# THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF A SWAMINARAYAN

## SECT IN BRITAIN.


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PH.D. THESIS
1980.


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ProQuest Number: 10673004

ProQuest 10673004

ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents an ethnographic and anthropological study of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal, a Hindu sect among the Leva Kanbi Patels of Cutch who have recently settled in Britain. Defined in the context of colonial migration and the settlement of sect members both in East Africa and Britain, the study focuses on the sect's ideology of salvation as it is conceptualised in the polar opposites of moksha and man. Moksha is a state of salvation and man a contrary state of assertive individual interest. The connection moksha and man has to the social organisation of the sect is explained by interrelated spheres of ritual and authority. Members of the sect follow a sequence of temple-based institutional rituals which induce the purity essential for moksha. This purity must be complimented with devotional compliance to the authority of the sect leader and those who speak for him. Whenever members fail to comply, the leaders interpret this as defiance expressing man. The antithetical relationship between moksha and man is thus related to the contrasting patterns of compliance and efiance.

The study also explains the rise of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal as an independent sect in the Swaminarayan movement in Gujarat and the effects of segmentary division between primary and secondary Swaminarayan sects on the caste of Leva Kanbi Patels. As this sect based cleavage in the caste has acquired a new meaning in Britain, explanation of its recurrence shows the extent to which the British social conditions influence expression of a category seen to possess a traditional form.

In reproducing the basis of their organisation in a new environment, members of the sect respond to a wide range of British institutions. The multiplicity of these institutions and their complex operation impinges on the everyday life of the sect members. The process of change that occurs in the interplay between the sect and the social institutions of the British society indicates the degree to which the secular attributes are likely to influence the sect. The significance of these elements in the process of change is an important theme in the analysis of ideology and social organisation of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal in Britain.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

dealing with Ph.D. dissertations, Mrs. Doris Macey has typed the final version of the thesis with admirable care and attention. For the excellence of her work, she deserves my special thanks.

Finally, my debt to the members of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal and to many Leva Kanbi Patels is immense. I should particularly like to extend my sincere thanks to Shree Mavjibhai Vekaria and Shree Premjibhai Varsani for giving me an opportunity to carry out the field research and for talking to me at length so that I could grasp the central significance of moksha for the members of the sect. I am equally indebted to many other members of the sect without whose goodwill and cooperation this study would never have become feasible. For their support and assistance, I am grateful to them all. They will no doubt notice differences between their own devotional knowledge of the sect and my anthropological study of their organisation. I am certain that those sect members who read this account will appreciate that the viewpoint I have adopted is that of a sympathetic observer. It is my hope that they will see this study, at the very least, as providing a relatively detached and useful account of their sect and its evolution in their migratory settlement in Britain.

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CONTENTS

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This study is an ethnographic and anthropological account of the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal which is a small Hindu sect within the expanding Swaminarayan movement amongst the Hindu settlers in Britain. The main body of the sect is situated in the state of Gujarat in India with its headquarters in Maninagar near Ahmedabad.[1] An important feature of the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal is that it has recruited a substantial bulk of its membership from the Cutch district of Gujarat and from one particular group. Members of this group identify themselves as Leva Kanbi Patels. This thesis is an account of the part Leva Kanbi Patels have played in developing and consolidating the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal in Britain. In the postwar period, through their migration and settlement in East Africa followed by a secondary movement to Britain, the Leva Kanbi Patels have recreated their sect's organisation in England. As a sect, they have established a fairly compact residential community in two separate locations in England. The bulk of sect members, their wives and children live in Hendon, which is a part of the Borough of Barnet in Greater London. A small number of sect members have also settled in the inner city area of Bolton. Eighty five members of the sect and the members of their families constitute a community of about five hundred individuals in the context of fieldwork carried out for the present study in 1970-1972.

As an introduction to the thesis, this chapter outlines the theoretical framework in whibh this study is developed. Analysis of

ideology and organisation of the sect are approached in terms of themes of continuity and social change. These interrelated themes are closely associated to three dimensions according to which the sect is situated in the historical context of relationship between Britain, India and East Africa. The themes and dimensions constitute a basis for an understanding of the sect's development in Britain. Since members of the sect are a part of South Asian settlement in Britain, there follows a description of this settlement. The argument advanced here is that insufficient attention has been paid to the social and cultural significance of belief systems in the studies of Asian minorities in Britain. It is in relation to this argument that I introduce Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal as a sect which is a part of the Swaminarayan movement amongst the Hindus. As this study concentrates on belief and its practice, there is also a general discussion of the importance of belief in anthropological inquiries and the theoretical necessity of examining a particular belief or an ideology in the wider set of social relations. The second half of this chapter is a description of my fieldwork. It focuses on general issues and particular encounters and experiences as they determined the evolution of research for this study. In the end there is a summary of contents giving a brief sketch of the topics and arguments developed in each chapter.

In this account of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal ideological and organisational continuity is closely related to social change migration to Britain has generated. As settlers in an industrial society, members of the sect have sought to recreate their social organisation in order to maintain and practise their belief in moksha, salvation. Although the thesis provides an account of the way members

of the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal have established
their sect as a community of believers, it is important to emphasise
that reproduction of their belief and organisation is far from an act
of simple duplication to be explained as little other than an extension
to Britain of their social and cultural life from India and East Africa.
The very process of migration to Britain and settlement in London and
Bolton entails a radical change in that the sect finds itself as an
emergent collectivity in new surroundings. The relationship between
the sect and society remains an important aspect of this study.  It is
the focus on this relationship which provides a basis for a discussion
of the effect the British society has on the sect and the process of
social change that is likely to develop from the interplay between the
two entities.

