt uncomfortable about displacing his father and offered to rent an office. Shirish welcomed Naik's assistance in finding a room through his networks. Though Shirish does not want to undermine his father's place as head of household, he also wants to assert his independence. Shirish says, "He paid the rent. In spite of me, he paid the rent." By paying the rent, Naik demonstrated that he is 'supporting the family' and that Shirish is still living under his roof. In this way, Dilip asserts his dominance or authority over Shirish. Reluctantly, Shirish accepts his father's authority.

While Shirish does not want to challenge his father, he wants to separate himself from Naik's affairs. When I asked if he participated in Shiv Sena activities, Shirish responded, "I have tried to leave his work because we two have separated into two different fields. His field being politics and my field teaching." Though Shirish nominally joined Shiv Sena during its membership drive, he is not interested in his father's political activities. He does not want to intrude in his father's political domain. Identifying himself as a teacher, he wants to maintain his autonomy and establish equal relations with his father.

Although his loss of political power in 1997 undermined Dilip's self-confidence and authority, he appears to have emerged from the challenges more personally empowered. Having lost the election in 2002, Naik finally accepted that he was no longer the corporator. He no longer regards his loss of position as a personal loss. In the five years between 1997

and 2002, he has come to recognise the extent of his own abilities and personal influence.

Despite not having a job, political position or Shiv Sena title, Naik continues to 'work hard for the people'.

[You mentioned working hard for the people?]

Working hard is...Of course, people who have the chair, when they lose the chair generally they sit at their house and they don't come out. As if everything is lost or the world is closed down for them. I do not believe in that. I was working previously when I was no one. I was working when I was somebody in some capacity. Maybe it was a smaller capacity. I was working whole-heartedly when I was corporator. I was working full capacity when I was chairman, so there is no difference for me. I was working all those years.

And they think we are people with experience in society. "They are someone." Of course, just giving an ear to them does a lot. Even not doing anything. I say, "*Are!* I will see to it." Even saying this pacifies them. Someone is there to look over you. They feel better because they feel lonely in society.

Naik recognises that losing a political seat or 'chair' makes people withdraw from society, feeling that without a title they are no one. Though he himself does not admit to these feelings, Shirish's narrative suggests otherwise. Nonetheless, today Naik gains self-esteem from his continuous 'hard work for the people' – as 'no one', as 'corporator' and as 'chairman' of the education committee. He does not regard the loss of political power as the end of his social work, just a limitation on his 'capacity'.

Naik also draws 'power' from his former constituents who still appeal to him for assistance. Their confidence in his abilities and their regard for him as 'someone' has helped Naik to recognise his self-worth. He states,

So one fine period, I lost everything because of the reservation. But then I was just Mr. Dilip Naik. But still I was *me*, Dilip Naik, and it made me work.

That was the reason because people were expecting from you. Suppose you know me two years back and you ask where is Dilip. So some expectation is there. Some person who had voted for you twice, thrice asks you. So all those expectations are there. All those people who voted for you all those years. "*Are!* Where are you? You are not in society. Where are you all? Where are you hiding? Don't hide, come out!" They meet us. If some person who admired me all those years, comes to me, to my house with some problem, I can't tell him I'm not corporator now. He or she whomever, I can't say, "Go to Mr. Padwal." "I have come to your house, what are you doing for me." So I have to always try to pick up the phone to BMC or government office, whichever, wherever the work, or give some chit. Or accompany him to the office. This is the work.

See there are many things and with any expectation people are coming to the public representative. There are no hard and fast rules about what issue or what makes them come. There are many issues, many practical difficulties in life. People are facing them. Minor things in government office, or BMC some big thing. There are many hardships so people like to share their difficulties or sorrows with others.

So you should do something for the betterment of society. You should do something for society. Because I'm not having this chair I will not work. This is not. You should do something for society. If people in the chair can do 10 things at least we should be able to do 2 or 3. They don't expect to do laurels. All those people who are admirers for years, what should we tell them? "Oh, I'm not having anything so don't come to me." Should I shut the door? We should work for the society and then people say only you have the chair and you are working, then you are a selfish person. You should not be selfish. So you should do something

On our authority there is no authority with us. For doing any social work, you don't require authority. You should have the social awareness. You should have the social cause to do *anything*. Then anything under the sky you can do.

Naik realises that he does not need the title of 'corporator' to perform social work or earn respect from society. When his former constituents appealed to him, he recognised his self-worth as simply 'Dilip Naik'. Though he was not corporator, he still had political contacts, networks and the knowledge of how to solve civic problems. Naik draws political authority from 'social work' and the support of his former constituents. The people still recognise him as 'someone' and have faith in his abilities. Though he has been displaced in his home and *shakha*, he still has influence over his community. They still turn to him for solace and advice because of who he is as an individual, not because of his political position.

Devoted to social work, Naik has begun to move away from Shiv Sena politics and participates in other groups. As president of *Yuvak Utkarsh Mandal*, he encourages the youth through sports competitions and employment seminars. He is also the vice-president of *Adhar*, an organisation that assists orphans. All year he is involved in community service projects such as the distribution of notebooks to poor students, medical camps and the organisation of religious festivals. Below, Naik describes his role in *Adhar*.

As I told you, we have our organisation where I am the vice-president. We, I, tell my people to take care of the orphan children. 125 children. We're just taking the responsibility for fees, uniform and all those things. So it is a social work and people know that Mr. Naik is confined with one institution.

Suppose you know one very poor student and he's not able to pay and his mother is working hard to earn her bread and butter. And he doesn't have a father. So people who are working very hard in society who know them like you are supposed to help. See, that poor chap can't pay his fees. We have to do it or give myself. If individually I can't do, then I should know something, some institution for funding such people. There are many people who are doing this. Many institutions giving scholarships. Not only our institutions.

So we know it. Poor people are there. They don't know how to carry out a big major operation costing 2 *lakhs*, 3 *lakhs*. Then we have charitable institutions that fund them. Siddhi Vinaik pays Rs. 20,000 for by-pass surgery and all. So if you know this.

No one is knowing this or very few people are knowing it. 0.001% knows such things are there. And so people say she's a poor lady or he's a poor person undergoing some operation. We have to fund him. No. But the Mayor of Mumbai fund is there. He has 5,000. Everyone has funds, even the Prime Minister has his funds.

So every person in India can get this, but no one knows this. What is the source? You have to give him some chit and go and meet him. We phoned him, we are sending such person, just help him out. So that administrator in the concerned department is given the chit and he does it. So people are happy.

Participating in *Adhar*, Naik realises that the knowledge and networks he gained as corporator are a source of power. Naik explains that most people, especially the poor, do not know that they can apply for government assistance. As a former corporator, Naik knows the different funds people can access. He also knows how to successfully apply for funds. Thus, when people come to him with problems, he can direct them to the appropriate charity with a reference. Since he knows the people in charge of the funds, he contacts them personally. According to Naik, ordinary people lack the knowledge and contacts to solve their own problems. Thanks to his Shiv Sena experience, he can guide them. Naik derives personal empowerment from being a mediator between 'the people' and the government and no longer relies on his affiliation with Shiv Sena for a purpose or authority.

2. Jagdish Purandare: Disillusioned by Corruption and Violence

An exploited orphan with few prospects, Jagdish Purandare admired Bal Thackeray who promised him a job and power. Thackeray blamed his problems on discrimination against Maharashtrians by the outsiders who controlled Mumbai. He told him that as a Maharashtrian, it was his right to have a job and dignity in 'his' city. Regarding Thackeray as a father figure, Purandare has been blindly loyal to the first man who gave him any encouragement and guidance. For the last thirty years, Purandare had been promoted within the Sena, based on this loyalty to Thackeray.

However, Shiv Sena has changed over these thirty years. As it evolved from a social movement into a political party, the organisation attracted members interested in acquiring

personal power and wealth. According to Hansen, corruption in the Sena is linked to the growing economic stakes in local politics. In the 1980s, Mumbai witnessed a booming market in construction and real estate. This prosperity was accompanied with a proliferation of corruption at the municipal level (Hansen 2001: 119). Members of the Municipal Council routinely demand bribes from builders and contractors. Due to the high financial stakes in electoral politics, Shiv Sena began moving towards the Congress-style of electioneering with the open purchase and trade in party tickets for elections. A major source of finance for the party, the allocation of election tickets to the highest bidder is difficult to verify (Hansen 2001: 58). Yet many Shiv Sainiks I interviewed, including Naik and Purandare, claimed that this was done in the 2002 elections, in which Udhav Thackeray designated election tickets.¹

Corruption in Shiv Sena has disillusioned loyal old members like Jagdish Purandare. Purandare believed Shiv Sena fought for the rights of Maharashtrians. This fight against discrimination and for the promotion of Marathi-speakers had given him a purpose in life. This was the end for which he was willing to use violent means. He expected a Shiv Sena government to restore the dominance of Marathi-speakers in Mumbai. Yet, when Shiv Sena took office, he realised that they had abandoned the 'sons of the soil' platform. Purandare explains,

Since 1995, the Sena has changed and stopped working for the common man. Now that they have money. They are corrupt.

They have set aside all the old workers. They have forgotten us. These new leaders don't care about the common man. They don't know who we are. They don't know anything.

That Neelam Gorhe came from nowhere. When she came to Sena Bhavan, she would ask me, "Who's that?" She didn't know who the senior leaders are. Now she's MLC and head of Mahila Aghadi West because she's fooling around with Udhav Thackeray. Yes, now these newcomers are getting the posts.

Purandare believes that Shiv Sena's corruption began in 1996 when it finally gained control of the Maharashtra government. He believes that political power has corrupted Shiv Sena's

¹ While Hansen suggests this has been the practice since the 1970s, my research participants claimed this practice only started under Udhav Thackeray. This may be an act of cognitive dissonance: they are trying to attribute the corruption in Shiv Sena to Udhav so that they may remain loyal to Bal Thackeray.

new leaders, who are not concerned with the plight of the common man. Feeling personally abandoned, Purandare says that the leaders have 'set aside all the old workers'.

Purandare identifies Dr. Neelam Gorhe as such a leader, accusing her of having sexual relations with Udhav Thackeray, the Sena's new acting leader. Like the other new leaders, Gorhe joined Shiv Sena after 1996, when it controlled the government. Unable to get election tickets from Congress, many educated and wealthy women approached the Sena at that time. Due to the women's reservation legislation, Shiv Sena was eager to recruit educated women into the party. Neelam Gorhe is notorious for opportunistically shifting her political allegiance. A prominent women's rights advocate and physician, Gorhe began her political career with the far-left *Dalit* Party, representing caste-less 'untouchables'. She then joined Congress in the 1980s. She joined Shiv Sena in 1997 and was given the position of Chairman of the Women's Development Committee. In 2002, she was given the MLC ticket for Pune. Presently, she is head of Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi West. Due to her opportunistic behaviour, she has been heavily criticised by women's rights activists and by Shiv Sena's old guard.

Purandare and other members of the old guard deeply resent the new leaders who only recently joined Shiv Sena, but immediately received election tickets and government posts. After working for Shiv Sena for thirty years, sacrificing their personal time and endangering their lives, old guard members like Purandare did not receive posts in the Shiv Sena government. For this reason, Purandare feels that the leaders 'have forgotten us'. Unacknowledged for his years of loyalty and work, Purandare feels marginalised by the party that he believed would give him power.

Purandare's disillusionment with Shiv Sena's political corruption evolved into personal disempowerment when his son, Vaibhav, was attacked by a Sena mob. A journalist for Asian Age, Vaibhav Purandare was brutally attacked in 2001 during a Shiv Sena

bandh(strike) upon which he was reporting. In the interview he granted me in 2002.

Vaibhav Purandare describes his attack and its impact on his family.

[Vaibhav Purandare]

The press clearly stated that press vehicles would be allowed during the *bandh*. I went in a clearly marked press jeep. We were surrounded by a mob. They formed a circle around us and stopped us. I stepped out of the car to show my Press Pass [gestures to show how he calmly removed it from his breast pocket]. The leader simply said, "You press-wallahs are always spreading lies about us." Asian Age, we only know Samna [Shiv Sena's newspaper]." They then began beating me without giving me a chance to explain anything. Luckily I started bleeding quickly. There was blood all over my clothes. Blood running down my ear. So they got scared. I heard the leader say, "*Bas*" [enough]. I think they were afraid that I might die.

But the worst part was how the Sena reacted. I was in the hospital for a few hours and then went home. Udhav Thackeray called my home and told my father not to make an issue of it. He didn't even ask if I was all right. Later some Sainiks were sent over to shut them up. Later Udhav claimed to the press and Bal Thackeray that Sainiks did not beat me. I wrote an article to the contrary and told Udhav to get lost. Months went on with such politics.

Even the old man claimed to the press that first they weren't Sainiks and then that I provoked them. I didn't provoke them. But, the old man was misinformed by Udhav. Now the old man has left everything in Udhav's control.

The worst part of all this was how it affected my family. My family was so frightened. They saw me bloody on TV, but couldn't come to the hospital because of the *bandh*. We could only talk on the phone. They were so worried.

My father was torn. He couldn't believe what his party had done to his son. This party which he was devoted to. He was very hurt. He is no longer an active member, but he is a loyal Sainik. He remains loyal to the old man [Bal Thackeray].

Before his attack, Vaibhav had been a strong Shiv Sena supporter. Like his father, he believed Shiv Sena protected the rights of Maharashtrians in Mumbai. In the interview he granted me in 2000, Vaibhav had even justified the use of violence towards this end. Despite writing a book on the Sena's history and his father's close association with Thackeray, Vaibhav was indiscriminately beaten as a member of the press. While Vaibhav now regards all violence as senseless, he was especially hurt by how the Sena treated the incident. Rather than being concerned about his health, Udhav was more concerned with the Sena's reputation. Jagdish Purandare was expected to toe the party line and pressure Vaibhav into silence. Shiv Sainiks were sent to the Purandare household to further intimidate them. Disgusted with the Sena, Vaibhav exercised his power as a journalist and published his article about the attack. Having lost respect for the Sena, Vaibhav now refers to Bal Thackeray as 'the old man' rather than 'Balasaheb'. Though he has rejected Shiv Sena,

he also blames the corruption of the party on Udhav versus Bal Thackeray. Vaibhav claims 'the old man was misinformed by Udhav'. Thus, absolving Shiv Sena's patriarch for the attack. Forced to choose between his son and the party, Jagdish supported his son's action. The attack on Vaibhav was a tremendous blow to him. While Shiv Sena's political corruption made him feel marginalised, the violence against his son made him feel personally betrayed. Like his childhood, Purandare finds it difficult to discuss Vaibhav's attack. He simply states,

Now after what happened to Vaibhav, I have stopped my Sena activities.

Still, I'm an active member, but after the incident of Vaibhav I have stopped everything because it was hard feeling.

Because I worked for the Sena my whole life. I had devoted my whole life to the Sena as a Sthanik Lokadhikar Samiti leader and in Shiv Sena Bhavan I was sitting. I was looking after all the administrative, election campaigning, all this thing. I was in charge of all that.

After the incident of Vaibhav, it is a shock to me, it was a shock to me.

Only one year after Vaibhav's attack, Purandare still seems to be in 'shock'. He is still processing his hurt feelings. Unable to fight against the Sena, he has simply stopped all his Sena activities as an act of silent protest. He feels deeply betrayed by the Sena, the party he had devoted his life to and which then disfigured and almost killed his son.

No longer actively participating in the Sena, Purandare appears lost. He needs to find a new purpose in life. When I asked about how he spends his time, Purandare responded,

I spend more time at work. I do work in the bank. For 30 years, I didn't do work in the bank. I just played cricket. After all I did for the Sena, now I am the loser [sits silently].

For thirty years, Purandare spent his entire day working for Shiv Sena. During office hours, he played cricket and organised Shiv Sena union activities. After work he went to Sena Bhavan, Shiv Sena's headquarters, to co-ordinate with the central leadership. Now he is actually performing a function related to banking at work. After work he simply goes home to an empty house, since his wife works and his sons also have jobs and other activities. Purandare had invested so much time in Shiv Sena that he became obsolete at home and in the bank. He does not have any activity or place to fall back on. As a result, he feels like he

wasted his time. Due to Shiv Sena, he missed out on raising his sons and he did not earn enough money so his wife could stop working. Dejected and personally disempowered, Purandare states, 'I am the loser.' Purandare had derived all of his personal self-worth from Shiv Sena. Therefore, now he has lost everything.

Having built his entire identity around Shiv Sena, he cannot break off ties entirely. Though the Sena is corrupt and criminal, he refuses to accept that Bal Thackeray is responsible. Regarding Thackeray like a god, Purandare is unable to lose faith in him. Purandare states,

But still I believe in Balasaheb Thackeray, there is no question of that. Still, I'm a strong member of Shiv Sena. That is not the problem. See, people are there in Shiv Sena, like that. Generally, you will find these educated crowd in banks, Sthaniya Lokhadika Samiti. They are highly qualified, they are well-educated. They don't do such things.

I have cut down my activity with the Sena, but I am still a Sainik and loyal to Balasaheb. In the bank I still organise activities. I received a charge sheet by the management for defending a Marathi who was being harassed. They have cut my access to facilities. I don't care.

I have to fight against injustices against Maharashtrians. Wednesday we are making a human chain and Thursday we will strike. If they don't drop the charge sheet against me. This is not for me. Management has sent me many charge sheets and memos. This is about protecting Marhashtrians and doing what is right.

Purandare has spent his life fighting for Maharashtrians' rights under Thackeray's direction.

He is incapable of pursuing a new cause, or even the same cause without Shiv Sena.

Without the Sena, he feels powerless in society. Unlike Naik, who realises that even without a position he is still 'somebody', Purandare depends on his identity as a Shiv Sainik. As a result, he rationalises his continued loyalty and activity by explaining that the Sainiks he works with are not '*goondas*', but 'educated' and 'highly qualified'. Purandare cannot do without Shiv Sena's collective empowerment. He requires Shiv Sena's masses to form a human chain and intimidate the Bank of Baroda's management. Lacking personal empowerment, Purandare remains dependent on Shiv Sena for his self-esteem.

In relation to his family, Purandare has also become disempowered. The Sena's attack on Vaibhav and the leadership's attempt to intimidate the family has discredited the party in their eyes. Purandare's wife and sons no longer respect Shiv Sena and therefore do not

support Purandare's continued loyalty. While they formerly supported or at least tolerated his Shiv Sena membership, they now regard it as a waste of time. According to Mrs. Purandare and Vaibhav,

[Mrs. Purandare]

He is a loser. He devoted so much time, so many years and they did that to Vaibhav.

I told him he could do politics, but only after first completing his service [job]. Service first, then politics. I have never liked the Sena. From the beginning. Only at the time of Vaibhav's book. I thought it was OK. Balasaheb had said nice things about Vaibhav. That was the only Sena function I've ever attended. After what happened to Vaibhav, I have returned to hating the Sena. How could they do that to him after all he did for the party? We are the losers.

[Vaibhav]

During these last elections, I couldn't vote, nor did my mother. I couldn't vote for the other parties either. Once I could support the Sena but...My father voted for the Sena. He remains a loyal Sainik. My mother was upset with him. She couldn't believe that he could vote for the Sena after what they did to her son.

From what I've seen he's worked very hard for the Sena. It has been a waste of time, I believe, because it has become a complete waste and it's, I think today, very tragic because he could have utilised his energy for another purpose, either to get into a business which is how you progress in life. Why don't you earn some more money? Why don't you do something creative or self-enhancing? Go to yoga class, do some exercise. Go listen to some good speakers, go have a picnic. Why this? It's wisdom in hindsight. Even I thought, "Oh, he's doing some work." Even he thought this way. Now with all this wisdom in hindsight, I can say it was a waste. Though he won't say it.

Mrs. Purandare also regards her husband as a 'loser'. For many years, she allowed Purandare to participate, as long as it did not interfere with his job. Now that the Sena has interfered with their family life, she wants him to completely disassociate himself from the party. To Mrs. Purandare, the disfigurement of Vaibhav and her husband's marginalisation have made the entire family 'losers'.

Once an avid Sena supporter, Vaibhav no longer votes for Shiv Sena. He resents his father's former involvement and considers it a waste of time. Previously, Vaibhav and Jagdish Purandare believed that Shiv Sena's violent tactics were necessary to achieve the 'good end' of promoting Maharashtrian people. Now that Vaibhav has experienced Shiv Sena's senseless violence first hand, he no longer believes that the end justifies the means. Instead, Shiv Sena's violent means undermine its purported end. With hindsight, he believes his father should have spent more time with the family or at work. Regarding the Sena as a

destructive force, Vaibhav wishes his father had been involved in more productive and creative activities.

Due to Purandare's Shiv Sena activities, he was not physically present at home. Like a typical Shiv Sainik, he left the household duties to his wife. As a result, his wife subtly dominates the family and controls their home. This is evident in their children's descriptions of their parents.

[Vaibhav]

He wasn't home a lot. No, he was hardly at home. He was always away at work. More on Sena work and less on his official work. So, he wasn't home. He was only home in the evenings and night. The interaction has been limited.

On the other hand, I admire him profoundly for his guts in life. And what he's gone through in life. And what he's emerged as, because he could have easily destroyed himself. He could have easily become a criminal, because he had no positive influence on him, because he stayed on the streets.

And he, see, actually it's not his fault. Had he been born in a very civilised household, he would have been a very civilised man. But he has grown up on the streets with the *goondas*. Come on, you are an orphan. You have no opportunities in life and still you do something.

[Kunal – Jagdish's younger son]

As I told you, she is working in a private firm and it's very difficult to go six days a week, there are no fixed things. She literally works for 8 to 10 hours a day. And you know, there have been no servants to cook food and all. And at the same time, cooking food for both of us, growing up two children, it's not an easy job to bring up two children. So, I think that in itself shows that she is the backbone of our family. She's been working very hard. She's supported my father during rough times, you know. She's not only supported us, she's, she's sort of a lifeline for us. And when she is happy, all of us are happy.

Vaibhav remarks that his father was 'hardly home' when he was growing up. Purandare spent more time working for Shiv Sena than interacting with his family. In contrast, Mrs. Purandare spent all of her time outside of work at home. Before going to work, she prepared breakfast for the family. At 3 p.m., she would return from work to help them with their studies. After making dinner, she would return to the furniture shop until 9 p.m. Her younger son recognises that Mrs. Purandare has been working very hard for their family and calls her its 'backbone' and 'lifeline'.

While Purandare invested the last thirty years in Shiv Sena politics, Mrs. Purandare has invested her self-worth in her job and her family. In speaking of her job she says, "I've worked there for 30 years. It is not a job. It is my showroom. My boss was like my father."

Though Mrs. Purandare has worked without holidays for the last thirty years, she does not feel exploited. She does not consider herself an employee, but the owner. Thus, Mrs. Purandare dominates both her home and her showroom. Her children feel close to her, since she was at home and involved in the minute details of their lives. While they respect their father, they regard their mother as the heart of the home.

Conclusion

Shiv Sena offers relief from the disempowerment of the common Maharashtrian man. The *shakha* gives men a place to go when unemployed, a network to work with to become self-employed and social work to justify their existence. Through employment, politics and social work, Shiv Sena provides men with a public identity. In the cases of Padwal and Naik, involvement in Shiv Sena led to lucrative political careers, while Purandare was able to secure employment in a bank. Shiv Sena's reputation for violence and Bal Thackeray's stature allow male Shiv Sainiks to derive self-esteem from their involvement in the party. Before joining Shiv Sena, they were 'nobody'. By working for the Sena, they have gained public recognition and are now 'someone'.

Padwal, Naik, Vedak and Purandare have achieved varying levels of empowerment through their participation in Shiv Sena. While they have all experienced collective empowerment, only Padwal and Naik exhibit personal empowerment. As public representatives, they have both built up a personal following of supporters. These constituents believe in their personal leadership and capabilities. They vote for them because of their 'hard work', not because of their loyalty to Shiv Sena. Both Padwal and Naik have come to realise that while they are indebted to Shiv Sena, they are 'someone' in society because of their own abilities and rapport with their constituents. While Vedak also realises that his public recognition comes from his 'social work', he still relies on his identity as a Shiv Sainik. Until he finds permanent employment, he will remain dependent on Shiv Sena. Purandare has only experienced collective empowerment through Shiv Sena. Though

he has personal talents such as cricket, he has not achieved personal empowerment. He has gone through a cycle of disempowerment, empowerment with assistance from his wife and Shiv Sena, and finally disillusionment. Despite the attack on his son, Purandare is unable to detach himself from Shiv Sena. He is too dependent on the organisation for his self-worth, purpose in life and public identity. As a result, after thirty years in Shiv Sena, Purandare regards himself as a 'loser'.

For men, participation in Shiv Sena can be debilitating as it requires their full devotion and loyalty. In order to justify its violent methods, members must believe in the fight for Maharashtrians and the righteousness of Bal Thackeray. Unfortunately, those who are too loyal tend to be burned by the party's political machinations (e.g., platform shifts to capture votes). Others may find themselves marginalised for the sake of the party's political advancement. When the party's violence and intimidation are turned against a Shiv Sainik, he begins to question the party's righteousness and the basis of his identity.

CHAPTER SEVEN: WOMEN OF THE HINDU RIGHT

Introduction

While the Mahila Aghadi is very much a branch of the Shiv Sena, reflecting its parent organisation's ideology and practices, it also belongs to the category, 'Women of the Hindu Right'. Thus far, I have presented the Hindu Right from the male perspective. This chapter will focus on women and their particular involvement in the Hindu nationalist movement. First, a theoretical framework regarding types of women will be discussed. In the second part, women of the RSS Combine will be established as the benchmark of women's involvement in Hindu nationalism. Finally, the Mahila Aghadi will be compared and contrasted with the RSS' women's wing, the Samiti. Using case study material from my fieldwork in 2000, I will explain the reasons why women choose to join Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi and Shiv Sena's relationship to its women's wing.

I. Theoretical Types of Women

In chapter five, women's sex roles and femininity were discussed in relation to men's sex roles and hegemonic masculinity. It was established that for both men and women, gender identities are influenced by relationships between the sexes as well as within them. Gerson argues that women's views of men and men's influences on women develop out of a constantly changing social context that is rearranging the opportunities and constraints faced by both sexes and altering the balance of power between them (Gerson 1987:115). Just as multiple masculinities exist for men, women are not a homogeneous group. They vary in the kinds of power they possess as well as in their orientation toward parenthood and family. Women's orientations towards work and motherhood vary according to the different kinds of relationships they have (or have not) developed with men and the types of pressures and supports they experience with men and other women. Gerson identifies two types of orientations among women that are especially relevant when looking at women from conservative milieus: domestic and non-domestic. While men play a critical role in the

development of these orientations among women due to their structural power, they can never control women completely (Gerson 1987:117).

1. Domestic versus Non-Domestic Women

While the dichotomy between domestic and non-domestic women has lessened over the last thirty years in Western countries, it remains an extremely influential paradigm. In conservative milieus, the domestic orientation remains predominant. Therefore, although these categories are increasingly becoming blurred, they still exist as ideal types that shape the discourse regarding women's public participation. Domestic orientation is defined as a commitment to a traditional heterosexual partnership in which men pursue careers. The man's career takes precedence and women relinquish advancement opportunities that may threaten personal relationships and the security of the family. Women choose a commitment to interpersonal relations over work commitments. Though they may be economically independent before marriage, women accept economic dependence on the male income afterwards. A domestic orientation for women is largely supported by the system of patriarchy. Underlying this system is a belief that women are essentially passive and emotional, traits considered suitable for child-rearing and homemaking. In contrast, men are considered naturally active and rational; therefore, they are given a prominent role in the public sphere (Kull 2001). Such assumptions, grounded in sex role theory, have ensured the subordination of women and their confinement to the domestic sphere.

According to Gerson, such an orientation results from a woman's experiences in the work place and her relationship with men around her. Ninety percent of the women oriented towards domesticity in Gerson's study encountered difficulty getting promoted – male employers refused to advance them. In addition, pressure to bear children provides an alternative occupation and 'honourable' escape from the paid labour force. Thus, when faced with frustrations from underpaid jobs, women turn towards domestic occupations for the autonomy and personal fulfilment they did not receive from their jobs (Gerson 1987:118).

By adopting a domestic orientation, a woman places her commitment to her family over her job responsibilities.

Women with non-domestic orientations who have a stronger commitment to their career than to their family may have had a different experience with men. These women have been exposed to opportunities and constraints that encouraged or forced them to make a greater commitment to their work and to alter the traditional gender relations between men and women. According to Gerson's research, two-thirds of women with a non-domestic orientation had experienced unstable and/or dissatisfying heterosexual partnerships (Gerson 1987:119). Often, they divorced after finding their traditional marriage oppressive or conflicted. Many remained married, but the conflict changed their perception of their choices and their definition of marital commitment. Instability in their marital relations caused women to depend less on their husbands. These women increased their self-reliance through work or by postponing family commitments.

The move away from domesticity also occurs when men's earnings do not meet the family's perceived need. Women are forced to become employed and earn an income for the entire family. Their increased commitment towards paid employment results in ambivalence towards parenting and a decreased dependence on men. In this case, women lack male economic and social support to maintain a domestic orientation. Yet women can also experience positive support from men (and women) at work, resulting in opportunities for upward mobility. Thus, contrasting experiences at work and at home, and different relations with men, influence a woman's choice between domestic and non-domestic orientations. For many women, choosing a non-domestic orientation has meant choosing their career over their family, despite believing that their children would suffer from their choice. They were unable to envision a sexual division of parenting and had accepted the idea that men could have both careers and children, but women could not (Gerson 1987:122).

Positive and negative experiences with men at the workplace and at home are not the only factors influencing women's increasing turn towards a non-domestic orientation. Changing gender relations have also eroded the structural supports (or pressures) for female domesticity and male dominance. The decline of patriarchy has changed the role men play in women's lives, reducing their influence. The increasing frequency and social acceptance of divorce and separation has reduced the stability of marriage. This allows for greater independence from male dominance within traditional marriages. Also, fewer women depend on men for lifetime economic and emotional support. As mentioned earlier with regards to changes to hegemonic masculinity, the increasing difficulty of supporting an entire family on a single income by a male breadwinner is forcing women into the labour force. By bringing home an income upon which the whole family depends, these women are increasing their economic and social power in their personal relationships. These independent earnings have not only improved women's leverage in negotiations with their male partners, but have given them the means to leave oppressive relationships.

These structural changes in gender relations provide women with new opportunities and sources of power, but also create new insecurities and problems. Changes in women's own attitudes and support from their male partners have allowed work-committed women to also become mothers. With increasing gender equality at work and in parenthood, women no longer believe they need to choose either a career or a family. Thus, changing relations between men and women have created new opportunities for co-operation and conflict, resulting in new conditions for women's choices, which in turn further change gender relations.

2. Women in Male-Dominated Environments

While women have gained access to male-dominated environments, they are not always fully accepted or treated with respect. In order to be accepted in a male-dominated group, a woman must accept patterns of male bonding and decipher male behaviour patterns.

Many work-committed women adopt characteristics considered desirable in men, but corrupting to women. While working women may be accepted by male colleagues, they are often criticised by domestic women who claim they are "trying to be like men" (Fine 1987:131). According to Fine, this is the cost women must accept to be "one of the boys". In his research, Fine found little hostility among male work colleagues towards women per se; difficulties arose because women did not share men's informal work values. A sole woman threatened the 'club' atmosphere of all-male groups (Fine 1987:132). In order to be accepted in a 'male world', women need to overcome certain obstacles: 1) obscene language and offensive humour 2) sexual talk directed at women 3) participation in informal work settings (Fine 1987:132; Kimmel 1987:18). Due to off-colour humour, women often avoid settings in which such comments occur (i.e., lunches, after-work drinks). Yet it is in such settings that real work is accomplished and a sense of community is built. By not participating in such bonding experiences, women miss networking opportunities that affect their upward mobility.

Women must also decipher and adapt to cultural traditions and behaviour of male-dominated workplaces in order to succeed in them. Often women are perceived as unable to do everything men can, and are therefore not considered full members of the community. This is particularly the case with jobs that involve danger or violence (e.g., police force). Male police officers may believe women should not be on the streets and will not assign them to dangerous situations. Others claim they must protect their female officers in the street and put themselves at risk. To be regarded as 'real' police officers, women must demonstrate their acceptance of informal structures of the male occupation by roughing up suspects (Fine 1987:143). Since the informal rules and objectives of the occupation are slow to change, women who wish to be successful must play by the rules and adopt a male orientation – whether it is desirable or not.

The following two sections examine women of the RSS Combine and the Mahila Aghadi and their relationships with their male-dominated parent organisations. Due to their

conservative values, most of these women have a domestic orientation that is ideologically supported by the Hindu Right, but challenged by their real socio-economic circumstances and personal ambitions. I will examine how these women's wings negotiate their political participation with the patriarchal male leadership of their respective organisations.

II. Women of the RSS "Combine"¹

For Indian women, liberation means liberation from atrocities. It doesn't mean that women should be relieved of their duties as wives and mothers. We want to encourage our members not to think in terms of individual rights but in terms of responsibility to the nation – Mohini Garg, the All-India secretary of the BJP's Mahila Morcha (Basu 1993b:33).

