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**Coalitions in Maharashtra
Political fragmentation or Social Reconfiguration?**

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Preface

We are happy to bring out this Occasional Paper under the series of Occasional Papers under the Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) of this Department. The series of Occasional Papers will mostly consist of research work done by the faculty members of the Department. The purpose of this series is to make available to students, researchers, college teachers and colleagues the 'work-in-progress' that has benefited from the resources of the CAS.

The Department is currently running the first phase of the CAS after successful completion of three phases of Special Assistance Programme of the UGC from 1991 onwards. During those fifteen years, the Department initiated the practice of publishing Occasional papers and many have been subsequently revised and published separately or as part of edited books. We hope that this series will also help in disseminating the research work of the Department and benefit students and researchers.

The CAS was granted by the UGC for the period 2008-13 and was inaugurated in January 2009. The thrust area of research is Indian Politics with the theme of State of Democracy in India in Global Context.

This paper by Professor Suhas Palshikar, Dr Nitin Birmal and Shri Vivek Ghotale is based on their ongoing work on various aspects of political process in Maharashtra. We are thankful to the authors for preparing the draft and giving the same to CAS for publication. We are also thankful to the reviewer who did the peer review of the draft.

Coordinator,
CAS

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The research into the politics of coalitions in Maharashtra began as part of the larger project on coalitions in select Indian States. The larger project was steered by E. Sridharan under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania Institute of Advanced Studies in India (UPIASI), New Delhi. We are thankful to Dr. Sridharan and UPIASI for inviting us to be part of this project. Subsequently, at the Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Pune, we expanded the scope of the study and received support from the Special Assistance Programme (Phase Three) and some marginal support also from Centre of Advanced Studies in Indian Politics at the Department. In 2009, we were engaged in two separate major research projects of the UGC on the Lok Sabha and Assembly Elections; one under the leadership of Professor Rajeshwari Deshpande and another with one of us (Suhas Palshikar) as the Principal Investigator. These two projects further gave us an opportunity to study the politics of alliance making during these elections. We are thankful to all these institutions and particularly to Professor Rajeshwari Deshpande. We also thank Professor Sridharan and Professor Mahesh Rangarajan for their valuable inputs on an earlier draft.

In the initial phase of the study, Dr. Prakash Pawar helped us in conducting interviews with district level political activists across the state. In the latter phase, we received assistance from Suresh Ingale and Sominath Gholwe in collecting and compiling data. Without the help from these three, many details could not have been captured adequately. We thank them all.

Authors

Introduction

In a parliamentary democracy, it is not very uncommon for political parties to form alliances in order to reach political office, retain power and/or thwart some adversary from doing so. Both the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) and Proportional Representation (PR) systems can and do undergo the experience of coalitions, though the latter is more likely to produce/force coalitions on the polity. In this sense, theory of parties would have us believe that parliamentary system is more partial towards a stable two party system and less prone to coalitions. The Indian experience slightly departs from this conventional and received wisdom based on experience of the North Atlantic polities. While coalitions were not unknown to Indian politics, the overall dominance of the Congress party both at the Centre and in most of the states during 1952-1967 characterized India's experience of parliamentary competitive democracy. But even then, in post-1967 period, coalitions became much more common feature of the state level political competition. The resulting instability and the preceding 'defections' meant that attention was more on the moral and normative aspects than on the structural aspects of this new development. The return of one-party dominance in the seventies and the following upheavals caused by emergency and post-emergency politics too contributed to this neglect of the structural dimension of party competition. Only when the politics of alliances became a reality at the national level and also the state level in the nineties, some scholars (Sridharan, 2002 and 2004) initiated what could be rightly described as 'coalition studies' (see also, Thakurta and Raghuraman, 2004).

As sections of society develop sharp identities and a set of well-defined demands distinct from other social sections, political parties find it difficult to aggregate these various demands. Instead, political parties choose to represent well-defined social interests and evolve a support structure that may not be adequate for acquiring power. Coincidentally, this process is also coupled with regionalization of party competition: as parties focus more and more on region, i.e., the state, they tend to rely more on narrow social bases. In this sense, the decline of 'all-India' parties and the rise of coalition politics coincide. Though, coalitions within a state too, are quite common in Indian context. India has been witnessing this process for quite some time now. Politics based on coalitions has become part of the routine electoral competition in many parts of India. Delhi, Gujarat, Rajasthan and M.P. have so far bucked that trend while Kerala and West Bengal have shown that there can be stable patterns emerging from alliance making. Tamil Nadu, too is following more or less in the footsteps of these two states. On the other hand, UP and Bihar have brought forward the messy and complex side of coalition making and its outcomes.

In this overall backdrop, this paper seeks to trace the recent history of coalition politics in the state of Maharashtra. While we review the nitty-gritty of alliance making and its structural dimensions in terms of the effects it had on power sharing between main partners of the two alliances in the state, this paper also seeks to situate the politics of coalitions in the broader context of fragmentation of the support system that Congress had built in the state as also the projected reconfiguration of social bases of main political actors in the state. We also touch upon the issue of durability of coalitions and relationship between longevity and intra-coalition relations. Coalitions became crucial to state's politics since 1989-90. Thus, an analysis of coalition politics in Maharashtra invites us to a review of the state's politics for two decades. As we shall see below, the first coalition ministry that came to power in the State was the coalition

of two Congress factions (1978). But the Congress did come back to power on its own strength in 1980. So, more or less, politics in Maharashtra, till the mid-nineties, was characterised by the domination of the Congress party. In the late eighties, the Shivsena and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) forged an alliance and since then, Maharashtra politics has entered into the era of coalition politics. The Shivsena-BJP alliance has been in existence since 1989 and thus, it may be seen as one of the few longstanding coalitions in the country, perhaps next only to the coalitions in West Bengal and Kerala. The emergence of coalition politics ushered in new political equations and marked the collapse of the congress system in the State. This process had commenced in the late seventies, though the nineties are distinguished by the prominence of coalitions in State politics.

It needs to be noted that there is a distinction between the era of coalition politics and the existence of alliances as an electoral strategy. Alliance making has always been a part of the political calculations of the political forces in the State even in the earlier period. However this was limited only to seat sharing on an ad hoc basis. Such alliances were necessitated by the fact that in the era of Congress domination, the non-Congress parties could pose a challenge to the Congress only by resorting to alliances. The Congress too had an understanding with the RPI right from the sixties. But these are different in their salience from the 'era' of coalitions that emerged since 1989-90.

In section I, we briefly report the alliances in pre-coalition era. Next, in section II the paper traces the emergence of the politics of coalitions in the State. In the third section, this paper narrates the functioning of the two rival coalitions that occupy much of the political space in Maharashtra since the late nineties. Finally, in section four, we raise some questions related to coalition politics and the implications for the broader political processes in the State.

I **Alliances during 1957-86**

Alliances and coalitions in the State hinge on the social composition of the State. One peculiarity of the social structure of Maharashtra is the large proportion of the Maratha-Kunbi caste cluster. The other related peculiarity is the internal structure of this caste cluster. Maratha-Kunbi community accounts for about thirty per cent of the State's population and this fact places the community in a unique situation of numerical domination. The other politically important segment of the society is that of the Scheduled Castes (SCs/Dalits). The historical awakening and mobilization of Dalits under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar has left behind a strong tradition of self-conscious politics among Dalits of Maharashtra who account for 10.2 percent of the population. Muslims (10.6 percent) and Adivasis (8.9 percent) are the other two social groups. Though numerically large in size, the Maratha community is internally stratified socially and economically. The social stratification among the Marathas is historically reflected in the division between Marathas and Kunbis. The Kunbis are listed as OBCs in the State while Marathas are not. At the same time, separate identification of these two sections is quite complicated as historically there has been intermixing between the two; and more recently there have been attempts to forge a political consciousness among all Marathas. This peculiarity makes the discussion of the OBCs in the State very difficult. Kunbis are OBCs but are socially and

politically part of the non-OBC Maratha identity. The viability of OBC politics is always in question as a result of this factor. Numerically, OBCs in Maharashtra may thus account for thirty percent of the population; and yet their strength would not be more than thirty percent excluding the Kunbis. (It needs to be noted that these references to population figures of different social sections are only tentative and except for Dalits (SCs), Adivasis (STs) and Muslims, do not have any backing from official census enumeration. Randomly selected samples of voters repeatedly show that OBCs excluding Kunbis account for twenty to twenty five percent in the various surveys conducted in 1999, 2004 and 2009 while proportion of Kunbis varies in the range of 7 and 11 percent. This suggests that the entire OBC category in the state would ordinarily account for 30 percent, including Kunbis.) Further, Marathas are more numerous in Marathwada and Western Maharashtra regions while the social composition of Vidarbha and North Maharashtra regions is much more complex with the presence of Adivasis and many OBC caste groups in these regions. Finally, the large scale transformation being brought about by urbanization is likely to play an important role in mediating the influence of the caste composition of the State. Over 42 percent of the population of Maharashtra lived in urban localities as in 2001. This fact means that at least partially, caste-based political identities may find it difficult to achieve levels of salience at which they operated previously.

This peculiar social composition of the State means that Maratha community can singly dominate politics in the State if it operates through one political instrument only. This is what used to happen for a number of years before the rise of fissures among the Maratha community and its leadership. The social composition also suggests that there would be severe limitations on 'OBC' politics in the State. Coalition politics has emerged in Maharashtra in the context of this social composition and the fragmentation of the Maratha-Kunbi social bloc.

Opposition unity: 1957-1972

In the first general elections after independence, there were efforts to forge a 'left unity' among the socialists, communists and the Peasants and Workers Party (PWP). While this did not materialize, the PWP did enter into an electoral understanding with the Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF) and the SCF also had seat adjustments with the socialists in Mumbai and some other urban constituencies (Kogekar-Park: 33-35). This though, did not have any impact on the outcome of the election results and the Congress inaugurated its domination in the State by winning 244 seats out of 301 seats in the Marathi speaking regions of the then Bombay State. This picture was dramatically fractured by the agitation for the creation of a Marathi speaking State (with Bombay as its capital) during 1955-1957 period.

Following the creation of the 'big bilingual' State of Bombay, comprising of the Gujarati and Marathi speaking territories, a joint committee was formed by those activists who were agitating for the demand of Maharashtra State. Known as the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti (SMS), this committee was a joint platform of the major non-Congress parties in the State since the Congress was seen as being opposed to the demand for the Marathi speaking State. The SMS included the Praja Socialists (PSP), Communists, SCF, PWP, Lal Nishan Party (a radical left group), Majdoor Kisan Party, Revolutionary Communist Party, Bolshevik Party, Congress Jan Parishad, (breakaway group of pro-Maharashtra Congressmen), Hindu Mahasabha and the Bharatiya Jan Sangh (Pendse: 587). Thus, it was the first-ever major non-Congress coalition in Maharashtra. (On the history of the movement for linguistic State and the SMS, see Phadke; 1979). The SMS

won 102 seats out of 135 in Western Maharashtra region and 11 out of the 24 seats in Bombay. In comparison, its performance in the crucial Marathi speaking areas of Marathwada and Vidarbha (the two areas that were merged with the Bombay State only in 1956) was not as impressive (seven and eleven respectively out of 42 and 66) (Sirsikar; 1976:193). This was partly due to the internal differences among the SMS partners and lack of coordination among them.

However, the performance of the SMS created an impression that the Congress could be challenged in elections if the non-Congress parties joined hands. In the emotionally surcharged atmosphere over the issue of linguistic State, the fact that the non-Congress parties, among themselves, had entirely different and in fact opposite ideological positions, was glossed over. But once the linguistic State of Maharashtra was created in 1960, the SMS crumbled under the weight of its internal contradictions and the experiment of anti-Congress coalitions came to an end. Even before 1960, the Jan Sangh had severed links with the SMS (1958) and later, one faction of the Republican Party of India (RPI), led by B.C. Kamble also left the SMS (1959) on the grounds that it was against the teachings of Dr. Ambedkar to enter into any alliance with the Communists. The debilitating defeat of the constituents of the SMS in the 1962 elections marked an end of this first-ever major alliance in the State. Although both in 1967 and 1971, the non-Congress parties did attempt to enter into alliances, these did not create any serious challenge for the Congress in the State. In 1971, the non-Congress alliance had the context of split in the Congress party. Attempts to forge a 'grand alliance' at the all-India level were made and State units of opposition parties in Maharashtra sought to displace the Congress through this strategy although without much success. (However, it needs to be remembered that in the post-split situation of 1969, Maharashtra Congress was not very deeply fragmented since under Y.B. Chavan's leadership, most of the state party unit and workers chose to remain loyal to Indira Gandhi. Therefore, unlike in some other states like Gujarat, there was not much space for new coalition making resulting from the split in the Congress party.)

Congress-RPI collaboration

The period of 1960s and early 1970s also saw the Congress trying to seek cooperation from some political forces. Though electorally it was in a very safe position, the Congress resorted to an alliance with the RPI in order to expand its base and legitimization network. The domination of the Congress party could take the shape of hegemony only by incorporating various social aspirations and this implied a careful management of the social forces in the State, including electoral alliances during the period of Congress domination. Thus, in the local elections (District Councils, i.e. *Zilla Parishads--ZPs*) held in 1967, the Congress entered into an alliance with the Republican Party of India (RPI) and announced that it would give ten per cent seats to the RPI. This arrangement also gave the RPI leader R.S. Gavai, the post of Deputy Chairperson of the Legislative Council and another leader, Barrister Khobragade, the post of Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha. This alliance had twin effects. One was the series of splits in the RPI over the issue of cooperation with the Congress and the other was the consolidation of the hegemony of the Congress. In 1971 Lok Sabha election also, the Congress had an alliance with the RPI and one parliamentary seat (Pandharpur) was contested by the RPI. The Congress-RPI alliance continued in assembly elections of 1972 as well. Since then, alliance with Congress has always been a major issue of contention among followers of RPI. Often, one faction of the RPI allies with the Congress while some other faction allies with non-Congress forces in the State (Morkhandikar; 1990). In retrospect, therefore, it may be said that the Congress has successfully

fissured the RPI as a political force in the State, through its alliance with (some factions of) that party. The RPI, with all its factions put together, never had a very large base among Dalits of Maharashtra: between 1957 and 1967, the Scheduled Castes Federation and later the RPI polled around six per cent votes—6.2, 5.4 and 6.7 respectively in 1957, 1962 and 1967 (*JISPE*: 365). Since then, RPI has never polled more than one and a half per cent vote. So, it is not as much for gaining Dalit votes that the Congress enters into an alliance with the RPI. More than that, this strategy has helped the Congress in gaining base among the Dalits and gaining legitimacy as a party that was not only a ‘Maratha’ party.