As the relationship between Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan
Mandal and the structure of society in Britain constitutes an important
theme in this thesis, the study does differ from some earlier anthro-
pological researches. Traditionally, social anthropologists have tended
to concentrate on empirical social relations to be found in a small-
scale non-European societies in Africa and Asia.  It is well-known that
in developing their explanation of these societies, the anthropologists
have often focussed on harmony and consensus in the working of social
and political institutions.  In explaining social relations within the
group, anthropologists have often ignored the relationship small scale
societies have had to the wider context of national and international
order. Although the intellectual heritage of investigating small-scale
societies using a functional explanation is deeply rooted in anthro-
pology, in recent decades anthropologists have increasingly turned to
studying groups within a wider context to explain change rather than
institutional stability.

Some critical anthropolgists have in fact situated the very rise
of anthropology as a by-product of the unequal relationship between
Western and non-Western societies.[2]  Taking this feature an an
important mark of the discipline, they argue that in its concern for
the studies of small scale societies, functional anthropology has taken
less adequate account of the part European powers have played in the
global transformation of traditional groups in non-European societies.
In today's world, as the most distant populations are brought into
the orbit of national and international order, to define a particular
society or a group as if it were apart from the wider context is
manifestly inadequate. For if, as in the traditional manner, an anthro-
pologist restricts his investigation to observable social relations,
seen to be in a state of harmony derived from normatively and consciously
held values, then the analysis can prove to be uncritical if not
unilluminating. Although an empirical focus with a functional explanation
can provide a useful account of a group, its apriori and ahistorical
bias towards stability is bound to hinder rather than advance under-
standing of historical changes as they occur beyond the boundaries of
an empirical unit in question.  Now that anthropologists usually
appreciate the difficulties inherent in defining a group in its own
right, they are less likely to conceive their subjects of investigation
as autonomous beings living for ever in the eternity of the ethno-
graphic present. The critique of anthropology has generated a much
sharper interest in the explanation of change and the relationship
between history and anthropology so that the variations in social and
cultural patterns can be interpreted by relating a specific social
entity to what E.H. Carr calls, "the course of history as a moving
procession".[3]

The development of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal
in Britain is part of a much wider historical process. This process
extends beyond the boundaries of the sect and contributes to its
extension and establishment in England. That is, if the sect is not
defined as a functionally autonomous organisation, then it is both
theoretically and methodologically more appropriate to situate it in
the context of British imperial and metropolitan history. It is with-
in this framework that an understanding of the sect, its ideology and
organisation can be clearly related to changes the sect is likely to
undergo in its new habitat in Britain.

For an understanding of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan
Mandal as it is found in Britain, in keeping with the above argument,
it is essential to distinguish three dimensions which are important
for analysing the observations made in this study. First of all, as
alluded to above, the colonial and imperial relationship between Britain
and the societies in the Indian subcontinent and East Africa is the
most important aspect for explaining the settlement of Indian groups
abroad. In this relationship as an advanced industrial society, and
a powerful metropolis, Britain continues to exert influence upon
populations in her previous dependencies. It is the assymetrical
power relationship between Britain and the societies in the Indian sub-
continent and East Africa that provides a basis for explaining the
processes which generated Indian labour migration and settlement over-
seas within the framework of the British imperial rule.[4] It is through
this imperial connection and migratory settlement as a consequence of
the colonial economic stimulus that the Indians have transplanted their
social and cultural institutions to societies where their labour was
demanded and exploited. In the more recent period, following the postwar

economic prosperity and labour shortages in Britain and Europe, migrants from the Indian subcontinent and elsewhere have been drawn to fill a wide range of labour niches often regarded as an unattractive source of work in the European labour market. A consequence of the colonial and imperial connection is particularly evident in the migration of East African Asians to Britain. In identifying it as a 'trilateral minority problem', Yash Tandon not only touches on the significance of imperial rule as it transcends the boundary of one particular society, but also highlights the relationship between Britain and societies both in the Indian subcontinent and East Africa.[5]

The second dimension of this thesis focuses on the social and cultural backgrounds of the three specific societies which are inter-related through the legacies of colonial and imperial history. For a fuller account of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal, it is important to refer to social and cultural conditions in Britain, India and East Africa. Changes in social and economic conditions in each of these societies have stimulated the extension of the sect to Britain. Since the importance of East African Indian settlement continues to decline, the Indian and the British bases of the sect are most important in this study. The importance of Indian conditions lies in the fact that the sect has its headquarters in the state of Gujarat which the sect members regard as the source of their social and cultural values. The significance of the British base is marked by the fact that the members of the sect have recreated patterns of their sectarian ideology and organisation here in Britain. As far as the Indian social and cultural conditions are concerned, it must be emphasised that although the sect members retain both material and cultural interest in the country of their origin, the most important matter for them is the

fact that their extension of the sect is based in Britain. It is
the British cities, namely London and Bolton which provide the concrete
institutional setting for the development of corporate communities
such as the sect.

Thirdly, the main focus of the thesis is the ideology and
organisation of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal in
Britain, given that now the sect has established a base in England
and given the significance of the imperial connections and the range
of social conditions prevailing in India and East Africa.