With the exception of Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi, most Hindu Right women's groups in India fall under the umbrella of the RSS "Combine". The Samiti, Mahila Morcha and Durga Vahinis are respectively the women's wings of the RSS, BJP and VHP. While each of these women's wings reflect the purpose of their respective parent organisation, they all fall under the ideological leadership of the RSS. The Samiti trains the leaders of the BJP's politically active Mahila Morcha and the VHP's martial-arts-focused Durga Vahinis (Setalvad 1995:18). Rather than promoting the rights and interests of women, the Samiti's prime function has been to organise women to support the RSS's Hindutva campaign (Basu 1993b:4). The Samiti, formally known as Rashtra Sevika Samiti (National Women's Volunteer Organisation), was established in 1936 by Lakshmibai Kelkar, the mother of a Maharashtrian RSS *swayamsevak* (member of the RSS). Though initially unwilling to allow women membership, the founder of the RSS, Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, eventually gave his consent for the establishment of a separate women's wing. By making the Samiti a separate organisation, the RSS could include women without fully incorporating them as equal members and without challenging its patriarchal values. This exclusion of women from the RSS proper, which continues today, reflects the RSS' fundamentally patriarchal and

¹ Part II was presented in my MPhil thesis in Development Studies, "Empowering Women of the Hindu Right: A Case Study of Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi," April 2001.

male chauvinistic culture, which threatens to limit the empowerment of women in the Samiti.

In this section the empowerment of the women of the Samiti will be examined in light of: 1) the RSS's patriarchal structure 2) Hindutva's role in promoting women's agency 3) the accommodation of women through the RSS/Samiti's familial structure. The assessment will be based on interviews of women of the RSS Combine, on secondary sources and a study conducted by Kamini Karlekar in August 2000 that assessed the agency exercised by members of the Samiti.

1. Residing within the RSS

The RSS' Patriarchal Bargain

When the Samiti was first formed, women were to stay out of the nationalist movement and away from women's organisations that were debating and agitating over issues of gender justice and equal rights (Sarkar 1993:18). While the RSS was politically aware and publicly active, the Samiti was meant to bolster the family and women's domestic roles. This division of labour reflects the traditional patriarchal view of the public or outside world as the man's domain and the domestic sphere as the woman's. Often growing up within the RSS, *sevikas* (members of the Samiti) are brought up to accept that a married woman's place is with her family, which is her first priority. Within the RSS, the roles of mother and housewife are glorified; they are depicted as the saviours of Hindu culture. According to M.S. Golwalkar, the supreme ideologue of the RSS, women promote the goals of the RSS predominantly as mothers who rear children within the RSS framework of *sanskars*, a combination of family ritual and unquestioning deference toward family elders and RSS leaders (Sarkar 1993:18). Internalising the RSS' patriarchal bargain in which mothers stay at home and sons are valued more than daughters, Malathi, a senior Samiti leader in Delhi's northern zone states:

Mothers should stay at home and bring up their son/sons in their lap. They must teach their children to respect their mother, Hindu religion, and encourage them to work towards the attainment of a true Hindu nation by abiding by tradition. If a mother does not stay at home

and supervise the upbringing of her children, they could learn all the wrong lessons and not understand our way of life (Karlekar 2000:27).

Encouraged to stay at home, RSS mothers are expected to raise their 'sons' to realise the Hindu nation. Thus, the RSS fundamentally regards women of the Samiti as having a supportive role as cultural receptacles and vehicles of Hindutva.

The RSS' Structural Limits

Over the last two decades, *sevikas* have been given greater opportunities to become more active members. The widespread entry of women's issues into Indian political discourse has compelled the RSS to feature its women in more visible and leading positions. Most notably, Uma Bharati, a *sanayasin* (ascetic) and BJP member of Parliament, and Vijayraje Scindia, a BJP member of Parliament, have prominently represented the RSS Combine and its values of Hindutva (Sarkar 1993:17). The BJP's political aspirations also require that they appeal to women voters, which entails presenting the party as a champion of women's rights. At a women's gathering convened by the BJP in 1991, the male leadership acknowledged women's suffering and the importance of day care and implementation of equal pay for women.

Yet the absence of women from the RSS proper undermines the BJP's apparent public support for women's equality and tempers the importance of female leaders like Bharati and Scindia. Participation of women in the highest decision-making bodies of the RSS Combine is impossible, since that capacity is reserved for members of the all-male RSS. Thus, despite achieving prominence within the BJP or VHP, women's exclusion from the RSS means they can never attain real power or responsibility in the Combine overall. This suggests that attitudes of male dominance embedded within the RSS's structure limits the extent of women's empowerment within RSS Combine organisations.

2. Empowerment through the Samiti

While the autonomous women's movement in India teaches women to exercise agency by questioning and opposing tradition and the patriarchal bargain, the Samiti's emphasis on

motherhood means that women can assume 'activist' roles without violating their traditional Hindu identities as wives and mothers. Through the promotion of Hindutva, *sevikas* are able to exercise agency based on their collective Hindu identity. Despite the RSS' structural limitations on women, participation in Samiti activities further enable *sevikas* to attain a degree of empowerment within the RSS's patriarchal constraints.

Empowerment through Hindutva

Evoking a sense of respectability, Hindutva enables the process of empowerment by providing a legitimate reason for women from conservative milieus to participate in public activities. Deeming the Samiti a religious organisation, families often support the decision of their women to join. For Neelima, a 60-year-old *sevika*,

The RSS, with its emphasis on traditional Hindu values and the family, appealed to me greatly and so I decided to join. It was also an easy organisation to join because it was seen as a religious, family-oriented organisation and therefore fit in well with my husband's family and their ideological beliefs (Karlekar 2000:25).

Families feel comfortable that their female relatives are joining an organisation that will not challenge their authority or undermine their values. Women also feel they need not rebel against their families in order to participate in the public domain. The BJP's Mahila Morcha also uses religious and cultural functions (e.g., *Diwali*) to initially bring women together and then promote its ideology (Setalvad 1995:241). Once gathered, the women discuss their problems and build social networks with women outside their families. Stepping outside the domestic sphere and participating in public activities is an essential and often difficult first step towards empowerment. By promoting Hindutva, the Samiti facilitates this critical step for women from conservative Hindu families.

Hindutva also enables the process of empowerment by legitimising women's agency. By appealing to self-sacrifice for the sake of the Hindu nation, Samiti members are allowed to step out of their expected domestic roles with the approval of their community (Bacchetta 1993:46). As Kamlabehn, an upper caste, middle class *sevika* explains,

People think a woman alone on a train is a prostitute. Earlier women from our background could not travel alone, but I am doing this for our nation. This is how the Samiti will change our country (Bacchetta 1993:46).

The cause of the nation justifies Kamlabehn's defiance of social norms and in turn enhances her mobility. According to Bacchetta and Basu (1993: 4), women of the Hindu Right interpret and use Hindutva in ways that enable them to achieve greater freedom for themselves. Under the banner of Hindutva, Uma Bharati has been able to pursue her ambitions and avoid typical domestic roles (Basu 1993b:31). Creating an aura of religious devotion through her saffron robes and short haircut as a celibate *sanyasin*, Bharati has attained political prominence as an MLA in the BJP. Due to her religious devotion to the Hindu nation, her lifestyle as an unmarried politician is accepted by the community (Basu 1993b:36). Thus, by propagating the RSS' Hindutva ideology, women are able to assume roles as activists without forgoing respect in the community.

Though Hindutva has facilitated the empowerment of the women of the RSS Combine, it has done this by disempowering Muslims. The basic tenets of Hindutva involve attaining 'power over' Muslims by excluding them from the Hindu nation. According to the RSS, Muslims are to be tolerated at best, at worst, they must either assimilate or die (Basu 1993b:32; Bacchetta 1993:39). The spectre of the lustful Muslim man is demonised and posed as a threat to the Hindu woman who must protect herself, and in turn, to the Hindu nation. *Sevikas* are trained in martial arts to protect themselves from Muslim attacks and strengthen their bodies to produce Hindu men who will protect the community. As a result, violence against Muslims also serves as a potential means by which women of the RSS Combine have become empowered. Through the use of violence, the women of the RSS wish to depict themselves as powerful agents rather than passive victims (Basu 1993b:26). Advocating and inciting violence against Muslims, women of the RSS justify their position as self-defence or defence of the Hindu nation. This is reflected in Kamlabehn's invective against Muslims with regards to the 1986 riots in Ahmedabad:

Look at what they have done to our people. They deserve to die. They should all be killed. They spill our blood. They rape our women. Let their blood be spilled, the bloody bastards (Bacchetta 1993:50).

While violence is most often expressed verbally by the women of the RSS, it is also manifested physically in public demonstrations and attacks against Muslims during riots (Sarkar 1993). Evidence suggests that *sevikas* were complicit in brutalities against Muslim women such as gang rapes and the tearing open of a pregnant woman's womb in Bhopal and Surat in December 1992 and January 1993 (Sarkar 1993:17). Such violence which brutally disempowers Muslim women not only undermines the validity of empowerment potentially derived from it, but also calls into question whether women's interests in general are served by Hindutva as an ideology which differentiates women of minority communities and advocates violence against them (Basu 1993b:26).

Participation in Samiti Activities

Through intricate neighbourhood networks centred on the family, the Samiti provides women with an ideal opportunity for controlled and acceptable activism. Apart from their duties as mothers, *sevikas* are encouraged to build contact with women in their neighbourhoods to instil RSS ideals among them. Mothers and children of the community are encouraged to visit the *shakhas* and participate in their activities. Within the community, *sevikas* provide an important source of strength and support.

Visiting women in their neighbourhood, Samiti members help housewives in their daily tasks as well as with problems that might arise. According to the *sevika* Neelima, "We always look after each other, support each other. Sometimes I feel that the Samiti does more for me than my own family..." (Karlekar 2000:25). Like an extended family, Samiti members share burdens and provide assistance in times of distress or crisis. Women will cook for one another when they are ill, gather funds if there is a family emergency, and provide support during weddings and funerals. The Samiti organises abortions and helps re-settle the girls. The efficiency of their neighbourhood network enables *sevikas* to often provide the fastest response in difficult times. Maintaining and protecting the stability of the community, the Samiti provides its members with a reliable system of social security.

From this extended family which the Samiti provides, *sevikas* are able to derive a sense of collective empowerment which translates into personal empowerment. As Neelima explains,

I learnt to stand on my own two feet, have confidence in myself and handle many different situations. I have to admit that I was very nervous in the beginning, but I received so much encouragement and support from Sangh and Samiti members wherever I went, that I soon felt capable to deal with any situation. I felt that as long as I had the umbrella of the Samiti to turn to and Samiti families for support, I would never be in need for anything (Karlekar 2000:25).

Drawing strength from the support and protection the Samiti provides, women gain self-confidence. The collective empowerment Neelima derived from belonging to the Samiti enabled her to experience a sense of 'power within' which fuelled her personal empowerment.

Participation in Samiti activities also serves to cultivate personal empowerment for *sevikas*. Radha, a *sevika* of forty years, joined the Samiti to raise her social consciousness and become politically active. According to Radha,

I was a housewife with three children and my life revolved around my family. My husband was a *swayamsevak* with the RSS and through him I was aware of the organisation's activities. I also wanted to participate in their struggle (protection of the Hindu community and its traditions) and learn more about the world, and therefore I decided to join the Samiti (Karlekar 2000:24).

Engagement in activism through the Samiti has enabled Radha to "learn about my country, its needs and the needs of the community" (Karlekar 2000:24). Through the Samiti, women are often thrust into the public arena and politics for the first time. Through *prashikshan shibirs* (training camps), the Samiti systematically trains and educates its members on legal, educational and health issues, raising awareness of their social position and placing problems within a wider context, as well as, suggesting possible solutions. The process of learning and interacting with other women enables them to gain confidence to speak in public and participate in politics. As a result, participation in the Samiti has enabled women to move from simply meeting their family's immediate needs to strengthening their community. Through the Samiti's extended family structure and participation in Samiti activities, women gain a sense of collective empowerment that develops into a personal empowerment that can be used for collective social change.

3. Contained Accommodation or Empowerment?

While the extended family of the Samiti can be empowering, the collective empowerment it offers is at best contained, and at worst may be oppressive and disempowering to individuals. As Yuval-Davies (1994) warns, organisations involving specific 'identity politics' which homogenise social groups can deny internal power differences or conflicts of interest. Since collective empowerment is largely derived from sharing the common Hindutva cause, the Samiti encourages conformity to its views. Disagreement in this situation of collective empowerment may result in the personal disempowerment of individuals.

Containment through the Collective

The prevailing conservative domestic values of the Samiti often result in the oppression of individual women for the sake of the family. For example, reverence for parental consent and discipline as the ultimate authority means the Samiti does not encourage women to go against the wishes of their parents. So the Samiti will only encourage educational and career aspirations if a girl's parents sanction them. Parental permission in marriage arrangements is emphasised, while self-choice is discouraged. In cases of marital conflict or domestic violence, saving the marriage is the first priority, not the welfare or interests of the wife (Sarkar 1998). As a result, the Samiti advises the battered wife to accept her lot. Seeking divorce or legal help is discouraged, while protest is silenced through persuasion and invocations of legendary Hindu wives who overcame their persecution (Sarkar 1998). In these situations, individual women must sacrifice their personal empowerment for the patriarchal and familial ideology of the collective from which their empowerment was originally derived. In this way, the Samiti provides women with a contained empowerment that potentially results in individual oppression.

A recent emphasis on conservative domesticity in the Samiti threatens to contain women's empowerment further by returning women to a more rigidly defined homemaking

role that reinforces the RSS's patriarchal ideology. According to Malathi, a senior leader in the Samiti,

The mother's first responsibility thus has to be to her family. She is to go out of the home in search of employment only in times of severe economic hardship. In fact, why does she need to be involved in anything outside of the Samiti – in the Samiti we understand the need of some women to be involved in activities outside of the home as well – and we provide for their needs. If a mother wants a career, she can always train to be a teacher in our RSS schools, or be a counsellor within the community. We cover all needs... (Karlekar 2000:18).

This reactionary position reinforces women's primary roles as mothers and wives as well as their place in the domestic sphere. Engagement with the public domain that is not facilitated by the Samiti is discouraged, since a woman's ambitions can be fulfilled through the extended family of the Samiti and RSS Combine. If a *sevika* wants a career, she can become a teacher in RSS schools. Yet, in 'covering all needs', the extended family of the Samiti attempts to contain a woman's activities and, by extension, her empowerment.

Containment by Class/Caste

The Samiti seeks to deepen the conformist character of its constituency by diverting attention away from concerns about victims of social oppression (Sarkar 1993:19). Women's activities are generally confined to homogenous class-caste clusters. Most RSS activity is restricted to the upper caste, middle class, urban service and trading community (Sarkar 1998). In addition, the notion that the interests of women and the community are inseparably linked obscures issues of importance to women as opposed to men, and denies the reality of inequality among women. Tied to family interests and ideology, the Samiti confines itself to solving domestic and practical problems, rather than larger ideological and strategic problems of women. Though meeting practical needs can lead to addressing strategic needs, the main concern remains with the former. According to Sarkar, the Samiti lacks genuine concern for women's issues and selectively uses women's campaigns to further Hindutva's communal cause (Setalvad 1995:243). The RSS women's wings have not organised around issues like rape, female infanticide, dowry death or the real violence women confront daily (Basu 1993b:33). Thus, though participation in the Samiti may

contribute to an individual woman's empowerment, it does not necessarily contribute to women's overall emancipation.

Questioning the Patriarchal Bargain

The strong identity of the RSS, based on patriarchy and Hindutva, can make the collective empowerment offered by the Samiti oppressive and disempowering to individuals who may dissent. Through its extended family network, the Samiti attempts to accommodate those who are not satisfied with the gender roles of mother and wife as defined by the RSS. This accommodation within the Samiti's extended family effectively contains this dissent within the organisation as well as the empowerment of its members. This raises the question to what extent these women are experiencing real empowerment if their interaction with the public domain is contained within the RSS Combine's extended family. According to Sarkar, gender power grows from a sense of solidarity to being a force of its own only through intervention, contestation and exercise of and struggle over choices. A woman acquires a feminist consciousness through bitter conflicts and problems of choices, particularly within herself (Sarkar 1993:24). By containing *sevikas'* activism and dissent within its extended family network, the Samiti apparently prevents women from contesting and struggling over choices. Does this mean that despite women's commitment and claims to increased confidence in themselves and their ability to affect change, that they are in fact not empowered?

In the literature on women of the Hindu Right, there have been some indicators that individual women in the RSS Combine are recognising the limitations of the RSS's patriarchal bargain. Individuals like *sevika* Vidushi oppose the position of Scindia by stridently attacking customs of widow immolation and refusing to accept *sati* as voluntary. Even the Samiti journal *Jagruti* (Awakening) applauds the global women's movement and the demand for the extension of property, legal and political rights for women (Sarkar 1993:21). Therefore, despite the limitations of the RSS's patriarchal bargain on women's empowerment, the women of the RSS Combine appear to be experiencing a growing sense

of collective empowerment, which potentially translates into personal empowerment for individual women. Whether this personal empowerment is 'false' or genuine depends largely on the individual woman and how she processes it (i.e., questions and evaluates it or blindly accepts it) and incorporates it into her life. Literature on women of the Hindu Right is limited in its provision of individual women's experiences in the RSS, therefore one cannot properly evaluate individual *sevika's* empowerment through secondary sources. My case study on the women of the Shiv Sena will enable me to evaluate empowerment through the Mahila Aghadi for its general membership as well as for specific individuals, by examining their actions and opinions related to their involvement in Shiv Sena.

III. Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi²

Though Shiv Sena only created its women's wing, the Mahila Aghadi, in 1985, women have been involved in Shiv Sena since its inception. The majority of the women who participated in Shiv Sena protests and activities were the sisters and wives of Shiv Sainiks. Nonetheless, a handful of women joined as young students or corporate employees to fight for the rights of the 'sons of the soil'. Since the creation of the Mahila Aghadi, Shiv Sena has actively recruited women into its originally male-dominated ranks. Unlike the Samiti, the Mahila is not independent of its parent organisation: it is the women's branch of the Shiv Sena, responsible for addressing issues such as dowry deaths, domestic abuse and the plight of widows. From 1985 to 2001, the Mahila Aghadi was led by a central *pramukh*. As of 2001, the Mahila Aghadi has been divided into four regional areas, each led by a different woman leader. These female leaders are all subordinate to Bal Thackeray and do not belong to the executive branch of Shiv Sena. This may change when Bal Thackeray's son Udhav replaces his father as 'Supremo'. Informally, Dr. Neelam Gorhe³, Mahila Aghadi's Western

² Part III was presented in my MPhil thesis in Development Studies, "Empowering Women of the Hindu Right: A Case Study of Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi," April 2001.

³ Rumours abound regarding the nature of Dr. Gorhe's relationship with Udhav Thackeray. This is common within the Sena whenever a woman becomes a close associate with the top leadership and is potentially a tactic to undermine women's influence in the Sena.

Regional Head, has great influence over Udhav Thackeray, who began controlling Shiv Sena operations in 2001.⁴

Consisting of women from the lower middle classes and slums, the Mahila Aghadi has two faces; the face of the traditional housewife and the face of the protesting slum dweller. In Shiv Sena's older middle-class strongholds, the Mahila Aghadi plays a supportive role for the party by canvassing for votes during elections, arranging *shibirs*, providing social services, and arranging separate activities for women and children during religious festivals. In the *chawls* and slum areas, the women's wing devises income-generating activities and demands the provision of day care to enable women to take full-time employment (Hansen 2001:80). These women come together during protests to support Shiv Sena's general efforts. The Mahila Aghadi is especially effective for its 'nuisance-value' in protests against employers, government officials, and landlords. The Mahila Aghadi derives its efficacy from its association with Shiv Sena, but being a part of Shiv Sena also has its costs. Drawing on my case study of the Opera House district from 2000⁵, this final section explains Shiv Sena's attraction to women and its practical and ideological relations with the Mahila Aghadi, which can be considered at once empowering and oppressive.

1. Joining the Mahila Aghadi

Civic Services and Practical Needs

Supposing a commodity like sugar has gone underground. Shiv Sena will just go to the shopkeepers to make it available. That attracts the people. Even if they are non-Maharashtrian. Everyone needs water, everyone needs sugar, everyone needs an education – Subash Desai, Shiv Sena spokesman (Interview July 21, 2000)

Overall, women of the Opera House district are attracted to Shiv Sena for the civic services it provides rather than for its Hindutva program. When asked why they joined the Mahila Aghadi, most women cited their desire to perform 'social work', the inspiration of

⁴ While Bal Thackeray remains the party's official leader, Udhav effectively runs the organisation due to his father's failing health. In 2002, Shiv Sena was undergoing a transition of power in which Sainiks' blind loyalty was being transferred to Udhav Thackeray. In shakhas, Udhav's photo was displayed next to his father's and Sainiks began referring to him respectfully as 'Udhavji'. This was not the case in 2000 when Bal Thackeray was still considering having his nephew, Raj Thackeray, succeed him.

⁵ Material from focus groups in Girgaum, Khetwadi, Mumbai Central and Gamdevi shakhas as well as the Opera House District meeting of leaders held in the Chirabazar shakha.

'Balasaheb', and the ability of the Sena to meet their practical needs (e.g., provision of water, childcare, and employment) and provide 'justice' to women with regards to domestic violence and divorce maintenance. Hindutva was generally mentioned as a secondary reason and associated with their support for the 'sons of the soil' ideology. Mumbai's weak municipal corporation and courts are generally slow in meeting these civic needs or providing timely justice. Meeting these civic needs has enabled the Sena to attract new members, as the women at an Opera House meeting explain:

The municipality doesn't take care of problems like water, drainage, and garbage. Those problems come to us. Women come from work and take care of the children. They have problems which we solve quickly. We take care of these problems and so they join – that's how Shiv Sena grows (Opera House meeting, July 27, 2000).

Court cases may also take years to settle, with cases involving women often never resolved (Setalvad, 1995:238). In contrast, the Sena offers immediate justice to victims. According to Manohar Joshi, a top leader in the Sena who was previously a Member of Parliament,

When someone teases a woman or tries to play mischief with her, if there is a Sena boy or a Sena woman nearby she will immediately hit him on the spot. In other cases, people go to the station, then the police will come after two days to make an enquiry. That is the difference. If they want action, this party is known as the action-oriented party (Joshi interview, August 28, 2000).

Thus, the perception that the Sena solves practical problems expediently enhances its appeal to women. Although the Sena's strategy of meeting women's practical needs seems to obfuscate their identities as women and awareness of women's issues such as equality in society, this is not necessarily the case.

Living within the constraints of the patriarchal bargain and their socio-economic circumstances, lower-income housewives do not identify themselves primarily as women, but in terms of their roles within the family – as mothers and wives. Therefore, they identify "women's problems" as those problems that affect their household roles and family. As a result, many women cited municipal problems, unemployment, bribes for school entrance and high prices as women's problems. For the predominantly lower class/caste housewives of Khetwadi *shakha* in South Mumbai, the availability and accessibility of water is considered the primary problem for women.

Water...there is always too little water. We have no other problem but water. They should increase the water supply by another half hour. Otherwise, in the 20 minutes we now have, it is difficult to do everything (Khetwadi shakha meeting, August 8, 2000).

Water is considered the most important "woman's problem" because water supply has the greatest impact on a woman's time. In the *chawls* of Mumbai, housewives must collect water daily to perform their tasks of cooking and cleaning. Previously, the women of Khetwadi *shakha* had to walk several blocks to collect their daily water supply. A housewife from Khetwadi *shakha* explains the importance of meeting this practical need,

So all the problems of the house are mine, such as getting water. Before, doing housework was difficult because of the water problems. Now that is solved, so I can leave the house and do things I enjoy. So why do we come to Shiv Sena? To get our problems solved (Khetwadi shakha meeting, August 8, 2000).

The short supply of water impedes their housework and thus limits their participation in activities outside the house. Belonging to a lower income bracket, these women cannot afford to hire servants to wash their clothes and pots; they must perform these time-consuming daily tasks themselves, in addition to caring for their children. The free time that easy access to water provides women can be used towards their self-development (e.g., beauty parlour courses, knitting classes) or to enhance the household income. As Meena Kamble, *Vibagh Pramukh* of South Mumbai explains,

Women have a double duty. They work in the home and need to earn some money for the family. If women have time after finishing their housework, we can teach them some vocation, so they can earn a livelihood and stand on their feet and become independent (Kamble interview, July 27, 2000).

Thus, members also expect the Mahila Aghadi to organise classes where they can learn new skills or arrange income-generating schemes that allow them to work (e.g., embroidery, sewing) in their free time. Surekha Ubale, *Mahila Shakha Pramukh* of Khetwadi, arranged lace cutting work for the women in her *shakha*. This extra income makes these women less economically dependent on their husbands, enhancing their leverage within the household.

The lower caste/class young housewives of Khetwadi *shakha* who only joined in the last year underscore the importance of meeting practical needs of lower-income women as the first step towards empowerment. Once their practical problems are solved, they can begin to earn an income and leave the house regularly. This effectively raises their

awareness regarding broader issues affecting women. Joining the Mahila Aghadi, members become exposed to women's problems like domestic violence and dowry deaths. This raised consciousness regarding injustices to women causes them to identify themselves as more than just housewives, but also as 'women' and as 'activists'. This difference is reflected in the more senior members who, in the Opera House meeting, expressed their commitment to "fight against injustices to women." According to Meena Kamble,

I wasn't doing any work for any political party before this. I was a housewife. Now I am a social worker. The work I'm doing here gives me great satisfaction. I was born and raised in this society and so I want to do something for society. That is why I'm doing this through Mahila Aghadi, to get justice for outrages against women (Kamble interview, July 27, 2000).

Meena Kamble's identity is no longer restricted to the household as a housewife. She is now a 'social worker' doing work for society and for women. Thus, though most lower and middle class housewives initially join the Mahila Aghadi in order to meet their practical household needs, rather than to address feminist issues, participation raises their consciousness regarding the conditions of women in Indian society.

Hindutva and the Mahila Aghadi

For members of the Mahila Aghadi in the Opera House district, the promotion of Hindutva was generally a secondary reason for joining. They regard Hindutva as a matter of culture or patriotism rather than the basis of communalism. The slogan of the 'sons of the soil movement', 'Maharashtra for Maharashtrians' has become 'Hindustan for Hindus'. As a member of the Khetwadi *shakha* states,

Our Hindustan should be only for Hindu people, that's what we want. The people who come from outside, they progress more than Marathi people. They go ahead of Hindu people and Marathi people. In our India, in our Bharat, Hindus should be prominent, should have the upper hand (Khetwadi shakha meeting, July 8, 2000).

In this statement, 'Marathi people' is interchangeable with 'Hindus'. Following the logic of the 'sons of the soil' theory, she argues that natives deserve the best positions. While clearly defining 'us', she neglects to define the 'outsiders'. Defining 'us' as a matter of commitment to India, and construing Hindutva as an expression of patriotism, the women at the Opera House meeting regard 'outsiders' as those who are unpatriotic.

Those who live in India are Hindus, even if they are Muslim. Those who recognise India as Hindu have Hindutva. Those who recognise Pakistan have no Hindutva. Those living in India should be proud of India (Opera House meeting, July 27, 2000).

By equating being Hindu with being Indian and regarding 'recognition' of Pakistan as unpatriotic, the Mahila Aghadi attempts to justify its Hindu chauvinism.

While the Mahila Aghadi publicly promotes this patriotic Hindutva, individual members do not seem to harbour animosity towards either Muslims or non-Maharashtrians. Though Meena Kulkarni, Mahila Aghadi's second president, believes in promoting Marathi interests in Maharashtra, she does not personally believe in discrimination. Discussing her reasons for joining the Sena, Kulkarni explains,

So I was feeling that as a Maharashtrian I should do something here [in Mumbai]. Otherwise, I don't believe that you are Maharashtrian or Gujarati or you are this way or that way. It is not in our hands. I believe that God has given the birth to us. We don't know in which religion or what way we have to take the birth (Kulkarni interview, July 28, 2000).

The personal lives of Nita Kanade, a Mumbai Central *shakha* member, and Anuradha Navalkar, a *gata pramukh* (row leader) in Girgaum *shakha*, also reflect tolerance and acceptance of other religions. Nita Kanade is a Sindhi whose parents fled from Pakistan at the time of Partition. Though she is ostensibly Hindu, Nita claims to espouse all religions and believes that God is one. The mixture of Christian, Muslim and Hindu iconography in her home reflects her syncretism. In her living room, a picture of a mosque hangs above her shrine of Hindu gods, while a cross and statue of the Virgin Mary are prominently displayed in her bedroom. Nita goes to temples, mosques and churches to pray. Anuradha Navalkar's personal history also demonstrates her indifference towards religious, regional and caste distinctions. Born into a Hindu Brahmin family, Anuradha married a man from a different caste, for which her family disowned her. Though a committed member of the Sena, she has allowed her daughter to marry into a Gujarati Jain family. Her daughter has accepted her husband's culture and religious practices though she is a Maharashtrian Hindu. Thus, the personal lives of Nita and Anuradha demonstrate that though the Mahila Aghadi promotes Hindu nationalism, its members interpret Hindutva in their own way and are able to separate their promotion of the interests of Hindus and Maharashtrians from their personal beliefs.

Within the Mahila Aghadi, Hindutva acts primarily as a source of pride based on a unified cultural identity. Like the Samiti, the Mahila Aghadi uses Hindu rituals and ceremonies such as *haldi kumkum*⁶ as a means of gathering women and reinforcing an identity of Marathi Hindu womanhood. These Hindu ceremonies foster a sense of cultural pride which contribute to the empowerment process of Mahila Aghadi members. According to Bal Thackeray,

Everything modern has to be accepted, but our age-old values too have to be taken, entire and whole. Girls these days do not wear *kumkum* due to the fancy for fashions of the day. But the *kumkum* is a beautiful article of personal decoration and also a mark of good fortune and auspiciousness. Wearing it does not in any way indicate illiteracy or backwardness (Speech delivered at convention of Mahila Aghadi on June 6, 1994)

Addressing the Mahila Aghadi's mostly lower middle class membership of housewives who generally wear *saris* and do not speak English, Thackeray tells them they need not discard their cultural values and deny their Hindu identity to become modern. The Sena's Hindutva program encourages them to be proud of who they are and assert themselves as Hindu women.

2. Collective Empowerment through the Mahila Aghadi

Though most women join Shiv Sena as a means of meeting their practical needs, they appear to have also gained new confidence in themselves as women. As one member from Girgaum *shakha* proclaimed, "After joining Shiv Sena, I feel there is nothing difficult for women to accomplish. Nothing is impossible to do." This confidence, resulting from a self-perception that they are able and entitled to act, is one indicator of the empowerment process these women are experiencing. Throughout their empowerment process, various women have exhibited the three forms of 'power' defined as energy – 'power to', 'power with' and 'power from within' – as well as 'power over'. The empowerment experienced by the majority of women in the Mahila Aghadi is based on 'power with', strength produced through group unity, which then fosters individual women's personal empowerment.

⁶ Ceremony in which married women show their respect for each other by placing *haldi* (turmeric) and *kumkum* (red powder) on each other's forehead.

According to Kabeer (1994), this collective empowerment is derived from a sense of belonging to a group and often results from individuals working together to achieve a greater impact than each member could have alone. Collective empowerment produces a sense of group agency which catalyses an individual woman's personal empowerment, involving the development of self-confidence, individual agency as well as a sense of 'self' in society (Kabeer 1994; Rowlands 1997). This personal empowerment can be demonstrated in a woman going outside her home alone or assuming a leadership position in an organisation.

Among the women of the Mahila Aghadi, personal empowerment is evident as they proudly state,

We can go anywhere, we can talk however we want. We can speak. There is no pressure from [police] officers on us. We can go anywhere without fear (Khetwadi *shakha*)

Before joining, I was staying at home as a simple housewife. When I joined Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi, I became aware of the outside world. Then we became aware of the real factors that cause injustice to women. We learned to oppose injustice even with men at home. If he is doing injustice to her, she learns to oppose it from anybody – husband, father-in-law, son-in-law (Opera House meeting 2000).

Prior to joining the Mahila Aghadi, many women were housewives who rarely left their homes and felt intimidated by the police and government officials. The group identity they derive from Shiv Sena gives them confidence to confront injustice and assert their rights not only with government officials, but also with the men in their own household. Participation in Mahila Aghadi activities also raises their awareness regarding the larger problems faced by women, as well as a sense of self-awareness. This self-awareness entails a woman recognising injustice in her own household as well as the discovery of talents such as the ability to give speeches or organise events. This personal empowerment exhibited by women in the Mahila Aghadi results from a collective empowerment derived from the Shiv Sena's reputation and the women's participation in the Mahila Aghadi.

Shiv Sena's Reputation for Violence

The Mahila Aghadi's group identity and sense of agency in society relies greatly on the Shiv Sena's reputation for violence and its intimidating presence in Mumbai. As the Sena's women's wing, the Mahila Aghadi does not have a separate reputation or identity from its

parent organisation. It is the name Shiv Sena that carries weight in Mumbai. As a result, many women in the Mahila Aghadi cite support from the Shiv Sena as the reason "...why we are respected and people treat us with honour" (Opera House meeting 2001). As a lower caste owner of a beauty parlour explains,

We got status after joining Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi. Formerly, though we have money, we did not get respect. Before, I was doing social work for others, but no one recognised me. Now, everyone is afraid of me, even ladies are afraid of me (Opera House meeting 2001).