Most of the alliances of the early period were very ad hoc and except the SMS, they did not have much significance in electoral terms. It would therefore be more accurate to describe this period as the period of proto-coalitions. The period between 1960 and 1977 is known as the period of Congress domination and the nature of this domination was such that the opposition parties failed to forge an alliance against the Congress. The Congress party was able to cultivate the support of the dominant caste-cluster of the Maratha-Kunbis and under the ‘patrimonial’ leadership of the Marathas the OBCs also constituted the base of the Congress party in the State. Therefore, in terms of social base, non-Congress parties had very little space for alliance politics. Only when the internal factionalism within the Maratha-Kunbi caste cluster rose to unmanageable levels within the Congress party, did the era of coalition politics emerge in the State.

Coalitions in the pre-coalition era

The Congress system entered into a period of chronic crisis in the mid-seventies. This period was also characterized by the rise of anti-Congress politics during the Janata phase and by the split in Maratha leadership. These developments led to coalition politics in the State. It is possible to imagine three different phases in the politics of coalitions in the State: firstly, coalitions in the period of Congress domination (1977-1986), secondly, non-Congress coalition along side of decline of the Congress (1989-1998) and thirdly Congress coalitions in the period after the split in Congress party (1999-2009).

The period from 1977 to 1986 was the precursor to the emergence of politics of coalitions in the State. After its defeat in the parliamentary elections in 1977, a split occurred in the Congress party at the all-India level. The loyal followers of Indira Gandhi identified their faction as the Congress (I) and the other faction was identified as Congress (Reddy). In Maharashtra, in the 1977 Lok Sabha election itself there was considerable factionalism within the Congress. This had three dimensions: one was the unease among many congressmen about the emergency and the leadership of Indira Gandhi. The other was the consolidation of the lobby opposed to Y.B. Chavan. Indira Gandhi had cultivated this anti-Chavan lobby since 1972. Thirdly, the factionalism within the Maratha leadership led to dissension and anti-party activity. As a result of these developments, many Congress candidates were defeated in 1977 (Vora et al: 102). In this background, the split in Congress party in the State was more a function of State level factors than the national situation. The defeat of Indira Gandhi and the national level split only provided an excuse. A majority of the leaders from the Maratha lobby sided with Congress (Reddy) once Y.B. Chavan decided to oppose Indira Gandhi.

In the Assembly elections held in 1978, there were three main contestants: the two Congress parties and the alliance led by Janata Party. The Janata party made a serious effort to take advantage of the division in the Congress party and a loose coalition was formed by bringing together the PWP, CPI (M), Kamble and Khobragade factions of the RPI, one small breakaway group of the Congress (Maharashtra Samajwadi Congress of S. B. Chavan), Nag Vidarbh Samiti and a rebel faction of the Muslim League. Shivsena supported the Congress (I) and Gavai faction of the RPI supported the Congress (Reddy). However, the Janata alliance was not successful in settling all internal disputes and at many places the partners of this alliance contested against each other (*Maharashtra Times: MT*; files for January and February, 1978). The election ended up in a hung assembly, for the first time in the State. The Janata party emerged as the single largest party (99 seats) but the two Congress parties with 131 seats (Indira loyalists had 62 and Chavan loyalists had 69 seats) formed a coalition government with the help of independents. This was the first ever coalition ministry which was a minority coalition and also a post-election coalition) in the State. Vasantdada Patil (Congress-Reddy) became the Chief Minister of this ministry and Tirpude, of the Congress (I) became the deputy chief minister. While the Congress (Reddy) sought to consolidate the Maratha leadership, the Congress (I) projected itself as the party of the non-Maratha interests, particularly from the regions other than western Maharashtra. Relations between the two Congress parties were extremely strained and even within each party there was considerable opposition to the alliance (for details see; Ghotale: 66-70).

Finally, Sharad Pawar along with 44 MLAs left the Congress (Reddy—by then it had come to be known as Congress-Urs) and formed the Congress (S) party bringing down the Congress coalition (July 1978) (*MT*, files for the period 15 March-14 July 1978). Pawar then swiftly went on to form an alliance with Janata Party and its friends (PWP and RPI). This coalition was named as the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF). The PDF came to power with Pawar as its leader. The PDF was not a minority coalition like its predecessor since its constituents—Janata (99), PWP (13) and the Pawar faction of the Congress (44) ---had a tally of 156, above the required majority of 145.

Pawar's revolt created a split among the Maratha leaders of the Congress. Vasantdada and his faction were very bitter at the 'backstabbing' by Pawar and after a brief interval finally merged their faction with Congress (I). In other words, the developments during 1977-78, though they ushered in two coalition ministries in the State in quick succession, were in fact, a fall-out of two things. In the first place, it was a result of the internal factionalism within the Congress party in the State and secondly, it was the result of the reconfiguration taking place among the various factions of the Maratha leadership of the State. It was only providential that the national level politics had catapulted the Janata party into a strategic position to take advantage of this situation and thus, a non-Congress government led by a Congress faction formed the alliance in 1978. Pawar, along with the socialist elements in the Janata party did of course try to give an ideological basis to this development by projecting a 'progressive' and democratic image of this alliance. Once Indira Gandhi returned to power at the centre (1980), she dismissed the PDF government and called for fresh assembly elections. Though the PDF fought the Assembly elections together, they could not stop the return of the Congress to power.

In the Lok Sabha election of 1984, Shivsena and BJP came together for the first time. The Shivsena contested two seats (S-C Mumbai and N-C Mumbai) on the election symbol of the BJP

(*MT*, 1 Dec. 1984), though it lost in both constituencies. In the Assembly election of 1985 a very complicated picture of party political competition emerged. The BJP severed its links with the Shivsena and joined the non-Congress coalition led by Sharad Pawar. Pawar's PDF now included the PWP, Janata Party, BJP and his Congress(S) (*MT*, 29 Jan. 1985). This coalition was supported by the Shetkari Sanghatana. This coalition contested 284 seats for the assembly election (*MT*, 2 Feb. 1985) and won 103 seats. These elections may be seen as the precursor to the latter phase of coalition politics, though the Congress managed to win 161 seats and retain power. In a sense, the formation of the PDF in 1978 marked the decline of the Congress system in the State. Pawar continued to lead the opposition forces in the State, till he finally decided to merge his Congress (S) with Congress (I) in 1986. Pawar tried to project a progressive and democratic image of the opposition. At the same time, Pawar was leading various agitations on issues related to agriculture. However, since 1981 itself, there were reports about Pawar's inclination to merge with the Congress (I) (*MT*, 25 May, 1981) because many State level Maratha leaders were, one by one, joining the Congress led by Indira Gandhi.

II Emergence of the era of coalition politics

Pawar's return to the Congress created a political vacuum in the State that was filled by the Shivsena. After its relative hibernation for almost a decade since the emergency, Shivsena re-emerged and began to spread its organization in the rural parts of Marathwada region (Palshikar, 2004). After the electoral debacle in the 1984-85 elections, the BJP was searching for alternative strategies. It was willing to enter into alliances with both Janata party (later Janata Dal) and the Shivsena on the basis of the old platform of non-congressism. Finally, in June 1989, on the eve of the 1989 elections, it took a formal decision to forge an alliance with the Shivsena as far as Maharashtra was concerned. This decision of the BJP was to make a long lasting impact on State's politics in the next decade.

Shivsena-BJP coalition

As the first decade of the twenty first century came to a close, the Shivsena-BJP alliance in Maharashtra had been in place for more than two decades and may be seen as a durable coalition perhaps next only to the left coalition in West Bengal and Kerala. The difference is however, that this alliance is between two roughly equal partners, unlike in West Bengal and Kerala where the CPI (M) is the dominant partner. As we shall see later, the Sena-BJP alliance is simultaneously an anti-Congress alliance, alliance of 'Hindutva' forces in the State and the coalition facilitating a reconfiguration of caste politics in the State. In its life of twenty years, this alliance has gone through three different roles: firstly, it operated as a challenger to the Congress party, then it was the ruling coalition in the State for five years and later it has been functioning as an opposition coalition. In its first two incarnations, the Sena-BJP coalition has been very effective while as an opposition, it has been lacklustre in its performance from 1999 onwards.

It may also be noted that the Sena-BJP coalition preceded the attempts by the BJP to forge broad-based coalitions at the all-India level and manage them successfully. When the BJP first put up a coalition in 1998 at the centre, the Sena-BJP government in the State was already three years old and the BJP must have drawn valuable lessons from working that coalition. All the

strategic moves that the BJP followed later in the nineties were first tried out in Maharashtra vis-à-vis Shivsena: to choose partners who were politically significant at the State level (only?), to allow them maximum leeway at the State level, help them win power in the State by accepting a secondary role in State politics, and in exchange, get their support to the BJP-led government at the centre without much interference from them regarding the policies and politics of the BJP. Shivsena was a growing political force in the late eighties and it was never much comfortable with the Congress (although, the Shivsena did support the Congress during 1980-1984). The rise of Janata Party, limited success of the PDF experiment and the large number of seats won by opposition in 1980 and 1985 indicated the existence of the anti-Congress space and the impatience of one section of the Maratha leadership with the Congress party. The BJP thus, exploited the anti-Congress space in the State by forging this alliance and precisely the same strategy was adopted in State after State once the Congress was defeated in 1996. Another parallel with the all-India situation is the inability of the BJP to function effectively as leader of the coalition in opposition. Again, the experience of Maharashtra between 1999 and 2004 had already given an indication of this trait. However, the BJP and Shivsena in Maharashtra have managed to retain the coalition even after the defeat in the assembly election and they together fought the local elections of 2001-02 and later in 2007 also. These details justify the claim that the Shivsena-BJP coalition has ushered in the era of coalition politics in the State, particularly in the context of the decline of the Congress party. There were some strains in the coalition on the eve of the elections in 2009. One of the main reasons behind this was the split in Shivsena in 2007 when Raj Thakare left the party and formed the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS). After its relatively impressive performance in Lok Sabha election of 2009, some sections in the BJP wanted to enter into an arrangement with MNS or even leave out the Shivsena in favour of MNS. However, finally the party decided to continue its alliance with Shivsena. The fact remains that the 2009 round of elections witnessed a frosty and formal coalition between the two parties.

Congress coalition in post-Congress era

The Congress had long been reluctant to engage in coalition politics and whenever it so tried in the past, it was in its role as the dominant partner of the coalition. Such coalitions have had only limited successes or limited durations. We have seen above, how the Congress sought to ally with the RPI factions from time to time, without inspiring much confidence in its alliance partner. This trend continued even when the Congress was on the verge of decline, both nationally and at the State level. In 1990, Sharad Pawar as leader of the Congress ensured the support of the RPI by 'giving' the RPI 12 seats in the assembly elections (*MT*, 3 Feb., 1990) (the RPI lost on all those seats). After the defeat in the 1995 assembly election and the 1996 Lok Sabha election, Pawar forged a larger coalition in 1998 Lok Sabha election, with the RPI factions, Janata Dal and Samajwadi Party and inflicted a crushing blow to the ruling Sena-BJP coalition. The Congress patiently negotiated with various parties for an understanding over seat distribution (see, *MT*, files for Dec. 1997 to February 1998; particularly 24 Dec., 1997, 1 Feb., 1998, 11 Feb. 1998). The Congress-led coalition won 37 seats and also helped the PWP pick one seat, restricting the Sena-BJP to a mere ten seats (out of forty eight from the State). However, this could happen mainly because instead of non-Congressism, opposition to the BJP and its communal politics (non-BJPism?) became the main concern of the smaller parties. This forced them to ally with the Congress although they were not necessarily pro-Congress. In other words, the shrill Hindutva rhetoric of the BJP and the alleged involvement of the Shivsena in the anti-Muslim riots in Mumbai in January 1993 drove the non-Congress and non-BJP parties into an alliance with the

Congress. This was not a durable alliance however, and anti-Congress politics and politics of 'third force' re-emerged soon and the Congress-led alliance became defunct.

In May 1999, Pawar suddenly led a rebellion against the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and (after being expelled from Congress,) formed the Nationalist Congress party (NCP) in June 1999. The Lok Sabha elections were soon held and State assembly elections were also held simultaneously, in October 1999. In Maharashtra, these elections were more or less triangular. While the Shivsena and BJP continued their alliance, the two Congress parties were out to finish each other. Each wanted to prove that it was the real inheritor of whatever was left of the Congress legacy in the State. The other smaller parties aligned either with the NCP or the Congress. The Bahujan Mahasangh and RPI-Gavai faction contested in association with Congress and SP, RPI-Athavale faction and JD-S joined the alliance led by NCP. PWP and Communists did not join any coalition (*MT*, files for July-October 1998). However, circumstances forced a new political configuration after the election. The Sena-BJP failed to get a majority in the State legislature and the two Congress parties saw this as an opportunity to form a government if they formed an alliance. This was almost a repeat show of 1978. After a long period of negotiations, the two Congress parties entered into an agreement and roped in the other smaller parties (RPI, PWP, SP and Bahujan Mahasangh as partners in the ministry and the left parties as supporters from the outside) to form the Democratic Front. Unlike in 1978, this coalition of the two Congress parties survived the tenure of five years. However, during their tenure, they fought the local elections separately and against each other.

Their success in running the State government for five years encouraged them (and probably built up pressure from inside) to contest the 2004 Lok Sabha elections as a coalition. Some sections within the Congress were opposed to continue the alliance with the NCP. But once Sonia Gandhi personally spoke to Pawar, the alliance was firmed up (*Loksatta*, 7 and 8 January, 2004). After intense negotiations, the formula of seat sharing on the basis of performance in the 1999 election was slightly modified. This gave the NCP 18 seats (*Loksatta*, files for February and March 2004). Once the Congress-led government came to power in Delhi with NCP as one partner, it was a foregone conclusion that they will contest the assembly elections too, as partners. Yet, many Congress leaders at the State level, tried to abort the alliance with NCP. The central leadership prevailed on the State leaders and an alliance with the NCP was forged. This helped them retain power in the State in October 2004 for a second term.