In applying the word 'ideology' to the sect, it should be indicated
that the concept of ideology is subject to different interpretations.
As Raymond Williams informs us, ideology as illusion, false conscious-
ness, unreality, upside down reality is a distinctive feature of the
Marxist mode of analysis.[6] Marx, as John Plamenatz explains, seems
to have attributed false consciousness to what he regarded as mistaken
beliefs about important matters shared by a whole group of persons or
even a whole community.[7] However, it ought to be stressed that Marx's
main concern has been to explain ideology in relation to the division
of labour and the structures of social relations arising out of it.
The postulate that a widely accepted social ideology related to
division of labour in a given society has a link to the ideology of a
specific group is an important topic of sociological investigation.
However, the scope of this inquiry does not extend to any investigation
of such relationships. For the purpose of description and analysis in
the present study, I use the word 'ideology' in a more restricted sense
of the belief system of a particular group. The truth or falsity of a
particular belief is a topic of more complex discussion which does
not concern me in this study. In using ideology and belief system as

synonymous terms, it should be emphasised that sect's ideology is one important element which concerns the sect members. For there is an interplay between sect-determined viewpoint and a range of new ideas which the members of the sect encounter through their work and residence in Britain. Consequences of this interplay for the members of the sect is a topic which is a part of the broadly defined theme of migration and social change in this thesis.

In view of the complex relationship the sect has to societies across the continents, if the account of the sect was strictly restricted to the social and cultural consciousness of its members, it would prove to be insufficiently illuminating for explaining the development of the sect in Britain. In situating the sect in a context encompassing links between three separate societies, the present anthropological enterprise does go beyond the bounds of field material obtained from what members of a group say they are conscious of. However, in any event, the consciousness of sect members is by no means confined to the narrower grooves of sect's ideology. Having experienced multiple phases of migration and overseas settlement, the sect members are far from being parochial. Their own interpretation of the events shows that they are aware of changes which the wider international order has created for them and many of their compatriots who make up the bulk of the South Asian settlement in Britain.

2.  <u>SOUTH ASIAN SETTLEMENT AND THE SWAMINARAYAN SECT IN BRITAIN.</u>[8]

According to the perspective outlined here, the context of imperial history is crucial to an understanding of South Asian settlement in Britain. The Asians who work and live in Britain come both from the Indian subcontinent and from those countries to which Indians migrated

with the extension of the British Empire in the 19th and early 20th
centuries. So it is not uncommon to meet Asians in Britain who come
from places as far apart as Fiji, Mauritius, Guyana and East Africa.
The migrants who originate from the Indian subcontinent usually maintain
a close social and cultural link with their homelands, even if they
have previously been resident in East and central Africa. People of
Asian origin who have come to Britain from Guyana or Trinidad rarely
maintain any regular and viable contact with their ancestral home in
India. Vidya S. Naipaul, the Trinidadian writer provides the best known
account of contact between an Indian from the West Indies and his
ancestral home in North India. In his concluding chapter 'The Village
of Dubes' in his book An Area of Darkness Naipaul highlights discontinuity
with India when he affirms, "I had learned my separateness from India
and was content to be a colonial without a past, without ancestor".[9]
In his recent travelogue North of South : An African Journey, Shiva
Naipaul also emphasises comparable discontinuity when he says, "For me
the period which covers my family's migration from Utter Pradesh and
their arrival in Trinidad posseses something of the aura of prehistory".[10]
However, this discontinuity between the East Indians as they are known
in the Caribbean and their original homeland does not necessarily mean
that the Indian culture has entirely disappeared among them. The
Contributors to John Gaffar La Guerre's work Calcutta to Caroni examined
the persistence and revival of the Indian culture in the social and
political context life in Trinidad.[11] If the East Indians living in
Britain maintain Indian cultural practices,then they are likely to
associate with the South Asians.

For at least a century the British have used the stereotypical
category 'colour' to label and identify all non-white persons

irrespective of the part of the world they come from. Although such categories play an important part in contemporary majority perceptions, the white public is becoming increasingly aware of differences between different ethnic minorities.  Largely due to political discussions in the mass media, it is now common knowledge that the bulk of South Asian settlers in Britain have come from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. A focus on 'Uganda Asians' or 'Malawi Asians' evokes memories of the late sixties when the East African Asians had become a focus of national concern.  Majority categories applied to South Asians are highly generalized, but within the minorities themselves there is a whole range of socio-economic and cultural distinctions which are crucial to social relations both within the minorities and in their relations with the majority.

The majority view of South Asians minimizes class differences within the minorities and places them at the bottom of the British social hierarchy. But there is also a danger of erring in the opposite direction. The image of hardworking and highly successful entrepreneurs applies to a small but a distinct stratum of Asian petit-bourgeoisies who are either merchants and shopkeepers or professionals such as doctors, pharmacists and accountants. To generalize this image to the entire South Asian population would be misleading. For most Asians are engaged either in low grade white collar jobs or, more frequently, in skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled manual work.