For this beautician, money and performing social work did not improve her social status.

But, Shiv Sena's intimidating reputation and her association with it, causes people to 'respect' her, based on fear. The first President of the Mahila Aghadi, Sudha Chury, also attributes the Mahila Aghadi's efficacy to Shiv Sena's notoriety, stating,

If a husband who, say, is unwilling to pay maintenance, is brought to our *shakha* and told to pay, do you seriously think he will refuse? If we lead a *morcha* to the police station demanding the arrest of a husband and in-laws involved in a dowry death, do you think that the police will refuse us? Come on, we are part of the Shiv Sena (Setalvad 1995:238, Hansen 2001:80-81).

Publicly identifying themselves as Shiv Sainiks, these women find their demands are taken more seriously in society, by the municipality and the government. The municipal corporation addresses their problems more expediently because they belong to Shiv Sena. As a result, Mahila Aghadi members gain a sense of efficacy in society as well as confidence.

In line with the Sena's strong-arm image, the Mahila Aghadi endorses rough justice, using violence to achieve its ends (Setalvad 1995:238). Violence as a threat and as a practice is frequently used by the Mahila Aghadi in cases of domestic violence, obtaining divorce maintenance or other matters concerning women. Justifying their acts of violence as retaliation and actions of last resort, Vishakha Raut, a Sena MLA and former Mayor of Mumbai, explains:

If I abuse your father day in and day out, will you take it lying down? You will definitely hit the person...Shiv Sena is like a bee hive. Until you instigate a bee hive or throw a stone at a bee hive, they don't sting you. But if you throw a stone, the bees make your life miserable. We are those type of people (Raut interview, August 5, 2000).

With the same bravado as the male *sainiks*, Vishakha Raut unabashedly endorses the use of violence, not only as a means of self-defence, but also as part of a Shiv Sainik's character.

Though constructed with the male Shiv Sainik in mind, the representation of the Shiv Sainik as an assertive man who regains his masculinity through violence transposes almost directly onto the women of the Mahila Aghadi. Addressing the Mahila Aghadi at a Shiv Sena convention, Thackeray incites the women to 'fight':

If this government and the police inflict atrocities and wrongs, rise like a swarm of bees and ensure the government and police suffer a shocking sting...Fight for your rights... You must rise in anger against all forms of injustice.

Why did Phoolan Devi stand up in protest? She was raped by ten men. She did not sit shedding tears. She rose up in anger. Taking a gun in her hands, she caught those demons, tied them to a tree in the village and pumped bullets into them. She avenged the wrong done to her (Thackeray speech, June 5, 1994).

Using Phoolan Devi⁷ as a role model, Thackeray encourages women to use violence to demand their rights and 'avenge' wrongs done to them. In the Mahila Aghadi, the "dashing" woman is admired for her ability to speak and act assertively, and if necessary, violently. A woman becomes dashing through action and speaking out, not through ideological training. Unlike the Samiti, the Mahila Aghadi does not provide special physical training to prepare these women to 'fight against injustice'. The women of the Mahila Aghadi are simply told to come and use their fists, sticks or stones. Through the action itself, violent or otherwise the women of Mahila Aghadi are thought to gain confidence. The following example offered by women leaders in the Opera House area illustrates this point,

During Bhagwa Supta [Saffron Week], we put responsibility on every woman. This gives them an opportunity to participate and encourages them to be active. There are many women who generally don't get a chance to speak out. But when they were assigned a job and they completed it successfully, they gained confidence (Opera House meeting, July 27, 2000).

Thus, in the Mahila Aghadi as in the Shiv Sena as a whole, action rather than Hindutva has a greater transformative effect on women. Though Hindutva provides an object for the action (e.g., Saffron Week), the action in and of itself is sufficient.

Just as the Mahila Aghadi values violence and action as processes for gaining confidence, woman *sainiks* also uphold and promote the Sena's general regard for masculine characteristics. Admiring the Mahila Aghadi after its members beat her husband who had been abusing her for seven years, Nita Kanade asked the Mahila Aghadi leader how she

⁷Phoolan Devi was an infamous woman bandit who became a Member of Parliament in August 1996.

could become a member. She was told that if she wanted to be a Shiv Sainik, she would first have to stop crying and then start 'acting like a man'. It was only by being a 'man' – talking and acting violently like men – that she would no longer be afraid of them and could fight them. This command to 'act like a man' illustrates how the Sena's masculine character and value for violence and action have been internalised by the Mahila Aghadi. Addressing the Mahila Aghadi, Bal Thackeray reinforces this message that women can only be empowered by behaving like men:

If you want to be equal to men, then you have to change your nature...Our young boys sit by the side of Chandra Shekar because they have guts. You should have the same guts (Saamna, July 30 1995).

Thus, just as violence enables *sainik* men to recuperate their masculinity, it also allows *sainik* women to acquire the male characteristics valued in the Sena.

Collective Force of the Mahila Aghadi

Building on the 'power with' engendered by Shiv Sena's intimidating reputation, the collective force of the Mahila Aghadi further promotes the empowerment of its members.

According to Meena Kamble,

If you go alone, nobody can hear you. If you fight against injustice alone, nothing will happen. When you make a group of women and do things, it brings pressure. A single voice does nothing. But if it is a plural voice, then it has an effect (Kamble interview, July 27, 2000).

The strength of this collective force which members draw on is generated by the unified action of a group of women. As Vishakha Raut further explains, "A woman becomes bold because she knows that she has the support of the Mahila Aghadi behind her" (Raut interview, August 5, 2000). This support is manifested as physical protection. In cases of domestic violence, the Mahila Aghadi comes *en masse* to the woman's home to threaten her abusive husband and in-laws. In dealing with her abusive husband, Nita Kanade relies on the Mahila Aghadi's strong arm. According to Anuradha Navalkar,

Nita Kanade was having a lot of trouble with her husband. He used to beat her a lot. We went to her house and threatened him that if you give her trouble and think that she is alone, that is your mistake. Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi is behind her (Opera House meeting 2001).

With the strength of the Mahila Aghadi behind her, Nita separated from her husband and is no longer afraid of him.

Mahila Aghadi members also provide one another with emotional and practical support during difficult periods. At the Opera House meeting, one woman described the support the Mahila Aghadi provided her when her husband fell from the second floor of their building:

I don't have an older sister but Meena Kamble did more for me than what an older sister would do. Our Shiv Sena Mahila Aghadi came every day to the hospital and stayed with me even though this was a personal problem. Our Shiv Sena Mahila Aghadi, all of them stood by my side, and that is the way they work with everybody (Opera House meeting 2000).

Similar to the Samiti, the Mahila Aghadi acts like a family, providing its members a sense of belonging and security. At meetings, the women listen to each other's problems and provide advice and comfort. As a Gamdevi member explains, the Mahila Aghadi members extend this support to women in their neighbourhoods as well.

As members of Mahila Aghadi, we also do work where we live. So if anyone has difficulties they ask us and we solve their problems. Even though we don't know them, we go with them. If needed, we go with them to the police station. We don't have any fear (Opera House meeting 2000). Through this physical and emotional support, the Mahila Aghadi creates a sense of collective empowerment for its members. The confidence women gain from the Mahila Aghadi's unity enables them to "go anywhere outside and get their work done" (Opera House meeting 2000).

Participation and Problem-Solving

By attending Mahila Aghadi meetings and participating in its functions, women transform their collective empowerment into personal empowerment. Gathering together, women discuss their problems and learn how to solve them. According to a housewife in Khetwadi *shakha*,

When we come to the *shakha*, we get all new information and get introduced to one another. Otherwise, how can we meet new people? You learn the problems of people – what is where and where is what. You can learn where to find things. If you don't go to *shakha*, you won't get an opportunity to learn new things (Khetwadi *shakha* meeting 2000).

Learning new information and building social networks, members become more active in society. Jayshree Ballikar, who was a housewife when she joined and is now the Mumbai

Central *mahila shakha pramukh* and runs her own *zunkr bhakr*⁸ concession stand, exemplifies this transformation. While affiliation with the Sena enabled her to get a license for her food stall, confidence in her own abilities, which she cultivated through the Mahila Aghadi, has enabled her to start her own business.

The Mahila Aghadi also teaches members how to solve municipal problems and other matters through legal and bureaucratic channels. As Anuradha Navalkar explains,

We bring our problems and complaints to the municipality to get injustices resolved. We personally take interest in these problems and personally deal with them in the municipality and assembly. We get it worked out and if it is not done, we pursue it, push it and get the result.

Taking total responsibility, members gain confidence in their personal abilities to solve problems. The process of solving municipal and domestic problems also develops their capabilities and skills. With their neighbours approaching them with municipal problems, Mahila Aghadi members become leaders in their community. Several Mahila Aghadi members proudly noted that people in the community knew their names and come to them personally to discuss their problems. According to women at the Opera House meeting (2000), "Self-reliance and pride is awakened in every woman. Our confidence grows and we feel we are also 'somebody' in society." Learning how to handle problems through the proper channels, women of the Mahila Aghadi gain a sense of agency and an identity in society.

While the 'social work' the Mahila Aghadi performs typically entails solving municipal problems and women's problems through municipal and legal channels, 'anti-social' means such as violence and threats are also used to 'get the result'. For example, the Mahila Aghadi used threats against an employer to recover a woman's wages after legal channels failed (Setalvad 1995). They have also shut down movie theatres in protest against films they deem immoral (e.g., "Fire").⁹ This is an example of how the collective empowerment of women through the Mahila Aghadi can also result in the disempowerment of society and

⁸ Stalls selling *zunkr bhakr* (a traditional Maharashtrian meal of beans with bread) are part of a development scheme executed by the Sena government to provide 2-rupee meals for the poor. In Mumbai, these stalls also sell other types of food at market prices, since they are not subsidized.

⁹ "Fire" was a controversial film which was set in India and depicted a lesbian relationship between sisters-in-law.

individuals as the Mahila Aghadi imposes its values as a self-appointed censor and standard-bearer of morality (Yuval-Davis 1994).

3. Shiv Sena's Structural Limitations on the Mahila Aghadi

The Instrumental Role of Women in the Sena

Created over twenty years after the formation of Shiv Sena, the Mahila Aghadi occupies a marginal position within the organisation as a whole. Though women have participated in the Sena from the start, they were generally female relatives of Shiv Sainiks providing support to their brothers, fathers or husbands. While women have a more substantial and valued presence within the Sena today, it is arguable that the women's wing still plays a mere supportive role within the organisation as a whole. The visible inclusion of women has served to broaden the Sena's electoral appeal by softening its *goonda* image. Though women *sainiks* also use violence, their presence still lends the Sena some respectability. Prominently displaying the Mahila Aghadi in front of *morchas* (demonstrations), the image of women protesting gives their cause credence.

Rather than an expression of the Sena's commitment to women's issues, most male *sainiks* regard the Mahila Aghadi as a bank of bodies that they draw upon for public relations and other political purposes. According to a male Shiv Sainik from Girgaum, women often act as shields for male *sainiks*, being typically placed in the front of demonstrations to prevent the police from leading a *lathi-charge* (an attack using clubs) against them. Mahila Aghadi members slept on the road to prevent the arrest of the Sena leader Madhukar Sarpotdar who was implicated in the 1992-1993 Bombay Riots. For public relations purposes, the Mahila Aghadi was also brought to the Chhatrapati Shivaji train station to tie *rakhis* (bracelets) onto the wrists of *coolies* (baggage carriers) as part of the *rakhi bandum* ceremony, a ceremony affirming the ties between brothers and sisters. The entire ceremony was organised and led by the male leaders. The women sat in the back and were brought

forward only to be photographed tying the *rhakhis*. This example illustrates how the Mahila Aghadi is used as window dressing for the Sena's overall electoral and political purposes.

Organisational Inclusion without Integration

Pressured to include women in politics by the 33% reservation of political seats for women in Maharashtra's local governing bodies, the Sena has been compelled publicly to support women's political participation and equality. One way the Sena has done this is by creating positions for women that correspond to leadership positions within the Sena's main structure. For example, each of the Sena's 221 *shakhas* located in respective wards of Mumbai is led by a *shakha pramukh* (branch leader), who is always a man. Since 1992, every *shakha* is expected to have a *mahila shakha pramukh* (woman branch leader) as well. While the *mahila shakha pramukh* position was purportedly created to address the needs of women better, it also allows the Sena to include women within the organisation without completely integrating them. By creating this parallel leadership structure the Sena creates two separate domains for men and women. The *mahila shakha pramukh* is responsible for women's problems such as domestic violence, divorce and the plight of widows, as well as supporting the Sena's main activities. The *shakha pramukh* remains the primary leader of the *shakha*, overseeing its general business such as solving municipal problems and organising *shakha* members.

These women's positions are meant to accommodate women's aspirations for leadership positions within the Sena without threatening the male leadership. The separate leadership positions for women obviate competition for power between men and women by preventing women from entering the male domain in which the Sena's main business occurs. As a result, the *shakha pramukh* has never been a woman and probably never will be, since the position is now gendered. Thus, while women are given titles, they have no real power, since their participation in the decision-making process and advancement within the party

are limited by the Sena's organisational structure. The parallel ranking effectively marginalises the Mahila Aghadi within the Sena.

Despite the discrepancy in importance between the male and female *shakha pramukhs*' domains, the Sena leadership and membership publicly insist that the two *shakha pramukhs* hold equal status and regard. However, from my observations of the Girgaum *shakha*, power clearly resides with the *shakha pramukh* rather than with the *mahila shakha pramukh*, who is often marginalized. The former President of the Mahila Aghadi Meena Kulkarni¹⁰ corroborated my observations by admitting that male *shakha pramukhs* do not always regard their female counterparts as equals and often disregard their opinions. Regarding efforts to ensure that the *mahila shakha pramukhs* are recognised and respected, Meena Kulkarni stated,

I'm trying for that, definitely. Now they [men] are giving equal rights. And slowly, slowly...if they are not convinced, then sometimes I have to tell them she is right, and he is wrong (Kulkarni interview, July 28, 2000).

Using her influence while president of the Mahila Aghadi, she attempted to get men to recognise the authority of female *shakha pramukhs*. Yet, the inefficacy of the female *shakha pramukh* is further demonstrated by the absence of a *mahila shakha pramukh* in many *shakhas* and by the frequent filling of the position with the wife of the male *shakha pramukh* or local corporator.

4. Ideological Limitations: Shiv Sena's Patriarchal Bargain

The participation and advancement of women in the Sena are not only limited by its organisational structure, but also by the dictates of Bal Thackeray. Just as the organisational structure ostensibly reflects the equal status of women in the Sena, but actually limits their jurisdiction, Thackeray ostensibly encourages women to participate in politics and social work, but his glorification of their duties as mothers effectively limits the extent of their participation. Thackeray's views on women's reservations particularly illustrate this point.

¹⁰ Meena Kulkarni was President of the Mahila Aghadi until 2001 when the Presidency was dissolved and replaced with a system of five regional women's leaders. Neelam Gorhe became the Head of the Western Region.

Why just 33%, I favour setting aside 50% of seats for women... we're eager to give more than 33% reservation for women, but there's one condition: they've all got to be *able*. I've never opposed the entry of women into politics, but I don't accept the idea of pulling women out of their homes and throwing them rashly into the political arena. Women have to enter politics, but at the same time they also have to look after their family too. If mothers leave their children with *ayahs* (nannies), there is no one to take care of them. They must provide that (Saamna, December 8, 1996).

By claiming to support the reservation of not just 33%, but 50% of seats for women in Parliament, Thackeray ostensibly shows his support for greater representation of women in government. Yet he raises two issues with women's reservations and the participation of women in politics in general. First, he raises the issue of 'ability', suggesting that not all women representatives are capable (McDowell 1999:176). He suggests that women's reservations result in unqualified women running for office – which no doubt occurs. Yet how does Thackeray define and measure the ability to serve? Secondly, he suggests that a woman's first priority is her family and that she should first take care of her children before entering politics. These objections will be explored further to illustrate how the prevalent patriarchal and male chauvinistic attitudes among male *sainiks* limit women's political participation in the Sena.

Although women of the Sena are encouraged to 'act like men', they are not free from the patriarchal bargain that the Sena firmly endorses. In my interview with Manohar Joshi, a former Shiv Sena Minister in the Union government, he presented the patriarchal bargain as an integral and valuable aspect of middle class Hindu culture:

In my mind, I always find more freedom is required for Muslim women than Hindu women. If you want to know my opinion about the culture in the country, many women are very happy with the Indian culture. Indian culture is about looking after the family. The men will go and get money from outside. So the women never feel that there is something else [outside the home]. They feel this is the duty I must look after (Joshi interview, August 28, 2000).

Joshi defines the patriarchal bargain as men going 'outside' to provide for his family and women in turn taking care of the family and housework. He asserts that most women find fulfilment and happiness in this arrangement and does not see its drawbacks.

While Joshi endorses the patriarchal bargain based on his belief that women are happy within it, Thackeray presents the patriarchal bargain as the basis of a good family and a

strong society. According to Thackeray, a woman has a duty to her family and children which is fundamental to Hindu *sanskar*.¹¹

Culture is a different thing. *Sanskar* is *sanskar*. The mother should feel proud that I have brought him up. I have groomed him. There is no such mother. Busy, very busy. When they come home from service and say don't disturb me, I am very tired. Think of the child. Where will the child go, where will he get that love. That is one aspect of a good family (Thackeray interview, August 21, 2000).

Emphasising the importance of a mother's love, Thackeray places the full responsibility of raising children on the mother.

Now you are all educated and go to work, but your children are left with the *ayahs* (nannies). The child does not get the mother's love. But giving love is your responsibility as a mother. So do your social work while at the same time taking care of your home, your children and your family (*Saamna*, December 1996).

His message to women is that, despite working all day, they should not forget that their main priority or duty is to their children. By glorifying a "mother's love", Thackeray suggests a father's love is insufficient and thus frees men from sharing the responsibility of raising children. Manohar Joshi further explains the relative importance of mother's and father's love,

A father is not able to give children love if he is ambitious enough. Ambitious fathers at a young age must work very hard. He has to work 14-15 hours a day, then only can he achieve his ambitions. So for the child, the mother is everything, not the father. The father may love the children, but in our country we will find the mother has more respect than the father in general. And mothers are also happy with that (Joshi interview, August 28, 2000).

In this way, a double burden is placed upon women. Though they work outside the home, they also must work in the home. Furthermore, a woman's professional ambitions are supposed to be secondary to her husband's, as well as to her sacred role as mother.

Thackeray's message that women must first take care of their homes and then do social work and other outside activities has become a common *mantra* among Shiv Sainiks. It promotes the casual participation of women in the Sena, while deterring more committed involvement. As Manohar Joshi expressed,

Someone has to bring up the children in the family. Who will do that? Why should we presume that this work is of a lower category, to look after your home? She has done a great service to the family and serving our own family is also good (Joshi interview, August 28, 2000).

¹¹In Shiv Sena, *sanskar* refers to Hindu cultural duties.

Regarding a woman's family as her first priority, the Sena does not expect as much commitment from women members as it does of its male members. Though men are expected to come to the *shakha* on a daily basis, women are not. A woman can excuse herself from a meeting if her child is sick or she has to cook dinner.

While the sanctity of the patriarchal bargain makes it easier for women to join and remain in the Sena, it can serve as an obstacle for women with political aspirations. With the burdens of housework and child rearing, it is difficult for women to participate assiduously enough to reach the upper echelons of the Sena. Explaining why the Sena has no significant women leaders, Joshi cites the constraints of the patriarchal bargain,

In the Indian system, the woman has to work hard at home. It is the nature. She has her own children, she has to take care of the husband. So much so that the husband is really the boss. (I'm talking generally – at least he pretends to be a boss.) Then she has to look after the children. The husband's father and mother are also her bosses in her husband's house. So she has to satisfy them also. How can that poor lady go outside and become a leader? So generally, I'm sorry to make this statement, those who have no such things at home can only become the leaders. Unfortunately (Joshi interview, August 28, 2000).

Though Joshi recognises that only women who are not overburdened by the domestic side of the patriarchal bargain can become leaders, he does not question its premise. Accepting it as their 'unfortunate' fate, Joshi upholds the patriarchal system and the authority of husbands and family elders over women. As a result, many women will not accept leadership positions within the Mahila Aghadi without the consent of their families.

Containing Women's Political Participation

Though Thackeray encourages women to be bold and assertive, they are expected to remain within their own domain and not enter the male domain of employment or politics, unless necessity requires it. As a result, the Sena attempts to confine women's activities within the sphere of 'social work'.¹² The successful relegation of the Mahila Aghadi to the realm of social work as opposed to politics, is reflected in the constant repetition by women sainiks of the motto expressing the Sena's commitment to community service – "80% social work and 20% politics." Though men actively participate in social work as well as politics,

¹² 'Social work' in the Sena refers to community service and social activism.

women are expected to remain within the realm of social work. As Sudha Chury rationalises, "Social work naturally comes to women's hands. This is how we help Shiv Sena" (Chury interview, July 22, 2000). As a result, male sainiks will often praise the Mahila Aghadi for its efforts in social work, but strongly resent women's presence in politics.

Male sainiks particularly resent the 33% reservation of seats in local government for women, regarding it as an incursion into their domain – the public space. As Manohar Joshi explains,

Men do not want to give rights to the women. They will always resist. Who likes to do that? So in the case of women, it is always the case that every *shakha pramukh* does not want women to come to his *shakha*. He only wants them to come in election time. He wants to keep control in himself only. He doesn't like it to be divided. In politics, we don't allow the competitor to come. She becomes a competitor in the election. Who wants to encourage a competitor in the next election? (Joshi interview, August 28, 2000).

Male sainiks resent women's reservations and women in political positions because they threaten their own access to power and in turn their own empowerment. Women's reservations deprive men of the political positions which give them control over municipal funds and scarce civic resources, as well as social and political influence. Men greatly resent what they correctly regard as a loss of power.

Promoting assertive and violent action as a means of attaining self-respect and power, the masculine Shiv Sena ideology views power as something externally attained through action. In terms of Rowlands' definitions of power, the Sena's masculine definition best fits the idea of power as 'obedience'. Viewing power as a force externally imposed leads to a 'power over' understanding of power relations in which one party controls the actions of another. Power is finite, gained only at someone else's expense. Thackeray expresses this sentiment with regard to reservations:

Recently there is a problem...once you've reserved a particular constituency for a woman, it is very difficult to get a candidate...Our good people doing well in Assembly or in Parliament or in Corporation, he just couldn't fight. A good candidate, *a man*, you know has been dropped. We were finding it so difficult to find a good woman for that constituency...(Thackeray interview, August 21, 2000).

Thackeray sees reservations as giving power to unqualified women at the expense of good candidates who are men. Thus, reservations that enable women to gain political power are interpreted by the Sena as a loss of political power for men.

Ironically, the 'lack of ability' perceived by male *sainiks* in women stems from preconceptions of women's roles based on the patriarchal bargain the Sena espouses. As Manohar Joshi explains,

Sometimes the women ask for representation and reservations, but whether a woman can be available for anyone 24 hours, if you ask me, in our country it is very difficult. As the municipal corporator, people come to you during the night time also. No woman during the night time can go outside. Whether a house collapses or there is a fire, we get called, people need him, it is not possible for a woman to go and attend because the calls may not be genuine (Joshi interview, August 28, 2000).

According to Joshi, a woman's 'ability' to perform the job of corporator is curtailed by social norms in India regarding women's propriety and conduct, and not by the individual woman's capabilities. These norms limit the mobility of respectable women due to concern for their physical safety and honour. The corporator position is deemed inappropriate for women because it would expose them to sexual danger. Thus, a woman by definition lacks the 'ability' to perform the duties of a corporator.

At the local level, resentment towards reservations and the women who benefit from them is especially strong. In Girgaum, Dilip Naik had been the corporator from 1985 until 1997 when it became a woman's reserved seat. Naik resented Jaya Goythale, the corporator who had taken what he considered 'his seat'. Undermining the legitimacy of her position, Naik suggested that she was elected by a narrow margin and did not have popular support in the area. While Naik's criticism of Jaya's performance regarding civic matters (e.g., road repairs) may be valid, much of his criticism of her as a corporator is related to the Sena's patriarchal bargain. Referring to Jaya's performance, he stated,

A corporator should not look at his watch. The corporator must make society at large his first priority, and then home. In any time of night, the corporator must address problems and emergencies. They should not say, I must go now because I have to make dinner or have dinner with my family (Naik interview, August 22, 2000).

Dilip Naik essentially does not think Jaya is a good corporator because she has accepted the Sena's patriarchal bargain and has made her family her first priority. In order to prepare and

eat dinner with her family, she limits her time in the *shakha* and does not spend the entire evening talking with the men. The woman's role in the patriarchal bargain is not compatible with what male *sainiks* expect from persons holding municipal positions.

Revisiting Thackeray's complaint about the dearth of qualified women candidates, one must question whether it is not the result of the patriarchal bargain he himself imposes on women in the Sena. According to Thackeray,

It is difficult to get women in the first place... Sometimes I've given scope to the women. I wanted to send one very bold woman to Parliament, she refused. What can you do? You can't just catch the woman and force her to stand (Thackeray interview, August 21, 2000).

Thackeray claims that not only is it difficult to find female candidates, but that often they themselves do not want to accept the positions. Not questioning why they refuse, he simply accepts it as their natural inadequacy. Thackeray does not see the patriarchal bargain he espouses as the potential cause for women's refusal or the basis for women's 'lack of ability' [sic]. This is because Thackeray, despite his encouraging speeches, does not believe women are equal to men. How can they be equal when the patriarchal bargain prevents them from being equally able? Expressing disappointment with the Mahila Aghadi, Thackeray stated,

Though it is a women's wing, I wanted squads. These 25 to 50 women would look at those plights of women, this group would look at dowry murders, divorces and harassment by husbands. But somehow nobody did it. I wanted it that way, but nobody did it. Again women have a drawback. What can you do? I gave them a role to play, but they did not do it. I don't know why. Why should I challenge their capacity? (Thackeray interview, August 21, 2000).

With his 'power over' perspective, Thackeray claims women lack initiative and have a limited capacity simply because they did not use the power he 'gave' them, according to his dictates. This basic belief in women's inferiority underlies the Sena's attempt to curtail women's political participation through the patriarchal bargain. No genuine interest in women's emancipation seems evident from the male leadership. Given the limitations imposed by the Sena's patriarchal bargain, it is questionable whether the Shiv Sena offers women any 'real' power that is not controlled by men.

Conclusion

Women of the Hindu Right belong to conservative milieus in which women are expected to remain 'domestic'. Through the RSS's Samiti, upper caste/class Hindu women are able to participate in politics and society without violating this domestic role. Since the propagation of Hindutva is considered a 'religious' activity, these women can join the Samiti without resistance from their families. Regarded as an extension of the family, the Samiti allows women to participate in non-domestic activities without leaving the domestic sphere. As a result, women in the Samiti do not challenge men's social roles and position. In contrast, the lower caste/class women of Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi are domestic women who are forced to become non-domestic due to their socio-economic situation. These women want to improve their family's financial circumstances through part-time employment. By improving access to water and providing income-generating activities, Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi enables women to complete their domestic tasks more efficiently and participate in non-domestic activities outside the home. Mahila Aghadi leaders encourage members to enter the public realm of men by acting like men. Nonetheless, these women are not fully accepted by their male colleagues, who regard them as political competitors and attempt to limit their political participation. Thus, despite their different circumstances, women in the Mahila Aghadi and Samiti share similar positions in relation to their respective parent organisations. In the next chapter, I will explore to what extent individual women in the Mahila Aghadi have managed to become empowered despite the Sena's patriarchal ideology and structures.

CHAPTER EIGHT: Case Study – Lives of Seven Shiv Sena Women

Introduction

Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi provides women with collective empowerment based on the Sena's corporate identity and camaraderie, but the Sena leadership's structural and ideological limitations potentially hinder women's full participation in politics and their personal empowerment. To understand how Shiv Sena's patriarchal bargain affects women's personal empowerment, I conducted biographical narrative interviews in 2002 with seven female Shiv Sainiks and their families. By asking women about their family and life stories, I could analyse their Shiv Sena activity in relation to their personal lives and family context. Additional interviews with their children, spouses and in-laws provided further information regarding their empowerment 'in relation to others' and also allowed me to triangulate data provided by the women themselves.

The seven women who participated in the biographical narrative interviews were selected on the basis of their level of activity in Shiv Sena. Each woman falls into one of the following categories: 1) Top Leader 2) Local Leader 3) Active Member 4) Inactive Member. The chapter begins with a brief biographical portrait of each woman. I then establish a general pattern of empowerment for female Shiv Sainiks. In contrast to male Shiv Sainiks, who experience disempowerment, empowerment, and disillusionment, female Shiv Sainiks tend to be initially active young women who become disempowered after they marry. While Shiv Sena facilitates their empowerment, some women (like the men) experience disillusionment. However, variances in each woman's personal empowerment and ability to cope distinguish them from the men, as well as from one another.

I. Portraits of Seven Shiv Sena Women

The relatively recent formation of Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi has meant that most of its members joined in the 1990s. Although an 'old guard' exists, these women are a diminishing

minority, set aside by the central leadership. Most women in Shiv Sena today are between the ages of 35 and 45, having joined after marriage and having children. Of the seven women I interviewed, three moved to Mumbai as adults. All seven have completed secondary school, and three have received advanced degrees. Though these women characterise themselves as 'bold' and 'dashing', their male colleagues typically describe them as 'housewives'. Of course, each woman has a unique personality and experience that has shaped her empowerment.

1. Top Leaders

The top women leaders hold public office or regional leadership positions in the party. Since 1991, Shiv Sena has actively recruited educated and accomplished women to fill its reserved women's posts and give the party a more respectable image. Vishakha Raut, who is presently a MLA, and Meenakshi Kolgergonkar, *Uppa Vibagh Pramukh* (Vice Regional Chief) of South Mumbai, are women who were actively recruited by the Sena and then rose through the party ranks.

Vishakha Raut

An MLA at 38, Vishakha Raut claims she "eats, drinks and sleeps politics." Born in Mumbai to an upper middle class family, Vishakha's father was a bank manager; her mother was a school principal. The oldest of three, Vishakha remained in India while her siblings emigrated to North America to pursue professional careers as a physical therapist and engineer. After receiving her undergraduate degree, she taught middle school for two years. At 23, she entered an arranged marriage with a distant relative, living near her parents. After her first daughter was born, Vishakha pursued a Masters degree in Economics and Sociology, took a course on travel and tourism, and became a travel agent. Her mother provided childcare. In 1988, Shiv Sena invited Vishakha to speak at a woman's cultural function. The party wanted to reward her husband for his active role in Sena election

campaigns by inviting a woman from his household as the Chief Guest. Since Vishakha's mother-in-law and sister-in-law refused, she accepted the invitation. After reciting a speech on Hindutva written by her mother, Vishakha was declared *Mahila Shakha Pramukh* of Dadar by Manohar Joshi, the then corporator. In 1992, at the age of 30, Vishakha competed for and received the election ticket as corporator when the position became reserved for women. She won the election and gave birth to a son with difficulty. She was re-elected corporator in 1997 and subsequently became Mayor of Mumbai at the age of 35. During this period, she started her own freight-forwarding company and was appointed Chairman of Siddhivinaik Temple, a prominent and wealthy Hindu temple in Mumbai. Finally, Vishakha was elected as an MLA in 1998. At the time of the interview, she still held this position and lived in a 'joint family' with her husband, his family (mother-in-law, brother-in-law and sister-in-law) and their 16-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son.

Meenakshi Kolgergonkar

Though Meenakshi Kolgergonkar was born and raised in a village near Ratnagiri, she no longer regards herself as an ignorant villager. A 51-year-old nurse, Meenakshi stands out among the seven women. Not only is she older than most women in Shiv Sena, but she is also the only one with a profession she has practised continuously since her marriage. Despite her village roots, Meenakshi is proud of her family. Her father was village chief with the power to police and responsibility for collecting taxes and maintaining land records. Unfortunately, he died when she was 14 years old, leaving his wife and six children without an income. Completing her education at the age of 16, Meenakshi learned how to type and began to pursue nursing training at Sassoon Hospital in Bombay. After passing her nursing exams, she entered an arranged marriage at the age of 23 with Mohan Kolgergonkar. A year after her first son was born, she began working as a nurse in the state hospital. Her second son was born in 1982. From 1986 until 1989, the family faced financial problems, but this did not prevent her from performing social work in her ward, while supporting her family.

She was asked to join Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi in 1991. In 1993, her husband lost his job due to his company's re-location to Gujarat. That same year, Meenakshi went to the UK as a private nurse for one year. Her first son also completed his secondary education and entered university. Upon her return to India, Mr. Kolgergonkar found a new job as a clerk for a medical equipment company. In 1997, Meenakshi received a nursing award from the state and went to the USA as a private nurse for a pregnant non-resident Indian. A year after her return, Meenakshi was appointed South Mumbai *Uppa Vibagh Pramukh*. Finally, in 2002, her eldest son became a pilot with Indian Airlines due to Shiv Sena's influence.