More or less the same developments took place on the eve of Lok Sabha and Assembly elections of 2009---NCP prevaricated, Congress leaders at the State level opposed coalition with NCP and finally, the alliance took place and in fact helped the Congress better than in 2004. In 2009 Assembly elections too, some leaders from the State like Vilasrao Deshmukh (ex-CM), and some others kept insisting that Congress should contest on its own (see for instance the news item in Daily *Sakal*, Pune edition, 22 Sept., 2009). NCP did not post a good performance in parliamentary elections of 2009, but joined the new UPA government at Delhi effectively ending any speculation about the possible configurations at Assembly elections. In the Assembly elections of 2009 also, a tedious process of negotiation took place both before and after the elections for files of Daily *Sakal* for the period September 20 to October 20, 2009).

A few things need to be noted regarding the Congress coalitions. Firstly, many of the Congress-led coalitions have been either only seat-adjustments (e.g. 1990 Assembly or 1998 LS elections, where the Congress 'left' certain seats uncontested in favour of some 'friendly' parties without any formal State-wide understanding or pre-election coalition) or they were post-election alliances for forming the government (1999). The coalition in 2004 has been the first major pre-election coalition involving the Congress in the State. Secondly, the Congress has finally entered into the art of coalition making only after the emergence of the post-Congress era. Thirdly, at least in Maharashtra, the Congress coalition has been mainly between two factions, who belonged to the same party for a long time. As such, their alliance is characterised by their rivalries and relationships that evolved within the framework of the Congress party. This has an important implication. It means that the two Congress parties would have basically the same social segments as their targeted support base, which would be the traditional Congress vote. (For instance, in 1999 Assembly election, the vote share of the two Congress parties among various communities was as follows: among Marathas Congress polled 23 percent votes and the NCP polled 28 percent; among Kunbis, they polled 15 and 26 percent respectively; Palshikar-Deshpande; 2003: 120). Both the Congress parties continue to be dependent upon the vote of the Maratha-Kunbi community. Therefore, whether their alliance helps them in adding to their total vote base or simply helps the two Congress parties to hold on to their traditional vote, is a moot point. However, it is clear that coalition politics has been the strategy adopted by the Congress for its survival in the post-Congress political context.

Ideological justifications

The Shivsena-BJP coalition was formed in June 1989. This was the period when the BJP was already identified with the ideology of Hindutva but was yet to get fully involved in the Ramjanmabhoomi agitation. In Maharashtra, no party was willing to ally with the Shivsena because of its anti-Dalit, anti-minorities stand and penchant for aggressive and violent direct action. But it was also the time when the Shivsena had started spreading to the rural parts of the state. Therefore, the coalition of these two parties quickly got identified as a coalition of Hindutva forces. On the other hand, the two Congress parties fought against each other and then came together to form a government. Thus, theirs was seen as an opportunistic alliance. In this section we shall look at the ideological content of the coalition and the policy priorities of both the major coalitions in the State.

When the BJP decided to join hands with the Shivsena in the State, Shivsena had already taken up an explicitly pro-Hindutva position. Therefore, both the parties could easily invoke a common ideological platform as the basis for their coalition. After the humiliating defeat of 1984-85, the BJP had begun the process of its own ideological rediscovery. The Ramjanmabhoomi '*abhiyan*' of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad had commenced, Advani had taken over the leadership of the party from Vajpayee and ideology of cultural nationalism was adopted by the BJP. Thus, the argument could be offered that the two parties had decided to join hands in order to avoid the possible division of the Hindu vote. However, it is not correct to say that the BJP was actually driven by this argument alone. The experience of the Janata interregnum had taught BJP a lesson or two about non-Congressism. The ease with which the non-Congress forces had agreed to cooperate with the erstwhile Jan Sangh indicated that there was adequate ideological space around the issue of non-congressism. The BJP was in fact groping to explore that space. Even in

the case of Maharashtra, the objective of the BJP was to avoid the division of non-Congress vote. Therefore, the BJP was constantly attempting to come to terms with the Janata Dal (JD) in the State. With blessings of V.P. Singh, this could not have been very difficult. However, the Janata Dal in Maharashtra, under the influence of socialist leadership, was averse to the idea of cooperating with the Shivsena. Ironical as it may appear in retrospect, the BJP was not seen as the threat to secularism and democracy. Shivsena was the villain of the piece. Shivsena, with its long history of semi-fascistic activities and violent dealings with its opponents in Mumbai city, had earned notoriety in State politics. The Janata Dal in the State vetoed any indirect dealing with the Shivsena (*MT*, 30 April, 18 June, 25 June, 29 June, 8 Sept., 10 Sept., 20 Sept., and 21 Sept., 1989). So, the BJP had to make its choice. It decided to have a buoyant and expanding Shivsena as its partner rather than the declining Janata Dal in the State that had no durable base and had only a limited potential of attracting non-Congress votes. As a result, the ideological justification for the choice had to be such that it would implicitly explain the preference for Shivsena over JD. Hindutva filled the bill eminently. It distinguished the Sena-BJP alliance from a mere power seeking arrangement and lifted it to the plane of popular sentiment and cultural nationalist position. Within the BJP-Sena alliance, the Shivsena invoked the ideology of Hindutva more frequently than the BJP. The Shivsena probably wanted to use this as a strategy for its expansion among the non-Brahman castes in rural Maharashtra. It also wanted to underscore the point that it was only because of the Hindutva ideology that Shivsena was willing to make 'sacrifices' and adjustments for the BJP. Shivsena saw itself as more--or truly--and aggressively wedded to the ideology of Hindutva in comparison to BJP. The RSS-BJP variety of Hindutva was projected by Shivsena as Brahmanical, non-aggressive and therefore ineffective.

While 'Hindutva' was offered as the justification for this alliance, all the other alliances in the State since 1989 have been justified on grounds of 'secularism'. Just as in the case of the Sena-BJP alliance the BJP was the astute partner floating the ideological justification and the Shivsena was the willing broadcaster of that claim, Congress invoked the ideology of secularism again and again and the smaller, 'third force', parties fell for the bait again and again, despite their reservations about the Congress. Sharad Pawar based his entire strategy of anti-Sena-BJP campaign in 1998 on ideological vulnerability of the 'third force' parties to this claim of anti-communal fight (see for instance the statement by Athavale, RPI leader that the alliance with Congress was based on the objective of fighting the communal forces: *MT*, 24 Dec. 1997. The same consideration motivated the SP in Maharashtra to join the alliance led by Congress: *MT*, 1 Feb. 1998). This justification also provided both NCP and Congress with the escape route in 1999, when both had to enter into a post-election coalition to form the ministry. The main purpose of the Congress-NCP alliances was to combat communal politics. Pawar had formed the NCP on the plank of Sonia's foreign origin. Congress on the other hand, vested full loyalty in Sonia's leadership. In this background, the two parties had to convince themselves and their followers of the reasons for their alliance. Just as the BJP adroitly used the anti-Congress sentiments, the Congress, too, sought to occupy the anti-BJP space by relying on the anti-communal platform. Besides, as both the parties were part of the same political past, they could easily invoke the common 'Congress tradition' as the justification for their alliance. Pawar however, had another argument: Both during 1999-2004 and after the two parties entered into pre-election coalition in 2004, Pawar argued that his party was doing this in the interests of the State. The economy and society of Maharashtra were fractured by the Sena-BJP alliance and only the two Congress parties could together 'save' Maharashtra from this mess (*MT*, 16 Oct.

1999). This argument implicitly rested on a regionalist platform. Since its formation in 1999, NCP has tried to occupy the regional space in the State contesting the claims of the Shivsena of being the representative of the Marathi people. Thus, for the NCP, the additional justification for the coalition with Congress was the protection of the interests of Maharashtra (Palshikar-Yadav, 2004 and Palshikar, 2004). In other words, while Hindutva vs. secularism was the main text of the ideological discourse of the two coalitions, it did have other sub-texts.

Was there any policy difference?

The Sena-BJP coalition tried to emphasize its distinctive nature in comparison to the Congress by initially attacking the Congress for corruption and appeasement of minorities. In the backdrop of the Mumbai riots of January 1993 and the bomb blasts in Mumbai in March 1993, the Shivsena and BJP systematically projected their alliance as the alliance of Hindutva forces. This strategy helped them in transcending the caste question. The BJP had been identified as the party of the urban interests. Both the Shivsena and BJP had a primarily urban and upper caste leadership. The Hindutva rhetoric helped them in attracting the votes of masses from OBC sections. But besides Hindutva, Sena-BJP also tried to create expectations of a better government. Thakare had already floated two ideas even before the electoral victory of the coalition. These were slum rehabilitation in Mumbai by constructing low cost tenements for the slum dwellers and secondly, the construction of an express highway linking Mumbai and Pune. After coming to power, the coalition took up a large number of new schemes and projects for different sections of the society. (One source actually lists the hundreds of policy announcements made by the Sena-BJP government during its first year in power: see *Anubhav* 1996: 13-23.) These had two objectives. One was to consolidate the urban constituency and the other was to construct a new rural vote base by putting the Maratha interests on the back foot. The Sena-BJP speeded up the process of privatisation on a large scale. It undertook the construction of roads and flyovers all over the State on the Build-Operate-Transfer basis. Although the State Road Development Corporation was activated for the purpose of road construction, the thrust was on privatisation. In Mumbai, the rehabilitation of slums benefited the builders' lobby. In the rural areas the Sena-BJP government allowed private sugar factories apart from allowing the movement of sugarcane outside the 'zones' of the sugar cooperatives. Besides, private milk dairies were also allowed. Another major policy initiative of the Sena-BJP government was the establishment of the Krishna river valley corporation. The alliance started, on a massive scale, work on medium irrigation projects under that scheme in order to meet the deadline under the Krishna valley award on sharing of waters of the Krishna river. The Sena-BJP government also became famous for its scheme of promoting sale of simple lunch, '*Zunka Bhakar*', at Re. One. Though this scheme soon failed due to its economically unviable nature, for a little while, it gave employment to many youth, thus expanding the patronage network of the Shivsena in particular.

However, the most significant episode concerning Sena-BJP government's policy framework was the Enron issue. The Congress government of Pawar had entered into a contract with the Enron Company for generation of power through the plant to be formally owned by the Dabhol Power Corporation. The Sena-BJP coalition raised a huge controversy over this and alleged corruption. It promised the cancellation of the project if it came to power. Accordingly, it sought to terminate the contract once it was in power. However, at the same time, it renegotiated the contract and revived the deal. The renegotiated Enron deal was allegedly more beneficial for the Enron Corporation (Patwardhan; 24-25). Among other things, the handling of the Enron issue

contributed to the debt crisis that the State entered during this period. But there were many other policy initiatives of the Sena-BJP government that also contributed to the worsening financial condition of the State. They included the subsidy paid to urban governments in the State for running the *Zunka Bhakar* centres, free rehabilitation of slums of Mumbai, pushing the development of Marathwada and Vidarbha regions (for which respectively Rupees 1400 crores and 2700 crores were provided), etc.

Congress government under Sharad Pawar had initiated the policy of liberalisation in the State. Therefore, when the Congress-NCP alliance came to power, it could not revoke many of the initiatives taken by the Sena-BJP coalition. Thus, while political competition became severe, there was no policy shift in the political economy of the State. The period of coalition politics is thus marked by continuity of the policy perspectives, though there were differences of emphasis marked by competitive populism of the two alliances. The Congress-NCP alliance tried very hard to restart the Enron project that had run into trouble. Besides, the Congress-NCP alliance continued the trend of privatisation and extended privatisation policy to windmills, water supply, etc. During the campaign for the Assembly election of 2004, the Congress-NCP alliance promised free electricity for agricultural purpose and loan waiver for the farmers (Joint manifesto, 2004). Once this coalition came to power in 2004, it got busy trying to wriggle out of these promises since these promises threatened to constrain the economy of the State. But their election manifesto makes it very clear that they were targeting the same social sections that the Sena-BJP had attracted. Thus, the Congress-NCP promised infrastructure development for Mumbai, protection for the slum dwellers of Mumbai and simultaneously aimed at poor farmers and the rural poor. In the policy initiatives of both the coalitions, there is a combination of populism and privatisation. Differences of details notwithstanding, the two coalitions share the same development perspective and same strategies to placate popular resentment.

The Congress and NCP chose to include the issue of protection to and advancement of Marathi language and interests of Marathi people in their manifesto in an obvious attempt to counter the MNS; they also emphasized the inclination of the coalition to work for the ordinary people (*aam adami*) by promising ten lakh dwelling units for the poor, food grains at Rs. 3 per kg for those below the poverty line, agricultural loans with an interest rate of 3% per annum, etc. (*Daily Maharashtra Times*, Oct. 3, 2009). The Shivsena and BJP repeated almost all the promises they had made in the manifestos of 1999 and 2004. Their manifesto shifted focus from Hindutva to farmers and the middle class. Their alliance too, included the issue of Marathi language and culture (*Daily Sakal*, Sept., 30, 2009). In other words, the coalitions did not choose to differentiate each other on policies and programmes.

III

Functioning of the coalitions

There is no doubt that the alliance between Shivsena and BJP changed the structure of political competition in the State. Since 1989-90, party politics in Maharashtra has become very competitive. Previous political equations of social support base have changed. The Janata Dal, which briefly sought to occupy the non-Congress space in the State, has been fully marginalized.

Therefore, it is useful to look at the electoral changes effected by the politics of coalition in the State.