Regional, social and cultural differences also play an important part in the everyday life of Asian immigrants in Britain. The state or region from which a person comes may be significant since regions often coincide with cultural areas.  Most Pakistanis living in Britain come from the Punjab and the Mirpur regions of Pakistan whereas most

Bangladeshis are from the Sylhet district. Most of the Indian settlers come from the two western states of Punjab and Gujarat, while most of the Sikh migration to Britain originates from Hoshiarpur and Jullundur districts. Although Punjabis and Sikhs are often identified with one another, not all Punjabis are Sikhs. As a cultural category, the expression 'Punjabi' denotes a region running across the state and national boundaries dividing India and Pakistan; it can refer to Hindus in the state of Punjab or Haryana, or to Punjabi Muslims living in Pakistan.

Just as there are significant social and cultural variations in Punjab, so are there comparable differences in Gujarat. As in Punjab, the tradition of migration from Gujarat to parts of India as well as abroad is well-established. Within the state geographical and cultural distinctions between Gujarat, Kathiawad (or Saurashtra) and Cutch must be noted. Gujarati immigrants to Britain come from all the three areas but in particular from the districts adjacent to Surat, Baroda and Ahmedabad in Gujarat, from areas closer to Jamnagar, Polbander and Rajkot in Saurashtra, and from a cluster of villages around Bhuj in Cutch. It is the migrants who come from the rural areas adjacent to Bhuj who belong to the Swaminarayan sect with which this thesis is concerned.

Despite the regional differences, almost all South Asian migrants to Britain share certain common features. First of all, most South Asians originate from agricultural societies where pressures of rural poverty and incentives of gain push individuals out of the local communities to towns and cities and beyond. The social organisation of rural communities centers on close interpersonal relationships

characterized by conflict as well as cooperation. These relationships usually develop in a closed endogamous kin group usually calling itself a nāt, jāt or jāti, which enforces and maintains a boundary between itself and other comparable groups. These self-conscious corporate organisations remain socially significant whenever individuals choose to emigrate to other parts of the Indian subcontinent or abroad. Members of such groups use the nexus of kinship and affinity to organise their interpersonal relationships and these remain socially active in many post-migration situations. Such caste groups from each particular area not only possess a distinctive corporate identity but also a name associated with a cluster of attributes. In identifying themselves as members of a particular caste group, individuals use a distinct name which signifies their membership in a particular community. For instance, among the Sikhs from India, names such as Jat, Ramgarhia or Bhattra refer to specific groups which maintain their particular socio-cultural identity in Britain. Similarly among the Gujaratis, names such as Patel or Lohana refer to relatively closed corporate communities. As the South Asian population in Britain has increased since the mid-sixties, there has been a corresponding increase in the formation and organisation of nāt-based communities. Their socio-cultural activities can vary from an annual meeting or gatherings centered on weddings to regular meetings and a pattern of more intense involvement in the group. Studies of these caste-based associations is an important area of anthropological research among the South Asians in Britain.

It is important to emphasise that the members of a particular group see others in terms of both similarity and difference. Social perception of difference is highlighted by important cultural differences not only between different regions but between different parts of the

same region. Language and religion constitute the most important dimensions in defining both more general as well as specific and minute differences relevant to the social life of the South Asian migrants. The fact that the South Asians in Britain speak Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi and Bengali indicates that speakers of these different languages belong to different social categories and groups. Within each linguistic category, there are further distinctions which point to differences marking off one set of people from the other, although they_may all come from the same cultural zone. For example, Gujaratis maintain a distinct awareness of stylistic and vocabulary differences which are used to distinguish people coming from different districts and regions such as Charottar, Kathiawad and Cutch. Similar variations are reflected among Asians coming from other areas of the Indian subcontinent.

The belief South Asians have in a particular religious ideology and practice is an important factor to be considered in this study. Broadly most South Asians in Britain subscribe to Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. Although religious belief and associated levels of practice and organisation appear to be crucial amongst the Muslims and Sikhs, apart from general allusions to their belief the area of sociological and anthropological research remains largely neglected and almost entirely unexplored - although there is, in the changing circumstances of South Asian minorities in Britain, an opportunity to research and study the possible influences of British institutions on religious belief and practice.

A brief review of existing accounts clearly illustrates this assertion. Badr Dahya for instance, provides an interesting and stimulating account of Pakistani settlement in Bradford.[12] It is

relatively well-known that wherever Pakistanis have settled in any

significant numbers, they have usually established a mosque as the

center of their religious and social activities. If Islam and its

main sectarian branches play an important part in the lives of Muslims

from Pakistan and elsewhere, then their belief pattern would seem to be

an important element. However, Badar Dahya does not focus on this

ideological factor. In his emphasis on 'Pakistani ethnicity' defined

as the socio-cultural attributes migrants bring to bear on their settle-

ment Dahya excludes Islam as having any bearing on 'Pakistani ethnicity'.[13]

In a more recent study of Pakistani Muslim and Christian families

living in Bristol, Patricia Jeffery provides a useful general introduction

to Islam and its influence in the lives of her Muslim respondents.[14]

However, her exposition is not concerned with explaining the categories

Islamic belief and their link to the social organisation of the mosque

in Bristol. In her account of Mirpuri Muslims living in Britain,

Verity Saifullah Khan[15] emphasises the centrality and significance of

Islamic belief amongst the Mirpuri Muslims in their homeland - although

her account of their settlement in Bradford does not elaborate on the

extent to which the Mirpuri Muslims recreate their sectarian institutions

and the kind of significance these acquire in their inner city environ-

ments.