2. Branch Leaders

The category of branch leader consists of *mahila shakha pramukhs*. Secondary to the male *shakha pramukh*, these women need not have the same qualifications as top leaders. Typically, the *mahila shakha pramukh* has her SSC, but did not attend university. She is usually Maharashtrian and speaks Hindi and Marathi. English is not necessary, since she only needs to speak with women in her area. She is usually a housewife and has a husband who provides a steady income. Since the household does not depend on her income, she has time to be a Shiv Sena leader. While her husband may not object to her participation (as long as she does not neglect her household duties), he usually does not support her. Her children are usually older and do not require constant attention. While many *mahila shakha pramukhs* are forceful and willing to use violence for the Sena's objectives, some male *shakha pramukhs* prefer to appoint women who are malleable and will not challenge their authority. Surekha Ubale, *mahila shakha pramukh* in Khetwadi *shakha*, and Jayashree Ballikar, *mahila shakha pramukh* in Mumbai Central, are both forceful leaders.

Surekha Ubale

Born in a village near Thane, an industrial town north of Mumbai, Surekha Ubale moved to Mumbai after marrying and having two children. Though her parents were

illiterate and from the scheduled castes, she and her five brothers were educated up to the SSC level. Her father was a driver for a company and her mother was a housewife. After completing her SSC, Surekha became a machine operator for Texum Company in Thane. She married at 19 and continued working after her daughter and son were born. In 1985, the year her son was born, her husband became a policeman in Mumbai. Surekha moved to the police quarters in Mumbai with her husband and two small children. Due to the long commute and the age of her children, Surekha's husband told her to quit her job. Surekha remained a housewife for fourteen years. Conducting cultural programs in the police quarters, Surekha was asked to become the Khetwadi *mahila shakha pramukh* in 1999 at the age of 37. In February 2002, Surekha's husband committed suicide by jumping off a third-floor balcony after being hospitalised for one year. In August 2002, Surekha began looking for employment to avoid eviction from the police quarters.

Jayashree Ballikar

Born and raised in Mumbai, Jayashree Ballikar has lived in the same area her entire life. Her father worked for the company Mahindra & Mahindra and her mother was a housewife. An only child, Jayashree completed her SSC and became a medical receptionist. She assisted her mother when she developed cataracts. When Jayashree was 21, her mother slipped into a coma and died. The same year she had a 'love' marriage with a man living two lanes away. Two years later her daughter was born. When her daughter was two months old, Jayashree complained to her MLA, Chandrakant Padwal, about gutters overflowing in her lane. After the gutter problem was solved, Padwal asked her to join Shiv Sena in 1991. During this period, her father also suffered a stroke and required her help. He died in 1995 after a 9-month coma. By 1997, Jayashree had become the *mahila shakha pramukh* of Mumbai Central, an area where many women are illiterate vegetable sellers. At age 30, using her Shiv Sena contacts, Jayashree got a license for a *zunkr bhakr* (Maharashtrian food stall) and left her job as a receptionist. In the same year, she encouraged her daughter to take

karate lessons. The following year her daughter went to Australia for a Pan-Asian karate competition. In 2002, I interviewed Jayashree and her daughter at a local karate competition. Her daughter now has a black belt and Jayashree actively supports her. Jayashree appears to be separated from her husband, who lives in Goa. She has now returned to the doctor's office as a receptionist.

3. Active Members

Active women in Shiv Sena who lack leadership positions generally head their household, since their husband is absent. They may be widows, separated or divorced. As a result, they can actively participate in Shiv Sena without patriarchal constraints. Since they are financially insecure, they unfortunately cannot become prominent leaders. In addition to working for Shiv Sena, they must also run their household and raise their children alone. Though they feel capable of running for elected office, the party does not endorse them. As a result, they remain ordinary members for many years, often campaigning for recent recruits. Only a few women are active members in each *shakha*, and they are easy to identify since they attend frequently. I first met Anuradha Navalkar and Nita Kanade at the Opera House meeting, a biweekly event attended by the different *mahila shakha pramukhs* of South Mumbai. The meeting was led by Meena Kamble, *vibagh pramukh* (regional chief) of South Mumbai.

Anuradha Navalkar

Like Vishakha and Jayashree, Anuradha lives in the same area where she was born and raised. Her father owned an aluminium shop and her mother was a housewife. Her father, a Brahman, was educated to the 10th standard and was knowledgeable about law. Anuradha was the youngest daughter of eight children. When she was 9 years old, her mother died of breast cancer after suffering for many years. Anuradha received her SSC in 1974 at the age of 18. Through friends, she met and fell in love with Anil Navalkar, who belonged to the

kshatriya caste. Since her father and brothers disapproved of the caste difference, Anuradha and Anil eloped. Her father immediately disowned her and severed her contact with the family. Anil's family accepted the marriage, but did not welcome it.

After her marriage, Anuradha became a housewife. Her husband worked for Air France. As a hobby, she tutored children in the slums. She had her first daughter within the first year of her marriage, and her second four years later. Satisfied with two daughters, Anuradha was shocked to discover in 1983 that she was six months pregnant with her son. Soon after his birth, her house collapsed and she lost all her possessions. The family was forced to move from their large house to a shop and then, in 1989, to a one-room *chawl* where she still lives. After moving to the *chawl*, her husband was diagnosed with kidney failure. When his brothers refused to donate a kidney or assist financially, Anuradha decided that Anil should do dialysis. He died two years later, on the day their eldest daughter was admitted to college. Anuradha raised her three children, then aged 14, 12, and 8, without familial support. In 1997, the year her eldest daughter completed her university degree, Anuradha joined Shiv Sena to campaign for Jaya Goythale's election. In 1998, her first daughter married a Gujarati Jain living in the same building. At 45, Anuradha became a grandmother when her eldest daughter gave birth to a son. She now attends *shakha* meetings less frequently.

Nita Kanade

As a Sindhi Hindu, Nita Kanade represents Mahila Aghadi's non-Marathi minority. Originally from Sindh, which is now in Pakistan, Nita's family fled to Ulasnagar, where she was born in 1964. After receiving her SSC from a Sindhi medium school, Nita moved with her family to Mumbai. Her father, a Western Railways Officer, was given quarters in Mumbai. Her mother, a teacher, began commuting to Ulasnagar. At 20, Nita began working for Air India with the help of her uncle. During the four years she worked at Air India, she met a South Indian man. She married him in 1989, against her family's wishes. Her mother-

in-law also opposed her only son marrying a Sindhi woman. Promising to open a beauty parlour for her, Nita's husband asked her to resign from Air India. In 1993, she had a son. Around that time, her husband began having extra-marital affairs and physically abusing her. In 1995, her husband lost a leg in a motorcycle accident. Soon after her husband's hospitalisation, Nita gave birth to their daughter. Due to his disability, Nita's husband became an alcoholic and his mother hired prostitutes to visit him in their home. Nita's husband and mother-in-law increasingly abused her physically and psychologically. Nita's father approached the police, government agencies and NGOs for assistance. In 1997, her cousin advised her to contact Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi. The Mahila Aghadi spoke to her husband and mother-in-law. With threats, they forced Nita's husband to leave the flat and allow Nita to work in his beauty parlour. Upon the Mahila Aghadi leader's advice, she joined Shiv Sena to learn how to defend herself. In 2002, Nita's husband made her leave the beauty parlour and she began a food stall which, however, was not successful.

4. Inactive Members

Inactive members are those who occasionally visit the *shakha* to attend large cultural functions. There are two types of inactive members. The first type includes young housewives with small children who have recently moved to Mumbai from nearby villages. These members rarely attend the meetings. The majority of Mahila Aghadi members fall into this category. The second type includes former leaders who have significantly reduced their participation in Shiv Sena after losing their positions. Jaya Goythale fits this second category and will be the focus of my analysis of inactive members since the last chapter already addressed the empowerment of the first type.

Jaya Goythale

Though Jaya Goythale is an OBC (Other Backward Caste), her family is very wealthy and well-educated. Her father was a school principal, and her mother a housewife. She is

one of seven children. Jaya and her siblings all received university degrees. Born in Mumbai around the corner from the Girgaum *shakha*, Jaya graduated from her ICICS (international credit) school in 1972. She then received her LLB (law degree) in 1979. Though her father encouraged her to pursue a Masters degree, Jaya instead worked for a private company for a short time. Since she was dissatisfied with the work, her sister encouraged her to start her own nursery school in their parents' home. With Shiv Sena's endorsement, her school was able to attract many students. In appreciation, she joined Shiv Sena in 1982 at the age of 24. Though she met her husband in 1976, they only married in 1984, when she was 27. Her daughter was born the following year and her son five years later. In 1992, Jaya unsuccessfully ran for corporator in a ward reserved for women. Despite her initial failure, Jaya ran again in 1997 when Girgaum became reserved for women. Displacing Dilip Naik, Jaya became corporator at 40. While corporator, Jaya became Speaker of the Corporation and Chairman of the Education Committee. During this time, her daughter took her ICICS exams in 2000 and entered college. In 2002, Jaya did not receive the corporation ticket from Shiv Sena to run for re-election. Instead, the election ticket was given to the former *shakha pramukh*'s wife, Meenal Tsovatkar, who "never stepped foot into the *shakha* before the election." At the time of the elections, Jaya's mother passed away and she stopped frequenting the *shakha* daily.

II. Women's Empowerment Processes¹

Despite coming from different castes, economic classes and education levels, the seven women have experienced similar empowerment processes. This process has three stages: 1) Confident Childhood 2) Disempowerment and withdrawal from the Public 3) Empowerment and Return to the Public. In the portraits, I presented each woman's life history based on verifiable facts. In this section, I present their subjective representations of their lives and observations from their families to demonstrate their empowerment. While their lives fall

¹ Sections 1 and 3 of part II were presented in my MPhil thesis in Development Studies, "Empowering Women of the Hindu Right: A Case Study of Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi," April 2001.

into similar patterns, the catalysts of their empowerment and the levels of empowerment they achieved varied based on their economic conditions, life cycle stage and family relations.

1. Confident Childhood

All seven women provide brief, but 'happy' childhood stories (by childhood, I mean the period before their marriage, when they lived with their parents). Although their parents had varying levels of income, most of the women felt 'pampered'. They were given everything they could reasonably ask for and were sufficiently educated.

Top Leaders

Vishakha Raut presents the childhood of an upper middle class family. In response to my question, "Can you tell me more about your childhood and your parents?" she states,

Well, I had a very...uh, happy childhood. I was not born with a golden spoon, but definitely a silver spoon. My parents gave me all the best things in life – clothes, food. They used to take us out. We are three -- two sisters and one brother. Uh, they gave us the best of education. They used to take us round every holiday, you know. They used to take us out in India. Generally, my parents are responsible for my cultured upbringing.

We had two servants who used to look after us. They were like sisters to us...It's they who brought us up. Of course, my mummy used to cook and all, but my mummy used to go to school. It was they who used to take care of us...So, I had a very...

And ours was a joint family. My Dad's elder brother and his wife were also staying with us. So they along with the servants used to take care of us. So naturally we were...

I had a happy childhood without any hassles. We were never left alone in the house even though my mother was working.

Describing herself as born with a 'silver spoon', Vishakha recognises that she had a better childhood than most Indian children. Her parents could afford to travel in India for holidays. Financially, they were very comfortable and Vishakha was being groomed for a cosmopolitan life. Although Vishakha's mother was not home, she did not feel neglected. Instead, she developed a close relationship with her servants who took care of her. Living also with her uncle and aunt, she did not feel lonely or miss her mother who was balancing a career and motherhood. Her well-off parents ensured she had 'the best things in life' and was free from 'hassles'.

Yet, Vishakha also says she was not born with a 'golden' spoon, indicating that though her family was financially comfortable, they were not socially elite. Mumbai's elite reside on Malabar Hill and travel abroad for their education and vacations. Owning businesses and belonging to clubs, these people control the city financially and politically. Vishakha's parents were simple, middle-class people and not involved in politics or society as such. To this point, she first mentions in her narrative,

I was...uh, my family...my mother's...family, no one was into active politics. We were involved in politics...uh, discussing politics during the lunch time or dinner time at the dining table. OK, and voting. That was the only connection with politics at my mother's place.

By mentioning her parents' lack of involvement, Vishakha asserts the significance of her present position as an MLA. In her childhood, politics was a subject discussed at the dinner table, not a potential career. Like Chandrakant Padwal, Vishakha wants to emphasise her extraordinary rise as a politician.

Though born in a village, Meenakshi Kolgergonkar recounts her upbringing with fierce pride. She begins her biographic narrative by stating,

I was born in a village in 1951. At that time, our family was extremely well-off in our house. My father was the police-*patil* of the village. Nowadays there are police in the village. In those days, my father was the village chief with police powers and land recording power and tax collecting. All the business of the village he took care of. If there was a murder or a quarrel he would take care of it.

Due to those positions, he had great respect from all the people in the village. From every house they had respect. A lot of respect was there. And he had some eminence in the village. We had a lot of land and we were rich in my childhood.

Meenakshi derives her pride from her family's position in the village. While the village may have been small and remote in comparison to Mumbai, her father held the highest social position as the 'police-*patil*' or village chief. In addition, the family had land and wealth. Aware of her family's position, Meenakshi mentions the 'respect' of the villagers three times. This 'respect' and 'eminence' certainly infused Meenakshi with great self-confidence from an early age.

However, Meenakshi's circumstances change in her teens when her father dies. She explains her family's difficulties in great detail.

Later when I was 14 or 15, my father died. My brother alone was in service and there were 5-6 people in my house. One brother and the rest sisters. We were living together in an OK condition. We never got any such kind of situation that we had to fast a single day. We always had something in the house. Some vegetables, some food, so we never went hungry a single day. People would bring something – some vegetables, milk, something. In addition, the people in the village, when my father was police-*patil* and gave favours during weddings and hard times, they returned that favour, not in cash but in kind.

Whatever inside the house was not known, outside we were looking posh. In this way, my mother kept us. Outside the house they thought we were doing well. That is how my mother took care of things. Only milk and *pohe* we ate and no vegetables, but outside people did not know. My mother kept us in a dignified manner. No one had a car in the village. We got the first car in our village.

The death of Meenakshi's father impoverishes her family. Her one brother must support his sisters and mother. As a result, the family subsists on *pohe*, made from rice flakes and milk.

Despite their poverty, her mother maintains the family's 'posh' image and Meenakshi is proud of having had the first car in the village. Full of pride, Meenakshi does not describe the vegetables and milk given by friends as 'charity', but as the reciprocation of past favours.

The change in her family's fortune does not alter her self-confidence.

Faith also plays an important role in Meenakshi's self-esteem. Meenakshi first mentions her religious devotion in relation to her childhood and her family's status.

Near our house there is a Swami Rupalnanda. He did some studies and then became a swami. He had a divine vision and that swami performed self-immolation. And his neighbourly love was for us. We had a celebration for his self-immolation and about 17-18 thousand people came from Kolhapur, Satara and Shangli. We had a BIG house, about 500 people could sit there. We used to give all those people who came there tea, food and snacks as a service to society. And we learned this from our mother and we follow it.

To help others was our religion. We help people without any expectations – altruism. I studied up to the 11th grade in my village. I went to Ratnagiri for 12th grade where I learned typing. Today, people become graduates and get jobs. In those days it was not the case and we did not get proper guidance. I vowed to do service for the people. So, for two and a half years, I took training and then I took my exam in Sassoon Hospital in Mumbai. In the Board of Education, I was ranked fourth. I passed with good grades. Later, I did service and then I got married.

This segment on her family's altruism follows her narration of their poverty. It is clear that she wants to de-emphasise their poverty and reaffirm their social prominence and generosity.

She mentions their 'big house' which could accommodate '500 people' and the thousands of pilgrims for whom they provided tea and snacks, to emphasise her family's former wealth and prestige. She also 'vows to do service for the people' and becomes a nurse. She does not mention her family's need for additional breadwinners as a reason for pursuing this career; rather, she maintains her identity as the daughter of the police-*patil* who works as a service

to society. Thus, religious devotion and altruism have replaced her family's wealth as a source of confidence.

Branch Leaders

In comparison to the top leaders, women branch leaders come from modest social and economic backgrounds. While Surekha Ubale originally came from a village like Meenakshi, her family traditionally held the lowest position, belonging to the scheduled castes. Nonetheless, Surekha's illiterate father secured stable employment as a company driver. Her father's income was sufficient to support his six children and allow his wife to remain a housewife. Despite Surekha's parents limited education, they ensured that their children passed their SSC. In response to my initial question "Can you tell me your life story in detail from your childhood until now?" Surekha shared happy memories:

From my childhood. Of five brothers, I was the only daughter to my parents so I was especially pampered by them. Whatever I asked for my parents would give me. I enjoyed my childhood very much.

I was pampered because I was alone. And in my family there were not so many girls so I was given more importance.

After passing my SSC examination, I started the job. I was a machine operator at the Texum Company for five years. Even though I was doing service, I never felt that I had a job. The company was so good and big. They gave school uniforms – skirt, top, shoes and apron. So I was feeling it was a school-like atmosphere. We were all young recruits so it was looking like a school. The company was giving importance to sports. After work we would stay there and play basketball, throw ball and other games. We enjoyed ourselves. So from childhood up to my job, I enjoyed life nicely. After my SSC, I worked for five years. The job I told you about...it was very good. I had many friends – lady friends, gents friends. We were a group of friends. We would go around together to the cinema and walk around. We would go in a group. Remembering those days I feel very happy.

Though a girl, Surekha was given the same encouragement as her brothers. She even claims to have been 'pampered' as the only daughter. After graduating, she did not marry immediately. Instead, she worked as a machine operator. Surekha enjoyed working, regarding it as an extension of school. Surekha's job taught her the importance of working carefully and a little English. Socially active, Surekha played sports after work with her colleagues. She even formed a mixed-gender group of friends with whom she socialised outside the company's domain. Belonging to that group gave her the confidence to roam

around the city and enjoy herself. Today Surekha has only happy memories of her childhood and job.

Despite a different social and economic background, Jayashree also described herself as 'pampered'. She comes from a cosmopolitan and affluent family and speaks fluent English. Her first job before her marriage was also an important point she expounded upon. She was more reluctant to discuss her childhood.

[Any memories from childhood?]
I was a very pampered child. I was pampered a lot by both my parents, but I was not a spoilt child. Pampered means I was pampered in good ways, not for, 'OK, I want this' and I used to get that. But when I used to forget that, that time my father used to give.

[And your schooling?]
Yeah, I was very good at my schooling and I have been working at Dr. B.R. Shah's clinic since 1985 onwards. I am running a *zunka bhaker kendra*, plus I am a *Mahila Shakha Pramukh*.

[How did you get your job?]
There also I went with my neighbour auntie. She was just staying in our next door building and she was operated by him. So then, no one was able to take her to that doctor so I just went with her once or twice and suddenly the doctor asked me, "Why don't you work over here?" Just the way Chandrakant Padwal, our MLA, asked me, "Why don't you become a social worker?" Same way my doctor too asked me, "Why don't you come over here?" So very clearly, I told him, "I don't have any experience." So he said, "Don't worry. I know you're very capable." I have a very good commanding power. That's my plus point. He told me, "Why don't you start working here?" I said, "Very fine." I joined him.

As an only child, Jayashree received ample attention from her parents. Within reason, her parents provided her everything she desired. Though she says she was 'very good at my schooling', she does not elaborate further. She prefers moving on to her employment history, of which she appears particularly proud. After her previous brief responses, Jayashree speaks at length about her first job at Dr. Shah's clinic: 8 lines compared to her usual 3-line response. She explains how, by helping a neighbour, she demonstrated her 'commanding power' to Dr. Shah, who offered her a job. Jayashree links this episode with a later event when she is asked to join Shiv Sena. She regards both episodes as turning points in her life when a male authority recognised her abilities and offered opportunities to develop them. Due to her lack of experience, Jayashree may not have had confidence in herself initially; but by offering her a job based on her intrinsic abilities, Dr. Shah gave her confidence. While her parents' attention provides a basis for her self-esteem, Jayashree places greater value on

the public recognition of a renowned physician. This is demonstrated in her repetition of Dr. Shah's job offer three times – which is also echoed in Padwal's invitation to join Shiv Sena.

Active Members

Raised by a strict Brahman father, Anuradha Navalkar was not 'pampered' like the others. A disciplined man, her father demanded high standards and obedience from his children. His aluminium shop enabled him to support his family of six children comfortably. Though Anuradha did not face any financial hardships in her childhood, the death of her mother was an important turning point. When asked about her childhood, Anuradha speaks of her mother's struggle with breast cancer.

My *Ai* (mother) and *Baba* (father). [laughs] My *Baba* is a very angry man. Very, very angry man. He belong only Brahman. So after my marriage he never talk to me. And my mother expired before my marriage. She suffered from cancer. Breast cancer when I'm in standard 9. Afterwards when he comes home, we're doing the life and all that.

Now at this moment much research is going on, but that time, not. But [pause] the first time she suffered, I'm asking, "Mummy, what is this pain? Doctor, doctor, give the medicine."

"Baba, this a cancer. It was first starting so giving the light and all that. Otherwise, you remove one breast."

So that time, I'm very small, but like my Meenal, I was very close to my Mom. So, every day going to the hospital after school and all that. When she come home doctor asked me to do the dressing.

"So everyday you come to Tata hospital."

"Doctor, I can do it!"

"You can do it? This in not *paththa* (play)."

"Every day you're doing, I'm seeing. If you don't trust me, you stand with me. I do the dressing and you see. You do, I can do!"

Because she's very trouble to taking taxi and going further and she's worried.

"If you're doing very lightly, its OK."

Doctor said, "You are trained."

Because in our school one of the subjects was 'nursing'. So, I could manage it. I could manage it.

Between 6 to 7 months, I took care of her. Then after, she started realising what cancer is. So she was depressed. She became withdrawn and in the same month, she's dead.

In this segment, Anuradha moves back in time to her mother's death in 1969. Initially, she feels confused by her mother's illness. She explains how, in those days, very little was known about breast cancer. This ignorance, combined with her youth, made Anuradha feel helpless and frustrated. Yet, by going to the hospital every day, Anuradha learned how to change her mother's dressings. This knowledge gave her the courage to tell the doctors that she could change her mother's dressings herself to avoid her daily trips to the hospital. Though she could not cure her mother, at least she could relieve her discomfort by nursing

her at home. In her dialogue with the doctors, Anuradha presented herself as a competent and confident teenager. She boldly told the doctor, 'I can do it!' And 'You do, I can do!'. Though he was initially sceptical, she successfully convinced him of her abilities.

At the age of seventeen, Anuradha again displayed her independence and self-confidence through 'social work'. When asked why she joined Shiv Sena, she argues that she has been active in social work since her childhood. She says,

I joined Shiv Sena because from my childhood I liked to do social work. From my childhood, anyone person hurt, I like to go there. I like to give my blood. So when I completed 18, I was playing in the lane near Kotari Hospital -- a very small hospital. So someone told me there is a blood camp. I want to give the blood. Without *chappals* I was running to give the blood. Then he asked me, "You complete 18?"
"No, I've completed 17 and I'm 18 running."
"Then it is OK. 18, no? So if you get bad feeling?"
"No, I'm OK."
Then he stick the tape. Anyone seeing, my *baba* (father) and all. I came home. I removed the tape and put *mati* (dirt) and played. When the blood card came, then I'm telling that I gave blood. *Baba* also giving. He also doing social, not party someone. He's also a helpful man.

That tie also in school. I liked to learn different, different languages. At least, you'll try. In this school there is Gujarati. There are six divisions. Five are Gujarati and one Marathi. And that time they were starting new admissions. My *Baba* tell me first, "she's accepted." I'm doing medical, but after my future totally changed.

So from childhood also and from teenage also I'm giving help. And after we're giving good way for Shiv Sena.

Though she was a minor, she donated blood without telling her father. For Anuradha, performing social work is the 'good' end that justifies the means. It gave her the authority to deceive her father and defy the law. Nonetheless, she rationalises that her father would have approved of her donating blood, since he also performed social work. Anuradha also identifies the roots of her later Shiv Sena involvement in her school activities. She was interested in learning different languages and had received admission to a school with Gujaratis, people of a different ethnicity. Overall, Anuradha presents herself as an outgoing, social teenager, interested in other peoples and actively performing social work. Though her father was strict, he encouraged her and taught her how to live a disciplined life. Before her marriage, she hoped to enter the medical field, '...but after [her] future totally changed'.

Coming from an upper middle class family, Nita Kanade experienced few difficulties before her marriage. Although her Sindhi family moved from Ulasnagar, a small city

dominated by Sindhis, to cosmopolitan Mumbai, Nita recalls the transition with excitement.

Not mentioning life in Ulasnagar, Nita begins her story in Mumbai.

So, I from Sindhi family. My *mama* was a teacher, my daddy was a Western Railway officer. So I was born in Ulasnagar. After 1984, my papa got railway quarters so we from Ulasnagar we shifted to Bombay.

Immediate coming in Bombay, I started doing job in Air India. I got a nice job in Air India. Air India was for three years. After that I got in an affair with a boy. He's from a South Indian family. So we fell in love. I got a love marriage.

[Do you remember moving to Mumbai?]

Yes, we remember everything. And we were so happy. So happy. Because after all Bombay is a big city and Ulasnagar was like a small village. We were so anxious to see and so happy to move from Ulasnagar to Bombay. We were moving to a better place, so we were very happy.

[Do you remember working at Air India?]

Life was very glad. Very nice life. It was only beautiful moments of my life. Everybody was happy with my work. Everybody happy because of my nature. Everybody used to love me and help me. Everybody was helping nature. I was very happy over there. And everybody used to help me and support me.

See totally I was only 18 years old. I had no idea about nothing. Just from leaving the college, that time only passing the 12th. Immediately, I started job working at Air India. So it was very difficult for me to handle all the accounts, cash. So I was totally disappointed, nervous also. So they used to help me in calculating cash everywhere. And sometimes I would get a transfer, calculating cash everywhere. Instead of me, anybody used to go.

"You don't worry. You don't go. I'll go in your place."

That way they used to help me a lot.

The move to Mumbai was a happy occasion for Nita's family. Her father received housing in Mumbai as an officer of Western Railways, perhaps as a promotion. Nita was glad to leave Ulasnagar, which she describes as a 'small village', in order to see the big city. In Mumbai, Nita had greater job opportunities. With the influence of her uncle, the Chairman of Air India, she immediately started working for the airline, though she had only received her SSC. Initially, she felt overwhelmed by her new job and her lack of work experience. Finding the management of the cash account difficult, she 'was totally disappointed' and anxious. This challenging experience became an encouraging one when her co-workers began assisting her with the accounts. When she was meant to be transferred to another office, they went in her place. Though her uncle's authority in Air India may account for their co-operation, Nita claims that they helped her because of her 'nature'. Regardless of the reason, this assistance boosted Nita's self-esteem. She remembers her five years at Air India as the 'only beautiful moments of my life'. She believed that her colleagues helped and

supported her because they appreciated her intrinsic qualities. Stating, 'Everybody used to love me and help me,' Nita exudes a confidence she derived from belonging to this group. The support of her Air India colleagues gave her a sense of collective empowerment.

Inactive Member

Similar to the men, Jaya Goythale describes her life in terms of accomplishments. The milestones of her life include the degrees she received and her business. She neglects to mention her marriage, her children or her parents. In Jaya's initial narrative it appears that all of her significant accomplishments occurred after her marriage in 1987. Only when asked specific questions about her childhood does Jaya include details about her family and activities.

My life story means, I have completed my ICIC from Chikasa School and after that graduation from Rut Bhavans. And then double graduate from Hinduja and after that I have started my nursery. That was in 1981.

And after that, when I completed my graduation, I looked after this nursery. And I was interested in kids. That's why I started my nursery. Before that, I was serving in a private company. But uh, I left that job and started my own nursery because my elder sister, she had guided me for this nursery. But still I am running my nursery.

[Can you tell me about your childhood?]

We were in Mumbai only. My mother and father, they were all there. I liked my school life and all college life. I enjoyed it my childhood life. Even still I enjoy my life because of my kids and husband. My family is very well-trained and disciplined family from both sides, mother and father.

When I was in college, I took part in every function. Like social and after gatherings and *pujas*, then games, everywhere. I was Class Representative. I was General Secretary in college. Not just college, even in school. I was very active from my school life. When my papa and mama, they were very co-operative. I told you they were giving us co-operation. So I was very active in school and college and even now.

Though Jaya comes from an OBC caste, her childhood is one of privilege and access to excellent schools. While most middle class Maharashtrians attend municipal schools, where they receive their SSC, Jaya attended an English medium private school that issues international school certificates. Like Vishakha Raut, she also attended university, where she studied law. In university, Jaya actively participated in student government and held various positions – Class Representative and General Secretary. She also participated in sports and religious gatherings. After receiving her university degree, she began working at

a private company. She only stayed a short time since she does not like to be 'bossed'. Her sister encouraged her to start a nursery school in their parents' home. Jaya mentions 'my nursery' five times in her biographic narrative, indicating its significance to her. Starting it with Shiv Sena's help, before her marriage, Jaya still runs it in her own *chawl* room today. Her identity and self-esteem is strongly attached to her nursery's success and continuance. Jaya also credits her parents' 'training' and 'discipline' for her educational success. Allowing her to start her nursery in their home was also a tremendous support. Her family's support and guidance enabled Jaya to participate in school activities, complete her education and leave her first job. To leave a job with which she was dissatisfied, Jaya clearly had a great sense of self-worth, which she derived from her family and her educational accomplishments.

All of the women regard the period before their marriage as 'happy' overall. They claim to have supportive parents who provided for all their needs. Regardless of their parents' social status or wealth, none of the women depicted a childhood of deprivation. Even Meenakshi, who experienced poverty after her father's death, insisted that 'we never went hungry a single day'. Instead, she and Anuradha both regarded the challenges they faced due to their respective parent's death as opportunities for growth. They credit the surviving parent with raising them with dignity and discipline. 'Social work', 'altruism', and devotion to the needs of others became their source of pride and confidence. Others, like Surekha, Jayashree, Nita and Jaya, placed a great deal of importance on their first jobs. Being offered a job immediately after graduating affirmed their self-worth. Surekha and Nita both drew a sense of collective empowerment from the camaraderie they shared with their colleagues. Overcoming the challenge of the work itself also infused them with confidence in their own abilities. With their parents' support, all of these women actively participated in society and their futures seemed full of potential and possibilities.

2. Disempowerment

The optimism and confidence the women derived from their parental support dissipated after their marriage. They no longer experienced the same support from their families and they found themselves facing new challenges that were not easily overcome. The seven Shiv Sena women are all married, but the circumstances of their marriages vary a great deal. Some dutifully entered arranged marriages, while others married for love. Regardless of the type of marriage, the lives of each woman changed after their marriage. Although these women belong to a traditional, male chauvinist political party, only three of them still live with their husbands. In this segment, I will present each woman's perspective of their lives around the time of their marriage and other related events.

Top Leaders

The eldest of three children, Vishakha entered an arranged marriage at the age of twenty-three. Although she was related to her husband and he lived close to her parents' home, she met him for the first time when they were engaged. Entering a new family and marrying a man she did not know may have caused Vishakha to feel alienated and isolated. She seemed to miss her old family life and home after her marriage. Her sense of loneliness intensified after her siblings emigrated to North America. Below, Vishakha describes her feelings at the time.

And I have one brother who is settled in Detroit. And one sister who is in Regina, Canada. So my sister is a physio-therapist practising in Canada. And my brother is a computer engineer with General Motors in Detroit. And I am here in India as a politician looking after my constituency and also my parents.

Sometimes I feel...I and my sister shared a room until I married in '85 and then maybe in '87 she left for Canada. So I was so used to her, like. Right from our childhood we shared the same bed, the same wardrobe. A big wardrobe, one side was hers, one side was mine. We had a double bed. One was hers, one was mine. We went to the... We had a big writing table, one was hers, one was mine. We were stuck together. We used to sleep in the same room and we used to chat in the night. We did fight also, but then...

The day my sister went to Canada, my daughter was born and...I mean my daughter was born that time. The day my sister left for Canada, I knew she was not coming back. You know, we were sleeping in the same room and I cried a lot, OK. And eventually she... That's my daughter [points to her daughter]...Eventually my sister settled there.

But then I could not feel that *loneliness* more because then I got actively involved in politics. So I was involved in something. I do miss her but...She got married there. I could not attend her wedding because my daughter was small and I probably could not carry her to Canada at that time. And she

got married in Canada. After that my brother also finished his studies. He also migrated to U.S. So that time I was very lonely because both of them, both my siblings had left.