Electoral Outcomes

The outcomes of the coalitions in Maharashtra in terms of the changes in the patterns of electoral-political competition are well documented (Palshikar-Deshpande, 2003; Palshikar-Birmal, 2003 and Palshikar-Birmal, 2004; Deshpande-Birmal, 2009; Palshikar et al, 2009). The decline of the Congress in the State and the electoral rise of the Shivsena-BJP alliance mutually reinforce each other. Yet, it is doubtful if these changes would have come about in 1990 or 1995 if the Sena-BJP alliance had not been in place. In this sense, the Sena-BJP coalition hastened the process of Congress' decline in the State. Political changes, particularly changes in the pattern of electoral competition require a carrier and the Sena-BJP provided just that in the State. Electoral politics in the State suddenly became competitive in 1990 throwing up Shivsena and the BJP as formidable rivals of the Congress. The Congress barely managed to form a government and was in fact short of majority by seven seats in the assembly. On the one hand, the Sena-BJP posed a serious challenge before the Congress and on the other, replaced the Janata Dal and its allies as the main challengers to Congress. In fact, as later events were to show, the Sena-BJP coalition forced the 'third force' parties to shift ground from their anti-Congress position to a qualified and limited pro-Congress stance. Instead of being the potential inheritors of the vacuum created by the demise of the Congress, these 'third force' parties became weak crutches facilitating the survival of the Congress in the State. (*See table no. 1 for election results of Lok Sabha and Assembly elections during the period 1989-2009.*)

The challenge thrown up by the Sena-BJP coalition further created strain on the declining Congress system and aggravated the rebel factor within the Congress in 1995. Although the Sena-BJP cannot be blamed for the unprecedented rebellion in the Congress party in 1995 assembly election, the presence of an external challenge put an additional stress on the Congress. In the first place, the possibility of the rival coalition winning the election enthused the rebels and secondly, with the Sena-BJP as a formidable opposition, the division of vote dealt a severe blow to the Congress. In the absence of the Sena-BJP coalition, so many (35) rebel candidates of the Congress party would not have got elected in 1995. Besides, the Congress lost 24 seats due to division of votes caused by the presence of the rebels in the 1995 elections (Vora-Palshikar, 1996: 67-68). Thirdly, after the elections, the Sena-BJP--- short of majority by five seats----- could and actually did accommodate the rebels and by giving them ministerial berths, ensured their survival outside of the Congress. The rebels formed a group of 'independent' MLAs and functioned as a bloc. They continued to function as a bloc even during the Congress coalition, although as supporters of the Congress ministry. Thus, the Sena-BJP coalition weakened the ability of the Congress to handle rebellion and facilitated the rise of this hitherto unknown quantity of 'independents' in the politics of the State. For instance, in the run up to the 2004 assembly election, a section of ex-Congress leaders formed a separate party, Jan Surajya Party hoping to be able to negotiate with both coalitions in the event of a hung assembly. These developments eroded the base of the third force parties in the State. In particular, the politics of coalitions has dealt a deathblow to Janata Dal and the PWP. In the aftermath of Lok Sabha election of 2009, the Left parties and RPI (Athavale faction) took the initiative in forming a front named the Republican Left Democratic Front (RLDF) consisting of more than 20 groups, organizations and parties. This Front, however, could not provide a real alternative to the voters

in terms of viability; nor did its constituents have any strength in electoral terms. Though it was believed that the Front may cut into the votes of the Congress and NCP, there is no clear evidence of this. Thus, the 2009 elections too, were mostly bipolar. However, quite a few individual constituencies witnessed keen competition due to the role of 'rebels' of various parties. Many of the rebel candidates were an outcome of the seat sharing resulting from the coalition apart from the newly delimited constituency boundaries. Yet, even the rebel factor could not improve the lot of the parties outside the two main coalitions and it is in this sense that the political competition in the state has assumed a bipolar structure following a long period of coalition politics.

Strictly speaking, four of the five elections since the rise of coalition politics in the State have produced hung assemblies, with only the 2009 election witnessing a clear majority for the Congress-NCP alliance. But more than the distribution of seats among the various parties and coalitions, it is interesting to look at the vote share of different parties. All through the decade since 1995 there has been a fragmentation of the vote. In 1990, the Congress vote share slipped by five percentage points in comparison to 1985. In 1995, it slipped further by almost seven percent, though the vote share of the Shivsena did not increase between 1990 and 1995. The BJP registered a small but significant increase of two percent in its vote share in this period. Shivsena did not gain much between 1990 and 1995 but improved its vote share by one per cent in 1999 and added another two per cent in 2004. The BJP, though, lost about one per cent vote in 2004 in comparison to 1999. In the case of the two Congress parties, they polled more votes when they contested separately than as a coalition. Together they polled 49 per cent votes in 1999 though they were contesting elections independently. In 2004, they contested as an alliance and yet lost over nine per cent votes. In 2009, their combined loss over 2004 was considerably limited (two and a half percent) which was mainly due to the relatively weak performance of the NCP.

It is however, possible that these details have more to do with the disintegration of the Congress base than with coalition strategy. Even in 1978, when there was a split in the Congress, the total votes polled by the two factions were rather impressive (44 per cent). In the case of the non-Congress parties, a coalition often helps to add the votes of the coalition partners while in the case of the Congress, when two factions contest separately, they tend to attract additional votes from outside the traditional catchment area of the Congress party. The relationship between seats and votes has also become somewhat complex. In 1995, the Sena-BJP together polled a little less than 30 per cent votes and the Congress, too polled 30 per cent votes but the former coalition got 138 seats and the Congress was restricted to only 80 seats. This shows the efficacy of the coalition in fetching more seats. However, in 1999, the Sena-BJP polled more votes but still lost three seats. In 2004, the Congress-NCP alliance lost nine per cent votes but added eight seats. In 2009, the alliance of Congress and NCP polled 37 percent votes and won fifty percent seats in the legislature. The Shivsena and BJP together polled 30 percent votes and won 32 percent seats. These details are captured in the tables on effective number of parties (*Tables No. 2 & 3*).

Then, there is the regional dimension to the new pattern of electoral competition that is emerging. Each region of the state is now experiencing a distinct pattern of competition. In the Mumbai-Thane metropolitan area, the competition is between Shivsena and the Congress. The rise of MNS altered this to some extent in 2009. The entire Mumbai-Thane belt became the key battleground in 2009 because of the ability of the MNS to win away Shivsena votes. In the

Mumbai and Thane belt, MNS won eight seats and also cut into the votes of the Shivsena by polling over twenty percent votes (for details see Palshikar et al, 2009: 43 and Thite, 2010). In the Konkan region, the NCP and Shivsena were locked in a battle (until Rane, a Sena leader from Konkan defected to the Congress in 2005) while in the Marathwada region all the four players are equally poised. In Vidarbha region, Congress and BJP are the main contestants and in western Maharashtra, the two Congress parties continue to fight each other. Besides, there is considerable volatility to this configuration of electoral competition. (*Table no. 5 shows the region-wise results for different major parties during 1990-2009.*)

One area in which the Sena-BJP coalition has not had much success is the elections to local bodies. In 1992, they did not have an alliance for the local elections. But since 1997, the Sena-BJP alliance contested the local elections together. Yet, their performance was very modest. They certainly did make in-roads into Congress bastions in rural Maharashtra, but failed to repeat their success at the assembly level. In 2002 and 2007, there was a triangular contest with the two Congress parties fighting it out against each other. Even then, the Shivsena and BJP failed to capitalize upon that. It is perhaps because, the local level workers of each party look upon the local elections as an opportunity for themselves to 'make it' in politics and are not concerned much with the State level coalition. Whereas they work for the candidates of the alliance partner in the Lok Sabha or assembly election, in the local election, the enthusiasm to work for the alliance partner is considerably low. As a result, the coalition has never done very well in local elections both of the municipalities and rural local bodies in the State (for details of the election results of 2001-02, see Palshikar, 2002; also see Palshikar-Birmal, 2009). Table 6 further shows that the Sena-BJP alliance is weaker in rural areas. The vote share in Zilla Parishads is less than the overall vote share of the coalition in the district as a whole. The only exception to this are the districts of Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri in Konkan region, Nasik in North Maharashtra, Nagpur, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli in Vidarbha region, and Nanded and Hingoli in Marathwada region. (*Table no. 6 gives the district-wise vote share of Shivsena and BJP for 1999 and 2004 assembly elections in comparison to Zilla Parishad results for 2002 and 2007.*)

The practice of coalition dharma

The alliance between Shivsena and BJP not only changed the structure of political competition in the State it also changed the norms of political practice as far as relations among various parties are concerned. Later, when the Congress and NCP had to enter into an alliance in 1999, they implicitly followed many a convention set by the Sena-BJP coalition. And yet, party politics being a very lively and dynamic activity, many uncertainties and contingencies prevail in the actual practice of coalition politics. Seat sharing, leadership issues and the question of local level dynamics of coalition are some of the issues that need to be looked into in order to understand the evolution of the culture of coalitional politics.

Neither the Shivsena nor the BJP had a clear idea of the strength of each other when they entered into an alliance in 1989. However, both had a clear idea of the *primary* location of their politics. The Shivsena wanted to play a major role at the State level and the BJP wanted to emerge as a major national player. Therefore, early on in their alliance, it was decided that BJP would get more seats to contest for the Lok Sabha and the Shivsena would contest more seats in the assembly election. (*Table no. 7.1 shows the number of seats contested and won by Shivsena and*

BJP and Table no. 7.2 shows these details for Congress and NCP). This formula has stayed over the last twenty years. Interestingly, in its efforts to spread to all parts of the State, the Shivsena has registered a low success rate in terms of proportion of seats won compared to seats contested. Even in 2004, when the Sena-BJP coalition lost the election, the success rate of the BJP has improved. It is evident therefore, that the BJP has been able to get for itself constituencies where it could have better chances of winning the election. The Shivsena has of course got its pound of flesh by bargaining for large number of ministries in the union ministry and also speakership of the Lok Sabha when the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was in power. On its part, the BJP was successful in obtaining the post of deputy chief minister and important portfolios such as home and finance when the Sena-BJP alliance came to power in the State. Hard bargaining also marked the distribution of seats between the Congress and the NCP. The NCP had to forego its claim over many seats in Western Maharashtra, but in exchange, it could get the seats from Marathwada region and thus, expand its base in that region. In 1999 Assembly election, it had only five seats from that region. In 2004, it could win as many as 11 seats from Marathwada.

Interestingly, many of the principles of practicing coalition politics were evolved by the Sena-BJP alliance during 1995-1999 and the Congress-NCP coalition actually followed most of them. Thus, in 1999, they agreed to follow the principle of the larger partner getting the post of chief minister and also the principle of distribution of portfolios among the coalition partners. In addition, the Congress and NCP had to agree to form a coordination committee because their coalition had many smaller partners who were insisting on some common programme and modality to keep a check on the ministry. This experiment, though, did not work very effectively and the government continued to follow its own policies much to the consternation of the smaller partners. Many of these smaller partners finally chose to leave the coalition since they thought that the two Congress parties were dominating all policy making in the government.

The Congress coalition also departed from the norm laid down by the previous coalitions and settled for a chief minister from the party that had less number of MLAs in the 2004 assembly election. This was partly because the NCP, not expecting to outnumber the Congress, had given the impression that it would agree to a Congress chief minister. This was based on the fact that since the NCP was contesting less number of seats, it was unlikely to be the bigger partner. But like the BJP, the NCP, too, chose its constituencies carefully and recorded an impressive success rate of 57 per cent of the seats contested by it. Secondly, when negotiations on this issue were going on, the Congress was in power at the centre and the NCP had already got a more than satisfactory deal in the formation of union cabinet. In this background, the NCP had to concede to the demand made by the State Congress that the post of chief minister would go to that party even though NCP had more MLAs. The Congress advanced the argument that its total tally of seats including the seats it had left for the allies and won by those allies should be taken into consideration. But the NCP ensured that it would get larger number of portfolios in exchange of giving up its claim over the post of chief minister. It went on bargaining for each portfolio before the ministry could be formed (for details, see: files of *Loksatta*, 18 October to 2 November, 2004). Bargaining over cabinet berths has also meant that the Congress chose to keep a few cabinet berths vacant as also many positions of the Chairpersons of semi-government corporations both during 2004-09 and after the 2009 elections. After winning more seats than its partner in 2009, Congress promptly demanded more cabinet berths but the NCP managed to

retain the cabinet positions it had held earlier (for details see, Daily *Sakal*, Oct. 28, 2009 and Daily *Loksatta*, Oct. 30, 2009).

In the study of coalitions in the parliamentary political process, greatest attention is often given to the complex practices of seat sharing between or among the coalition partners. When the Shivsena and BJP embarked on the path of coalition formation in 1989-90, they had no basis to negotiate as both had a weak base in the State and very limited representation in the legislatures. It was through trial and error, through negotiations, through the aspirations and calculations of local workers of the parties and through the long term planning of some leaders from both parties that the pattern for seat sharing was evolved. As already mentioned, the Shivsena had the ambition of becoming important player at the State level and the BJP accepted this. As a result, the Shivsena always managed to get a larger share compared to its performance and turned out to be a loser in terms of net success rate. However, if we look at the seats gained by the Sena in negotiations with BJP, the Sena emerges more successful between the two. This is particularly so in the case of Assembly seat sharing. In the case of the Congress and the NCP, it appears that the NCP has got a better deal for itself. This shows that coalition politics depends on the negotiating skills of the partners. It also shows that potential to win a seat is as much important as the number of seats contested. (*Tables 10 to 12 depict the patterns of seat sharing.*)

Local dynamics

Our study of the functioning of the coalition at the local level shows that the actual relationship is much more fluid, flexible and complex than what appears from a State level overview and from the figures of assembly and Lok Sabha elections. We have already noticed how the Sena-BJP coalition has not been very successful at the local elections. This is mainly because both parties have a compulsion of accommodating the aspirations of their own activists at the local level. Where only one party is well organised and more popular and the other party concedes this unequal relationship, the coalition continues to function in an orderly fashion. This is the case in the Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri districts of Konkan or Hingoli and Parbhani districts of Marathwada. But the moment the weaker party starts spreading its base, tensions between coalition partners crop up. We see this happening in Beed and Osmanabad districts of Marathwada. In Beed, BJP has been the dominant party and the Sena wants to equal BJP's strength. In Osmanabad, the Shivsena has evolved a base among the Maratha community and the BJP is trying to spread precisely among this section and that has led to tensions between the two partners. Akola, Buldhana, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts of Vidarbha are areas of competition between Shivsena and BJP. But whereas in Akola and Buldhana, both are roughly equally placed, in Chandrapur and Gadchiroli the BJP is the dominant partner and the Shivsena complains that the BJP does not allow the growth of the Sena there.

The review of the working of the coalition at the district level throws up a few interesting findings. In the first place, even after two decades of partnership, the Shivsena and BJP have seldom organised joint programmes except during campaigns. Both parties are conscious that they have to create a space for themselves as a party and while the coalition continues, there is clarity among the rank and file that this may end one day and that they will have to face the electorate on their own. So, each party organises its own programmes locally. This gives enough

space to local workers of the party to both showcase and develop their organisational skills. However, coalition politics has imposed limitations on the ability of political parties to expand their base and consolidate the organisation. Any expansion unsettles the coalition partner and produces tensions within the coalition. Ironical as it may seem, coalition politics emerges in the first place because parties have a limited base and limited capacity to expand. But in the long run, this same characteristic is strengthened by compulsions of coalition politics. In this sense, coalition politics produces conditions for its continuation.