In outlining the pattern of Sikh settlement in Britain, in his

monumental Colour and Citizenship[16] E.J.B. Rose does refer to the

importance of Sikh belief and the way Sikhs themselves express this

by establishing temples, gurudwārās. He also emphasises that the

gurudwārā-based activities are important in maintaining the cohesion

of the Sikh communities. In discussing the increasing consolidation

of religious activities among the Sikhs, he refers to the religious

preachers - sants who are invited from India to perform religious

services and to the foundation of Shiromani Khalsa Dal in Britain.
However, this brief introduction to the Sikhs is not concerned with
the relationship between belief and social organisation. De Witt
John Jr's study of Indian Workers Associations in Britain[17] is entirely
concerned with the organisation of Sikh settlement and the part it has
played in the evolution of Indian Workers Associations in Britain. In
his references to Sikkhism, John underlines the political and military
character of the movement and the relevance of religious devotion in
fostering loyalty to the community. Apart from this reference to the
ideology of brotherhood as it is derived from the Sikh belief, John's
analysis is more concerned with the politics of Indian Workers'
Association than with any relevance the categories of Sikh belief may
have to the organisation of the Sikh settlements in question. In her
notes on the social system of Jat Sikhs[18] Joyce Pettigrew is primarily
interested in those Jat social categories concerned with the dimensions
of economy in Punjab rather than with the importance of Sikh ideology
in the Jat social framework. In their latest formulation on the
development of South Asian settlements in Britain, Roger and Catherine
Ballard outline the phases Sikh settlement has passed through.[19] They
briefly refer to the formation of gurudwārās in Yorkshire as a
reflection of interest in religion and in the maintenance of the
fundamental values of Sikh society. It is well-known that establish-
ment of a gurudwārā plays an important part in the Sikh settlement in
Britain. The establishment of so many gurudwārās in Britain is an
expression of the significance Sikhs attach to their belief and its
practice. In this regard the political significance which the turban
has acquired as a means whereby the Sikh maintain their distinctiveness
is to be noted. Apart from the interplay between the belief, cultural

distinctiveness and the whole range of British social institutions,
there is an interesting realm of relationship between ideology and
social and political organisation of Sikhs, a dimension which is
marginal to Ballard's study.

Rashmi Desai's study[20] in the sixties provides the earliest
reference to the significance of religion among the Gujarati Hindus.[21]
E.J.B. Rose calls upon it in asserting:

> We are told by Desai that there are no Hindu temples
> in this country because the elaborate rituals which
> are required are forbidden by custom on foreign soil.
> But in any case, temple observance is on the decline
> among the relatively Westernised Hindus of Gujarat and
> Punjab. Hinduism does not need to find expression in
> temple worship. It is a religion which is practised
> in the home. The Gujarati immigrants delegate their
> duties including even marriage and funeral rites to
> members of their families who are in India, performing
> no more than a token ceremony in this country. [22]

There is no doubt that the observations Rashmi Desai made on the basis
of his fieldwork in the 1960's were relevant in the initial and formative
stage of Indian settlement in Britain. However, with the increase in
the total Indian population in the 1960's and 1970's, it is abundantly
clear that as the Indians have consolidated their settlement, Hindu
gods and goddesses have not only crossed the oceans but have in fact
settled on traditionally forbidden soil. In places like Leicester and
London where Gujaratis have settled in substantial numbers, there has
been a keen interest in establishing religious institutions.

Although Gujaratis share certain common cultural attributes such
as a common language, they do not possess any homogeneous character
as a group. First, there are important class differences amongst them.
Moreover, caste distinctions maintained by enforcement of endogamy,
and religious differences such as those between Muslims and Hindus,

remain significant. Nor do Gujarati Muslims form a homogeneous group,

for besides the division between Sunnis and Shias, Shias are further

distinguished into separate sects such as Daudi Bohras, Shia Ithnasharis

and Shia Imami Ismailis, followers of the Aga Khan best known for

having transformed their sect's institutions into profit-making

enterprises.[23]

The Hindus from Gujarat and East Africa maintain a wide range of

religious and sectarian differences. To understand the pattern of

these differences, it is necessary to distinguish between dharma and

sampradaya, the two categories widely used among the Hindus who observe

the precepts of their belief in Britain. The ideology of a specific

sect such as the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal is best

understood in terms of these important distinctions. In an introduction

to a study outlining various meanings of dharma, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty

and J. Duncan M. Derrett illuminate the difficulties which surround a

specific definition of dharma. "Dharma is", they explain, "a problem

rather than a concept, vague, indeterminable, impossible to define

without broadening into useless generality or narrowing it to exclude

valid instances".[24] Contributors to this work clearly show that dharma

has multiple dimensions some of which even appear to be contradictory.

However, as anthropologists familiar with the Indian context know,

although the Hindus attach different meanings to the word dharma, its

actual usage in a specific socio-cultural context makes it clear to

the participants which particular meaning is being conveyed. Although

the members of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal rarely

approach the concept from the complex intellectual viewpoint to be

found in scholarly theological discussions, they do appear to be

familiar with certain general and specific meanings of the term.
Accordingly, it is usually recognised that the word refers to the
widest framework of Hinduism and its varied manifestations in different
contexts. At the most general level, sanātan dharma implies values
which are believed to apply universally to all. The word sanātan
means eternal, perpetual, permanent, everlasting, primeval and ancient.[25]
It conveys both timelessness and universality. It is the encompassing
sanātan dharma which provides a basis for determining a specific level
of dharma. When dharma is applied in a specific sense, the prescriptive
element in 'what ought to be done' seems to be its distinctive feature.
The derivate expressions such as varnāshram dharma meaning caste duties
or svadharma meaning the duty one is expected to perform indicate the
usage that can occur at a more specific level.