The emigration of Vishakha's younger siblings intensified her loneliness and dissatisfaction with her life as an Indian housewife. According to Vishakha, "I always wanted to join the travel and tourism industry and I always wanted to become a traffic assistant with some airline." In her childhood, she had dreams of a career. Instead, she entered an arranged marriage and a year later had a daughter. In that same year, when she became rooted to India as a wife and mother, her sister emigrated to Canada to become a physiotherapist. Four years later, her brother emigrated to the United States to become an engineer with General Motors. In the first paragraph, Vishakha compares her life with those of her siblings. While they are professionals living abroad, she is a politician living in India and taking care of her parents. She consoles herself today with the knowledge that she is an MLA, responsible for her constituency. In 1986, she was simply a housewife and new mother. While her sister was travelling and establishing a career, she had to nurse her daughter and cook. Though she had a university degree and ambitions, it seemed she could no longer realise them.

In addition, her sister's emigration affected Vishakha emotionally. She illustrates their close relationship by listing the things they shared (e.g., room, bed, wardrobe, desk). Not just sharing a room, these two sisters also shared an identity. When Vishakha married, she felt that she lost a part of her identity. When her sister emigrated, these feelings of loss intensified, since she knew her sister was 'not coming back'. Despite having a new-born to care for, Vishakha still felt a deep loneliness. As she says, the loneliness only went away when she entered politics.

University-educated, Vishakha was not satisfied to be a housewife and mother. Her mother's and sister's examples as career women led Vishakha to seek other sources of personal fulfilment. As a result, after her daughter's birth, she pursued further education and relevant training. She then worked at a travel agency until she entered politics. During this

period of disempowerment from 1985 to 1988, Vishakha actively sought achievement commensurate with her education and upbringing.

While Vishakha's disempowerment resulted from a sense of limited opportunity and mobility, Meenakshi Kolgergonkar experienced a loss of status when she married and moved to Mumbai from her village.

After my marriage, we came to my mister's house for the first time. I realised the type of space. In my parents' place, we have a big house. We had enough space for 500 people to sit in our hall. That big a house we had. My father's house had 14 rooms. That much big house we had. Then I arrived here and there were only two rooms and I felt very uncomfortable. I felt so much from where to where I came. Coming from the village, there were so many differences. The way of talking, other manners, there is a great difference.

In two years time I became adjusted, you cannot tell that I am a village girl. I did this by observing things, absorbed and learned how to move in society. So I learned how to mix and behave in society. There is a difference between the village and city. I was no longer a village girl.

Since they didn't have a mother, or sister, so I had to act as a mother, sister, girlfriend and wife also. Naturally, I act as wife also.

Though Meenakshi's family was no longer wealthy, they still lived in a large house and maintained their former prestige. Becoming a nurse and receiving high grades, Meenakshi remained the proud daughter of the police-*patil*. When she entered her arranged marriage and moved to her husband's small *chawl* in Mumbai, she realised her change in circumstances. She expresses this when she says, 'I felt so much from where to where I came.' In the village, her family status gave her respect, while in Mumbai she was nobody. The confidence and sense of importance from her childhood dissipated as she regarded herself as a simple village girl. She did not know how to speak or behave and became shy and withdrawn. She felt isolated and bewildered by her new environment and constrained resources.

After her marriage, Meenakshi also experienced a change in her personal identity. No longer just a daughter, she became a wife, a mother to her sons and a female friend to her brothers-in-law. Her husband, Mr. Kolgergonkar, was the eldest of three sons. He had taken care of his brothers after his mother died, when he was nine. At the age of sixteen, Mohan taught himself how to cook and began cooking for the family, since his father, a graphic

designer, lacked homemaking skills. After he completed his SSC, he immediately began working to allow his brothers to study further. One brother became a scientist with a Ph.D., and the other an engineer. Mohan remained a simple clerk with a modest income. When Meenakshi married Mohan, his brothers were still studying and living in the small two-room *chawl*. The only woman in the household, Meenakshi had to play different feminine roles for her brothers-in-law, father-in-law, husband, and later, her sons. The daughter of a wealthy man, encouraged to study and become a nurse, Meenakshi could not even boil rice. The first day of her marriage, she burned the rice. Without telling his father, Mohan quietly cooked more rice and taught his wife how to cook. Thus, Meenakshi became the unskilled housewife of a poor clerk in Mumbai. With her family still in the village, Meenakshi also had little support. As a result, Meenakshi felt disorientated and lost some of her former confidence in the first years of her marriage.

Branch Leaders

Surekha Ubale also experienced a disempowering turning point, when she moved to Mumbai two years after her marriage. Initially, her life continued as she expected. She states,

Then I got married. My marriage was in 1983. My husband was a police officer. Their house was also very good – in status and money. It was not troublesome in any way. I got children quickly – a daughter and then a son. All the things of life occurred quickly. I was married at an early age. I got a son. I didn't have to wait to have a boy.

Coming from a lower middle class, scheduled caste family, Surekha considered herself successful for marrying early into a family with 'status and money' and quickly having a son. In addition, she continued working as a machine operator at the Texum Company, though she had two babies – a daughter and son.

Two years later, Surekha's husband was transferred to Mumbai. Surekha's circumstances changed in Mumbai's resource-constrained environment.

After marriage, I had children and we changed place. We moved here. Then it became difficult to go to my job. It was far away. The company is in Thane. To get to my job, I had to change trains two times from Grant Road. So, my mister told me to stop going to work and the children were small. So, I gave it up.

Then I became a housewife. As a housewife, I did small, small programs – *haldi kum kum*, Ganpati, all those festivals. I would hold these events in the attic of the police quarters. As a housewife, I didn't go outside the area. Sometimes I would organise a picnic with the ladies. Those activities for ladies I did when I came here.

I could do job and I could go to Thane, but since the children were small and I didn't have anyone to take care of them. So, I quit my job.

After working as a machine operator for five years, Surekha's husband forced her to quit her job. Though Surekha wanted to continue, despite the commute to Thane, her husband argued that the children were too young. Saying, 'I didn't have anyone to take care of them', Surekha realises today that it was her lack of family support that forced her to quit her job. She regrets leaving her job which had given her an identity and a sense of collective empowerment. Moving to Mumbai, Surekha adopted her new identity as a housewife. Although she had previously been active, for the next 14 years her activity was limited. She spent her days in her one-room *chawl*, cooking, cleaning and raising her children. Occasionally, she demonstrates her capabilities by organising cultural events for other housewives in the police quarters.

Not only did Surekha lose her identity as a worker by moving to Mumbai, she also entered a more difficult and impoverished life.

In the beginning, I didn't like it here. Because in Thane we had everything inside the house – especially water. But in the police quarters, it was outside the house and I had to carry it to the house. Only after I came, water came in the house. So I had a lot of hardship in my husband's place since everything is outside the house. Common bathroom – I didn't like that.

In Thane, Surekha had running water in her flat and her own toilet. In Mumbai, they lived in the police quarters' old dilapidated *chawl* rooms. After living in a flat, Surekha had difficulty living in one room that served as the kitchen, living room, and bedroom for her family of four. Her greatest hardship was the lack of running water in her room, which meant fetching water for a limited time each morning in competition with other women. This made performing her household duties more tedious and time-consuming. She no longer had time for outside activities; she was bound to her home.

For Jayashree Balliker, the circumstances around her marriage indicate the impediments that prevented her from achieving her ambitions. In the third stage of interviewing, she recounts the period between finishing her education and marrying.

[What level of education did you finish with?]

I finished my SSC.

[OK, then what did you do afterwards?]

Since I was the only child after my SSC, my mother she got operated for her cataract. So there was no one in the house. And after that few years she slipped into a coma. And I had a lot of my responsibilities. My father also he had a paralytic stroke immediately after he retired and even he slipped into a coma. He was ill for 9 months. So I had all my responsibilities on my head.

My mother, she expired before my marriage and my father expired after my marriage, after my daughter was born. I got married in the year 1988 and my father expired in 1995.

But from my in-laws place and in my father's place, I took care of my father and mother. I selected a boy living in the same locality just in the next lane. So it was a distance of two minutes. So even after my marriage, I used to look after my father, cook for him. Because they had given me birth so since I was the only child, it was my responsibility to look after my father. So I used to take care of him.

[And when you were growing up, what did you think you would be?]

I always wanted to become a doctor, but unfortunately I couldn't. But I'm working in a doctor's place. And I'm working there since, since 1985. He's a very well-known doctor. Dr. B. Shah. He specialises in ambulatory surgery clinic. He sees the patient at 8 in the morning and he discharges the patient by 10 am. And he operates. He's an urologist. He's a Parsi. He's operated even Balasaheb Thackeray and he's a very well known doctor.

I'm totally in charge in the clinic. And though I couldn't become a doctor, I'm into that field. So I'm feeling happy and I want my daughter to become a doctor.

As a child, Jayashree aspired to become a doctor; but she was unable to receive an education beyond her SSC. Sensitive about her limited education, Jayashree responds briefly when asked about it. As to her activities after her SSC, she provides a rationalisation for not going to university. As the only daughter, she remained home to assist her ill mother. Although her father's stroke occurred ten years later, she subsequently mentions her need to care for him as well. She seems to suggest that her love marriage was a matter of convenience. Her husband's home was only two minutes from her parents, so she could continue to care for her father after her marriage. The poor health of her parents transformed her from a 'pampered child' into a dutiful daughter, burdened by her role as a caretaker. Finally, Jayashree rationalises her curtailed education and inability to become a doctor by asserting that she works in a doctor's office. She uses her employer's excellent reputation to boost her own self-esteem and prestige. She tries to share his success by asserting that she is 'totally in

charge in the clinic'. Disappointed by her thwarted ambition to become a doctor, Jayashree now wants her daughter to become one.

Active Members

Entering love marriages against their families' wishes, Anuradha Navalkar and Nita Kanade find their lives completely altered. When circumstances beyond their control occur during their marriage, they must face the predicaments alone. As a result, both women regard their marriages as the main turning points in their lives. Beginning her life story with her marriage, Anuradha indicates its central significance.

You're interested in my life story. My life history is very long. Where can I start? From my marriage life. I done love marriage. My parents totally against this marriage because we are Brahman and they are Kshatriya. This is a vegetarian, non-vegetarian difference. Let's see. Let's try. We are first going to my husband's house also. But my brother-in-law was also very narrow-minded. "Why should we bring the marriage from this girl who is Brahman?"

Then someone also talked to my father, who asked me, "Is this the truth?"

What could I do? "No, this person is my friend's brother."

"Don't tell lie. Tell me truth. I know. I get all information."

So my big brother very shouted to me, "You can't understand we are Brahmins. Why should you?

You can't find a person from our caste?"

I'm telling them, we don't have our caste written on our heads, we don't wear a sign – I, Brahman. His grandmother also said, "I'm also not a low caste, scheduled caste. We are also Rajput which means high quality. So let us see you do the marriage." But she didn't speak to my father.

Anuradha married her Kshatriya husband despite her father's disapproval of inter-caste marriages. Animated and proud, Anuradha provides a detailed description of how she avoided an arranged marriage and eloped. Asserting her independence, she disagrees with the traditional view that people of different castes should not marry. At first, she is proud of her rebellion and open mind. Later, she relates how she suffered the consequences of her family's disapproval and abandonment.

Then after taking marriage, from that day, I'm starting my marriage life and tragedy after tragedy after tragedy is going on...So no one helped from my family.

Every time my husband would shout, "You belong to such a rich family and you came to my house and I don't give any one facility to you."

"It is OK. God gave my life, whatever. I am happy. If I married that other person, can I be happy to the end of my life?"

So. At the end of his life he said, "You wasted your life marrying me."

He told (our daughters) Meenal and Sonal, "Your mother is very mad. She had lots of activities, but she closed them and kept them in the cupboard because she joined with me and our nonsense stupid family."

Forget it. From childhood, my nature is what? Once an idea comes to the brain, I want to do this.

So whatever work I have, I must finish it before I can do another.

Real struggles started from his [her son's] birth because after a few days during that time, both my in-laws were sick in bed. What the God take my test, on test, on test! Five to six month after his birth, our house collapsed. From that time, the floor and wall were totally different [disconnected]. So at the last moment we went to the police station. And what can we do? In my house if someone is dying, what can we all do? After two months, my house collapsed. Then after two years, he [her husband] got some kidney problems.

Before relating the tragedies of her life, Anuradha assesses and rationalises them to herself.

Re-enacting a past discussion with her husband, Anuradha ostensibly defends her decision to marry him. She asserts that she could only be happy married to him and that she is satisfied with the life God has given her. Later, she also asserts that her life decisions reflect her nature, therefore there is no reason to have regrets. Yet, through her husband's voice, she expresses her regret. She relates how she sacrificed the comfort of her father's home and her aspirations, to marry him. After her house collapsed, she could not return to her parents' home and had to live in a shop for six years and a small one-room *chawl* for the next twelve. When her husband had kidney failure, his brothers refused to donate a kidney or provide financial assistance for dialysis. They did not even attend the funeral when he finally died.

Anuradha realises that her inter-caste marriage cost her her family's support as well as that of her husband's family. She expresses this sentiment when, in the second interview, she speculates,

So my mummy also very good to me. If she alive, no? [pause] my father agree to my marriage also because actually husband-wife relation is very different. She agrees with me.

Rather than disowning her, Anuradha believes that her father would have accepted her marriage had her mother lived. Since Anuradha was close to her mother, she believes her mother would have supported her and convinced her father. In this way, Anuradha also links her mother's death with her disempowering isolation from her family after her marriage.

Though Nita Kanade's parents do not disown her for marrying a South Indian, they cannot prevent him from physically abusing her. As a result, Nita's happy life working at Air India turns into seven years of isolation, humiliation and abuse. Nita extensively recounts her marriage and resulting disempowerment.

So we fell in love. We got registered marriage. Yeah. Actually, my parents were against it because I was Sindhi and he was South Indian. But against their wish I married him.

After marriage, he forced me to leave the job. Ahn...because of his...means, on his word I left the job. After marriage, then he opened a parlour for me. Before leaving the job, he said he promised would open a parlour for me. So he opened the parlour. I started working hard for the parlour. Near about 6 years I worked hard for the parlour. Slowly starting to improve...business started more and more. And he also started torturing me.

He was loving like a, you know, like a playboy womaniser. So he started beating on me, giving me torture. He used to roam around with other ladies, affairs with so many ladies. So arguments started between us. So he threw me out of the parlour after 6 years. 6 years.

And because of his torture...He used to beat me *all* the time. My daddy used to support me. My mummy used to support me. All of a sudden my daddy expired [died] four years back. So no one was to help me. I felt myself alone. And he started giving me more torture. He used to beat me like anything. Even he tried to kill me also.

The behaviour of Nita's husband after their marriage led to her disempowerment on multiple levels. Firstly, he 'forced her to leave the job' she loved. Promising to open a beauty parlour, he told her to quit the job where she felt appreciated and supported. Without this job, she no longer earned an income independent of her husband's family. She became financially dependent on him. Secondly, he forced her to stay home. Though he opened the beauty parlour, he only allowed Nita to work there seven years after she quit her job. As Nita explains, she became a 'simple' housewife.

Simpleness is, I never used to go down in my building. 2-3 months, 2-2 months. Just to sit inside the home, to cook food for my husband, for my mother-in-law. Just to take care of my children, so watching TV, cleaning the house. I never used to go months out of the house. That's why I was very simple. I was not knowing what is...what is out of world. What was going on out of this building. I was so simple. But because of these all things, I was forced to go out of the house. Yeah.

Though she had previously worked and gone to yoga classes, after her marriage Nita only stayed at home cooking and cleaning for her husband, mother-in-law and children. For months at a time, she did not leave her building. Watching TV and staying home, Nita became isolated and ignorant of the world in which she no longer participated.

Thirdly and most importantly, Nita's husband was unfaithful to her and began abusing her. After a year of marriage, he lost interest and demanded a divorce. Expecting her first child, Nita refused to sign the divorce papers. Her husband began having affairs with numerous women. When she protested, he began physically beating her. The abuse became pathological after he lost his leg in a motorcycle accident. Nita explains,

After the accident, he began to become a psycho. The wound was not healing, it would still drip blood and he couldn't go out. He blamed me and said I had my mother stay and while he was in the hospital I had fun. He was so mad and wanted other women, so my mother-in-law brought them here for him. I couldn't stand that. These days in Mumbai prostitutes are cheap. He would buy women. He tried to kill me twice. Once I ran out of the house and went to the police. They only gave me Rs. 100 so I could go to my mother's place.

Although Nita provided her husband excellent medical treatment when she was nine months pregnant, he accused her of neglecting him and having 'fun' during his hospitalisation. In losing his leg, he seems to have lost his self-esteem and masculine identity. To bolster her son's confidence, Nita's mother-in-law brought prostitutes to their home. Although Nita's husband had been a 'womaniser' since the beginning of their marriage, she cannot tolerate this behaviour in her own home. Her protests lead to more 'torture' and his attempt to kill her.

Nita's fourth experience of disempowerment results from an ineffective police force and legal process. Nita has no choice but to remain in this abusive marriage. After her husband tries to kill her, she runs barefoot in the middle of the night to the police station. They do not arrest her husband, but turn her away, giving her money to take a taxi to her parents' home. Divorce is also not an option for her, since it would leave her and her children homeless and destitute. All of his money and property are legally in his mother's name, therefore if Nita divorced him she would not receive anything. Finally, her father's attempt to help her through government agencies, described below, was to no avail.

After marriage, also they supported me because when my mother and father came to know that I'm not happy, they are torturing me, then, every time they would come to me to meet with me. When I told them I don't want to stay with such a man, he is torturing me, beating me, and going with other women. So my daddy took me around everywhere, even to the crime branches and social branches to ladies' organisations. He wrote big applications to the crime branches and social branches. He used to write big, big, applications to the ladies to the everywhere. He tried to save me, myself, from my husband's torture. Because of that he got a lot of tensions, hyper-tensions, and he got heart attack. Yeah, because of my problems only.

Everything...I feel myself guilty for that because from first only they were against this marriage and then to have married him. After my marriage, I came to know he's a womaniser, this, that...and no use. Till that I left my job and everything and become mother of two children. And no way remained for me. Then they support me a lot.

Now, I don't get help from my relatives. How can you force people to help? Perhaps they don't help because I married a South Indian. So I left job that I got soon after coming to Bombay – my uncle, Chairman of Board of Air India and so I got a job through his influence because I was not a graduate – just 12th standard. They warned me, but I was blind.

Although Nita's father went through the bureaucratic processes and appealed to numerous organisations, no one was able to help Nita. Nita believes that her situation caused his heart attack. Thus, she is further burdened by guilt. She regrets ignoring her family's warnings and now finds herself facing her problems alone. Though her father helped her, other relatives have abandoned her. With little family support, Nita had to face many disempowering experiences due to her marriage.

Inactive Members

Similar to Vishakha Raut, Jaya Goythale is disappointed in her lack of achievement compared to her siblings. She seems dissatisfied with her career development.

My father was a principal in Municipal Secondary School and after his retirement, he did law. And that is the, you know...he is a very ambitious person. Still he is guiding us. "*Baba*, you do this, you do that." Because my papa, you know, each and every time he is telling me, "You don't spare time like this. You just... You do your good books and after that you do your MA." Like that he was telling me.

[You received your LLB?]

Yes, I completed my law in Hinduja College.

[You didn't continue?]

I completed my law. I don't want to become a lawyer. Because I am doing my social work and see I will get a post in Shiv Sena and do my work, *na*. And uh, my all, two brothers are there. One is in management, the other is an advocate. Then after my sisters. One is serving in GRS. My family is well-to-do family.

Jaya's father clearly encouraged his children to become educated and successful. Though she went to university and studied law, she did not become a professional. In contrast, her siblings work for well-known companies. One brother is a company manager, the other brother is a lawyer and one sister plays cricket for Western Railways. Jaya's father encouraged her to continue her studies and get a Masters degree; instead she started a nursery. Jaya is sensitive about not having continued her studies and rationalises that her social work will lead to a political position and social prominence again.

Jaya's financial status also varies greatly from her parents' and siblings. Her parents own two floors of an old narrow building above some shops. The large living room contained luxurious Western furniture and a five-foot tall bust of Shivaji. Her brother and sister, who live with her parents, were both dressed in Western clothes. Her sister, who is a

cricket player, had short hair and was wearing a shirt and trousers. Her brother, an advocate, wore a high-quality shirt, tie and suit. They both spoke English extremely well and had a posh, cosmopolitan appearance. Jaya's family of four lives in a modest space consisting of one room, a narrow corridor that serves as the kitchen, and a small balcony. It is only slightly larger than Anuradha and Surekha's one-room *chawls*. In the main room during my visit, her husband sat in the corner wearing a T-shirt and towel, her daughter studied at the desk, while we sat in the other corner on small stools. Decorated with children's pictures, the room also serves as her nursery. The smell of the common toilets indicated their proximity. The stark contrast in dwellings is a reminder that Jaya married into a less wealthy family.

Jaya's husband is an industrial draftsman. He wanted to become an engineer but had to raise his siblings from the age of eighteen, after his father died. Shortly afterwards, his younger brother required heart surgery, which caused greater financial difficulty. Mr. Goythale supported his siblings and sent them to university to become a businessman and engineer. Though Jaya and her husband met in junior college, they only married when she was twenty-seven and he was twenty-eight. The delay may have been the result of his financial situation and responsibilities. Though she does not mention any disapproval regarding her marriage, her family may not have approved of her marrying someone so poor. At any rate, Jaya's economic situation certainly became worse after her marriage. Though she still had her nursery, being poor impeded her father's ambitious plans for her career development.

Marriage is a major turning point in the lives of all of these women. Coming from middle class families of varying wealth, all of them received a basic education and led relatively comfortable lives. Though difficulties arose, their parents were able to manage and protect them. When they married, their parents' assistance was limited, regardless of their desire to help. These women had to adjust to their new homes, financial situations and identities. Being housewives often resulted in their withdrawal from society and

disorientation as they gave up jobs and aspirations. In Jayashree's case, she had to curtail her education and marry according to the needs of her ill parents. As the only daughter, she was obliged to become her parents' caregiver when they fell ill. Thus, though marriage is most often the catalyst, it is circumstance requiring them to play the role of main caregiver and housekeeper which cause women to withdraw from society and give up career aspirations. In their milieu, these functions are always assigned to women. Though their parents may have encouraged them to actively participate in society, marriage or the illness of a family member forces women back into their traditional role as defined by the patriarchal bargain. Dealing with new identities and constraints imposed upon them by the patriarchal bargain, women lose some of their former confidence.

3. Empowerment: Returning to the Public Sphere

Facing the challenges of their new circumstances and the constraints of the patriarchal bargain, each woman eventually overcomes them and becomes empowered. The role Shiv Sena plays in each woman's empowerment varies, just as the extent of their empowerment depends on their interpretation of the patriarchal bargain. This final section explores the sources of empowerment each woman draws upon and how they overcome the obstacles stemming from their socio-economic circumstances and the Sena's patriarchal ideology.

Top Leaders

Political power as an elected government representative is central to Vishakha Raut's empowerment. Like her male counterpart, Chandrakant Padwal, Vishakha's initial narrative recounts her political career. She only relates personal events as they relate to her life story as a politician. She begins her narrative by explaining that her parents were not 'active in politics' and that her husband's involvement in the Sena introduced her to politics. Vishakha presents a gradual empowerment strongly tied to Shiv Sena and to her political ascension.

Vishakha's empowerment began when she volunteered to make a speech at a Mahila Aghadi event.

In this ward Dadar, Manohar Joshi had arranged one *haldi kum kum* function. The Honorable Speaker, today he is the Speaker of India, told the local leader here, the local *Vibagh Pramukh*, Vinod Khadkar, to invite the Chief Guest from Sharad Raut's house, that is my husband's house. So his wife came to our house to ask if one of us could be the Chief Guest for the function. So my mother-in-law refused, my sister-in-law also refused. So I said, "OK, I'll come as the Chief Guest." Then I had to speak there.

OK, I had to give a speech. I used to take part in elocution competitions in school. But I had never spoken on a public platform. So I decided...uh, I told my Mom, you give me something in writing. So she gave me a speech. At that time, the topic of Hindutva was very, very...uh...burning issue. So, uh...I literally mugged up the speech and I said it in that function. So the speech was full on Hindutva.

So Manohar Joshi was there for the function and all the other wings were there so, in that function, Manohar Joshi only declared me the *Mahila Shakha Pramukh* of that ward, OK. And uh, he declared me. I did not say yes, also I did not say no, also. So I came home and I told my husband, they have declared me as the *shakha pramukh*. "You want me to join it or you don't want me to join it." He said, "It's up to you. It's your decision. You want to join, you join. You don't want to join, you don't join." So I said, "I'll join."

Vishakha could not have joined Shiv Sena without her husband's influence and support; she was asked to speak because of his contribution to the party. Her mother wrote the speech on Hindutva and she simply memorised and recited. In addition, she also only accepted the position of *mahila shakha pramukh* after her husband agreed. Though her husband left the decision of joining up to her, he remained the 'gatekeeper' of her public activities and, therefore of her initial empowerment.

The second stage of Vishakha's empowerment results from running for an elected office. While her husband was instrumental in the first stage, legislation promoting women's political participation enabled the second. Though Vishakha became the *mahila shakha pramukh*, she was not very involved in the party and rarely visited the *shakha*. In 1992, the reservation of councillor seats for women, forced Shiv Sena to give election tickets to women, allowing Vishakha to compete.

And after that I would go to *shakha*, not very often. Sometimes I would go to the *shakha*. But then after that, there were the municipal elections and in the municipal elections, there were reservations for women in '92. And fortunately, my ward became the woman-reserved ward and it was women-in-general category ward. So, seven women filled out the form. So even I filled the form. So there were seven...six senior women who were working even before me in that constituency, but then we had a panel interview where we had to, you know, Balasaheb Thackeray and all the bigwigs of Shiv Sena were there.

So lucky for me, I don't know from where, the blue, I was very scared because Balasaheb was sitting there. I had never met him. That was my first encounter with him. He asked me some questions and I answered it so well. I also don't know who gave me the strength to answer those questions. And I was given the ticket, OK. I was given the ticket.

That was '92. I was actually pregnant that time. OK, it was some time in January or February and I was just in the early stages of my pregnancy. So, ...and I went on campaigning with a stomach, big stomach. And I campaigned door-to-door. That was the first time women were contesting. Everything was new for me. I had long hair, I had a hair cut. I had hair cut so I could appeal to the electorate. And then I had to go from door-to-door which was *very tiring* because I was pregnant. I had to climb some four-four stairs at a time. And with a big stomach it was becoming really awful, but then...I did it and I won the elections.

Then I started...then it was a regular affair. I started going to *shakha* every day, you know. And then I delivered a son in September. In fact, it had to be a caesarean. My previous child was a natural delivery. But this son, because I had...exerted a lot, it was a caesarean.

And after that, that '92, 6th December was uh...the Babri Masjid issue. Babri Masjid was pulled down, then there were riots in Mumbai. All this got me involved more and more into politics. Then it was a regular affair, like going to the *shakha* every day, doing people's work from your fund, the MLA fund, I mean the corporator's fund, OK.

And my colleague, all the Shiv Sainiks, even Manohar Joshi used to guide. And once you fall into the water...what you say...you start hitting...I mean...you start hitting your feet and moving your hands. You know how to swim. It was the house, the corporation hall was a noble experience for us. But, being uh...I mean, being educated also did help us. And then slowly, slowly I got so much absorbed into politics that today, I eat, sleep and drink politics. [laughs]

Vishakha describes her first election in great detail, indicating it as a turning point in her life.

She was transformed by the election campaign's competitive process. First, she competed with senior Shiv Sena women for the party's election ticket. She was 'scared' and is uncertain how she managed to answer the questions posed by the panel. Previously, her mother's speech had earned her the *shakha pramukh* post, but now she had to develop her own views. After getting the ticket, she physically transformed herself by cutting her hair to 'appeal to the electorate'. Despite being pregnant, she campaigned intensely. Making the election her first priority, she put her health and baby at risk. After winning the election, she became enveloped in politics and the party. She attended the *shakha* daily and participated in the Bombay Riots following the destruction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. She also learned to manage the funds allocated to her as the corporator. Though the experience was overwhelming, she learned a great deal on the job and succeeded with her male colleagues' support. This election plunged her into the public realm of politics that now defines her identity. Though she gave birth to a son in the same year as her election, she only mentions it because she required a caesarean delivery due to her campaign exertions. Becoming

corporator overshadows giving birth to a son, and gains her greater importance in her household.

The third stage of Vishakha's empowerment occurred when she became Mayor of Mumbai. This position established her as a prominent Shiv Sena politician.

And then in '97, I contested in another constituency. I won and I became the Mayor of Mumbai City. After I became the mayor, I came in close contact with the Shiv Sena's...uh...you know, party upper first layer of people.

After I got down from the mayor's post, Mr. Balasaheb Thackeray gave me uh...Siddhi Vinayak Temple. The famous temple of Mumbai. He made me the Chairperson of that temple. So I was there on Siddhi Vinayak temple for two years. And I could, I came in contact with many people. You know people from different fields...uh, different fields. I came in contact with the political big wigs of Delhi. They used to visit the temple right from Prime Minister Vajpayee to Lal Krishna Advani and all. I came in contact with them even when I was the mayor. But my contacts with them increased when I became the chairperson of this Siddhi Vinayak temple and I could directly administer the temple.

Today, since I'm actively involved in the Sena, I have become tough. I can face any emergency in life also. At times even death. OK. But um, and uh, Sena has taught me to become tough and how I should fight against injustice. I have learned the skill of how to behave with different kind of people, how to talk to them. I can understand the psychology...I am now so much involved with people that I can understand the psychology of a person. You know, sometimes it is very tiring also. Because a person is telling you one thing on your face, and in his mind it is something else. You know, I can read through a person. Now with this recent interaction with people, I can understand people very well. Then, uh, Sena has also taught me to be bold and fight against injustice. And it has made me tough. I can face any situation in life today, any emergency, and I can talk to anybody.

Moving her family to the Mayor's residence and meeting important public figures in India, Vishakha began to regard herself as important. This position led to more influential ones such as Chairperson of the Siddhi Vinayak Temple and MLA. As Chairperson of a wealthy temple, Vishakha was exposed to a higher level of politics, power and networking. This position also marked her importance in the party, as Bal Thackeray himself appointed her. In the final paragraph, Vishakha reflects on how participating in Shiv Sena has changed her personally. At the start of the narrative, she regards herself as a naïve, young housewife. Towards the end, she describes herself as 'tough', willing to 'fight' against injustice and face any challenge. Vishakha has become a savvy, ambitious politician who knows how to get things done.

While Vishakha attributes her transformation to Shiv Sena, her husband and family support have been essential to her empowerment. She acknowledges this in her interview.

My mom stays very close by, OK. And uh...my daughter literally grew up in my mother's place.

My daughter is very much attached to my mother's than this place and my son is very attached to this place than my mother's. Because when he was born, my mother-in-law took care of him and when my daughter was born, my mom took care of her.

Without my husband's support I cannot do this. He has fully supported me. Today even he eats, drinks and sleeps politics. He gives me time in the morning and even in the evening for my political...he helps me out with my work. He gives suggestions. He sometimes drafts letters when I have no time to do it. And he manages my entire election campaign. And when my driver is not available, he comes along with me. He drives me anywhere in the world. When there are conferences out of India or somewhere there are party meetings, he comes with me. He accompanies me. He makes it a point I don't go alone. And I'm not lonely.

And when in December when I go to Nagpur or the Assembly, he takes care of...my mother-in-law of course, but he takes care of my children. In my absence, he is a father to them, even a mother to them.

Sharad Raut not only allows Vishakha to join the Sena, but he actively supports her political career. Though he remains in the shadows, he drives her to meetings, accompanies her on business trips, runs her election campaigns and drafts her letters. Unencumbered by sex roles, Mr. Raut acts as his wife's assistant and a 'mother' to his children. This allows Vishakha to be the 'breadwinner', though her husband also has the family business.

Vishakha's mother and mother-in-law also support her career by caring for her children.

Vishakha's mother raised her daughter while she studied and now her mother-in-law raises her son. With her mother-in-law's assistance, Vishakha is not burdened by household responsibilities and can devote her time to her political career. Despite Shiv Sena's patriarchal bargain, Vishakha's constituency is her first priority, not her home.

Vishakha's interpretation of Thackeray's patriarchal bargain allows her to pursue her political career without guilt. As an MLA, Vishakha is very busy and rarely home.

Nonetheless, she does not feel that she is violating the Sena's patriarchal bargain. Vishakha loosely interprets Thackeray's emphasis on *sanskar* and a mother's love, stating,

Balasaheb always tells us that a woman who looks after her family well can look after her ward well. How I interpret it is that if I can take good care of my children and have an affinity towards my house, then I will have an affinity towards my ward. I don't feel that I have to do the cooking and cleaning.

Vishakha does not believe that she needs to be home to take care of her children. She feels that if she loves her children it does not matter whether she is there to feed them.

Despite Vishakha's convenient interpretation, she recognises that a woman requires her family's support to pursue a political career. Rather than questioning the patriarchal

constraints that prevent women from entering politics, Vishakha is merely grateful that she has the financial stability and family support required. She admits that she could not have a political career without her mother-in-law and husband's support. This recognition of her fortunate family situation is her tacit acceptance of the limits the patriarchal bargain imposes on women's political participation.

Shiv Sena does not play a central role in Meenakshi Kolgergonkar's empowerment. While Vishakha Raut's empowerment stemmed entirely from her participation in Shiv Sena, Meenakshi's initial empowerment stems from her religious faith.