Secondly, local workers of the parties are quite aware of the sharp differences between the two. Mainly in Vidarbha, the BJP had earlier announced its support to the demand for a separate State while the Shivsena has been staunchly opposed to any division of the existing State. In Marathwada, on the other hand, the Sena was opposed to the renaming of the university at Aurangabad after Dr Ambedkar, and on the issue of the grazing lands (*gairan* issue), the Shivsena has opposed the Dalits and sided with the Marathas, while the BJP has supported the renaming and also been more sympathetic to the demands of the Dalits. Local level workers manage to underplay these differences and say that locally, the two parties do not make an issue out of these differences because the State level leadership is supposed to sort out the differences of this type. In Mumbai, the BJP has a base among the non-Marathi traders while the Shivsena has always relied on the support of the Marathi speaking population. On the other hand, for the average worker of the Congress or the NCP, it is not really very clear why they happen to be in two different parties. Both parties have the same political culture, background and ideological inclination.

Thirdly, in order to avoid misunderstandings, the Sena-BJP coalition has evolved two principal strategies. One is the 60: 40 sharing of candidatures for local elections and for appointments on various local committees—the party that has a majority of MLAs from the district would get 60 per cent candidatures from the district for local elections and the other partner will get 40 per cent. If both have equal number of MLAs or no MLAs at all, the seats will be shared equally. This avoids the claims and counter-claims of alliance partners. The other strategy, though not very successful, has been the formation of coordination committees at district level. This mechanism works as a platform for redress of grievances. Again, the two Congress parties do not have any such arrangement even after entering into a formal pre-election alliance.

Fourthly, the most striking feature of the Sena-BJP coalition has been that in many places it works in spite of itself. The success of Sena-BJP coalition in surviving for so long may not be due necessarily to any crafty design or conspiracy of the two parties. In many instances, it has been a case of circumstances governing the political players. One of the central features of the State politics has been the split among Maratha leaders and voters on the one hand and the split between the Marathas and OBCs on the other. This development, as we argue in the following section, has been the core factor in understanding the politics of coalitions in the State. This same factor has meant that at district level, new configurations would shape and the Shivsena and BJP were simply there, ‘on the spot’, as if it were, and the changing caste politics rode on the institutional factor of the coalition. For instance, in some districts, a politically dominant caste has ensured that the coalition would remain intact. This is ensured by the fact that the leadership of both parties belongs to the same caste and the caste loyalty ensures smooth functioning of the coalition, because then it is not a two-party coalition, but a coalition protecting the interests of

the dominant caste (instance of this may be found in Vidarbha where the Teli caste controls both alliance partners in Wardha and Chandrapur districts). On the other hand, when two castes are fighting it out at the district level, this competition spills over to the two partners and their relations become strained. Therefore, the functioning of the coalition has more to do with the socio-economic context of politics than the astute calculations of the leadership.

Finally, we witness a drag in the internal relationship between the two partners over a period of time. In the first phase of 1989-1995, there was enthusiasm, expectation and the urge to replace the Congress. Both BJP and Shivsena were really new in the many districts where they were fighting it out with the Congress. This period was marked by mutual trust and confidence. Coalition was functioning very smoothly in this phase. The Shivsena and BJP were successful in creating an atmosphere that if they came to power they would actually remain together. In the second phase, between 1995 and 1999, when they actually came to hold power, the various irritants emerged as parts of the power sharing arrangements. However, the cement of power held them together and contrary to predictions by the press and in spite of adverse media publicity, the coalition survived. Another reason why the coalition government survived was because the 'rebels' who supported it, had nowhere to go and so, it was in their interests that the coalition government survived. The coalition also survived internal hiccups like dissensions etc. because an entirely new set of political workers was sharing power for the first time and these new entrants to the power game did not want to lose power due to internal bickering. By 1999, however, the Shivsena had already started thinking big and the double incumbency (being in power both at the centre and the State) had its toll on the coalition. Since 1999, the coalition has lost the hope and freshness it brought. There has been a 'coalition fatigue'. The BJP in the State gave the slogan of '*Shat pratishat BJP*' (meaning cent per cent BJP) (2003). This angered the Shivsena.

On its part, the Shivsena faced the internal factionalism caused by the rivalry between two young leaders from the Thakare family. Finally, the chief minister of Sena-BJP coalition Narayan Rane, left the Shivsena to join the Congress (2005). Following this, the conflict between the two cousin brothers from the Thakare family, Uddhav and Raj, flared up in 2005. Raj Thakare left the Shivsena and has formed his new political party, the MNS. These developments have not only weakened the coalition, but also created new tensions. The BJP wanted the position of the Opposition Leader in 2004 itself (and particularly after the splits and defections in Shivsena) but the Shivsena managed to retain this position. More importantly, now, both parties realize the importance of party building for the post-coalition phase. This means that at the local level expansion of each party has to take place at the cost of the other. With the emergence of the NCP as the aggressive player and as a Maratha party, the pressure on both Shivsena and BJP to consolidate their base and to expand mainly among the OBCs has increased. Therefore, most of the local activists now concur that since 1999-2000, the relationship between the coalition partners has soured considerably. This is not to suggest the demise of the coalition. These details only alert us to the hazards and obstacles involved in coalition politics over a long period. The rise of Raj Thakare's new Sena is further likely to complicate the politics of coalitions in the State: the BJP may be tempted to align with this new outfit, because it has freshness and aggressiveness that marked the Shivsena in the past. This would open up the possibility for the Congress to have an alliance with the Shivsena. In other words, coalition politics is not going to decline, but it is certainly not going to fit itself into any formulae. It will be characterised by

fluidity and flexibility. Thus, coalition politics in Maharashtra will not manifest a stable pattern as exists in Kerala or West Bengal. This is mainly because Maharashtra is going through a complex phase of social and economic reconfiguration and this throws up unstable patterns of political alliances. We discuss this aspect in the sections below.

The relationship between the Congress and the NCP is conditioned by many factors. In the first place, the NCP was mostly a strong faction previously within the Congress in the State. So, their relationship has the backdrop of intra-party factionalism of a long standing. Pawar has been at the helm of affairs in State for more than three decades. Ever since he first left the Congress to form the PDF, he has his own faction within the Congress. In 1986, there were many within the State Congress who opposed to Pawar's re-entry into the party. At the same time, Pawar has many close contacts within the Congress and the same is true of many leaders of the NCP from the State. In district after district, the NCP produced a vertical split in the Congress. Therefore, the intra-party factionalism is now played out in the open as competition and rivalry between two parties. Secondly, the NCP is strong in the western regions of the State and this is also the region where the Congress has its roots. Therefore, both parties are very cautious about the possibility of other party cutting at its roots. Thirdly, when the NCP-Congress coalition first came into being, it was a post-election coalition and it was marked by mutual suspicion and distrust. There were repeated attempts at overpowering the other partner. The competitive relations formed the basis of their functioning. In comparison, the coalition of the two Congress parties after the 2004 elections is less marked by acrimony and public show of one-upmanship. Perhaps most importantly, in many parts, the Congress and the NCP have a common target: the Maratha-Kunbi voters. This common target is the most important factor in the relationship between the two Congress parties. Fourthly, between the two, the NCP has been more aggressive in its expansion and has systematically attempted to undercut the base of the Congress. It has also made efforts to expand in the small towns and cities of the State. It controls many city municipal councils. This has put the Congress on the back foot in its relations with the NCP. Finally, the Congress does not have a State level leader of equal stature as that of Sharad Pawar. The Congress party is ridden with factionalism and tussle between the organisational wing and the government. Compared to that, the NCP has been more successful in containing intra-party factionalism.

(This section is based on interviews with over seventy district level leaders of Shivsena and BJP and twenty leaders of the Congress and NCP.)

IV

Coalitions and the socio-political context

Leadership and Power sharing

In the case of Sena-BJP alliance, Sena chief Thakare has always been the person who controlled the affairs of the alliance. When the Sena-BJP government came to power in the State, Thakare was known as the 'remote control' of the State government and Thakare himself insisted on being the real power behind the coalition. His age and ailing health, the rise of his son as the leader of the Shivsena and ability of the BJP leadership to manage Thakare's tantrums, all contributed to the routinization and decline of Thakare's status as the supreme commander of the coalition after 1999. In the case of Congress alliance, Sharad Pawar has played a crucial role, though not something like what Thakare was able to do during the nineties. The key factor

behind the roles played by either Thakare or Pawar is their ability to sway the voters and control the electoral apparatus of their respective parties. In this sense, we can say that even after the formation of coalitions, political initiatives remained with these two leaders as far as the State is concerned. The Sena-BJP coalition sprang a surprise when Manohar Joshi was selected to be its first chief minister. Since the formation of the State, politics in Maharashtra has been dominated by the Maratha leadership. The Shivsena and BJP did not have any Maratha leader of state-wide base nor did they have much following among the Maratha community till 1995. Consequently, the chief minister was bound to be from non-Maratha community. However, the choice of Manohar Joshi was surprising mainly because since the mid-fifties, Brahmans have had a very limited role in the politics of the State and given the long history of anti-Brahmanism and non-Brahman politics in the State, this choice was somewhat incongruous. This was balanced by the appointment of Munde, from the OBC community (Vanjari caste) as the deputy chief minister. The Shivsena-BJP government thus, opened up possibilities of non-Maratha politics in the State. However, the Shivsena realised the importance of the Maratha community and replaced Joshi with a Maratha leader from Konkan region, Narayan Rane as chief minister in 1999. Yet, the attempt at redesigning the social and regional balance of power in the State was manifest in many moves of the Sena-BJP coalition. This is evident in the choice of chief and deputy chief ministers and other members of the ministry. In the first ever non-Congress ministry of the Sena-BJP coalition, the number of cabinet ministers from the Maratha community was very low and a large number of Maratha ministers of State came from the 'independents' who were Congress rebels. In contrast, the Maratha ministers have dominated the Congress-NCP ministry (*see Table no. 8 for caste composition of the ministries*).

The Congress and NCP alliance that came to power in 1999 was aware of the strategic moves of the Sena-BJP coalition. While the Sena-BJP coalition wanted to clip the wings of the Maratha leadership, the Congress-NCP chose to respond to these moves by attempting to consolidate the power of the Maratha leadership. Although Bhujbal, from the OBC (Mali) community, was made the deputy chief minister by the NCP, the post of chief minister went to Vilasrao Deshmukh, a Maratha leader from Marathwada. The ministry, too, was dominated by the Maratha leaders. The Congress made a somewhat daring move in appointing a Dalit leader (Shinde) as the chief minister, with the result that for a period of a little over one year both the positions of chief and deputy chief minister went to the non-Maratha leadership. But finally, the NCP brought in Mohite-Patil, a Maratha leader as deputy chief minister. (For a brief period, both posts were held by leaders from the same district, Solapur.) After the 2004 assembly elections, the Congress-NCP alliance again went back to the politics of Maratha caste and both these posts were held by Maratha leaders. After the replacement of Vilasrao Deshmukh (November 2008) by another Maratha leader from Marathwada, Ashok Chavan signalled the strategy of the Congress to garner the support of the Maratha community. After Assembly election of 2009, the NCP again resorted to appointing an OBC leader as Deputy CM. However, between the two partners, NCP is seen as more inclined to identify with the Maratha interests. During the Lok Sabha election of 2009 the issue of inclusion of Maratha community in the list of OBCs occupied considerable attention because of the strong position taken by some Maratha organizations and the favourable response given by the NCP. But later on, it was felt by the party that this issue alienated the non-Maratha voters among OBCs. Hence, in the Assembly election, this issue was played down and no party took any strong views on this matter (Daily *Sakal*, Sept. 26, 2009).

The caste composition of the MLAs of the two coalitions also reflects the same delicate search for the correct social equations. While the Shivsena has clearly emerged as an alternative for the Marathas (40 and 38 of its MLAs in 1995 and 1999 respectively were from the Maratha-Kunbi community), the BJP has failed to acquire any sharp social profile. The nineties saw the declining association between the Maratha community and the Congress. With the emergence of the NCP, the proportion of Maratha MLAs in the Congress party has radically declined. In 1999, barely one fourth of its MLAs came from the Maratha-Kunbi community, while two third of the NCP MLAs were from Maratha-Kunbi community. In 2004, 39 of the 62 Sena MLAs are from Maratha-Kunbi community, 41 of the 71 NCP MLAs are from this community and 26 of 69 Congress MLAs belong to this community. In the Assembly elected in 2009, 31 out of the 82 Congress MLAs (38 percent) were from the Maratha-Kunbi community while 35 of the 62 NCP MLAs (56 percent) were from that community. With 28 out of 44 MLAs belonging to this community (64 percent), Shivsena has the highest proportion of Maratha-Kunbi MLAs in 2009. It may be said that both the coalitions find it difficult to make a choice in terms of the social balance of power. While the Sena-BJP may want to counter Maratha power, they were not quite successful in doing so. In the case of the NCP, it may actually like to project itself as the party of the Marathas, since this may then become the distinctiveness of that party. On its part, the Congress seems to be in a state of confusion. Its social base has shifted but its leadership is still dominated by the Marathas. These details show that coalition politics may not actually settle questions of delicate social balance of power.

We now turn to the possible interface between the socio-economic context and the rise of coalition politics in Maharashtra. It is true that electoral politics has its own momentum. Yet, it cannot evolve in isolation from the social circumstances. On the other hand, coalition politics cannot and should not be seen as a phenomenon that obtains in the realm of party politics alone. To the extent competitive party politics is a product of socio-economic processes, coalition politics too, will be an outcome of and will have characteristics born out of the socio-economic context. Therefore, in this section, we shall hazard to locate the linkages between coalition politics and the socio-economic developments during the nineties.

Political fragmentation

Since the late seventies, there has been a division within the Maratha leadership. This factor has become the most important factor in the developments of the nineties. The rebellion in the Congress party during Assembly election of 1995 could not have come about without the split in the Maratha 'lobby'. Even after 1995, a section of the Maratha leadership kept supporting the Sena-BJP alliance and in fact many Maratha leaders joined either Shivsena or the BJP. Then, in 1999, when the NCP was formed, it became a vehicle of the political aspirations of the Maratha leadership. These details suggest that the process of disintegration of the Maratha leadership is continuing ever since Pawar first left the Congress and formed his own Congress (S) in 1978. The other important development with respect to the social configuration in the State has been the rise of a new caste politics. In the backdrop of the Mandal issue, the idiom of OBC politics entered political imagination of the State by the mid-nineties. Bhujbal, who was the leader of the Shivsena, adopted a pro-OBC stance while deserting the Sena in 1991 and has ever since sought to represent and organise the OBCs in the State. Later, when Pawar formed the NCP, he also made tentative efforts to attract the OBCs. The BJP leadership in the State right from early nineties has been in the hands of OBC leaders who are projected as an alternative to the

Congress' Maratha leadership. In the 1991 Lok Sabha election, the Janata Dal sought to project the OBC issue and in Maharashtra also, this had some impact (Kulkarni; 1991).