Besides the distinction between sanātan dharma and dharma at more
specific social and personal levels, an important aspect of the word is
expressed in the opposition that is posited between dharma and adharma
to distinguish the difference between prescribed and proscribed action
and behaviour. During the fieldwork, members of the sect tended to use
dharma and adharma as polar opposites to identify behaviour in terms of
these contrasting categories.

It is within the ideological framework of sanātan dharma or what
the Hindus broadly describe as the universal religion, or, more precisely
the religion of all the Hindus that the believers distinguish the
secondary ideological formation which usually constitutes a sect.
Dharma and sampradāya are ideologically less discontinuous, as a
sampradāya is based on the fundamental tenets of the sanātan dharma.
Whenever individuals focus on the organisational aspects of dharma

and sampradaya, the distinction between the two is often made clear-
cut. For example, those organisations and associations which carry
the expression sanatan dharma in their title are open to all Hindus
both in theory as well as in practice. The dharma-based bodies subscribe
to the wider precepts of the Hindu beliefs which are not associated
with any particular master or guru. However, the word sampradaya
carries a distinctly narrower meaning. Whenever the Hindus identify an
organisation as a sampradaya, as Joachim Wach explains, they imply
"a group with special concepts, forms of worship and adherance to
exclusive leadership exercised by an outstanding religious personality
or by his physical or spiritual descendant".[26] Sampradaya is thus
referred to a particular body of traditional doctines handed down
through a succession of teachers. In other words, the ideology and
organisation of a sampradaya are invariably related to one particular
teacher who demands exclusive allegiance from his followers. It is
in this sense that the word samparadaya approximates what is usually
understood as a sect in the English language. Though the difference
between dharma and sampradaya is apparently comparable to the dichotomy
between church and sect, it is important to point out that the latter
is not synonymous with the former. Joachim Wach rightly asserts that
"Sampradaya is not translatable by the term 'sect' or 'denomination'
because that implies secession from a larger body".[27] What is important
to note is that dharma and sampradaya seem to be much less exclusive
as well as less similar to the formal and institutional character of
Christian churches and sects. In contrast to a more specific connotation
of church as an organisational entity, dharma, as indicated before, is
multidimensional in meanings it carries. Though the Hindus distinguish
dharma as encompassing sampradaya and providing its basis and although

they also recognise that in the degree of its exclusiveness sampradāya
is apart from dharma, it is not uncommon for them to refer to a specific
sampradāya as if it was a particular dharma. In other words, they
give a measure of flexibility to the concept to convey different
meanings at different levels. In an instance such as this, to the
participants in a specific situation, it is clear whether the word
refers to the wider context of Hinduism or to a specific belief
expounded by a particular teacher in a movement or an organisation.
Other connotations which imply social or personal duty are comprehended
by the actors according to the context of the circumstances. It is
with some understanding of differences between dharma and sampradāya
that the Hindus apply the latter concept to Swaminarayan organisations
now evolving in Britain. They often regard the separate bodies as if
they formed a single sect with its particular definition of an exclusive
belief and practice developed in a tradition by its founder Sahajananda
Swami deified as Swaminarayan the supreme lord.

Though the Swaminarayan sect is popularly regarded among Indians
as a monolithic entity, a closer examination reveals that since it
became established in the nineteenth century, the sect has segmented
into separate and autonomous organisations. In order to distinguish
the primary sect from the segmented entities, I use the word 'movement'
to embrace all the existing Swaminarayan sects and refer to each sect
by its name. First of all as the sect founder Sahajananda Swami
expanded his following in Gujarat[28] it soon developed a character of
a sect with a territorial locus and a well-defined organisation. The
founder divided the sect into two administrative units, one centered
at Ahmedabad and the other at Vadtal in the present state of Gujarat.
Although these administrative divisions appear to have developed some

separateness, they essentially remain a part of the primary Swaminarayan sect. In due course, the disputes concerning ownership of sectarian assets and property generated fission at each administrative seat of the sect. A schism at the Vadtal administrative center gave rise to Shree Akshar Purshottam Sanstha which has established a separate sectarian organisation at Bochasan in Gujarat. Whereas the comparable dissent that developed at the Ahmedabad seat gave rise to Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal, which has established its main center at Maninagar, a township adjacent to Ahmedabad city. As a consequence of this segmentary development, the Swaminarayan movement now includes at least three main sects, as outlined below:

1. Shree Swaminarayan Sampradāya based at Ahmedabad and Vadtal;

2. Shree Akshar Purshottam Sanstha based at Bochasan;

3. Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal at Maninagar.

The Ahmedabad and Vadtal based primary sect and the separate secondary sectarian establishments at Bochasan and Maninagar have all spread throughout Gujarat and beyond. Apart from the roots these sects have put down in local caste communities in western India, all three establishments have founded prosperous extensions in East Africa and more recently in Britain and North America. Although an understanding of the Swaminarayan movement and of development of fission within the primary formation is essential to this study, my own fieldwork and research are concerned with the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal - which is referred to as "the Mandal" in this thesis.