And I have great faith in Swami Rupananda's teachings. I have his blessings and his blessing are forever with me. Alive, he went into self-immolation. He didn't get permission, but he did it. Nowadays, the government doesn't allow it at all. His blessings are always with me.

For work, I got the Best Nurse Commissioner's Award in 1997. Because of his grace I received it. I am still doing a selfless service to the people. The way I do my work in the corporation, I keep doing my social work. I am in the medical line. So late at night in my area, doctors call me after midnight to do work. I have done a lot of social work. Over 28 years I have been doing work.

Even in the middle of the night they call me for medical assistance. Even to put tubes in their noses or change catheter tubes. After midnight doctors call and I go. At midnight I leave and put the tube in the nose.

She credits the blessings of Swami Rupananda for her success and belief in her own abilities. Devoted to her swami, Meenakshi performs her job as a nurse and her 'work in the corporation'. Her devotion makes these acts into 'selfless service to the people' and 'social work'. Drawing strength from her faith, she provides medical assistance at all hours without concern for her safety. Her nursing award further enhances her self-confidence and self-esteem.

Like Vishakha, Meenakshi greatly relies on her husband's support. His active encouragement has enabled her to work as a full-time nurse, provide free medical assistance to neighbours and become a Shiv Sena leader. Meenakshi recognises the important role her husband plays in her empowerment.

And my husband supports me in doing all these things. He says go and do it. Don't get money. Do it for free.

We eat ready-made foods on Sundays. He cooks. He does all cooking, only *pori* he doesn't make. He enjoys cooking. Children are also happy because they eat their father's cooking. He feeds me also. He supports me also. When I went to UK for 6 months, he supported me. He also has

inspirational power and that's why I can do social work.

[Mohan Kolgergonkar:]

There is a phrase. Every successful man, a woman is behind him. Correct? In our case, it is reverse. Every successful woman there is a husband behind her. I have no problem.

Meenakshi's husband not only encourages Meenakshi's social work, he also enables her to work outside the home by cooking and cleaning. He rejects the patriarchal bargain and traditional gender roles through his actions. During Meenakshi's interview, Mr. Kolgergonkar washed the dishes and prepared dinner. When Meenakshi went to the UK as a private nurse for six months, he took care of the children. Recognising the importance of domestic tasks, Mr. Kolgergonkar does not feel devalued or less masculine by cooking or cleaning. He also realises that his wife's nursing job and Shiv Sena connections have benefited the family. The family lives in quarters provided by the hospital she works for. She also earned a significant salary as a private nurse in the USA and UK. Rejecting the patriarchal bargain, Mr. Kolgergonkar boasts that he is the man behind his wife's success.

Meenakshi's experiences as a private nurse in the UK and USA contributed to her empowerment. She gained a great deal of confidence from overcoming the challenges of travelling abroad for the first time.

In 1992, I wanted to go to London. I asked my husband, "Shall I go?"

He said, "Go."

I asked my son. He said I should go. Then I managed on my own. Without anyone I went on my own alone. I went to UK and lived there for 6 months. I didn't know where to go, language problems were there. But I managed. The way the British speak, I had grammar problem. For two weeks, I had a hard time because I couldn't understand what they said. They also tried to understand me. I always wore a sari and they gave me respect. Even in Lyle hospital they gave me respect. I found something different there in England. I heard and saw something different.

I didn't leave my husband and child for 28 years. I never went alone except when I went to England. I never went anywhere alone. Even to God's place, bazaar, and my mother's place I always went with someone. But I went to England alone. I am from a village then I went to Mumbai and then I went to the UK two times in 1994 and then the US. In my fate, I had a chance to go to foreign countries three times.

In 1997, I got a chance to go to the U.S. I thought in the U.S. I could go everywhere without fear. How did I go there? I went from Mumbai to New York to St. Louis. I had to change planes a lot. In New York, second place and then I took the third plane in St. Louis. And then they praise me. Everyone praised me. I got a lot of respect from them. At the airport they were going to receive me so I told them about the flight delay and not to come. I told them that I missed the flight and I would be travelling from Chicago and I told them the new time of arrival and all the information. Naturally, they were happy and the people in Arkansas told me I was very smart to call them. Then in St. Louis I spent one hour.

I got some dashing power – I will do it. And I behave like that. Let it be any work. Let it be any work, small or big. My brother-in-law is BSc, MSc and Ph.D. Through the office he wanted to go to the US and UK but he didn't get a visa. His daughter said, "Kaku [Aunt], how can you go, you cannot get a visa because my father did not get." I told her, "See, I will get it." I have Swami's blessings, I'm not afraid. I will get it." Second time, he went three times to U.S. Consulate and he couldn't get a 10-day visa. And I went there first time and I got a multiple visa for 10 years. I have faith in god and I believe in everything. I'm lucky, no? That's my dashing nature.

Though Meenakshi initially felt confused by cultural and language differences, she believes she gained the respect of her clients. Wearing her saris, she drew strength from her Indian traditions and identity. She felt that the staff at Lyle Hospital also respected her for this. Travelling to the UK exposed her to new ways that broadened her perspective and made her feel worldly. She no longer saw herself as a simple village girl. She was also proud that she got a visa to travel to the U.S. when her brother-in-law with a Ph.D. was rejected. Thus, Meenakshi not only gained respect from her clients abroad, but, more importantly, self-respect in relation to her extended family.

While Shiv Sena did not initiate Meenakshi's empowerment, the party has been an outlet for her to develop her skills and enhance her empowerment. Before joining Shiv Sena, Meenakshi actively provided free medical assistance in her area. For this reason, the party recruited her in 1993.

From 1993 onwards, I have been doing social work through Shiv Sena. After 1992, women were getting positions in Shiv Sena. And I kept on doing work for Shiv Sena in South Mumbai. We work with women who have problems in her house. If she has a hard time, we ask her what her hardships are, we then listen to her patiently, then we say we want to hear the other side. We have to hear your mother-in-law also. Then we ask her to bring her mother-in-law, we listen to their problems and give them advice. Husband's problems we also solve.

Our Mahila Aghadi, we have a one-week program and we have different activities during that one week. We have photographs of the programs which I showed you. We go to a garden and different places and we have art contests and give BMC certificates in art. We do Gujarati stick dancing competitions. We do these programs for six days. Everyone wants to show their art and this gives them confidence. They get encouraged to improve. We then have a prize ceremony.

See how powerful is the one word of Balasaheb Thackeray. We respect the Emperor of the Hindu Heart. He is the source of our inspiration. Why he is our inspiration? We became courageous and bold due to Balasaheb's inspiration. From this inspiration, I became daring. I realised that I unnecessarily have fear. So now I am not afraid of anything. On the surface of this earth, we can go anywhere. I am not afraid at all. Walking alone in the street, I have no fear. I am not at all afraid.

Meenakshi seems to have joined Shiv Sena with the hopes of getting a party position. In 1997, she became South Mumbai's *Uppa Vibagh Pramukh*. Joining Shiv Sena enabled her to channel her social work and gain leadership opportunities. By doing her social work

through Shiv Sena, she has built up her social network. By helping others, she has enhanced her self-esteem and learned new skills. She has also transferred her faith from her swami to Bal Thackeray. Just as her swami's blessings gave her confidence to become a nurse and perform social work, Thackeray's speeches inspire her to perform public work. Her faith in Thackeray has removed her fears so she can face new challenges. Not just confident, she is now 'daring'. This new 'daring' nature has enabled Meenakshi to face difficult personal experiences and fight for public issues. Involvement in Shiv Sena has raised her awareness of civic and world problems. She reads the newspaper and has opinions on political issues. With the Mahila Aghadi, she expresses these opinions forcefully as an activist. Below, Meenakshi describes her activism.

It was a holiday. There was a corporation strike. All went on strike. No water, rail and taxi stopped, bus stopped. Mahila Aghadi came out and they brought big and small metal water pots. All pots they brought. There was no water anywhere. There was no water to drink, then what about cooking. That was for one day.

I went to the C Ward office and all the gates were closed. Because people were *gheraoing* [circling] – holding the ward officers captive by surrounding them. We, all the women jumped over the gate and went inside. And we asked, "What is going on?" You reduce the pressure, but don't shut everything. We asked the ward officer. We talked with them and gave them the orders. And immediately water started coming.

When water was shutoff, Meenakshi addressed the problem at the grassroots and governmental level. She and the Mahila Aghadi gathered pots to collect the available water. When they found no water, they went to the ward office. She provided a reasonable solution – reducing the pressure – and gave them 'orders' to execute it. Through her Shiv Sena activism, she feels she has control over the government and her city and has gained a sense of personal efficacy in relation to Mumbai's bureaucratic institutions.

Meenakshi is also empowered in relation to her family. With Shiv Sena's assistance, her son Mahesh became an Indian Airlines pilot. Although he received top marks on the pilots' exam, he needed the Sena to demand that the airline hire a Maharashtrian. Now, after two years of unemployment, Mahesh is no longer dependent on his parents' financial support. In his interview, Mahesh expressed his respect for his mother.

You know, I didn't realise how much my mother had achieved until this point. There was an air force

function in which my parents came. As the first-ranked pilot, I had the honour of escorting the Chief Guest who was Manohar Joshi. During the reception, as well we were walking. Manohar Joshi saw my mother and reached out to her – "What are you doing here?" She told him that her son was graduating. "Oh, where is your son?" "He's behind you." It was a great surprise. I guess since most in the military are not political, he didn't know anyone. But when he recognised my mom, I realised how much she had achieved. I always knew she had achieved but...

At his graduation, Mahesh realised that his mother knew important people like Manohar Joshi, who was then the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Not only did Joshi recognise Meenakshi, but he 'reached out to her'. By knowing important public figures, Meenakshi is regarded as 'somebody' and has gained importance in her household.

Branch Leaders

The women in top leadership positions have very supportive families that encourage their professional careers and political activities. This support enables them to overcome the patriarchal bargain imposed by Shiv Sena's male leadership. The women branch leaders do not have the same family support. They are also housewives, and they have only their SSC. Yet both women have worked outside the home and have leadership positions in their local Sena branch.

Surekha Ubale's empowerment is strongly linked to being a Shiv Sena leader. After moving to Mumbai, Surekha remained a housewife for fourteen years with no activities outside her building. Her biographic narrative leaps from her move to Mumbai in 1985 to 1999, when she became Khetwadi's *mahila shakha pramukh*. She recounts joining Shiv Sena and its impact on her life.

I joined Shiv Sena now five years ago. The young men here told me, "*Vahini*, we are proposing your name to the *shakha pramukh*." I didn't think they would give it to me. But they gave it to me. My name came. So when the responsibility came to me, I took it over and carried out the work of the *shakha pramukh*.

Similar to Vishakha Raut, Surekha joined Shiv Sena as the *mahila shakha pramukh*. She was given the position based on her leadership among the women in the police quarters. Organising cultural events for the women, Surekha was regarded as a leader by the young men who asked her to join. Thus, Surekha immediately became an active leader, expanding on her cultural activities with the Sena's financial and political support.

During my *shakha pramukh* period, I did the work well. Using the MLA fund, I did the water work. I brought water to every *chawl* room. And using the corporator's fund, I had a concrete floor put in the back. I did these two important things in my four-year period as *shakha pramukh* for which the police quarters will always remember. All of them thought water will not come in the house, but I brought it. They thought the weight of the tanks on the roof of these old buildings would prevent us from getting water. But that was not the case and I got it done successfully. I showed them it was possible.

Surekha's Sena activities have empowered her. She derives pride from bringing plumbing into the building and paving the courtyard. Surekha earned the esteem of her neighbours by improving the quality of life in the police quarters. This genuine sense of leadership has also transformed her self-image.

After becoming *shakha pramukh*, there were many changes in me. I felt like I was somebody. Not just a housewife. I became a responsible person, thinking we should do something good for the people. I felt that I should do whatever I can for the people. I did it and will continue to help the people.

When you join in Shiv Sena, these things come automatically. *Morcha* [demonstrations], mission. Those things women must do that. If there is any injustice then you have to go over there and threaten the people. These are the works of women and men of Shiv Sena. We learn from Meena-tai [*Vibagh Pramukh*]. She gave us guidance. All these things I learned from her and I do it. And how women should keep on doing these things, fighting.

Now we have to remain a fighter, you cannot return to being a normal person. It is not possible to be normal in that atmosphere. Women must become courageous otherwise they cannot go ahead. That is what I think. These are not the old days. Before women only cooked and never went outside. That is not the way modern women are. Modern women can take care of the house as well as work outside. Both things she can do.

Similar to Naik, Surekha began to regard herself as 'somebody' important when she became *mahila shakha pramukh*. Granted a leadership position, she no longer regarded herself as a housewife concerned only with her children and husband. She 'became a responsible person' who had to help her community. With the guidance of leaders like Meena Kamble, Surekha developed the capabilities for 'fighting' against 'injustices' and for the public good. With the Sena's support, Surekha no longer feels limited to household. She believes she must care for her house and fight for her community.

The Sena network gives Surekha material benefits and confidence to act without concern for the consequences. Due to material benefits, her family supports her Sena work.

After I joined Shiv Sena, I became daring. Daring means not to be afraid of anyone, whatever you think, do it. After joining Shiv Sena, I got the advantage. That is the most important advantage. I saw something. I got a chance to get introduced to many elite people – MLAs, Corporators. That is a very important thing. For my son's college admissions, the MLA himself came to Wilson College. This help the MLA gave me. The MLA did this.

Powerful Sena politicians assist members by releasing them from criminal charges and helping their children enter university. As a Shiv Sena leader, Surekha can network with high-ranking Shiv Sena MLAs and corporators who use their influence to assist her. This makes Surekha feel like 'somebody' in society. Even Surekha's son feels a sense of importance among his friends, who admire the fact that his mother is a *shakha pramukh*.

Unlike Vishakha and Meenakshi, Surekha takes the Sena's patriarchal bargain literally – she first takes care of her house and then participates in Sena activities. While her husband was not an obstacle to her social work, he did not actively support her.

My mister didn't have any objections about joining Shiv Sena. He was quite frank with me so didn't create any obstacles. He used to do his job and I was doing my work. In addition, I was doing all of my work in the house and then doing my social work. Just because I joined Shiv Sena, I didn't stop my work at home. By doing husband's things, then I did Shiv Sena work. It was not only social work, but I also took care of the family. First, I would take care of my work at home and then I did other things. I took care of my children and husband and then I did social work. Only Shiv Sena, no.

I was doing my work well. So, my mister had no objections. It is not that I went to Shiv Sena so there was nothing in the house and my children and husband went hungry. That is not the case. First, I took care of my house and then I did Shiv Sena work.

Though Surekha's husband was a Congress supporter, he did not mind Surekha's political activities as long as it did not interfere with her household duties. A police officer, Surekha's husband had unusual hours. He typically returned home from work at midnight. This allowed Surekha to participate in the Sena until he came home. However, she had the double burden of working inside and outside the home. Though she claims she can work in and outside the house, she receives some help from her daughter, who sometimes cleans and cooks dinner.

Becoming a widow in February 2002, Surekha became disempowered again. In August 2002, she was still mourning her husband's death while trying to find a job and keep her *chawl* room. Since then, Surekha has relied on the Sena network and community more. With the support of Shiv Sena, Surekha has tried to maintain the empowerment she had achieved up to that point. Below she shares how the Sena has helped her since her husband's suicide.

The corporator came and told the doctors that these are our people so you must take care of them. All

the doctors came and started giving him treatment immediately. All people gave their help. A police statement was made. Everyone helped.

All my Shiv Sena women were in the hospital with me, Meena-tai. My relatives were not with me since they live a long distance away in Thane. But all these women were with me. My neighbours were with my kids who stayed with them. Here all my Mahila Aghadi was with me in the hospital. Meena-tai in the hospital. Karlekar. People from Mumbai and my husband's side were here with me. All these people were with me.

Help...they...in the police department, they do everything by law. They are trying to give me or my son a job in the police department. That is going on. And a MLA came with me to meet someone, but because of the holiday we couldn't meet the person. But we met in Amul Ghatge. Navalkar, Patekar, all of them are trying to find me a job...Meena-tai, Kasekar. I haven't found a job yet, but they are trying to get me one.

Shiv Sena MLAs and the Mahila Aghadi came immediately to Surekha's aid when her husband committed suicide. At the hospital, the corporators used their influence to get her husband the best medical assistance. Since Surekha had no relatives in Mumbai, the Mahila Aghadi women stayed with her in the hospital and gave her the familial support she required. Now, after her husband's death, Shiv Sena politicians are trying to help her get a job or start a business so she can pay the rent and stay in Mumbai.

Mahila Aghadi's collective empowerment also gives Surekha emotional support to face her depression. She draws on their fighting spirit to face her present situation.

Don't be afraid. Fear, no. You must not be afraid. You must face whatever comes. If you are scared, you are not a Shiv Sainik. You face it. That is Shiv Sena's principle. See me, what calamity has come on me. I can't be afraid. If I am afraid, I cannot go out alone. So if I don't go out of the home due to fear, who will do my business? Nobody. Finally, since I have to do it. I must take the fear out of my mind. If I keep the fear in my mind, it is useless.

When I go to *shakha*, I feel better. Chatting with the women, whatever sadness in my mind, it goes away. I forget my worries. In the *shakha*, we sit and chat with people. Doing social work makes me feel better. If I sit at home in the house, I get a lot of tension. That's why when I finish the work in my house, I go to the *shakha*. I don't sit at home in the house.

Simply going to the *shakha* helps Surekha deal with her depression. The biweekly meetings at Opera House give her a reason to dress up and leave her house. For two hours each week, she escapes her own problems by helping other women through the Mahila Aghadi.

Although Jayashree Ballikar continued working after her marriage, joining Shiv Sena was a turning point in her life. In her initial narrative, Jayashree immediately mentions Shiv Sena and relates it to her confident outlook.

There are too many important events. My first thing is today, where I am, because I decide nothing is impossible in this world. Everything is possible. So if I decide something, I achieve that. And one thing, to achieve something, you have to work hard.

And I'm into the social field because when my daughter was hardly 2 months old, we had these gutter-*galli* [lane] house problems and everything. So everybody was suffering. So I said, "Hey, Come on! We have our MLA. We can go to him, we can approach him." And so I went to him. He saw my follow-up and then he told me, "Why don't you work for me?" I said, "Very fine." Then the party saw my work. I got a party post.

I'm very happy today. I'm working also. I keep myself totally busy. And I feel each and every lady can do something if they decide. Sitting home is not the only thing.

Jayashree portrays herself as a responsible and energetic person who takes initiative. In addressing the overflowing gutter in her lane, she encouraged her neighbours and brought the problem to the attention of the MLA herself. She took charge of the gutter problem and managed to resolve it with the MLA's assistance. Due to her hard work, she was asked to join Shiv Sena and eventually received her position as *mahila shakha pramukh*.

Jayashree's story about joining Shiv Sena is similar to her story about getting her first job. Like the doctor, Padwal recognised Jayashree's innate capabilities and gave her an opportunity to work for the party. Jayashree had a great deal of self-confidence and abilities before joining Shiv Sena. Yet, without a university degree, she was limited to being a housewife and a receptionist. Shiv Sena enabled her to live up to her ambitions on the basis of her innate abilities rather than her educational qualifications. In Shiv Sena, she could become *mahila shakha pramukh* based on her hard work and bold character. Through her Shiv Sena network, she also started her own business. With her Shiv Sena connections, Jayashree got a license to open a food stall under the Sena's *zunka bhaker* scheme. She was allowed to build a food stall in central Mumbai in exchange for providing low-cost meals of *zunka* [black-eyed peas] and *bhaker* [flat bread]. With no experience, Jayashree started her stall and quit her job as a receptionist. Although her stall is not very profitable, she has learned how to run a business, manage staff and serve customers. Thus, Shiv Sena has enabled her empowerment by recognising her abilities, providing opportunities to develop them and giving her privileged access to society.

The use of force plays a role in enhancing Jayashree's sense of efficacy in Mumbai.

She does not regard her acts of force as violence, but as necessary self-defence. Below she explains her perceived acts of vigilantism.

I'm not scared of anything in life. See life and death, it is always there. And I'm not scared of dying because one day everyone has to die, either today or tomorrow. If you're afraid, if I do this someone will kill me, if I do this I'll die, that fear you should not have in you. That is why I can do everything.

One incident I remember. I was nearly 8 months pregnant. And uh, I was coming from my clinic, from my job. I was coming home. And one person he purposely came near me and he dashed me. He spoke something very vulgar. So with that 8-month-stomach, I ran after him and I hit him on the road. Because women, they have some status. You cannot speak anything vulgar about them. And for such people to teach them a lesson, you should behave like that.

Violence is a different matter. It's a different thing. And to protect ourselves. It is very necessary. If you are scared of anything. See, you must have read newspapers and hear the TV. Jayamala she was thrown out of the train. She lost two legs. Then one girl was raped just one or two months back. So this is because you are scared of these men. You know, you should not be scared of anything. OK. I'll die. I'll also pull you down. I'll lose my life anyway. That Jayamala, she lost her two legs. So she should have pulled that drug addict also. Even he would have lost his two legs so he would know what that girl has suffered these couple years. These people, you know, they think if I try to help this lady, if I try to help this person. They'll take revenge. This fear you should not have. And this is what I don't have. I'm not scared of anything.

Jayashree links her ability to use force to her confidence that she 'can do everything'. She regards Mumbai as a hostile city in which law and moral values are constantly violated. In such a city, she feels she must enforce these laws and uphold morality with force. When she was attacked during her pregnancy, she retaliated. She was not intimidated and wanted the attacker to pay for his misdemeanour. She feels empowered by retaliating with force and does not feel like a helpless victim fearful of leaving her house. This also enables her to act in other ways. She is willing to take risks and achieve her goals. Within Shiv Sena, she also gains prestige for her unhesitating willingness to fight. Other Mahila Agahdi members admire Jayashree who is always in front of a *morcha*, throwing stones or attacking bus drivers. Women who, like Jayashree, are willing to use force typically rise within the party ranks. They are the ones who come to the aid of women experiencing abuse and other sensitive situations.

Jayashree's empowerment in relation to her family is not clear. When asked about her husband's support she states, "He never said 'no' to anything. That's the big moral support." Like Surekha's husband, Mr. Ballikar does not actively support or endorse her participation

in Shiv Sena. Jayashree is simply grateful that he does not object. This suggests that Jayashree's husband controls her access to the public sphere. Therefore, she must contend with the patriarchal bargain by 'being able to do everything'. She must complete her household duties, care for her child, work in the office and then participate in Shiv Sena.

At present, she is free from the constraint of her husband's approval, since they appear to be separated. She did not openly admit to being separated, but only stated that he was in Goa. Other Mahila Aghadi members mentioned her changed marital status. Now, she appears to be a single mother supporting and raising her 10-year old daughter. As a result, she no longer abides by the Sena's admonition that women must first take care of their children, then work outside the home. As Jayashree's daughter states,

I come alone to school. She's busy. She goes to office in morning and then gives my lunch. And again, she goes to office in evening at 4pm. Then in the evening at 9 pm she's at home.

While Jayashree cares for her daughter by preparing meals and actively supporting her activities, she is rarely home. Jayashree's daughter goes to school by herself and comes home to an empty house after karate practice. She helps her mother by taking phone messages. Although she is only ten years old, Jayashree's daughter appears very mature and independent. She does not mind staying home alone in the evenings while her mother participates in Shiv Sena activities and says, "I get some peace." At present, she shows no interest in Shiv Sena, but she has adopted her mother's dream of becoming a doctor.

Active Members

While the women leaders draw power from the authority of their party positions, active members must derive theirs from other sources. Despite not having a title, Anuradha Navalkar and Nita Kanade diligently attend Sena meetings every week. While some women only attend important functions where the press or influential politicians are present, Anuradha and Nita regularly go to their local *shakha* and the biweekly Opera House women's meetings. Coincidentally, they are both single mothers and the heads of their households. Anuradha has been a widow for fourteen years and Nita has been separated

from her husband for six. As heads of their households, they can attend Shiv Sena meetings whenever they desire. They are not constrained by their husband's schedules or constraints. However it is difficult for them to become party leaders, since they must raise their children alone and financially support their families. They must always put their family before the party.

The illness and death of Anuradha Navalkar's husband contributed to her disempowerment as well as her initial empowerment. The most significant turning point in her life, her husband's kidney failure, she faced alone. Taking responsibility for her husband's life and her children's future, Anuradha became empowered 'from within'. This transformation is displayed in her initial narrative.

Doctor said, "Take this and this he told *ki* [um], both kidneys are collapsed 60 to 65% -- chronic." So that time also very trouble. What can we do? So I asked doctor, "What can we do?" "There are two ways – We do transplant, otherwise dialysis. And dialysis is very costly and very troublesome for that patient." What can I do? I'm very tired. "What is it? Why are you?" My husband was reading my face. "It's nothing." "Don't tell lie." "You are a very angry man now. So you take medicine and rest." "So what is doctor telling, admit." "Tsk, tsk. Doctor is telling mad way."

When we come back I call my in-laws. "That is the problem. What can we do?" If I take the decision alone, they all shout at me. I'm telling them, "Your brother is suffering this. What can we do? The doctors are giving two options – dialysis or transplant. The doctor is very brilliant and he said, 'If you can get an able person, kidney, then you can get a transplant. If a family member gives a kidney, then you get a very good match.' So, I'm not asking you to give me some part of you body. I am a totally different person, but your brother, no?" That time he told me, *ki*, "Everything doing, but money problems. It is not easy." No. If you agree, I can manage. Lion's Club, all that. So many trusts are giving contributions for that. "No, we are not interested." And he kept the phone down.

Then after what can I...the doctor said the patient has only 2-3 weeks. He said, "Call everyone to your family."

Why?

"I want to discuss."

I'm the alone person in the family, I'm the head. Tell me whatever you have to. What is the truth?

"You sit there. Anything you want to drink?"

I'm OK. You tell me first.

Still I was...then I controlled myself because my children were small and my husband is a very angry person. OK. *Chalo* [Let's go]. We are continuing with the dialysis. What can we do? That time 15 days he is admitted to Nair hospital. That time there was the nephrologist, Dr. Shina. He was very costly. Better you go to government hospital. We were thinking private and government. Majority of government hospitals are very clean because they don't have authority to do the cheating. How can I alone manage through all this? Then after we admitted in NAIR hospital, then after suffering 2-3 hours. We constantly see death near my eyes and around him. But I control.

So long time, we're having problem. Only one *chapati* [flat bread] and rice. That time we're going to hospital, blood-pressure going down, half dialysis. This patient is OK. Writing the discharge paper.

That time doctor said, "See, let's see. Otherwise you stay one day."
That time he shouted, "You can't see. Nonsense, we're going out, no."
"OK, OK. (laughs gently) You be quiet."
But they asked me, "What is he thinking about?"
"He understand that my timing is over."
"Don't go there. You stand there and talk about me."
He's touching my hand. First time he touched my right hand. [9 second pause]
Then he said, "Your right hand is very strong. I don't want. You give your left hand [starts crying]
because its weak like me also." [Cries.]
Talking about me.
"With whom you're talking, the patient is no more." [Crying]

From her husband's first diagnosis to his death, Anuradha changed from a housewife and mother to the head of household who makes all the decisions. Initially, she was shocked and confused by the news of his kidney failure. She decided to not tell her husband the full extent of his condition. Seeking help from her in-laws, she asked her brothers-in-law to donate a kidney for their brother. She had already identified sources for financial assistance for the transplant – the Lion's Club. Nonetheless, her in-laws simply hung up the phone. Until then, she used the pronoun 'we' when wondering about the possibilities. Afterwards, she only asks, "What can I do?" When she realised her husband's family had abandoned her, she took full responsibility for her family and made all the decisions. Thus, when the doctor asked her to gather the family to discuss the matter she responded, "I'm the alone person in the family, I'm the head. Tell me whatever you have to." She decided to prolong her husband's life with dialysis and a strict diet.

Although he lives for three years rather than just three weeks, he eventually dies in the hospital after a routine check-up.

Then after his death, also they also knew that time, we decided, no one simply man or woman through our lives can fight for our lives. You can fight for your life on your own. So you never wait for someone to help me. Whatever you want, you trust your heart and you take a decision. Then I continued my life. [cries] All the kids are very small. Only 500 rupees, I have that time. Then what can I do? Two-three months I'm really depressed. Then after 11 years he's gone. I can't feel I'm alone. When I'm tired, someone's voice comes to me, "I am with you." So for that I'm doing the work. Sometimes we are feeling if that person is with me I can do better.

Anuradha's in-laws refused to attend the funeral since her son was to perform the funeral rites, rather than Anil's brothers. Though her sister offered help, she refused it, realising that this initial help would end and that she would have to support her family for the rest of her life. Though she was depressed and had only five hundred rupees, she accepted her

circumstances and started tutoring children to support her family. When she felt discouraged, she heard her husband's voice encouraging her. Imagining her husband is with her, Anuradha draws power from within to raise her children. With this power, she has provided all three with a university education.

Anuradha does not mention Shiv Sena in her initial narrative. Joining Shiv Sena after her first daughter finishes university, she was not empowered through the party. Instead, she became empowered by facing the many challenges after her marriage – abandonment by her father, the collapse of her house, her husband's illness and his death. She states,

My house problem is very lonely. I'm telling, I giving good education and you do future well. You don't go ever and see the back. Past is going, present is also going on with you. In future you want to find your own. You take your decision in your heart. What to do? What to do? Depend on god. Depend on work. 20% depend on god and 80% work. Because if you work, you have patience for hard work, then automatically god helps you. So for 18 years, I have *tough* fight to my life. All problems, so I'm feeling light. One wish is there, I don't take anyone's help to my life. I think about god.

Anuradha is proud of how she has lived her life – making her own decisions and working hard against adverse circumstances. She credits god and hard work, rather than Shiv Sena, for her success.

Though Anuradha's empowerment comes from 'power within', her participation in Shiv Sena has enabled her to develop it further. Now that her children are adults, Shiv Sena gives her an outlet for her energy and ambitions.

My suffering changed my nature. All my dreams are in my son, Swapnil, then I can do it. I can't sleep properly at night, worried about my life. 5 am – wake up. Water plants, water, wash clothes, keep milk, make *tiffin*. Take bath and *puja*. Give breakfast. Start my radio and listen to old songs. 9:30 to 12, tuitions. 4:30-5pm Sonal goes until 7:30. First, I make my dinner then at 7pm I go to *shakha*. Three days in Chirabazar. Bapu asked the other day, "Who are you? Now, she's a grandmother, so busy." Bapu is like a family relation.

So, but no one gives importance, but I feeling good. I'm doing!...Everyday *busy*. Because before also I'm doing the work. If you're given some way in doing the work. Now we're knowing many officers. I know all rules, how can I do the work. How can I take work for other people. And how to contact offices. And if you're worried about your own problems. So you're doing nothing about social problems in our country. So if you are thinking, different minds, different things.

Though Anuradha entrusts her future security in her son Swapnil, she still needs to focus on an activity. After completing her household duties, she goes to the *shakha* and Shiv Sena meetings. She enjoys the company of her fellow Shiv Sainiks. Considering 'Bapu', Chandrakant Padwal, a 'family relation', Anuradha regards the Sena as her extended family.

Though she does not have a title, she enjoys keeping busy with Sena activities. Through these activities she learns how to manage the bureaucracy and meets influential politicians who can assist her. Through her Sena connections, she got inexpensive textbooks for her son and a discount for her daughter's hospitalisation. Finally, by assisting others, she forgets about her own problems. Though her children feel that she should not participate in Shiv Sena unless she has a party position, she values the access to society that the Sena provides.

By enabling Nita's separation from her abusive husband, the Mahila Aghadi effectively freed her from her abusive household and initiated her empowerment. Nita recounts the turning point in her life when she joined Shiv Sena.

To protect myself from his torture, I joined Shiv Sena. Some of my friends told me to join it so you'll get the support. The ladies will support you, they will save you. And you'll get then self-confidence. Self-confidence. Every...first time you know I was a simple lady. I never go anywhere. Just to sit at home. I didn't even know this building. See all this torturing and all. So to save myself, I joined Shiv Sena.

Some of Shiv Sena ladies came to my place to do settlement with my husband and mother-in-law to ask them why they are beating me, torturing me. The Sena ladies came and tried to talk to my husband and mother-in-law, but they wouldn't listen. So they forced them to go. I would have left. I couldn't stand living with that woman who used to torture me.

One day Shinde called me and told me, "Why don't you join?" Only now you should join. We can't protect you night and day. We have our own families to take care of. You should join and then you will get confidence and fight. You must fight for yourself. So if you've got any problem, midnight also learn to fight. So this thing came to my mind that I also should join this Shiv Sena. And because of that I also joined and I feel too much energy in myself.

He is not beating me now because he knows I also have support from my ladies, my seniors, especially Meena-tai Kamble is with me. She supports me every time. Even Meena-tai came to my shop also. Whenever something happened, whenever he tortures me, Meena-tai comes, immediately comes. Meenatai is always with me. So he knows she's got a lot of support from the ladies. Even from the police, everywhere she go there is support. Now she is not alone so he stopped beating me. But indirectly still he is torturing me, small things and all.