This new caste politics has two dimensions. One is the decline of the umbrella coalition of Maratha and non-Maratha (mostly OBC) castes. On the other hand, the new caste politics has thrown up single caste organizations rather than caste blocs that would constitute foci of political mobilization. Unlike in Uttar Pradesh or Tamil Nadu, the single caste mobilizations have rarely produced new political parties based on caste (though, in 2004, two parties were formed with mainly Dhangar community as their base: the Rashtriya Samaj party and the Lok Rajya party). Instead, single caste mobilizations have increasingly become the basis for political parties to construct their voter base. Thus, each party keeps organizing its followers on caste basis. In other words, castes are getting politically fragmented. This is the reason why there is no 'OBC party' in Maharashtra. During the late eighties and early nineties, the Shivsena was the location around which sections of the OBCs gravitated. However, in the course of the next two decades, the Shivsena consciously tried to accommodate the Marathas as well. Besides, the OBCs have been dispersed among BJP, Congress and Shivsena.

The same is true of the Dalits. Traditionally, Dalits of Maharashtra have been divided between RPI and Congress. The fragmentation of the RPI into many factions has already divided the Dalits into many camps. In addition, the Janata Dal attracted many Dalits in early nineties. Prakash Ambedkar formed the Bahujan Mahasangh (1993) and in collaboration with his faction of the RPI, the Bharatiya Republican Party (BRP), tried to forge a political bloc of Dalits and OBCs. The Shivsena and BJP, too, have won sections of the Matang and Charmakar communities from among the Dalits of Maharashtra. The net result is the fragmentation of Dalit vote and its consequent ineffectiveness in State politics. This was seen very prominently in the assembly election of 1995 and the following Lok Sabha election of 1996. In the assembly election of 2004, the BSP made concerted efforts to enter in the State's political arena and won a significant number of Dalit votes, at least in the Vidarbha region. These details only show how various social sections are fragmented and divided among the four major players as well as the smaller players in State politics. This applies to the Muslims also. Congress (and later the NCP), Samajwadi Party and Janata Dal (in 1995-96), have been the chief claimants for Muslim votes in the State.

Perhaps the most dramatic case of this political fragmentation of caste\community groups is that of the Marathas. Politics in Maharashtra always hinged on the overlap between the Congress party and the numerically significant, socially dominant and economically well-off caste cluster of the Maratha-Kunbis. As mentioned above, the Maratha leadership began to disintegrate since the mid-seventies. The ability of the Congress party to accommodate the interests of the expanding networks of Maratha kinship declined. Also, under Indira Gandhi, the Congress party at the centre made concerted efforts to displace Maratha leaders as the prime movers of State politics. In the nineties, the process of fragmentation of Marathas entered the next stage when the Maratha vote too, began to disperse. Although since 1999, the NCP has emerged as the main party of the Marathas, Maratha vote is divided among the NCP, Shivsena and the Congress. In fact, the division of Maratha leadership and Maratha vote is the central riddle of the politics of Maharashtra in the eighties and nineties. Cross section sample surveys conducted during the period 1995-2004 very sharply bring out this political fragmentation and the inability of political

parties to construct and retain 'vote banks' along caste\community lines (Palshikar-Deshpande, 2003 and Palshikar-Birmal, 2004; particularly see Deshpande-Birmal 2009 and Palshikar et al, 2009).

Consequences of new political economy

These developments should not be seen in isolation, though. Alongside the political fragmentation, many significant developments have been taking place in the realm of political economy of the State. Some of these developments are not confined only to the State, while some others are quite well known. For instance, the relative decline of agriculture and the rise of the tertiary sector is a widespread phenomenon. The same is true of the trend towards liberalization of the economy. It is also well known that during the tenure of Sharad Pawar as the chief minister (1989-1991), the State went ahead with aggressive liberalization. However, the discussion of the policies of the Sena-BJP coalition shows that this coalition went ahead very enthusiastically with the policies of liberalization. In a sense, then, the rise of coalition politics in Maharashtra coincides with restructuring of economic policies and the ascendance of 'private' interests as determinants of public policy.

Then, the story of the regional imbalances in the State is also fairly well known. The Marathwada and Vidarbh regions have remained comparatively backward and this backwardness has been a major political issue linked to the demand for the separate State of Vidarbh. However, what needs to be noted is the fact that outside of the Mumbai-Thane-Raigad-Pune-Nashik belt, the entire State is underdeveloped and this belt accounts for 52 per cent of State's income (HDR: 160). So, more than the question of backwardness of Vidarbh and Marathwada, it is the question of concentration of development in a narrow belt around Mumbai. Similarly, though Maharashtra is famous for its urbanization, three things need to be noted: that the rate of urbanization actually declined during 1991-2001 compared to 1981-91; that one fourth of the urban population resides in slums and that the incidence of poverty is greater in urban areas than in rural areas of the State (HDR: 18, 24-25 and 45).

However, it is beyond the maze of statistics and figures that one has to look for the possible impact of the political economy. For instance, we know that the development of irrigation has stagnated and only 17 per cent of the land under crops is irrigated. It is also a known fact that the agricultural output per hectare is unsatisfactory. In this background, the thrust towards horticulture and floriculture needs to be understood. These were part of Sharad Pawar's project of privatization-liberalization reforms in the agricultural sector. Similarly, the onward march of liberalization also endangered the cooperative sector on which the political domination of the Maratha leadership rested for long. The relative decline in the importance of the cooperative sector means that the patronage networks that were evolved through the cooperatives, became inefficient or at least, they were disrupted. Together with the crisis in the agricultural sector and the attempts to restructure that sector, the erosion of patronage networks posed a threat to the Maratha leadership. Already, the Maratha leadership was going through a long drawn political crisis. The addition of the new pressures of liberalization cracked the social contract that prevailed in Maharashtra. First, the Maratha leadership began to look for political options. Secondly, it ceased to be able to accommodate the interests of the non-Maratha castes either economically or politically. Thirdly, the delicate interweaving of politico-economic interests of Maratha elite and the socio-cultural interests of the ordinary Marathas was ruptured. Thus, it was

a double fragmentation: fragmentation of the elite and the fragmentation between elite and the lay Marathas.

As the Maratha leadership became more and more divided its ability to hold together the other castes as its political allies, also eroded. In particular, the backward castes distanced themselves from the Marathas and formed separate caste based organizations. As already noted, no single OBC party emerged from this divorce between the Marathas and the OBCs. Instead, many backward castes resorted to separate caste-based organization.

The period of coalition politics is also the period in which the three or four major political players entered into political competition without much distinction in terms of policy options. Since all parties adopted the liberalization policy, the base for political mobilizations became narrow, resulting in political fragmentation and inability of parties to construct broad based social blocs. Initially in the nineties, Shivsena and BJP sought to construct an alternative to the Maratha-led bloc of the Congress party. However, they had to accommodate the Maratha factions into their new arrangements. Pawar, both within and outside the Congress party, has always tried to provide an alternative Maratha bloc. His keen pursuit of new economic policies has meant that all Maratha sections would not join him and his strategy of building a Maratha bloc has meant that OBC sections would not whole heartedly join him. This predicament has added to the prevailing atmosphere of fragmentation of political blocs in the State.

Elections in 2009 evidenced the strains that both the coalitions in the state underwent. It seemed as if the partners did not want to continue the partnership, but no party was sure of what would happen if a new coalition were formed. Once the UPA returned to power at the centre, the ability of both the Congress parties to manoeuvre declined considerably: they could not have different partners at the State level. On the other hand, the BJP was too unenthusiastic in continuing its alliance with the Shivsena and was tempted to ally with the MNS. But the strident regionalism of the MNS and uncertainty about its real strength were the main stumbling blocks. The emergence of the MNS also indicated that the bipolar arrangement in the State may face challenges soon. However, the crucial question is: Do these developments indicate a social reconfiguration or does it involve merely political fragmentation, which is the function of competitive multi-party electoral politics? We argue that while electoral competitiveness of State politics is related to the emergence of coalition politics both in the country and in the State, the sustenance and significance of coalition politics need to be understood within the framework of broader social reconfiguration knocking at the doors of the society in Maharashtra. Four factors need to be taken into consideration in this respect.

Urbanization and rural frustrations

Two things are said ad nauseam. One is that India (Maharashtra) is a rural society and the other is that agriculture is the main occupation of the majority. While both these characteristics still continue, there are certain changes that need to be noted. One is that agriculture, though it continues to be the occupation of the majority, has a very limited share of the economy. Besides, the demographic composition is gradually changing. This has tremendous potential for social reconfiguration. Already, Maharashtra has 42 per cent urban population as per 2001 census. What it means is that a large number of constituencies in the State will be increasingly

dominated by urban voters (an estimated 125 constituencies will be 'urban dominated' by 2014). This will bring into play new forces and new political possibilities. On the one hand, as already mentioned, proportion of the poor is higher in the urban population of the State, than in the rural population. On the other hand, the linguistic and caste composition of the urban constituencies will be more complex than many rural constituencies. The latter development has already affected the Shivsena. In the 2004 elections, the Shivsena could not effectively take up the cause of Marathi speaking people. The social composition of cities like Mumbai, Thane as also Pune and Nasik is undergoing changes and the Shivsena simply cannot pursue its pro-Marathi policy. No wonder, Shivsena is strongly opposed to the regularization of slums in Mumbai. The Sena believes that the slums of Mumbai are populated mainly by the 'outsiders' and they are going to undermine its political future. It also needs to be noted that in the municipal elections of 2001-2002, the Congress and NCP did rather well, particularly in small urban localities. Later, in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections of 2004, the Congress-NCP alliance did quite well in urban constituencies. This is an indication of the volatility of urban vote, because, throughout the nineties, the Sena-BJP was doing well among urban voters. The rise of the Sena-BJP alliance was seen as the shift of power from rural to urban sector (Vora; 1996: 171-73). While this shift has come to stay, Shivsena and BJP are no more the only vehicles of the shift. One of the reasons for this change is the shift of poor voters from Sena-BJP to the Congress and NCP. If urban poor emerge as a bloc, that would alter the political equations in the State. At the present moment, the Congress has not responded to this possibility; it has probably not comprehended this possibility. It is also likely that the Congress and the NCP want to take political advantage of this development, but do not want this factor to crystallize because this would bring pressure on the political economy they visualize. A potentially very sensitive development is therefore in the making. A large section is in search of political vehicle but no political party wants to own it up because of pressures of political economy. This indicates further political fragmentation, perhaps based on emotive appeals.

Populism vs. pragmatism

Another factor indicating social reconfiguration is the political economy of liberalization. Our discussion above has shown that the two coalitions are both strongly committed to the policy of liberalization. Both are of course aware of the dangers involved. These policies are sure to throw up new disappointments and frustrations. They would generate new imbalances. This situation produces the dilemma of choosing between populism and pragmatism (Suri, 2003). If Andhra Pradesh under Chandrababu Naidu was one example of the adroit movement from populism to pragmatism, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal can manifest alternative scripts in this regard. The image of the leader and the construction of charisma aim at bridging the gap between populism and pragmatism in Tamil Nadu. In West Bengal, the organisational strength of the CPI (M) may be compensating for the disjunction between ideology and policy. In Maharashtra, parties appear to be vacillating between populism and pragmatism. But perhaps, even this choice is not very real. Given the fact that parties are firmly committed to the political economy of liberalization, populism will be constrained severely. Sena-BJP government was thus forced by its own ideological choices to renegotiate the Enron deal. In the last phase of the Sena-BJP government's tenure, the emphasis on populist programmes like the 'Zunka Bhakar' scheme had considerably declined. In the election campaign for 1999, no party raked up the sensitive issue of slum rehabilitation. In the campaign for the Assembly election of 2004, the Congress-NCP alliance promised free supply of electricity for agricultural use. Once elected, they found it difficult to

fulfil that promise and chose to wind up that scheme. After the elections in 2004, the Congress-NCP government went ahead ruthlessly demolishing thousands of slums in Mumbai.

One implication of this development is that there will be a cynical bifurcation between ‘populist’ politics and ‘pragmatic’ policy-making. This is something that the left fronts of Kerala and West Bengal may have to opt for. Another possibility is the disjunction between economic power and political power (Palshikar-Deshpande; 2003: 118). We talk of a reconfiguration because this disjunction has now settled in. Obviously, this would lead to social tensions and distortions. It is in this context that various alliances and adjustments need to be tried out. But because the coalitions lack a concrete base and are themselves slaves of this political economy, they would tend to focus on emotive mobilizations like communal or regionalist mobilization. The Shivsena and the BJP would have the option of communal mobilization available to them, given their Hindutva ideology. In 2009 elections and before that, MNS has shown the possibilities of a parochial regionalist mobilization almost on the lines of what the Shivsena did in the late sixties. Yet another possibility to overcome the dilemma between populism and pragmatism is the appropriation of caste sentiment. We discuss this point below.

Policy closures

The foregoing discussion of political economy suggests that strategies of populism and pragmatism pose certain pressures. Populism becomes unsustainable as a policy package while pragmatism limits the ability of the parties to attract the voters and evolve durable social base. Against this backdrop, we witness yet another peculiarity: populist politics and caste politics have heightened the expectations of the marginalised sections from the state machinery. Mobilizations of the late eighties and nineties made politics suddenly more competitive. Its structural fallout was multi-party competition and resultant coalition politics. On the other hand, precisely at the juncture at which party competition became multifarious, the availability of policy options before the voter has dramatically declined (Palshikar-Deshpande; 2003: 118). We have noted above that political contestations took place round the issues of communalism and secularism. However, this contestation only helps to obfuscate the reality of a policy closure. Like at the national level and in most States, in Maharashtra also, we are witnessing ‘more and more competition about less and less’ (Yadav-Palshikar; 2003: 39). The structure of coalition politics allows for such closure. Moreover, coalition politics facilitates an unreal sense of competitiveness and expansion of symbolic representations; it gives a sense of availability of alternatives and sustains the depoliticization of politics. At the same time, such policy closures do not answer all problems. Having adopted the course of empty politics, political parties in Maharashtra are now grappling with possible issues that can give a semblance of political contestation.