Having situated the Mandal within the wider Swaminarayan movement and having related it to the ideological framework of Hinduism, there is an important topic concerning the membership which is central for an

understanding of the Mandal and the relationship it has to the primary

Swaminarayan sect. Sects within the Swaminarayan movement recruit

their members from different class and caste backgrounds. In the

context of the present study, a person's membership in a particular

sect and in a caste group are matters of considerable significance.

First of all, both the primary and secondary schismatic sects encompass

a range of caste groups, none of which stand in any one-to-one relation-

ship with any particular Swaminarayan sect. To put it more precisely,

within the Swaminarayan movement caste and sect are not coterminous

categories. A particular sect does not coincide with a corresponding

caste. But it is important to appreciate that while each Swaminarayan

sect in its totality is multi-caste in character, a congregation may

be composed of people belonging to a particular caste group so that at

this level sect membership and caste membership may become synonymous.

This identity between sect and caste at the local level is important

for this thesis since the Mandal in the U.K. consists of one caste

group - the Leva Kanbi Patels of Cutch. The Leva Kanbi Patels have

affiliated themselves to the primary Swaminarayan sect since its

following spread to Cutch. The fission that developed at the Ahmedabad-

based administrative seat of the primary sect, not only gave rise to

the Mandal as a separate sectarian entity but also divided the Leva

Kanbi Patels between those who continued to support the primary sect

and those who supported the schismatic Mandal. The fact that members

of the same caste group belong to two separate Swaminarayan sects is

a significant feature in the evolution of the Mandal. Differential

sectarian affiliation has generated a cleavage which has implications

for social relations among the Leva Kanbi Patels who are members of

the Mandal. A substantial number of them remain members of the primary

sect and many probably also follow a range of Hindu cults and sects now proliferating in Britain. The recruitment of Leva Kanbi Patels into two competitive sectarian organisations is an important element in explaining the Mandal ideology and organisation.

An account of the Mandal ideology is best introduced with a distinction Edmund Leach makes between philosophical and practical religion.[29] According to Leach, philosophical religion and practical religion are not phenomena of the same order and therefore to study the latter as if it were the former can only lead to confusion and misunderstanding. Belief as understood and practised by the people is a topic of interest for an anthropologist, rather than abstractions contained in any formalised system of thought. Melford E. Spiro also expresses a similar viewpoint when he says, "... it is certainly a strange spectacle when anthropologists, of all people, confuse the teachings of a philosophical school with the beliefs and behaviour of a religious community".[30] Although the ideology of a sectarian group or a religious community may be at variance with the theological and philosophical principles developed in a classical tradition, their belief and practice as observed in their everyday life are no less real, nor are they to be excluded as inferior distortions of a 'pure' tradition. I have approached the study of the Mandal with Leach's important distinction between philosophical and practical religion. Even though the sects within the Swaminarayan movement have now developed a rich body of philosophical literature in Sanskrit and Gujarati, the exposition of the Mandal ideology in this thesis is based on what people actually believe and practice rather than what the sect's texts say about the belief.

As the Mandal members' belief and its relationship to the social organisation of their sect is a central theme of the thesis, it is essential to determine the elements which constitute the belief as the sect members perceive it, understand it, internalise it and put it into practice. In other words, it is important to explain the sect's ideology and belief as a subjective category. The importance of meaning to the participants in a religious group is distinctively emphasised by Max Weber when he observes,

> ... an understanding of this (religious) behaviour
> can only be achieved from the viewpoint of subjective
> experiences and purposes of the individuals concerned -
> in short from the viewpoint of religious behaviour's
> meaning (sinn). 31

Further, to explain the subjective significance of an ideology, it is necessary to appreciate the relationship this meaning has to the social context. Weber is clear in emphasising this point when he says,

> ... religious or magical behaviour and thinking must
> not be set apart from the range of everyday purposive
> conduct, particularly since even the ends of religious
> and magical actions are predominantly economic. 32.

Besides focussing on the social context of the meaning, this statement categorically alludes to the link meaning has to the material and economic organisation of a society.

In the context of social anthropology, Raymond Firth regards the problem of meaning as a central issue in the study of religion.[33] He also argues that the anthropological search for meaning is a two-fold process involving the discovery of meaning within the religious system and its relation to other parts of the society.[34] Clifford Geertz develops a comparable perspective in summarising his views on religion as a cultural system. According to him;

> the anthropological study of religion is therefore
> a two-stage operation: first an analysis of the
> systems of meaning embodied in the symbols which
> make up the religion proper, and the second, relating
> of these systems to socio-cultural and psychological
> processes.  35

To explain the meaning of the Mandal ideology and its social context,

there are two important questions which this study attempts to answer.

First of all, what is the meaning of the ideology of Shree Swaminarayan

Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal and, secondly, what relationship does the

ideology have to the social organisation of the sect.  In response to

the first question, the ideology of the sect can be expressed in a single

word, moksha, a word which means 'salvation' in most Indian languages.

In order to answer the second question, it is obvious that the inquiry

should focus on the relationship salvation has to social relations

within the sect. When moksha is linked to the social basis of the sect,

it is important to examine the ideological opposition between moksha

and man.  Just as moksha refers to salvation, man to self-assertion,

an attribute of human nature which is opposed to the salvational state.