Nita is unable to divorce her husband since it would leave her homeless and destitute.

Within these constraints, the Mahila Aghadi has enabled Nita's personal empowerment not only by protecting her, but also forcing her husband and mother-in-law to leave the flat for Nita and give her a job in their beauty parlour. The collective force of the Mahila Aghadi, led by Meena Kamble, protects Nita from her husband's abuse. Free from her husband's 'power over' her and the patriarchal bargain, Nita can actively participate in Shiv Sena and other groups.

By joining the Mahila Aghadi, Nita has also gained the confidence necessary to defend herself and live alone. Regarding her personal transformation, Nita elaborates:

After joining Shiv Sena, I started totally changing myself. I got a lot of confidence. Then I became... all things to do. After joining, my colleagues, my seniors they appreciate me. And in all these *morchas*, I used to go with them. Slowly, slowly, I felt myself become strong. So now the situation little bit changing for me. Now my husband is not beating me. But little bit still he is harassing me. But anyway, I can save myself, I can go anywhere. Even I become a member of the Mohalla Committee in the police station. Every month I sit with them in meetings and I can go for any problem. First, I used to be scared. Scared to go to anywhere in police station. Now I'm not scared. Anyway, I go freely without any fear. Now I help other ladies who are in need, who are tortured by their in-laws. All this is because of Shiv Sena. Shiv Sena ladies are very nice. They are so brave. They can face any problem by themselves. They don't need anybody's help.

Mohalla Committee. In every month in our area, they conduct a meeting with responsible people of that area to make peace within that area. Peace and all for the...so every people because I know what's the problems. To solve the problems of other people. Even I suffered a lot. So after that thing, all my problems of life, I myself started helping others. Social work, social work. Every month I started conducting the meeting with the police committee, that's called the mohalla. Done.

An active member of the Mumbai Central *shakha*, Nita also attends different Mahila Aghadi meetings daily. Within her block of flats, her neighbours come to her regarding municipal problems (e.g., sewage and garbage disposal). Recently, Nita stopped the molestation of a girl living on the street near her home. Along with the Mahila Aghadi, she beat the boys who were harassing the girl. With the Mahila Aghadi's initial inspiration, Nita has become a self-reliant and confident woman by helping others.

Inactive Members

Since Jaya Goythale became an inactive member only after she lost her position as corporator of Girgaum, her empowerment resembles that of the women in leadership positions. Similar to Vishakha Raut, Jaya has an extremely supportive family that encourages her and enables her to participate in Shiv Sena. Shiv Sena was also a primary enabler of her empowerment when the party endorsed her nursery. Becoming a Shiv Sena corporator further enabled her personal empowerment. As Jaya explains,

[How did you become introduced to Shiv Sena?]

You know, when I started my nursery, they were co-operative with me. From that I have started. Means, they have helped me a lot, Shiv Sainiks, to start my nursery. They put a board and after they helped me. Door to door I went and told, I have started my nursery. When I started my nursery, only 17 students were there. Then at the end of that year, I got 35 students. Then I started nursery.

See, I have done a lot in my area, like the beautification; then after that, road repairs, then after pothole repairs and then conservancy problems. So many water connections were there. So I had to look after

the water connections also. Then after repairs of building also. I had to take care of my area. And I was the Education Chairperson and then after one year, I was Deputy Speaker of the House.

I developed myself doing activities and all. See, when I go to an area then people would call, "Jaya-tai, Jaya-tai." Like that they were calling. That is what I call respect. When we are doing something for the people, then naturally they will respect us. I never say 'no' to them. I'll do it. I'll do it. I'll tell them that. When I do, they will be happy. And they are very co-operative, all the people from my area. So, I developed myself.

Apparently, Jaya joined Shiv Sena after the party publicised her nursery. Previously, she felt disempowered working for a company. By endorsing her nursery, Shiv Sena allowed her to successfully start and build her own business. Jaya's nursery is her prime source of empowerment. Not only was she able to teach children, an activity she loves, but she was also able to build an influential network in her community. She has also learned the skills for running her own business. Jaya later used these capabilities as corporator. In her narrative, she relates the success of her nursery to her accomplishments as corporator. Jaya is extremely proud of having been corporator and lists both the work she did and her various titles. While the Sena collective initiated Jaya's empowerment by allowing her to start her nursery and giving her the election ticket, she claims to have also developed her own capabilities and gained the respect of the community through her work.

Similar to Vishakha, Jaya has relied on her entire family in order to participate in politics and business. Originally, she started her nursery in her parents' home. Living next door to her mother, she had 24-hour childcare. Now that Jaya's daughter is older, she watches her brother when Jaya is busy. Jaya recognises the family's support, which demonstrates her empowerment in relation to her husband, parents and children.

[How did your parents encourage you?]

They encourage me from all sides. I'm a mother so when I go out they will take care of my kids. The problem is about kids only. When they are too small, at the time my Mom took care of my Sneha and Siddharth. So that I can go out, no? Otherwise, how can I go. This is great from their side. If I'm late, "Jaya, just give me a tinkle, where you are." Because she's taking care, *na*?

I can manage my home and work easily when my husband is very co-operative towards me and my kids are there. You know my daughter, she is a very understanding daughter. Anything Mama, I'm there, don't worry, you go. She's telling me like that. After 8 or 9 pm, some programme will be there and my husband is there to look after me. And he is always with me, my husband and even my brothers. And all Shiv Sainiks are brothers only. They are taking so much care of us. If a programme is there, they will come with us. No? We are all like family members.

See sometimes what happens, some problems there in my area so I have to rush. So she will take care of my son -- "Mama, you go. I will give him food." Like that she is helping me. Then after my

husband, see at night time, I can't go alone so he will come with me naturally. And my daughter and my mama are staying down you know and they are helping me, like you know [3 seconds]. There is good co-operation from them. We are a happy family.

See, man can go anywhere, anytime. There are restrictions for the women. And in our Marathi *Sanskriti* there is a restriction. And Balasaheb is right! You must take care of your home and family first and then do social work. He's right. And it's the same principle...I'm doing the work, what he guides us. We can do each and every thing. Women can do each and every thing. We can do it. With the help of the men we can do it, socially.

Though Jaya acknowledges that she could not have entered politics without her family's help, she also agrees with Thackeray that a woman must first take care of her family and then perform social work. She fails to recognise that her mother took care of her children while she worked outside the home. Since she had free and easy childcare from her mother and later her daughter, she does not question the restriction of *Sanskriti*. As a former politician, she might have proposed providing affordable childcare for low-income women, but instead she simply regards herself as fortunate for having a co-operative family.

In contrast, lower class housewives from Khetwadi *shakha*, who recently joined Mahila Aghadi and are the majority of inactive members, usually do not have the support of their family to participate freely outside their home. Mahila Aghadi's membership base consists primarily of such housewives of the Maratha caste. Particularly constrained by the patriarchal bargain, their participation is determined by their husband's consent and their life cycle position. As a young housewife from Khetwadi *shakha* explains,

I have freedom to do social work from my husband. Freedom is required in order to go. Women need support from men to work for organisations like Shiv Sena. Those women who always come, have support from their men. If they don't get support, they don't go.

These women have no choice but to adhere to Thackeray's admonition to 'first take care of the home and then do social work'. The reality of their situation demands that they perform their household duties and not upset their husbands on whom they are financially dependent.

There are many people in our houses so we are very happy to be housewives. We cannot do outside work actively. Even though we don't have time to work actively, still we do try to help.

I am a housewife. I like social work, but I cannot do it because I have small children. But still I will come and give some help (Khetwadi *shakha*).

As housewives with small children, they cannot make a commitment to the Sena. However, the Mahila Aghadi provides them with a space to exercise their interest in community

service and be more than just housewives "cooking and caring for children." Thus, they may participate casually in *haldi kumkum* ceremonies and restrict their attendance to important meetings to avoid inconveniencing their family.

The Mahila Aghadi offers these housewives a gradual process of personal empowerment, in accordance with their life cycle position. As their children become older and they have more free time, they can increase their involvement in the Sena. As another Khetwadi *shakha* housewife states,

I like to do outside things. Now my children are grown up so I have time after my mister goes to work. They [Mahila Aghadi] found us cottage-industry work so that we can run our home and earn a little money.

Providing women with work they can do at home, the Mahila Aghadi is responsive to their needs. Allowing women to participate according to their personal circumstances, Mahila Aghadi enables them to expand their roles as housewives and become progressively personally empowered, without disturbing the patriarchal bargain.

III. Negotiating Empowerment in Shiv Sena

While all seven women experience similar empowerment processes, a few have begun to experience disillusionment with Shiv Sena. Though none of the women directly challenge the patriarchal bargain, many Mahila Aghadi members have started to question the cultural prescriptions that limit women's participation in the public sphere. In this section, I examine the ways in which the Sena limits the personal empowerment of women and their impact on Surekha Ubale, Anuradha Navalkar, Jaya Goythale and other women in the Sena.

1. Recognising and Resisting the Patriarchal Bargain

Though women are becoming personally empowered within the Sena's patriarchal bargain, some women are also beginning to question and resist it. Accepting their duty to their homes, they see themselves as 'super women' who are capable of doing it all – home,

children, job as well as political activism. Managing their time well, the women in the Opera House meeting proudly state,

A woman is this, the whole family is dependent on us – one woman. First we do all things for the family because they are dependent on us, and still we can do social work. If we want to go out at 10pm we finish our work at 9pm so that there should not be any bother of preparation of food for our husband and children (Opera House Meeting 2000).

Not just accepting this double burden, they also assert that women are stronger than men.

A wife is not half of her husband. The opposite is true – she is full and her husband is half. Women are full. Women can work more, we can fight more and we can sacrifice more for others. If a husband dies, the wife can stand, but if the wife dies, the husband collapses. He can't do anything without her help (Opera House Meeting 2000).

Once a woman starts burning, she creates an inferno throughout society. She is equal to men in doing work so they should not consider her less or lower...today's women can do anything and men must not forget it (Opera House Meeting 2000).

These bold statements made at the Opera House meeting seem to indicate a nascent feminist outlook. Not only are women questioning gender inequality, but they also are recognising that male dominance underlies their oppression.

In a male dominated society, women have no opportunities. Women's all around progress is not possible because this is a male dominated society...So women must have the same power as men and she must be given the same opportunity and equal status with men (Opera House Meeting 2000).

This recognition of male dominance indicates a shift in their consciousness. Unequal power relations between men and women, rather than practical needs like water shortage, are recognised as women's primary problem. As a result, they have begun to demand equal opportunities and rights. Though they may accept the patriarchal bargain, they do not accept its implicit subordination of women.

Not simply blaming men, these women question the patriarchal bargain and its cultural ramifications a situation predicted by Flavia Agnes's theory. According to Agnes, participation in politics will eventually result in the erosion of conservative notions about women's roles and status in society as women struggle for equality within Hindu Right organisations (Agnes 1994). A Khetwadi *shakha* member provides evidence of this in her belief that expectations of what a good Hindu woman should be was preventing them from progressing as compared to Christian women.

Our women, even though they walk outside the house and move around society, still they are

looked down upon. So it is not that this job is not good. That job is good, but it depends on us [our perception]. All jobs are good. It depends on how we take it and look at it. If a woman takes a police job, they immediately criticise her and say, "That woman is not good." Why? Because she became a police officer. But that is not right. We need to move with the men but it depends on how we do it. You can move with men and still maintain your reputation. Christian girls can become nurses, they can move with men, but not our [Hindu] women (Opera House Meeting 2000).

She questions social prescriptions, propagated as Hindu culture, that prevent women from taking active roles in society and interacting with men as equals. She views them as detrimental to women's careers and overall development. Mahila Aghadi members also trace these social prescriptions and attitudes to the patriarchal bargain and Hindu texts like *Manusmirti* (Manu's social prescriptions), against which they are beginning to express resentment. Rejecting the greater value traditionally given to sons over daughters and questioning its cultural and practical ramifications, one woman at the Opera House meeting stated,

In the present world, daughters pay attention to their parents. But in the old days we were always demanding that we should get a son. We would go to god and beg that we should get a son. But these sons they don't take care of parents. They stay with their parents until they get married. Once they marry, they are with their wife and do whatever she says. They forget their indebtedness to their parents. And then parents cry. And this kind of thing is going on today. So at least when parents die the daughter comes to put water in their mouths and will cry for them, but these sons, they have to invite them. In the end, the daughter comes and takes care of them (Opera House Meeting 2000).

Traditionally, sons are valued more than daughters, because they are needed for death rituals and to provide their parents financial security in their old-age. Joining their husband's family, daughters are expected to care for their in-laws. Through their exposure to domestic problems, Mahila Aghadi members realise that the patriarchal bargain no longer works and therefore does not justify the lower value given to daughters. Awareness of the abuse of women by their in-laws has also caused Mahila Aghadi members to question whether the patriarchal bargain ever 'worked' for women.

Analysing and questioning the patriarchal bargain, they also realise that women are often complicit in the subordination of other women. They see older women demanding dowry as a means of reciprocation for the suffering they experienced. As was described in the Khetwadi *shakha*, "These older women's mentality is that they suffered, therefore she [her daughter-in-law] must also suffer" (Khetwadi meeting, July 2000). This mentality is an

expression of a mother-in-law's need to assert 'power over' her daughter-in-law, an integral part of the patriarchal bargain. Since the older woman was oppressed by her in-laws and husband, she must do the same to her daughter-in-law, who will one day exercise 'power over' her own daughter-in-law. In recognising and questioning this vicious cycle of 'power over', these members of the Mahila Aghadi are taking the first steps towards undermining the patriarchal bargain.

2. Disillusionment

Among the seven women, only Jaya Goythale has become disillusioned with Shiv Sena. Having lost her seat as the Girgaum corporator, she no longer goes to the *shakha*. Dilip Naik's remarks suggest that Jaya did not get the ticket precisely because she abided by the patriarchal bargain, making her family her first priority. The *shakha* found her ability to meet their needs constrained by her family duty and adherence to cultural prescriptions. They preferred giving the ticket to a figurehead, Meenal Tsovatkar, whose husband would actually perform the duties of corporator. Jaya did not mention the loss of her seat and only responded briefly to my question.

[I was surprised when I returned and you weren't the corporator. What happened?]
See after all its our party's decision. No problem. I'll help her. It's not the thing that I don't get the ticket. I'll get the ticket next time. And I'm not nervous. I was nervous four to five days, but its OK. See by birth, by nature we are...our nature is helping nature so there is no need of post and all. We can do our work, our social work anytime. And when she is there, I'll help her.

See, I'm running my nursery. I'm a good housewife. I look after my kids. See, if I will be a good housewife, my kids will say, see Mama is doing something for us. She's taking education. And that will be a good example for them. No?

Though she claims to have been 'nervous' only initially and that she will continue to work for the party, she no longer comes to the *shakha* or addresses peoples' problems in the way Dilip Naik continues to do (see chapter 6). She only comes to the *shakha* when she is invited for an event. While she may hope for an election ticket in the future, she has started to think about getting her Master's degree. Still unwilling to challenge the patriarchal bargain that made her an ineffective corporator, she claims that continuing her education will benefit her children – thus, she would still be adhering to the duty to her children.

Unlike Jaya, Vishakha Raut recognises that she has to give her constituency first priority to be re-elected. Vishakha also realises that the electorate and party are fickle and, so does not depend on them. As she states,

I have not shut down my business. Because politics is not my bread and butter. My bread and butter is my business. So I mean, I'm not in politics because I have nothing to do. I'm in politics because I like serving people. OK. But the day I think that people throw me away, then I have something to fall back on. There will not be a void in my life.

Vishakha has used her political influence to start her own business. She is also involved in political organisations not affiliated with Shiv Sena. Therefore, if the Sena abandons her, she has other outlets for her public participation and other sources of empowerment.

Other women, like Surekha Ubale and Nita Kanade, are discovering that empowerment through Shiv Sena has its limitations. Though the Sena has not rejected or abandoned them, they have found that as heads of their households they cannot depend on Shiv Sena to support them. They have discovered that they need financial stability and independence to fully participate in the Sena. Suddenly becoming a widow and head of household, Surekha Ubale has found Shiv Sena's support helpful, but insufficient.

Nothing was bad until now. Life events happened quickly in my life – early marriage, quickly got son. And nineteen years passed on my wedding day and I don't feel that so many years have passed. The days passed fast, I didn't understand. My husband also died three months ago. I don't feel he is not there but that he is still in the hospital somewhere else. I don't feel that he has died. (Voice low, sad and slower).

After my husband died, I changed. Before, I was doing all the things, I was adventurous. Now I am a little weak. I don't feel that old strength now. Now, I don't have the support of my husband. Though there are relatives and organisations, our main support is our husband. It cannot substitute our husband's support. I felt it – his absence. In all days, I knew there was somebody behind me. But now, there is no comparison to his support. From last month, I recognised my weakness.

Still, I am scared since my children are not grown up yet. Though I am weak, I try to stand up since I must raise my children. My children are still young, I must educate them. It is my obligation to see that they are on their way. My daughter's wedding. We have to do that thing. So it is not good that I become weak in my spirit. Whatever it is, we feel it.

I haven't found a job yet, but they are trying to get me one. Some kind of job. Try, try again for a job. Efforts are going on... Now I am no longer young, forty years. So, I wasn't able to find a job. What could I do? I realised I must do some business. From that a person can spring up. So initially, I must do a business on a small scale. First, I need to take care of my business and then I can do for others. I have more interest in women's business. So let three-four women come together and do something for the family. That is my objective. The women who have no support like me, they will get some help from this. That is my idea. So if we make some profit, I will get my things going and then help other people. I spoke to the corporator about it and he said, "Find some four women and do it."

But if I get a job then I cannot do this plan that is why I am waiting. I am worried about losing my quarters. This is not my own house, these are the quarters. I need to have some place otherwise I cannot do anything. So I need a place to live. I am trying for a job. I am worried about my living

accommodations. So I can do something as well as the job. That's why I'm trying to get a job first, so I can keep my quarters, do a business and other activities.

Three months after her husband's death, Surekha fights for her survival in Mumbai. She wants to remain in her *chawl* in Mumbai, not return to Thane. This requires finding a means to pay the rent and support her children. At the time of the interview, Surekha attempted to start her own food stall in front of the police station. Though she has Shiv Sena's moral support and police protection, she could not earn enough to pay her rent. After selling *pao-bhaji* (breaded vegetables) for two months, she decided to become a policewoman, (it is typical for widows to be offered employment by their husbands' former employer). Surekha hesitated to become a police officer because she would no longer be able to participate in Shiv Sena; but the party was unable to find her a job that would support her family.

Nita Kanade has also found Shiv Sena's support insufficient in freeing her from her husband's abuse. He still comes to her flat occasionally and harasses her. Though she has taken a self-defense course, Nita realises that she must be financially independent of her husband to end the abuse. She cannot rely on the Shiv Sena women to always come to her aid.

I must work. He threw me out of the beauty parlour and now some other lady works there. I used to work part-time. Now I need some part-time work since the morning I have the children and I have to cook. Though I have this *bai* [servant], I do the cooking.

You can't call the Sena every time. They came the first time when my cousin called them. Then those women from Dadar came but they told me we can't come every time. You'd better join so you can defend yourself. Meena-tai used to help me, but, in front of her, he would agree, but then he would come to me and say you shamed me in public and beat me.

Now I want to be financially independent. He gives me some money for children, but the same amount as six years ago. That's not enough. Prices have gone up and I want to be financially independent from him and have my own rooms. I only want peace. I'm willing to work this hard. Standing on the street with arthritis to get peace. Even the street woman sleeping there says she can't stand all day long.

With the Mahila Aghadi's help, Nita initially kept her three-rooms, worked at her husband's beauty parlour and was given child-support. Now, six year later, her husband 'threw her out of the beauty parlour' and has sold one of the rooms she lived in. She lives in two rooms with her children and receives the same amount of child-support as six years ago. With one servant, Nita's financial situation is better than Surekha's. Nonetheless, she wants an income

so she is can be completely independent from her abusive husband. In August 2002, Nita started her own food stall. Unfortunately, the stall was not profitable and she faced hostile competition from other food vendors. The police also expected a monthly payment since her business was illegal. She closed the food stall a month later when her workers quit after being threatened by the nearby shops. Undeterred, Nita plans to start another business in the hopes of gaining complete freedom from her husband.

3. Conflict Within the Mahila Aghadi

The Sena's patriarchal bargain is not the only limitation on women's empowerment through the Mahila Aghadi. Relationships within a collective can also inhibit the empowerment process of individuals (Rowlands 1997). Within the Mahila Aghadi, power struggles amongst members limit the empowerment and participation of individual women. Though a collective force, the Mahila Aghadi is not a unified group. Within the Mahila Aghadi, different types of women play different roles according to their class and level of education. As the *uppa vibagh pramukh* of Central Mumbai Arundhati Chorge intimated, some women speak well in public, while others are better at throwing stones.

The introduction of women's reservations in Maharashtra has politicised these differences. Often the allocation of election tickets is based upon a woman's education level or her caste. Women's reservations and the Shiv Sena's rise to power in 1995 resulted in an influx of politically ambitious women. As among the men, this has created a rift within the Mahila Aghadi between the loyal old guard, represented by officers like Arundhati Chorge, and educated, upper class newcomers like Dr. Neelam Gorhe.

A physician, Neelam Gorhe is a feminist who has been involved in the autonomous women's movement as well as different political parties. Neelam has much to offer the Sena and Mahila Aghadi in terms of developing and articulating their agenda for women. As a result, she was appointed head of the Maharashtra government's Women's Development Finance Corporation immediately upon entering the Sena. Working mostly with the male

leadership, Neelam is regarded with resentment by the Mahila Aghadi leadership. Aware of this resentment, Neelam states,

I have support from Shiv Sena leadership. But I don't have much support from among Mahila Aghadi leaders. I have got excellent support from the masses of Shiv Sena *mahila* [women]. The support is basically coming from women who are lower than the *shakha pramukh*, the common women. Atrei [SOAS Ph.D. researcher] told me that the young girls also appreciate my work because I am always pro-women's rights regarding atrocities against women. But when it comes to all these leaders... They think that I have come from outside and that I have not been a part of the organisation for very long. They think I am just pampered by the leadership. Maybe it is because the moment I joined the party I became the head of the Women's Development Finance Corporation. A lot of women must be striving for that post. There is a lot of competition.

Confirming Neelam's suspicions, the Mahila Aghadi leaders I interviewed see her as an opportunistic newcomer.

This resentment appears to be the reason Neelam did not get an election ticket for the Assembly in the 2000 elections. Thackeray wanted "to send her to the Assembly," but could not because he needed to "take care of his old people" (Thackeray interview, August 21, 2000). With a 'power over' perspective, the Mahila Aghadi leadership regards Neelam as a competitor who threatens to take election tickets they feel they deserve. Preventing her from receiving an election ticket in 2000, this resentment initially impeded her participation in the Sena. However, she became a Member of the Legislative Council in 2002 due to her close relationship with Udhav Thackeray. Shiv Sena men and women who resent her sudden rise in status have spread rumours regarding the nature of her relationship with Udhav. Her story illustrates how power struggles within the Mahila Aghadi can potentially suppress individual women's empowerment.

Anuradha Navalkar also faces resentment from other members for her active involvement in the Sena and strong relationships with male leaders. As a result, she does not tell the women in her *shakha* the extent of her participation. For example, Anuradha was invited to participate in a *rakhi bandhan* ceremony led by the former Cultural Minister, Pramod Navalkar. When another leader of her *shakha* who was unable to attend asked Anuradha if she was going, she claimed she was not, when in fact she was. She later explained to me that the other woman would have resented her going. Anuradha's

participation in Sena activities has been stifled by her inactive *shakha*. As a result, she has turned to other Sena groups to satisfy her desire to be actively involved. Along these lines, she has developed a strong relationship with Bapu. She visits his office every evening, where she fraternizes with the men and discusses problems in her area. In addition, she attends district-level and Mumbai-level meetings. In this way, she circumvents the constraints imposed by her *shakha* on her personal empowerment and political activism.

Yet, recently, Anuradha has begun to curtail her participation in Shiv Sena. Ironically, she uses the patriarchal bargain as an excuse for her reduced involvement. In 2002, she told me that she refused the corporation ticket for Girgaum because her eldest daughter was expecting her first child.

So many times Dilip said, "Madam, why you lose your seat?" So many peoples shouting at me that time. Before Meenal [her daughter] was pregnant, they offered me the corporation ticket. I know I can win more votes, but I must complete my family duty first. Same that time Meenal 's delivery is there. So I can do it. But then after Meenal must hear from her in-laws, "Your Mummy goes here and there, she doesn't want to complete her duty." I can't listen. For the election, I'm doing the work. That time campaigning, no? In our area, no one knows Meenal [Sena candidate]. Everyone asks, "Madam, why aren't you running? We thought you were standing." No, I'm not free. She's there so you give your votes for her.

Anuradha claims she had to take care of her daughter after her delivery and therefore could not run for corporator. Yet, only her children corroborated her claim that she was given the corporation ticket, which was reserved for an OBC woman. In fact, other Mahila Aghadi members pointed out to me that Anuradha as a Brahman could not have run for the Girgaum seat. Thus, it appears that Anuradha told her children that the Sena offered her the corporation ticket in order to allay their fears that the party did not appreciate her efforts. Though Anuradha assisted in the 2002 election campaigns, she no longer attends the *shakha* on a daily basis. She tells Bapu that she is now a grandmother and must attend to her duties. Finding herself not progressing within the party, Anuradha retreats to the domestic sphere where she can be appreciated as a grandmother. Since the Sena's patriarchal bargain supports family duty, she can gradually reduce her involvement in the Sena without completely breaking off her ties.

Conclusion

Despite the marginalisation of the Mahila Aghadi by male *sainiks* and the systemic limitations to women's participation in Shiv Sena, the seven life stories we have studied here indicate that Shiv Sena affords women degrees of empowerment. They suggest that empowerment is a dynamic process that can occur gradually and is experienced differently by individual women whose needs and circumstances vary. The extent of a woman's personal empowerment appears to vary according to her life cycle, family support, socio-economic circumstances and individual preferences. The empowerment process is cyclical rather than linear, so that disempowerment can follow initial empowerment.

In addition, although the Mahila Aghadi accepts the Sena's patriarchal bargain, group and individual interviews suggest that some women have begun to question male dominance as well as the patriarchal bargain, expressing views more in line with feminism than with the Hindu Right. On the other hand, power struggles within the Mahila Aghadi not only problematize the apparent unity of the Sena, but pose an additional threat to women's personal empowerment. Yet, despite the limitations posed by the Sena's patriarchal bargain and the Mahila Aghadi's internal conflicts, the seven female Shiv Sainiks' life stories illustrate how individual women are able to use the space the Shiv Sena provides them to empower themselves according to their own abilities and situations.

CONCLUSIONS: Comparing Men's & Women's Empowerment

Shiv Sena is a violent political party whose targets have changed to retain its popular appeal. It started as an ethnic-nationalist social movement that organised around the deprivations of Maharashtrians in relation to other ethno-linguistic groups in Mumbai. By attacking South Indians as well as Gujarati and Parsi middle classes, Shiv Sena attempted to secure jobs for Maharashtrian men and restore their hegemonic masculinity in Mumbai. To accommodate a wider electoral base, Shiv Sena became a Hindu nationalist party whose targets were Muslims and non-Hindus. Despite its electoral success (culminating in the 1996 elections), it has not definitively solved municipal problems such as water supply, sewage or housing. One of the paradoxes of Shiv Sena's success is that it has offered empowerment to a group (women) that its patriarchal ideology classifies as inferior and subservient. Its view of the position of women is akin to that of inter-war Germany – '*Kinder, Küche, Kirche*'¹. According to Bal Thackeray, women belong in the home, where they must cook and raise their children with Hindu values. Though women ostensibly accept these patriarchal policies, their political activities effectively deconstruct the Sena's gender-based division between private and public spaces. In fact, the life histories of Shiv Sainiks indicate that women are achieving more sustainable empowerment than their male colleagues.

I. Men's Empowerment

Shiv Sena men experience a cyclical process of empowerment. Men who join Shiv Sena tend to come from disempowered conditions. They belong to economically disadvantaged families and face prospects of unemployment or blue-collar labour as youths. Not only marginalised in the public sphere, these men are also ashamed and disempowered in the private sphere where they cannot provide financial support to their families. Joining Shiv Sena, they no longer feel alone in their marginalised existence in Mumbai's competitive

¹The Nazi regime promoted the idea that women's activities should be confined to those relating to children, cooking and the church.

socio-economic landscape. Congregating in the local *shakha*, they experience collective empowerment and are inspired by Bal Thackeray's charisma and support. Through their public spectacles during religious festivals, *bandhs* and riots, Shiv Sainiks momentarily dominate and control Mumbai. The men's ability to solve civic and personal problems through Shiv Sena's political network also enhances their sense of efficacy. If their involvement in Shiv Sena leads to employment or a political position, then this empowerment in the public sphere translates into greater esteem in their households. Though the Sena's patriarchal ideology assumes that men are the heads of their households, they actually must earn this place by economically supporting their family.

1. Collective Public Empowerment

All four men who participated in the biographic interviews valued their Shiv Sena affiliation because it gave them a public identity. For Padwal, Naik and Purandare, participation in Shiv Sena led to political positions in the party or to employment. Though Sameer Vedak has not found white-collar employment yet, his Shiv Sena social work gives him a purpose, an identity in his community and a small income. By joining Shiv Sena, they all believe they have a public identity and can enact change in their city. Yet this collective empowerment has only translated into personal empowerment for Padwal and Naik, who became elected politicians. By serving their constituency, they discovered their own self-worth and value. As political representatives, they developed their communication skills, knowledge and personal networks to meet the needs of their constituency. Although Naik no longer has a political position, he still uses these skills to assist his former constituency through Shiv Sena and other organisations.

Sameer Vedak and Jagdish Purandare have only achieved limited public empowerment through Shiv Sena. They both rely solely on Shiv Sena for their public identity and self-esteem. Vedak moves from one Shiv Sena patron to another hoping to find permanent employment. While he has gained self-esteem from performing social work, he still depends

upon his parents financially. Purandare cannot detach himself from the party, despite Shiv Sena's corruption and attack on his son. He continues to vote for Shiv Sena and actively participates in the Sena Union, placing himself and his job at risk. He is unable to fight for his beliefs without Shiv Sena's support. Thus, in the public sphere Vedak and Purandare have not achieved personal empowerment.

2. Limitations in the Private Sphere

In the private sphere, none of the Shiv Sena men have achieved significant empowerment in relation to their families. Upholding Shiv Sena's gender division of public and private spheres, these men spend little time in their homes, which are dominated by their wives. Though Padwal, as a professional politician for thirty years, is a successful breadwinner, he remains in public most of the day, performing his political duties. In the evening, he visits different Sena *shakhas* and finally sits in his personal office from 9 p.m. until midnight. Despite being unemployed, Dilip Naik only spends his mornings at home. He spends the rest of his day visiting the corporation and the offices of various organisations with which he is affiliated. In 2002, Naik was planning to reduce the time he spends at home further by eating fewer meals. He stated,

This year I thought I will only have one meal in the morning and then have something in the night – not a meal. We eat twice a day, once in the house. It's good for health also. Overeating does not make us strong. In the night, no question of going home just to eat.

[Does your wife miss you?]

No, no, no. She has friends outside – 2 or 3 ladies.

By eating only one meal at home, Naik effectively remains outside his home from 8 a.m. until late in the night. He also reduces the number of mouths to be fed. Not adding to the family income, he chooses to reduce its costs by eating less. He leaves the house for his wife to dominate and spend time with her friends. When I visited their home, Mrs. Naik welcomed me ceremoniously with a coconut and rice. In this manner, she marked her proprietorship over the home. Though Naik's wife and sons regard him with respect, he

must compete with them for space in their two rooms. His wife must cook and his sons need to study at home; therefore, Naik positions himself in the public sphere Shiv Sena provides.

While participation in Shiv Sena has given Vedak and Purandare some respect in the private sphere, neither dominates his household. Vedak's parents still support him financially. He works with his father in the sculpture workshop. Among his siblings, Vedak ranks last since he has not achieved much since graduating from university. As a result, he spends most of his time outside the house with his fellow Shiv Sainiks. Yet his parents are proud that he performs social work and believe he has become mature through his involvement in Shiv Sena.

Purandare's extended family, which once rejected him, now reaches out to him due to his Shiv Sena connections. By giving his nephews jobs, he has gained 'power over' his elder brothers who marginalised him as a child. While his sons are proud of their father for achieving so much despite being an orphan, they resent his participation in Shiv Sena. Rarely at home, Purandare spent his time in the public sphere establishing himself as a Shiv Sainik. Mrs. Purandare dominated the home by providing a stable income, cooking for the family and raising their sons. As a result, the younger son regards her as the 'backbone of the family'. His elder son wishes Purandare had spent more time at home or at work rather than with the party that violently attacked him. Due to the attack, Purandare and his wife regard themselves as 'the losers'. His family is further upset that he still votes for the Sena.