The Maratha reassertion

Finally, let us go back to the riddle of Maratha fragmentation. It holds the key to the failure of parties to construct a new social bloc that is politically viable and socially possible. The political economy of sugar cooperatives threw up Maratha elite that has become ‘the establishment’ in the State. The traditional division between the high and low Marathas has been replaced by the division between neo-high Marathas and the ordinary Marathas. The neo-high Marathas are not only rich, they are entrenched, they have evolved very sophisticated networks of patronage and created oligopolies of power at the district level by concentrating local power in the hands of

family and relatives (A detailed report of these was published in a series of articles in *Daily Sakal*, between August and September 2004; based on the inputs from researchers of the Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Pune. See also, Palshikar, 2004a). The rise of these neo-high Marathas has effectively blocked the entry of new aspirants from the Maratha caste into politics. The Congress has been for long, a hostage to these neo-high Marathas. Therefore, it has been unable to accommodate the aspirants from non-entrenched Maratha families. In the eighties, Pawar attracted these aspirants to his Congress (S). Once he joined the Congress (I), the new aspirants had to search for alternatives. Shivsena provided this alternative. Particularly in Marathwada, where the ability of the Congress and the cooperatives to accommodate new entrants was very limited, the Shivsena became the platform for the revolt against the entrenched Marathas.

Much of the contemporary complications in coalition politics in the State are thus indirectly linked to the crisis of the Maratha community. Since the Assembly election of 1990, Shivsena became the platform for 'upstart' political aspirants. It is no surprise that the Shivsena has retained the support of these sections of the Maratha community over the last decade and more. Precisely what Pawar's Congress (S) did in Marathwada in the early eighties the NCP has been doing in the western regions of Maharashtra since 1999. In a sense, then, these developments are not merely a part of the political fragmentation, but a social reconfiguration that has not been able to take shape over the last decade. Apparently, this development is only internal to the Maratha community. However, it refers to the 'social contract' evolved by Y.B. Chavan in the sixties. That arrangement sought to undermine the 'high Marathas' in favour of the lay Marathas. But the political domination of the Maratha community and the rise of state-supported networks of patronage through cooperatives gave rise to the neo-high Maratha elites and the social contract was already broken. Today, most of the Maratha leaders with links in the cooperative network are either with Congress or the NCP. On the other hand, the Shivsena has attracted the 'ordinary' Marathas (non-establishment Marathas) and in order to retain their support, it has used the weapons of anti-Dalit postures and anti-Muslim Hindutva postures. The decline of the cooperatives in the backdrop of the new political economy of liberalization would endanger the domination of the entrenched Marathas. These developments are at the root of the political fragmentation of the Marathas.

Ironically, side by side with this fragmentation of the Maratha community, there have been efforts to construct a broad-based Maratha identity (Deshpande; 2004 and 2006). These efforts combine anti-Brahmanism, soft Hindutva sentiments and an implicit patronizing approach towards OBCs and Dalits. Sharad Pawar and his NCP represent this effort. The NCP has sought to reconcile the contradictions between the neo-high Marathas and the aspiring sections among the Marathas. As already noted, NCP employs a multi-pronged strategy to achieve this. In terms of policies, it pursues the liberalization package ensuring that the material interests of entrenched Marathas will be protected and strengthened. In terms of power sharing arrangements, the NCP has shifted to a pro-Maratha policy. Instead of the initial attempt to share power with the OBCs, the NCP has now chosen to accommodate both entrenched and the aspiring sections. Thirdly, in terms of popular image, the NCP has appropriated the platform of regional pride. It has, in fact, applied the issue of regional pride outside of Mumbai. In order to do this, the party has combined regional pride with the caste pride of the Marathas. This has helped the party in constructing a cultural platform that bypasses issues of political economy. These moves have unsettled both

Shivsena and the Congress and may have long term implications for party competition and coalition politics in the State.

The discussion above makes it clear that coalition politics in Maharashtra is shaping at a crucial juncture in the politics of the State. It is not merely a function of the national level political situation, nor is it a fall out of competition among parties. Three things seem to be intersecting each other: one is the structural changes in the format of party political competition both in the State and at the all-India level; secondly, the issues emerging in the field of political economy (both because of liberalization and because of the distortions in the development trajectory of the State); and thirdly, the multi layered social churning obtaining in the State among the Marathas and between Marathas and other caste groups. Coalition politics is shaping at the intersection of these three. In this sense, coalition politics can be seen as a moment representing social reconfiguration in Maharashtra.

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Table No. 1.1
Result of Lok Sabha Election (1989 - 2009)

Year	Lok Sabha			
	Party	Contested	Won	Vote %
1989	INC	48	28	45.5
	BJP	33	10	23.7
	SS	10	4	4.4
	JD+	50	6	18.1
1991	INC	48	38	48.4
	BJP	31	5	20.2
	SS	17	4	9.5
1996	INC	48	15	34.8
	BJP	25	18	21.8
	SS	20	15	16.8
	JD+	37	0	12.6
1998	INC	41	33	43.6
	INC+	7	5	6.7
	BJP	25	4	22.5
	SS	22	6	19.7
1999	INC	42	10	29.7
	INC+	6	1	3.5
	NCP	38	6	21.6
	NCP allies	15	3	4.4
	BJP	26	13	21.2
	SS	22	15	16.9
2004	INC	26	13	23.8
	CONG+	22	10	21.0
	BJP	26	13	22.6
	SS	22	12	20.1
2009	Cong.	25	17	19.6
	NCP	21	8	19.2
	BJP	25	9	18.1
	SS	22	11	17.0

Table No. 1.2
Result of Assembly Election (1990 - 2009)

Year	Assembly			
	Party	Contested	Won	Vote %
1990	INC	276	141	38.2
	BJP	104	42	10.7
	SS	183	52	15.9
	JD- led Front	301	38	17.2
1995	INC	286	80	31
	BJP	116	65	12.8
	SS	169	73	16.4
	JD+	237	17	8.2
1999	INC	249	75	27.2
	MINOR PARTIES	44	4	2.6
	NCP	233	58	22.6
	NCP allies	104	11	4.5
	BJP	117	56	14.5
	SS	161	69	17.3
2004	INC	157	69	21.1
	Allies of CONG - NCP	8	6	1.3
	NCP	124	71	18.8
	BJP	111	54	13.7
	SS	163	62	20.0
2009	Cong.	170	82	21.01
	NCP	113	62	16.38
	BJP	119	46	14.02
	SS	160	44	16.26

Table No. 2
Effective Number of Parties: Assembly Election (by votes and by seats): 1962-2009

Year	ENP (votes)	ENP (seats)	Nature of Party competition
1962	3.547	1.496	One Party Dominance
1967	4.070	1.744	One Party Dominance
1972	3.028	1.476	One Party Dominance
1978	5.535	4.437	Competitive Multi Party
1980	3.865	2.218	Weak Multi Party
1985	4.309	2.765	Weak Multi Party
1990	5.005	3.317	Rise of Coalitional Multi Party
1995	6.962	5.143	Coalition Multi Party
1999	5.649	4.672	Coalition Multi Party
2004	7.083	4.996	Bipolar Coalitional
2009	6.911	5.398	Bipolar Coalitional

Table No. 3
Effective Number of Parties (By Votes and Seats): Lok Sabha 1962- 2009

Year	ENP (votes)	ENP (seats)	Nature of Party competition
1962	3.29	1.15	One Party Dominance
1967	3.74	1.46	One Party Dominance
1971	2.44	1.14	One Party Dominance
1977	3.06	2.89	Competitive Two Party
1980	2.93	1.45	One Party Dominance
1984	3.40	1.24	One Party Dominance
1989	3.62	2.52	Rise of Coalitional Multi Party
1991	3.38	1.55	Coalition Multi Party
1996	4.96	2.97	Coalition Multi Party
1998	3.53	1.98	Coalition Multi Party
1999	4.78	4.32	Coalition Multi Party
2004	5.46	4.08	Bipolar Coalitional
2009	6.53	4.13	Bipolar Coalitional

For Tables 2 and 3, effective number of parties is calculated on the basis of the formula by Taagepera-Shugart (1989:77-91) method.

Table No. 4
Government in Maharashtra by type and duration (1962-2009)

Government	Year	Type	Reason for termination	Duration
Congress	1962	Single Party Majority	End of Term	Five Years
Congress	1967	Single Party Majority	End of Term	Five Years
Congress	1972	Single Party Majority	End of Term	Five Years
Congress (I)- Congress (U)	March to July 1978	Post- Election Minority Coalition	Defection of Pawar faction	Four Months
PDF	July, 1978 to Feb.1980	Post- Election Surplus Majority Coalition	Dismissal by Central Govt.	19 Months
Congress	1980	Single Party Majority	End of Term	Five Years
Congress	1985	Single Party Majority	End of Term	Five Years
Congress	1990	Single Party Minority (with support from Independents)	End of Term	Five Years
SHS- BJP	1995	Surplus Majority Coalition (pre election)	Ministry calls early election	Four and half years
Congress – NCP	1999	Post- Election Surplus Majority Coalition	End of Term	Five Years
Congress – NCP	2004	Majority Coalition (pre - election)	End of Term	Five Years
Congress – NCP	2009	Majority Coalition (pre - election)	-	-

Table No. 5.1
Region – wise performance of Sena – BJP coalition: 1990-2009

Region	Total	1990	1995	1999	2004	2009	
						SS	BJP
Mumbai	34	24	30	19	14	9	9
Konkan	31	16	21	20	16	4	1
North	36	10	15	17	13	7	5
Vidarbh	66	22	33	29	31	8	18
Marathwada	46	16	24	26	25	7	2
W. Maharashtra	75	6	15	14	20	9	11

Table No. 5.2
Region – wise performance of Congress and NCP

Region	Total	1990 Cong.	1995 Cong.	1999		2004		2009	
				Cong.	NCP	Cong.	NCP	Cong.	NCP
Mumbai	34	9	1	12	1	15	4	18	8
Konkan	31	9	3	1	4	2	9	2	5
North	36	21	10	8	7	9	10	6	9
Vidarbh	66	25	17	26	5	19	11	24	4
Marathwada	46	23	12	11	5	7	11	18	12
W. Maharashtra	75	54	37	17	36	17	26	14	24

Table No. 6.1
District- wise votes polled by Sena- BJP alliance: Assembly and ZP election

District	Assembly (1999)	Local Election (2002)	Assembly (2004)	Local Election (2007)	Assembly (2009)
Sindhudurg	46.4	48.3	51.3	30.5	37.6
Ratnagiri	23.9	54.5	45.5	48.2	45.0
Raigad	29.6	17.6	24.8	16.9	14.9
Thane	37.5	29.9	40.3	30.5	30.6
Nashik	28.7	29.6	31.9	23.5	27.87
Dhule	29.2	16.0	30.4	29.8	37.2
Nandurbar	13.1	11.9	26.3	9.5	19.6
Jalgaon	43.0	36.4	45.0	46.8	42.1
Buldhana	28.0	30.1	38.4	29.7	47.0
Akola	35.6	26.5	31.9	25.7	28.5
Washim	32.6	23.4	29.1	28	28.5
Amravati	37.0	29.8	33.4	25.2	22.9
Wardha	26.2	20.0	20.1	18.1	32.4
Nagpur	34.4	33.1	33.6	30	39.4
Bhandara	31.6	-	33.6	31.4	49.5
Gondiya	42.0	-	29.2	34.6	41.1
Chandrapur	32.9	26.1	26.9	27.8	32.4
Gadchiroli	30.0	22.5	24.0	23.6	21.3
Yavatmal	27.5	26.4	37.4	21.5	32.6
Nanded	25.8	29.9	27.8	27.9	20.3
Parbhani	36.1	32.1	33.3	26.5	32.2
Hingoli	33.3	35.0	35.0	32.8	38.1
Jalna	40.3	35.1	36.3	32.1	35.3
Aurangabad	39.7	35.2	36.7	34.7	30.0
Beed	31.9	39.8	46.1	33.3	39.1
Latur	33.3	24.6	40.8	36.9	31.3
Osmanabad	26.6	22.4	24.3	13.8	40.6
Solapur	23.6	17.7	28.5	12.7	16.3
Ahmednagar	29.0	19.7	37.7	18.8	35.7
Pune	28.9	19.5	34.5	17.3	27.8
Satara	25.5	5.2	26.4	2.1	18.2
Sangli	11.2	2.8	11.9	2.5	19.7
Kolhapur	13.8	4.2	14.9	4.7	21.4

Table No. 6.2
District – wise votes polled by Congress and NCP: Assembly and ZP election

District	Local Election (2002)		Assembly (2004)		Local Election (2007)		Assembly (2009)	
	Congress	NCP	Congress	NCP	Congress	NCP	Congress	NCP
Sindhudurg	25.5	20.9	16.1	20.1	46.2	21.1	32.4	15.8
Ratnagiri	10.1	24.1	10.9	27.5	15.5	23.9	10.5	25.2
Raigad	8.1	20.0	23.6	15.6	25.3	24.5	23.7	16.1
Thane	15.4	24.8	9.4	23.8	16.8	27.5	8.6	15.9
Mumbai sub Urban			32.5				27.4	7.1
Mumbai City			39.3				31.0	4.5
Nashik	20.5	30.7	13.2	26.9	23.9	28.5	8.8	22.9
Dhule	40.0	23.6	35.7	11.7	34	23	33.6	3.9
Nandurbar	43.6	31.4	31.1	16.6	39.4	42.6	27.5	15.4
Jalgaon	22.5	30.9	12.3	28.1	19.4	25.4	9.0	29.5
Buldhana	28.4	21.1	24.7	9.0	27.0	18.7	26.2	12.6
Akola	18.4	13.6	15.7	6.9	13.7	11.7	19.7	5.0
Washim	27.7	24.5	17.4	9.1	19.0	19.5	19.5	13.3
Amravati	19.8	17.8	27.5	4.7	22.0	17.5	26.3	7.4
Wardha	26.9	26.2	32.6	14.7	30.7	23.2	27.2	6.3
Nagpur	24.0	20.3	27.0	7.5	24.9	19.8	29.3	6.7
Bhandara			30.9	6.4	24.3	19.3	21.8	9.0
Gondiya			19.9	19.5	28.4	24.2	31.9	9.2
Chandrapur	30.2	10.6	27.5	4.1	31.6	12.6	47.4	-
Gadchiroli	24.7	21.1	24.6	10.0	22.1	27.0	25.5	8.6
Yavatmal	27.9	20.3	25.6	10.8	29.9	26.2	34.1	6.7
Nanded	28.3	23.5	25.9	12.3	30.9	23.0	34.9	14.6
Parbhani	21.4	30.4	13.9	6.3	25.2	32.8	14.0	16.5
Hingoli	25.6	26.0	16.3	27.4	25.3	27.9	25.0	16.1
Jalna	23.4	26.5	12.5	32.1	19.1	31.1	12.8	25.6
Aurangabad	27.9	24.5	28.6	5.3	25.8	25.1	23.1	9.0
Beed	18.3	31.0	1.8	33.2	11.3	29.1	5.1	45.0
Latur	37.9	24.6	31.4	6.1	39.2	13.6	40.7	5.4
Osmanabad	31.2	26.2	20.6	18.5	37.9	30.3	17.2	22.8
Solapur	28.5	42.4	12.5	33.8	30.8	36.5	23.8	22.4
Ahmednagar	30.9	33.1	18.3	23.9	31.9	36.1	14.9	22.3
Pune	32.8	41.6	10.9	33.9	25.9	44.7	11.2	25.3
Satara	37.5	43.7	7.8	42.3	39.0	45.3	10.2	34.8
Sangli	28.5	42.3	23.3	22.4	43.6	42.3	26.9	19.1
Kolhapur	37.2	36.9	24.6	17.3	27.7	23.6	25.0	13.0