Overall, Shiv Sena men are not personally empowered in the private sphere. In most cases their family respects them as the father and may appreciate the material benefits Shiv Sena affiliation brings. Many Shiv Sena families have mobile phones, new cars and computers due to their fathers' political positions. In the case of Dilip Naik, his elder son realised that these economic benefits are fleeting. Usually, the family remains removed from Shiv Sena activities and politics. Children typically claim to agree with Shiv Sena's ideology, but are not interested in joining the organisation. Apart from material benefits,

they are unaffected by their father's participation in Shiv Sena. Wives also remain uninvolved as their husbands actively separate their Shiv Sena politics from the private sphere. Insisting that their wives are simple housewives, uninterested in politics, Shiv Sena men do not want their wives to enter this public sphere, which belongs to them. Since their wives already dominate the private sphere, they do not want them treading into their domain as well.

II. Women's Empowerment

According to the biographic interviews, women in Shiv Sena begin their lives in supportive families. Gaining confidence in their 'pampered' childhood, they participate actively in school and become interested in pursuing their education or working. After completing their education and working for a short period, they face challenging family circumstances. They are expected to marry and have children or they must care for elderly or ill parents. If their mothers provide childcare, they can remain active in the public sphere otherwise they must remain at home. Women who enter marriages not sanctioned by their parents are left unsupported. They must remain at home to care for their children, since most middle-class women in India cannot afford childcare.

The socio-economic circumstances of middle-class women who work for Shiv Sena make them dependent on their families. Family circumstances determine the extent of a woman's withdrawal from the public sphere and the level of her disempowerment. For most women, the early years of marriage are disempowering, as they transition from their parents' supportive environment to establish themselves in their husband's family. It is disorienting and difficult to adjust to a new household and lose the support of parents and siblings. Typically, they can only return to the public sphere when their children are older. If the woman has a supportive husband and family, then she can participate in the public sphere early on like Vishakha Raut. However, it is not easy for them to re-establish a public identity. They cannot always return to their old job and start from where they left off.

1. Empowerment through Shiv Sena

Shiv Sena assists women in this transition by gradually introducing them to Mumbai's political landscape. The party serves as a bridge between the private and public spheres, allowing women to retain their status in the private sphere while gaining a Shiv Sena identity in public. By attending Shiv Sena events and meetings, they meet men and women in their community as well as influential Shiv Sena politicians. Participating in election campaigns, organising cultural events and actively protesting, they become aware of political and social issues. More importantly, they learn how to manage Mumbai's bureaucracy to achieve their ends. By helping their neighbours solve personal and civic problems through their Sena network, women also gain confidence in themselves and their own public identity.

The Shiv Sena's role in each woman's empowerment process varies. For many women Shiv Sena initiated the empowerment process by providing easy access to the public sphere. Young lower-middle class wives are able to occasionally attend Mahila Aghadi events and remain in the Shiv Sena network. The Sena allows women to become involved and eventually empowered at their own pace, according to their life cycle and family demands.

In the case of Nita Kanade, Shiv Sena played a dramatic and essential part in her empowerment by freeing her from the source of her disempowerment – her husband and mother-in-law. By forcing Nita's husband to leave their flat and pay her child support, the Sena allowed her to be free from physical abuse at home. Nita needed to be empowered in the private sphere of her household before she could be empowered in the public sphere. Participating in the public sphere has further improved her status at home. She has the support of Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi when confronting her husband. This demonstrates how empowerment in the public and private spheres are interrelated and affect one another.

Giving women leadership positions is another significant way Shiv Sena empowers them. Like men, women gain self-confidence from the public recognition of their leadership. The respect and authority attached to a leadership position increases their sense

of efficacy. In serving the needs of their fellow Sainiks and constituency, women also gain the skills necessary to fulfil their responsibilities.

For many confident women, Shiv Sena does not initiate their empowerment, but enhances it. Anuradha Navalkar and Meenakshi Kolgeronkar entered Shiv Sena after overcoming their disempowerment themselves. Anuradha began playing the role of head of household and negotiating the public sphere when her husband was diagnosed with kidney failure. She joined Shiv Sena after successfully raising her children by herself. Shiv Sena gives her an outlet for her boundless energy and allows her to perform social work on a larger scale. The Shiv Sena 'family' or political network gives her more confidence when confronting civic problems. The dream of becoming a Shiv Sena corporator gives her a goal to work towards. Meenakshi Kolgeronkar's helpful husband enabled her to continue her professional career as a nurse and to work abroad. Successfully handling these situations on her own gave her self-confidence in the public sphere. Shiv Sena recruited her because of her accomplishments and longstanding community service. Through Shiv Sena, she has been able to channel her social work and become a leader within the party.

2. Empowerment in the Public and Private Spheres

Through active political participation, all seven women experience personal empowerment in the public sphere. For Vishakha, Nita, Surekha and Jaya, Shiv Sena's collective empowerment served as turning points in their lives. For Jayashree, Anuradha and Meenakshi, overcoming personal hardships and obtaining employment were the primary catalysts for their personal empowerment and for the discovery of their 'power from within'. Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi gives them opportunities to exercise and develop their natural capabilities.

All of the women are also empowered in the private sphere in relation to their family members. For Nita, Shiv Sena was instrumental in enabling this fundamental empowerment in relation to her abusive husband. The others began as housewives and mothers with their

primary responsibilities relating to the home. Negotiating with their husbands and relatives, the women reinterpreted their roles in the private sphere so they could also participate in the public sphere.

For Vishakha, this meant defining her role as having affection for her children and family, not staying at home and performing housework. Vishakha's mother-in-law cooks and cares for her young son while her husband also actively fathers their children. By giving up control over the household and children, Vishakha has been able to fully participate in the public sphere and serve her constituency. In Meenakshi's household, the division between the public and private spheres and gender roles is also blurred. Her supportive husband cooks and washes dishes while Meenakshi performs the night-shift at work or participates in Sena events. Meenakshi is not only empowered in relation to her husband and sons, but her husband has also become empowered in the private sphere. Their children prefer his cooking to their mother's and have confidence in his ability to raise them.

Anuradha, Surekha and Jayashree have delegated household duties to their children. As they are the heads of their households they need not get permission to participate in Shiv Sena events. Yet they need their children's co-operation to balance work inside and outside the house with their political activism. As a result, their children learn about the public sphere and become empowered as well. Actively thinking of ways to assist their mothers in the home and in their political activities, they become more mature and responsible.

3. Questioning Shiv Sena's Empowerment

Some feminist scholars and empowerment theorists question the validity of empowerment attained through the Mahila Aghadi's use of violence as well as its potential to contribute to women's emancipation. Yet, in certain 'power over' situations such as Nita Kanade's abusive marriage, the Mahila Aghadi's violent solution is often the most expedient and effective, since divorce may leave the women destitute and the police fail to protect

them. It was by using violence to end Nita's seven years of abuse that the Mahila Aghadi was able to help her begin the empowerment process.

Shiv Sena's use of violence should be regarded as the means by which disempowered men and women attempt to express their discontent and remedy their marginalised existence. It indicates the government's failure to provide jobs, protection and basic civic services to its citizens. The breaking down of channels of communications between the people and governmental power has provoked the use of violence by various cultural groups (e.g., Tamils and Sikhs). Since the government has not provided these disempowered groups effective, legitimate channels for communicating their needs, they have turned to the only power they have – their strength in numbers and their fists.

Not only have individual women become personally empowered through the Mahila Aghadi, but they have also begun to question the patriarchal bargain. Though feminist scholars often suggest that the women of the Hindu Right join such organisations more easily due to the support they receive from their families, not all Mahila Aghadi members have such support. According to Neelam Gorhe, many women in Mahila Aghadi have joined without their families' consent and risk being beaten for attending events and meetings. The Mahila Aghadi does not provide them much support in this regard. They claim that if a woman's husband/father is against her attending meetings, they will speak to the family and try to convince them, but if they still do not agree then the Mahila Aghadi recommends that she quit (Deshpande 2001).

Though it demonstrates one of the limitations resulting from the Sena's support for patriarchy, the fact that these women continue to attend meetings is also evidence of their personal empowerment and of their defiance of patriarchy. As illustrated in the case study of the Mahila Aghadi, individual women have started to question the patriarchal bargain with its overvaluation of sons over daughters and the exercise of 'power over' daughters-in-law by mothers-in-law. In the Opera House meeting, women also openly identified cultural male

dominance as the primary obstacle to women's progress. Finally, the Mahila Aghadi's active involvement in stopping domestic violence by threatening or beating abusive husbands and in-laws is perhaps the most compelling example of how members are challenging and undermining the patriarchal bargain.

Empowerment is a dynamic and enabling process that leads to the questioning of structures that perpetuate women's subordination (Rowlands 1997). The empowerment of women in the Mahila Aghadi is no exception. This study suggests that, though the Sena does not seek to transform women's lives, and arguably attempts to contain their empowerment, participation in politics and social work through the Mahila Aghadi has initiated a process of empowerment that cannot be entirely contained. Therefore, the empowerment offered by the Mahila Aghadi to the majority of its members should not be discounted, since the limited empowerment it offers women in the present can actually grow beyond the patriarchal constraints Shiv Sena imposes, to eventually undermine them (Deshpande 2001:96).

III. Men's versus Women's Empowerment

Men and women who realise their own self-worth and build personal networks achieve greater empowerment than those who rely solely on their Shiv Sena identity. Yet, comparing the empowerment processes of men versus women in Shiv Sena, women overall experience greater personal empowerment. The inability of Shiv Sena to secure men's hegemony in the public sphere through employment, and its undermining of their place in the home, means the party offers men less potential for personal empowerment. In contrast, women, whose dominance in the private sphere is reinforced by the patriarchal bargain, find themselves more empowered in relation to family members and are able to enter the public sphere as well, even without Shiv Sena's support.

1. Shiv Sena Women

Most women join Shiv Sena in their thirties, when they are married with older children. Though they may have been disempowered in the early years of their marriage, by this point they have typically learned how to manage their household and have established respectable identities as mothers and wives. As housewives, they have a home and steady source of income from their husband's job. They are secure in terms of their basic needs (i.e., food and shelter). Having established their position in the private sphere, women join Shiv Sena to gain access to the public sphere. Shiv Sena enables them to gain their own public identity and facilitates their empowerment by introducing them to social and political networks. They learn how the government bureaucracy operates and discover their ability to make speeches, organise protests and solve civic problems.

When these women confront Shiv Sena's structural constraints, such as male patriarchy that denies them political positions, they may reduce their participation in Shiv Sena, but not their activities in the public sphere. Having overcome disempowerment in the private sphere after their marriage, they realise their 'power within' and regard Shiv Sena as a facilitator, not as their entire identity. Women have multiple, meaningful identities as daughters, wives and mothers. Though the responsibilities that accompany these identities may hinder them in their early years, they become sources of strength when they become older. As a result, women who initially become empowered with Shiv Sena's assistance later turn to other sources of empowerment. Vishakha Raut has become involved in NGOs promoting the participation of women in politics; Meenakshi, Jayashree and Surekha have all turned to employment; Anuradha spends more time with her grandson; Jaya is considering getting a Master's degree; and Nita has joined the police station's Mullah Committee to promote better communal relations. Nita is also trying to start her own business, since she realises that maintaining her personal empowerment requires financial independence from her husband. In this manner, women gain access to the public sphere

through Shiv Sena, enhance their empowerment in the private and public spheres and then turn to other organisations when they find their options limited in Shiv Sena.

2. Shiv Sena Men

In contrast, most men join Shiv Sena as young men in their early twenties. They are unemployed and consequently have few prospects of marriage and children. Without a job, they have no place in the public sphere after they complete their education. Trapped by traditional sex roles, they believe their role as men is to provide economic support for the household. They do not see private-sphere activities such as housework or raising children as legitimate activities for them. Therefore, they remain idle until they can find a purpose in the public sphere. By giving them a public identity that leads to a job and a respectable position in the private sphere, these young men credit Shiv Sena for making them into 'somebody'. They draw their entire identity from being a Shiv Sainik. Therefore, when the party betrays or abandons them, they are lost. Since they define power as 'power over', they cannot disassociate themselves from the party, from which they draw their personal strength. They feel empowered in the public sphere because they are Shiv Sainiks, not because of their own skills and abilities. Therefore, the empowerment of these men is illusory.

With the transfer of power from Bal Thackeray to his son Udhav, empowerment through Shiv Sena for ordinary men seems less likely in the future. Udhav lacks his father's charismatic leadership that has engendered devotion and absolute loyalty from Shiv Sainiks. In 2002, disillusioned members blamed Udhav for corruption in the party and claimed they would quit after Bal Thackeray's death. Without Bal Thackeray's leadership and skilful construction of identity, Shiv Sena will not be able to attract members willing to risk their lives and perform acts of violence for the party. Since there are fewer jobs available in Mumbai, Shiv Sena will also not be able to secure employment for its members using its violent tactics. Instead, Shiv Sena will probably continue to widen its electoral base by broadening its identity into that of a generic Indian patriotism, and offering its election

tickets and vigilante services to the highest bidder. If so, it will further alienate its core male members.

3. Impact on Families of Shiv Sainiks

Women's participation in Shiv Sena also has a greater impact on the empowerment of their family members. Due to the important role women play in the household, their participation in the public sphere affects their family members more tangibly. In conservative milieus, a woman must negotiate her access to the public sphere with her husband, children and other members of the household. This process of negotiation raises everyone's awareness regarding gender role divisions. Gender role divisions in the private and public spheres are redefined as husbands must play more active and supportive roles in the household when their wives begin to participate in the public sphere. While it may appear that women pass the burden of housework onto their daughters, they are also empowering their daughters, who gain responsibilities and capabilities. Due to their close relationship to their mothers, children also learn about politics and meet new people in the community by attending Shiv Sena events.

On the other hand, men rarely involve their wives or children in their Shiv Sena activities. Men maintain the traditional segregation between the private and public spheres, while women bring them closer together. The household becomes exposed to the public sphere as a result of women's political participation. Family members then regard women's participation in public activities more positively, having experienced the benefits. Thus, by participating in politics through Shiv Sena, women are effectively undermining the party's patriarchal ideology by deconstructing the gender divisions between the home and society.

4. Hindu Right Politics as a Vehicle for Women's Empowerment

Based on this study on Shiv Sena, Hindu Right-wing politics do not empower men in the private sphere and have been less successful in recent years of empowering them in the

public sphere. With regards to women, participation in the public sphere has been the key factor in their empowerment rather than Hindu Right politics per se. Therefore, what is the significance of right wing politics in relation to women's empowerment?

While women in general may become empowered through participating in a variety of organisations, right wing political parties such as Shiv Sena are instrumental in facilitating the public participation of women from more conservative contexts. For women whose families have more restrictive views on women's roles, public participation may be limited to 'safe' environments such as school, family gatherings and religious functions. They would not be allowed to attend meetings held by left wing political parties, women's rights organisations or other political groups that promote ideas that the family might find threatening. Right wing and particularly religious-nationalist organisations are considered 'safe' as they are thought to promote traditional values. Thus, Hindu Right political parties afford women from conservative milieus access to public participation that they would not have had otherwise. In doing so, right wing political parties effectively facilitate the empowerment of women who are typically beyond the reach of left wing political parties and the autonomous women's movement. Thus, right wing politics in developing countries can provide a certain population of women the essential access to the public domain that they require to participate in the public domain, an essential element for women's empowerment.

In addition to appeasing the 'gatekeepers' of conservative women empowerment, right wing groups' also make it easier for women themselves to participate in the public domain. By reinforcing women's importance in the home, right wing group enable women to retain their dominance in the private sphere. They are not faced with the dilemma of choosing the political party over their family -- a choice that often causes women to withdraw from public activities. By expecting women to make their homes and family their first priority, Shiv Sena allows its female members to participate when they are free. Male members are not given such leeway. Men are expected to make the political party their first priority. By

allowing women to participate in politics in accordance to their ability, right wing political parties allow women to enter the public sphere and then gradually increase their involvement in politics as their children become older or family's attitudes toward their public participation changes. In India, the local presence of Hindu Right *shakhas* also make this gradual inclusion possible since the women need not travel far to attend meetings and then return home to fulfil their duties at home. As a result, women retain their importance in their homes while gradually participating in politics and becoming empowered in the public domain, at her own pace and on her own terms. This process is supported by both the right wing political party and the woman's family.

While I have argued that right wing politics can be a vehicle for empowerment and is significant because it reaches a group of women who are typically inaccessible, I would like to also acknowledge the contribution of the autonomous women's movement to conservative women's empowerment. The autonomous women's movement in India has played a key role at the state-level by expanding women's rights and raising awareness about women's issues. It is due to their pressures and demands for reservations of political seats for women in city councils that right wing political parties were forced to actively recruit and include women in their organisations. Yet, at the grassroots-level, right wing political parties have been more effective in reaching these conservative women and meeting their perceived practical needs (i.e., access to water, not political rights). The autonomous women's movement would do well to build bridges with women of the Hindu Right and establish relations with them that would allow women empowered by parties like Shiv Sena to migrate to women's rights groups when they experience patriarchal limitations. My study may enable such collaboration by demonstrating that many women join the Hindu Right to meet their practical needs, not because they share the Hindu Right's anti-Muslim, patriarchal ideology.

IV. Implications of this Study

1. Contribution to the Literature

Within the area of Gender and Geography, this study brings together topics that have not been extensively addressed in the literature. While there have been studies on peasant agriculture in the developing world, women in the financial sectors of metropolitan centres in developed countries, and violence against women; there have not been studies on women's active participation in the politics of racism and violence in the metropolitan centres of developing countries. Consequently, this study draws on different literatures and theories to understand whether women and men can be empowered in the private and public spheres through religious-based right wing politics in developing countries. In doing so, this study primarily enriches empowerment theory by addressing issues such as violence, ethnic identity and gender relations.

While empowerment theories relate to diverse disciplines (e.g., psychology, economic development) as well as different subjects (e.g., women, communities), studies on empowerment rarely compare the empowerment of men versus women or how women's empowerment affects men's empowerment and vice versa. While women's empowerment may be examined in relation to family members and others, studies do not examine and compare women and men's empowerment in the private and public spheres. Such a study seems unnecessary since it is presumed that men are empowered in the home as well as in public. Yet, from this study on men and women's empowerment, it appears that men are not necessarily or automatically empowered in the home. The home appears to be a contested space in which men must compete with women and other men for space and importance. For women and men, empowerment in one sphere influences their empowerment in the other. This suggests that in assessing women's and men's empowerment it is essential to also consider the spatial context, especially within the household.

Definitions and theories of empowerment also do not consider violence as a means of empowerment and generally discount right wing politics as a vehicle for women's empowerment. By examining empowerment through Shiv Sena, this study examines empowerment in relation to violence, cultural identities and gender identities within the context of right wing politics. Though these topics are not typically associated to one another, this study suggests that they are related and that cultural identity may serve as a justification for the use of violence to empower ethnic communities as well as to assert masculine hegemony.

The construction of cultural identities is both conducive to and a convenient rationale for violence claimed to empower a community. The process of constructing a cultural identity can generate a sense of relative deprivation and/or higher expectations in terms of socio-economic and political status. Gender identities are a key factor in constructing cultural identities. To create a sense of oppression or unjust deprivation, ethnic group leaders will assert that their masculinity has been undermined. Assertions of their cultural superiority may also be used to bolster their masculine identities and raise their socio-economic and political expectations.

When organised cultural groups are unable to improve their socio-economic or political status through government channels, they will revert to violence. For cultural groups that are disempowered and lack educational, political and economic clout or other means of improving their situation, violence is their most accessible and expressive means. In India, the de-institutionalisation of the Congress party by Indira Gandhi contributed to the rise in social movements, the use of violence and cultural politics.

When a group resorts to violence, its cultural identity is used as a convenient rationale. The survival of the cultural identity is evoked as the justification for using violence. The cultural group regards their acts of violence as 'self-defence'. The existence of the cultural group also absolves individual actors' of their responsibility for using violence. Individuals

may also find it easier to commit extreme acts of brutality as part of a collective cultural group.

Gender is also a key component in using cultural identities to justify violence as well as evoke violence. Violence is considered a means of protecting women who are deemed the cultural receptacles of an ethnic group. Threats to women of a cultural group also threaten men's masculine identities as protectors. Often in ethnic conflicts, women are raped precisely to undermine the cultural group's masculine identity. In addition, women may also invoke men in their group to use force against another ethnic group by undermining their masculinity. The use of gender identities in constructing cultural identities that evoke and/or justify violence indicates the importance of analysing ethnic conflicts in terms of gender.

Finally, this study also uses an innovative qualitative methodology for assessing empowerment. While McWhirter and Rowlands suggest indicators in the empowerment process, it is difficult to gather the information necessary to ascertain a person's empowerment in a research project. The empowerment process is one that extends over a person's lifetime and therefore, even participation observation for two years would only provide minimal data. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires are clearly inadequate and result in the collection of subjective statements that only reflect what the research participant wants you to believe. Using the in-depth interview procedure and analytical process of the Biographic Narrative Method, a researcher can establish the life history of the research participant. From this life history which sets the research participant's subjective view of his or her life in the context of objective facts, the researcher can assess whether the participant is empowered and identify the factors that influenced her empowerment. While the Biographic Narrative Method does not directly affect our understanding of empowerment theories, it provides a means of practically assessing empowerment based on theoretical indicators.

2. Future Implications

Since I began this research project in 1999, religious nationalism and fundamentalism have gained prominence in world affairs. The world has witnessed and experienced the powerful repercussions of Muslim and Christian fundamentalist politics. While this study examined Hindu nationalist politics, I believe that my findings and the empowerment and gender frameworks I have used can shed light on the increasing salience of religious nationalism in both developed and developing parts of the world today. It may be that, by understanding individual men and women's attraction to religious fundamentalism in terms of household and societal gender relations and identities, scholars will be able to identify the sources of these conflicts, which will contribute towards their elimination.

This study suggests that men and women in developing countries turn to religious nationalist organisations largely due to their government's failure to provide them with employment, basic civic services and a sense of efficacy. Feeling powerless as individuals, they turn to their cultural identities as a basis for demanding their rights. Cultural identities are seemingly blind to economic and social class differences and are open to all except the 'other' against which the group is defined. Organising the masses based on cultural identity, charismatic leaders like Bal Thackeray can control a city or state's political landscape. Belonging to the cultural organisation, ordinary men and women no longer feel marginalised. The cultural group justifies their acts of force used to take control of the land that belongs to them.

While I argue that religious nationalist organisations enable the empowerment of both Shiv Sena's men and women members, this empowerment limits the opportunities of those designated the 'other'. Local and national governments that wish to curb religious nationalism and prevent the disempowerment of the designated 'other' would do well to provide their citizens with basic civic amenities and maintain the infrastructure of the city. Simply by providing basic civic necessities, local governments in developing countries can

enable the empowerment of women who can perform their household duties more efficiently, thus allowing them time to enter the public sphere.

Local governments can also provide safe public spaces where ordinary citizens can gather, network and have access to information. By placing such facilities in local neighbourhoods, governments can provide both men and women with greater access to the public sphere. Women need not travel very far in order to attend a meeting in one of Shiv Sena's two hundred *shakhas*. The *shakha* also provides a focal point in the community where people can go to make complaints, meet friends, read newspapers and access computers. The provision of such facilities encourages women and men to participate in the public sphere. Such spaces may also encourage people of similar interests to organise at a grassroots level and provide leadership opportunities for those wishing to assist others in their community. Although Shiv Sainiks are not wealthy and may be unemployed, they feel empowered when they can help others. Presently in Mumbai, Shiv Sena provides such facilities to lower and middle classes in exchange for their political affiliation. Local governments could enable the empowerment of marginalised groups by providing such facilities in a non-partisan context.

Finally, both women and men need to be freed from the constrictions of sex roles and assignments to the private or public spheres. Neither the private nor the public sphere is the 'natural' domain of either women or men. Both women and men must negotiate their household positions and public identities. With women entering the workforce and public sphere, men should feel comfortable working in the house. Many female Shiv Sainiks' husbands claim to support their wives, but cannot cook. This leaves women with a double burden of working both inside and outside the home. Training men and boys to cook and to take care of small children would remove gender associations from work in the home. The provision of adequate paternity leave is also a means of encouraging men's greater participation in reproductive work in the home. Cleaning, cooking and taking care of

children are important household tasks upon which the family depends. By regarding them as gender-neutral, perhaps performing them will be seen as in the family's interest, not just a woman's issue. In addition, women's employment should be recognised as a benefit to the family that raises its standard of living. Along these lines, re-training programmes should be available to housewives to find paid employment after raising their children.

The private and public spheres are contested spaces where men and women compete against each other and amongst themselves for dominance. Removing gender distinctions in these spaces may reduce this competition as women share power with men in the private and public spheres. This will facilitate the adjustment of households to socio-economic changes and encourage the empowerment of every household member. Empowerment need not be a zero-sum game, both men and women may benefit by working together.

3. Further Enquiry

While this study addressed questions raised by my previous MPhil thesis that focused exclusively on women's empowerment, it also suggests the need to examine certain questions further. With regards to the topic of gender relations in the Hindu Right, it would be valuable to examine the impact of external contextual factors such as globalisation and the heightened attention world-wide to terrorism by Islamic fundamentalist groups. Focusing more inwardly on the Hindu Right in India, it would also be valuable to see whether such organisations have retained their appeal and still offer opportunities for empowerment after the 2004 national elections that replaced the BJP-coalition government. Building on this study's implications, more research should examine gender relations within the household. It is important to understand how men and women interact and examine whether men are empowered in the household. Towards this end, the Biographic Narrative Method may be used and further tested for the purpose of assessing empowerment as well as its suitability as a research method in the context of developing countries.

Glossary of Terms

1. *avataar* : form, incarnation
2. *bauddhik*: ideological classes in RSS/Samiti
3. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP): Indian People's Party, political wing of the RSS
4. *chawls*: building typical of Mumbai consisting of separate rooms and common bathroom
5. coolies: baggage carriers at train stations
6. corporator: municipal position relating to seat or constituencies in Mumbai's Brinhanbai Municipal Corporation
7. Dalits: Untouchables, or Scheduled Castes
8. Durga Vahinis: women's wing of the VHP consisting of younger women who focus on the martial arts training.
9. *haldi kumkum*: placement of turmeric and then red *kumkum* by married women to each other as a form of greeting and farewell; a ceremony in April in which married women show respect to other married women.
10. *gata pramukh*: deputy leader; small group leader within the *shakhas*. Each shakha will have several group leaders who are in-charge of mobilizing 10-20 members for events and activities.
11. *goonda*: criminal, thug
12. *Khal Awishkar*: 'Enlightened Age', the title of the literary magazine and women's group founded by Gamdevi Mahila Aghadi members
13. *kumkum*: auspicious red mark on the forehead of Hindu women and men (less often)
14. *lathi*: staff or stick wielded by police officers
15. Maharashtra: the Marathi-speaking state in Western India
16. Marathi: a Sanskrit-based Indian language spoken in the state of Maharashtra
17. Maharashtrian: people who claim Marathi as their mother-tongue or live in the state of Maharashtra
18. Maratha: an Indian warrior caste
19. Mahila Aghadi: 'Women's Front'; women's wing of the Shiv Sena
20. *mahila mandals*: women's groups
21. Mahila Morcha: the women's wing of the BJP
22. *mahila shakha pramukh*: woman branch leader of the Shiv Sena
23. Marathi *manus*: common Maharashtrian man
24. *morchas*: demonstrations, protests
25. *pracharika*: full-time female cadres in the Samiti
26. *prashikshan shibirs*: training camps
27. *rakhis*: bracelets given in rakhi bandum ceremony
28. *rakhi bandum*: ceremony between brothers and sisters in which sisters give brothers a bracelet to show their fealty
29. *ranraginis*: fighters on the battlefield
30. *rashtra*: nation
31. Rashtra Sevika Samiti or 'Samiti': National Women's Volunteer Organization; women's wing of the RSS; also known as Rashtriya Swayamsevika Samiti
32. Rashtra Swayamsevak Sangh(RSS): National Volunteers; primary propagator of Hindutva
33. *roti*: flat bread
34. RSS Combine: refers to the three organizations in the RSS family – RSS, BJP, VHP
35. *sanksar*(samskar, samskara): ideals and norms of good and virtuous behavior;
36. *sanskriti*: culture
37. sanyasin: a person who has taken religious vows, including the vow of celibacy
38. *shakha*: basic organizational cell of the RSS, generally referring to an RSS meeting; Shiv Sena branch office

39. Sevika, Rashtrasevika or Swayamsevika : 'women who serve the nation'; female members of the Samiti
40. *shakha pramukh*: Shiv Sena branch leader
41. *Shivshakhti*: Shivaji's power
42. SSC: Secondary School Certificate
43. Stree Aadhar Kendra: Women's Support Center
44. *swayamsevak*: 'volunteers'; male members of the RSS
45. '*tikli*': a decoration on the forehead of Hindu women
46. *up vibagh pramukh*: deputy district leader
47. *vibagh*: governmental zone
48. *vibagh pramukh*: zone leader
49. Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council): the cultural/ educational branch of the RSS

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MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/india/indiastateandunion.htm> (Map of India: States and Territories)

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/maharashtra/maharashtra.htm> (Map of Maharashtra and Districts)

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/maharashtra/mumbai-map-city.gif> (Mumbai: City Map)

Photos of Shiv Sena women, their families and *shakhas* by Chitra Deshpande

2002 List of Interviews Conducted

1. Top Leadership

Men:

Chandrakant , Member of Legislative Assembly (July 22, 2002)

Pramod Navalkar, Member of Legislative Council (October 2, 2002)

Women:

Vishaka Raut, Member of Legislative Assembly (September 24, 2002)

Family members: husband, mother-in-law, daughter

Meenakshi Kolgergonkar, Up Vibagh Pramukh South Mumbai (September 27, 2002)

Family members: husband, son, neighbor

Neelam Gorhe, Member of Legislative Council (July 16, 2002)

2. Shakha Leaders

Men:

Dilip Naik, Former Corporator of Girgaum (July 23, 2002)

Family members: wife and two sons

Women:

Surekha Ubale, Shakha Pramukh Khetwadi (July 24, 2002)

Family members: son, daughter

Jayashree Ballikar, Shakha Pramukh Mumbai Central (September 22, 2002)

Family members: daughter

3. Active Members

Men:

Sameer Vedak, Member of Girgaum Shakha (September 4, 2002)

Women:

Anuradha Navalkar, Member of Girgaum Shakha (July 30, 2002)

Family members: son, two daughter and son-in-law

Nita Kanade, Member of Mumbai Central (July 18, 2002)

Family members: brother

4. Inactive Member

Men:

Jagdish Purandare, Former Communications Manager (September 23, 2002)

Family members: wife, two sons

Women:

Jaya Goythale, Former Corporator Girgaum (September 28, 2002)

Family members: husband, daughter, son, niece

2000 LIST OF FORMAL INTERVIEWS
(Name/Title/Date of Interview)

Shiv Sena Leaders

1. Bal Thackeray, Supremo/Chief of Shiv Sena (August 21, 2000)
2. Manohar Joshi, Union Minister of Heavy Industries (August 28, 2000)
3. Pramod Navalkar, Former Cultural Affairs Minister of Maharashtra, Member of Maharashtra Legislative Council (August 15, 2000)
4. Subhash Desai, Spokesman for Shiv Sena (July 21, 2000)
5. Arvind Nerkar, Corporator Gamdevi (July 24, 2000)
6. Dilip Naik, Former Corporator Girgaum (August 22, 2000)

Mahila Aghadi Leaders

1. Meena Kulkarni, President of Mahila Aghadi (July 28, 2000)
2. Vishakha Raut, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra, Former Mayor of Mumbai (August 5, 2000)
3. Sudha Chury, Former President of Mahila Aghadi (July 22, 2000)
4. Neelam Gorhe, Former Head of Maharashtra's Women's Development Corporation, Head of *Yoginakaksha* (August 9, 2000)
5. Meena Kamble, *Vibagh Pramukh* South Mumbai (July 27, 2000)
6. Jaya Goythale, Corporator Girgaum (July 26, 2000)

Commentators on Shiv Sena

1. Vaibhav Purandare, Editorial staff of Asian Age (July 21, 2000)
2. Flavia Agnes, President of Majlis (July 31, 2000)
3. Teesta Setalvad, Co-Editor of Communalism Combat (August 2, 2000)
4. Pushpa Bhawe, Social/ Women's Activist, Literary critic, affiliated with North Maharashtra University Jalgaon (August 2, 2000)

APPENDIX



Vishakha Raut visiting the Dadar *shakha*



Vishakha Raut with her husband, son, mother-in-law and daughter



Female and male Shiv Sainiks at the Dadar *shakha*



Shiv Sainiks registering new members during the July 2002 membership drive.



Surekha Ubale with her daughter and son sitting below her husband's photo in their one-room *chawl*



Surekha supervising her food stall in front of the police station



Jayshree Ballikar with her daughter at a local karate competition



Nita Kanade collecting money at her South Indian food stand.



Anuradha and Swapnil Navalkar with the family's homemade Ganapati display in their one-room *chawl*



Anuradha Navalkar (center) with her daughter, son-in-law, grandson, son and a friend releasing their Ganapati at Chowpatty seafront on the final day of Ganapati Anant Chathurdashi.