Table No. 7.1
 Assembly seats contested and proportion of seats won by Shivsena and BJP

Year	Shivsena	BJP	Other allies
1990	183 (28.4)	104 (40.4)	1 (100)
1995	169 (43.2)	116 (56.0)	3 (0)
1999	161 (42.8)	117 (47.9)	10 (40.0)
2004	163 (38.1)	111 (48.7)	14 (21.1)
2009	160 (27.5)	119 (38.7)	1 (100)

Table No. 7.2
 Assembly seats contested and proportion of seats won by Congress and NCP

Year	Congress	NCP	Other allies
1999	249 (30.1)	223 (26.0)	Congress : 33 (12.1) NCP: 65 (13.9)
2004	157 (44.0)	124 (57.3)	8 (75.0)
2009	170 (48.2)	113(54.9)	4 (50)

Note to Tables 6 and 7: Seat distribution among smaller allies and independents is somewhat unreliable. For instance, in 1999, Congress did not contest at six places, but nor did officially support and candidate. In 2004, Congress and NCP first distributed seats between themselves and then each one entered into separate seat sharing with their respective allies. Even then, the alliance was not perfect and hence the total of its candidates for 2004 is 290.

Table No. 8.1
Caste composition of Sena – BJP ministry (1995)

	Shivsena		BJP		Others		Total
	Cabinet	M o S	Cabinet	M o S	Cabinet	M o S	
Upper	3	1	2	-	-	-	6
Maratha	2	3	3	1	-	5	14
Kunbi	-	1	1	1	-	-	3
OBC	2	-	3	-	-	-	5
Dalit	2	-	-	1	-	-	3
Adivasi	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Muslim	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Non – Marathi	1	1	-	2	-	-	4
Total	11	6	10	5	-	5	37

Table No. 8.2
Caste composition of Congress - NCP ministry (1999)

	Congress		NCP		Others		Total
	Cabinet	M o S	Cabinet	M o S	Cabinet	M o S	
Maratha	6	1	8	2	-	2	19
Kunbi	-	3	1	2	-	-	6
OBC	1	1	2	2	1	2	9
Intermediate	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Dalit	1	1	-	3	-	3	8
Adivasi	2	-	1	1	-	-	4
Muslim	1	3	-	-	-	1	5
Non – Marathi	-	3	1	-	-	-	4
Total	11	13	13	10	1	8	56

Table No. 8.3
Caste composition of Congress - NCP ministry (2004)

	Congress		NCP		Others		Total
	Cabinet	M o S	Cabinet	M o S	Cabinet	M o S	
Upper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maratha	5	1	8	3	-	-	17
Kunbi	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
OBC	-	1	4	-	-	-	5
Dalit	1	-	1	-	-	1	3
Adivasi	2	-	1	1	-	-	4
Muslim	1	1	1	1	-	-	4
Non – Marathi	1	1	-	-	-	-	3
Other	1	1	1	-	-	-	2
Total	11	6	16	6			40

Table No. 8.4
Caste composition of Congress - NCP ministry (2009)

	Congress		NCP		Others		Total
	Cabinet	M o S	Cabinet	M o S	Cabinet	M o S	
Upper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maratha	7	-	6	3	-	-	16
Kunbi	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
OBC	-	-	5	1	-	-	6
Dalit	1	2	1	-	-	-	4
Adivasi	1	1	1	-	-	-	3
Muslim	1	1	1	1	-	-	4
Non – Marathi	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Other	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	12	6	15	5	-	-	38

Table No. 9.1
Social Composition of MLAs: 1978

	Congress (I)	Congress (R)	JP	PWP	Others	IND	Total
Maratha – Kunbi	21	50	35	3	3	14	126
OBC	14	7	12	5	3	4	45
Dalit	2	4	2	2	4	5	19
Adivasi	10	4	4	1	3	2	24
Upper	-	-	19	-	1	-	20
Intermediate	6	4	3	1	-	-	14
Muslim	2	-	9	-	-	-	11
Non- Marathi	7	-	12	1	2	3	25
Others	-	-	3	-	1	-	4
Total	62	69	99	13	17	28	288

Table No. 9.2
Social Composition of MLAs: 1980

	Congress (I)	Congress (S)	JP	BJP	Others	IND	Total
Maratha – Kunbi	76	30	10	2	5	5	128
OBC	22	5	2	1	4	2	36
Dalit	13	5	-	-	2	1	21
Adivasi	18	1	1	-	2	-	22
Upper	8	-	-	5	1	1	15
Intermediate	11	4	2	-	-	1	18
Muslim	13	-	-	-	-	-	13
Non- Marathi	23	2	1	6	-	-	32
Others	2	-	1	-	-	-	3
Total	186	47	17	14	14	10	288

Table No. 9.3
Social Composition of MLAs: 1985

	Congress (I)	Congress (S)	JP	BJP	Others	IND	Total
Maratha – Kunbi	70	30	9	4	9	11	133
OBC	29	7	4	2	4	1	47
Dalit	12	5	-	1	2	-	20
Adivasi	12	5	2	1	2	1	23
Upper	5	1	1	5	-	2	14
Intermediate	5	3	2	-	-	4	14
Muslim	7	1	1	-	-	1	10
Non- Marathi	16	2	-	3	-	1	20
Others	5	-	1	-	-	-	6
Total	161	54	20	16	17	20	288

Table No. 9.4
Social Composition of MLAs: 1990

	Congress	BJP	SS	Others	IND	Total
Maratha – Kunbi	79	12	26	15	7	140
OBC	18	8	11	10	4	51
Dalit	8	3	2	4	2	19
Adivasi	11	5	2	5	-	22
Upper	3	5	7	-	-	13
Intermediate	8	2	2	3	-	13
Muslim	4	-	1	2	-	7
Non- Marathi	9	7	-	-	-	21
Others	1	-	1	1	-	2
Total	141	42	52	40	13	288

Table No. 9.5
Social Composition of MLAs: 1995

	Congress	BJP	SS	Others	IND	Total
Maratha – Kunbi	46	18	40	8	26	138
OBC	12	9	11	10	3	45
Dalit	3	8	5	-	3	19
Adivasi	7	6	3	3	4	23
Upper	2	5	5	-	-	12
Intermediate	5	6	3	2	3	19
Muslim	2	-	1	2	3	8
Non- Marathi	3	13	2	-	3	21
Others	-	-	3	-	-	3
Total	80	65	73	25	45	288

Table No. 9.6
Social Composition of MLAs: 1999

	Congress	NCP	BJP	SS	Others	IND	Total
Maratha – Kunbi	30	37	21	38	10	-	136
OBC	9	3	9	9	9	-	39
Dalit	5	3	6	5	3	-	22
Adivasi	5	6	4	3	4	-	22
Upper	-	1	5	2	-	-	8
Intermediate	5	3	2	4	-	1	15
Muslim	8	1	-	1	-	2	12
Non- Marathi	12	2	9	4	-	1	28
Others	1	-	2	3	-	-	6
Total	75	56	58	69	18	12	288

Table No. 9.7
Social Composition of MLAs: 2004

	Congress	NCP	BJP	SS	Others	IND	Total
Maratha – Kunbi	26	41	15	39	3	16	140
OBC	8	10	12	7	5	-	42
Dalit	7	4	6	5	1	-	23
Adivasi	6	7	4	2	2	1	22
Upper	-	2	5	4	-	-	11
Intermediate	4	1	5	5	1	1	17
Muslim	7	4	-	-	-	-	11
Non- Marathi	10	2	7	-	1	1	21
Others	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	69	71	54	62	13	19	288

Table No. 9.8
Social Composition of MLAs: 2009

	Congress	NCP	BJP	SS	MNS	Others	IND	Total
Maratha – Kunbi	30	35	9	27	7	2	15	125
OBC	8	10	10	2	4	6	3	43
Dalit	7	7	8	9	1		1	33
Adivasi	12	4	3	2		3	1	25
Upper	-	1	3	1	1	1	-	7
Intermediate	8	2	6	2	-	2	2	22
Muslim	4	2	-	-	-	4	-	10
Non- Marathi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	13	1	7	1	-	-	1	23
Total	82	62	46	44	13	18	23	288

Note to Table 9: For identifying castes of MLAs, we have used the following sources : a) Thite; 1996, Vora; 2003, information collected by the Dept. of Politics and Public Administration, University of Pune, under the Special Assistance Programme of the UGC and information collected during the UGC Major Research Projects for Lok Sabha elections of 2009 and Assembly Elections for 2009.

Table No. 10.1
Pattern of seat sharing between BJP and Shivsena: Assembly elections (1995-2009)

Year of election				
1995	No. of seats contested in 1995	Performance in 1990		Seats Beyond quota
		Winner	Runner	
BJP	116	42	33	41(35%)
Shivsena	169	52	46	71 (42%)
1999	No. of seats contested in 1999	Performance in 1995		
BJP	117	65	16	36 (30%)
Shivsena	161	73	22	66 (40%)
2004	No. of seats contested in 2004	Performance in 1999		
BJP	111	56	36	19 (17%)
Shivsena	163	69	41	53 (32%)
2009	No. of seats contested in 2009	Performance in 2004		
BJP	119	54	46	19 (16%)
Shivsena	160	62	75	23 (14%)

Table No. 10.2
Bargaining power of alliance partners beyond normal quota

	1995	1999	2004	2009
BJP	41 (35%)	36 (30%)	19 (17%)	19 (16%)
Shivsena	71 (42%)	66 (40%)	53 (32%)	23 (14%)

Table No. 10.3
Pattern of seat sharing between Congress and NCP: Assembly election 2004-2009

Alliance in 2004	No. of seats contested in 2004	Performance in 1999 Assembly election		Seats below quota
		Winner	Runner	
Congress	157	75	65	17 (10.4%)
NCP	124	58	42	24 (19.4%)
Alliance in 2009	No. of seats contested in 2009	Performance in 2004 Assembly election		Seats below quota
		Winner	Runner	
Congress	170	69	71	30 (18%)
NCP	113	71	43	-1(-1%)

Note: Congress and NCP had contested the Assembly elections independently in 1999 and therefore the number of seats lost by both in 2004 is high.

Table No. 11.1
Pattern of seat sharing among coalition partners in Lok Sabha elections (1991 – 2009)

Year	Seats contested	Performance in 1991		
		Winner	Runner	
1996				
BJP	24	5	18	1 (4.4 %)
Shivsena	20	4	8	8 (40.0%)
		Performance in 1996		
1998				
BJP	26	18	6	2 (7.7%)
Shivsena	22	15	5	2 (8.7%)
1999		Performance in 1998		
BJP	26	4	21	1 (4.0%)
Shivsena	22	6	15	1 (4.6%)
2004		Performance in 1999		
BJP	26	13	11	2(7.7%)
Shivsena	22	15	4	3 (13.7%)
Congress	26	10	18	-2 (-7.7%)
NCP	18	6	9	3 (16.7%)
2009		Performance in 2004		
BJP	25	13	13	-1(-4.0%)
Shivsena	22	12	9	1 (4.5%)
Congress	25	13	13	-1 (-4.0%)
NCP	21	9	9	3 (14.3%)

Note: Congress and NCP had contested the Assembly elections independently in 1999 and therefore the number of seats lost by both is high for 2004.

Table No. 11.2

Bargaining power of alliance partners seats allocated beyond/ below Quota: Lok Sabha elections

	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009
BJP	1 (4.4%)	2 (7.7%)	1 (4.0%)	2 (7.7%)	
Shivsena	8 (40.0%)	2 (8.7%)	1 (4.6%)	3 (13.7%)	
Congress	-	-	-	- 2 (-7.7%)	
NCP	-	-	-	3 (16.7%)	

Table No. 12.1
Pattern of ticket distribution for Assembly elections (1995): BJP- Shivsena

	Performance in 1995					
	No. of Seats	Winner	Runner	Third	Fourth	Transferred to
BJP : Winner in 1990	42	38	2	-	-	2: Sena
BJP: Runner up in 1990	33	16	5	6	1	5 : Sena
Shivsena: Winner in 1990	52	46	5	1	-	-
Shivsena Runner up in 1990	46	14	11	8	3	6: BJP 4: IND

Table No. 12.2
Pattern of ticket distribution for Assembly election (1999): BJP – Shivsena

	Performance in 1999				
	No. of Seats	Winner	Runner	Third	Transferred
BJP Winner 1995	65	41	21	3	-
BJP Runner 1995	16	7	7	1	1: IND
Shivsena Winner 1995	73	58	12	2	1 : IND
Shivsena Runner 1995	22	10	10	2	-

Table No. 12.3
Pattern of ticket distribution for Assembly election (2004) BJP – Shivsena

	Performance in 2004					
	No. of Seats	Winner	Runner	Third	Fourth	Transferred
BJP Winner 1999	56	35	20	1	-	-
BJP Runner up 1999	38	11	21	2	1	2: SS 1: SWBP 1: IND
Shivsena Winner 1999	69	39	27	3	-	-
Shivsena Runner up 1999	47	14	23	4	5	1:IND