It is the polarity between moksha and man which is the main focus of

the sect's ideology.  In outlining the antithetical juxtaposition

between the two, the first step is to show the meaning of this opposition

to the Mandal members, and the second step is to relate the two concepts

to the social organisation of the sect - the theme which is fully

developed in Chapters 5 and 6.  Although the sect members express the

significance of moksha in a ritual complex centered on their Swaminarayan

temple, the antithesis between moksha and man finds expression within

the organisational framework of the sect.  In linking the twin opposites

to sectarian social relations, the study is concerned with explaining

the fusion between the social organisation of the sect and the ideological

antithesis of moksha and man.

In studies such as the present account of the Mandal, if the subjective dimension of belief is regarded as having primary significance, then it is not uncommon for a student of ideology to argue that the belief itself influences the character of a particular social organisation. However, though doubtless belief plays an important part in bodies such as a movement or a sect, to regard it as being deterministic can be an error. Peter Worsley is particularly critical of this tendency which he appropriately refers to as "oversystematization of belief", an argument in which belief is held to be a fundamental feature of the analysis.[36] Stephen Feuchtwang also develops a similar viewpoint in a recent article. He is critical of what he calls 'subjective idealism', which, he argues, generates priority of belief in explanation.[37] In emphasising the importance of studying religious ideology, he also argues that it is not an autonomous category and that it should be studied as a part of structure of social relations in a given society.

The critique of the 'overemphasis' on belief or 'subjective idealism' can be fruitfully applied to clarify certain points which bear on the approach adopted in studying the Mandal as a social organisation. First of all, if the study were restricted to the phenomenological level and concentrated on the subjective aspects of ideology and its practice, it would definitely prove to be much less illuminating. Although the members of the Mandal come to regard their belief as an exclusive category, it is abundantly clear to an observer that the context beyond the immediate boundaries of the sect is an important aspect for explaining the consolidation and development of the Mandal. The wider perspective provides a basis for an understanding of continuity

the Mandal has to its main base in India and the kind of changes it
is likely to undergo as a consequence of migratory settlement of its
members abroad.  It is this approach, already  outlined at the outset
which enables the observer, for instance, to examine the relationship
the sect has to the structure of society in Britain. Tₒ take an
important concrete example, sect members face contrasting ideologies
in the British context.  On the one hand, there is the belief system
of the sect.  On the other side, through its institutional structure,
British society presents to the sect members an alternative set of
ideas and practices not all of which are compatible with pursuit of
salvation. The fact that a pattern of interplay can be assumed between
the belief system of a small sect and the dominant ideology of the
society in which it is found, enables the observer to focus on the
change this interaction is likely to generate.  In so far as what the
sect requires of its members does not entirely fit with the scheme
of social life in the wider society, certain difficulties and incon-
sistencies are bound to arise.  In responding to their new environment
in Britain, the Mandal members make choices in which they usually
seek a fair degree of compatibility with their sect's ethos.  If these
adaptive choices entail modification of a particular aspect of sect's
practice, then the wheels of social change are set in motion.  In
presenting an account of the ideology of the Mandal and its organisation,
the thesis focuses on change as it has occurred as a result of sect
members' residence in Britain.

There is one particular theme of social and cultural change which
is most important in this connection.  It applies to the widely held
thesis that when Indians settle in Britain, they transplant their social

and cultural institutions to reproduce a structure of their community which is not dissimilar to the one left behind at home. For the Mandal members, to take an empirical instance, in terms of their own subjectivity, the traditional cleavage between them and the members of their caste who follow the primary Swaminarayan sect is now extended and reproduced in Britain. Although the cleavage sustains the appearance of being traditional in character, this appearance is not what the reality is. Once the appearance is unmasked, the cleavage reveals a potential antithesis between values of the sect and those of the secular society. Exposition of a topic such as this one calls for an approach grounded in the wider framework of history and sociology, and supplemented by a careful analysis of what members of the sect believe constitutes reality. It is with this perspective that I pursued my inquiries and conducted fieldwork in London and Bolton from the autumn of 1970 till the spring of 1972. The following section provides a description of the fieldwork experiences and raises issues which have bearing on the course of this study.

3.    AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE MANDAL: FIELDWORK IN
      LONDON AND BOLTON.

When I arrived in London in the autumn of 1970, there were two matters which concerned me most. First I wanted to live somewhere as cheaply as possible and secondly I wanted to begin the fieldwork which was to constitute the main part of my study. It was the first objective, the need for a place to live, which led to the enquiry I embarked upon.

First I went to live in Hendon at a house where I was provided with accommodation for one week. It was during this brief stay that I

first met the sect members. One evening I noticed there were two Indian workmen who were engaged to redecorate the house. When I saw them, what struck me was the vermillion sectarian mark (<u>tilak</u>) on their forehead. I had no doubt they were Kanbi Patels from Cutch, many of whom I had frequently seen on construction sites in towns and cities in East Africa. Although my host described them to me as uneducated, orthodox and money-minded people, I met them without any hesitation or preconceptions. From our first conversation, they conveyed to me the friendly and affectionate warmth which I was to experience later for more than a year as a tenant in their house. A topic which they talked about with some feeling was their temple. As soon as I expressed interest in what they were saying they invited me to visit their place of worship. Following this brief but pleasant encounter, on my first morning in Hendon, I saw small groups of Indian boys and girls walking to their local school. What I noted about their appearance was not only their Gujarati bearing but also the prominant vermillion <u>tilak</u> mark especially on the foreheads of young boys. It surprised me as I had <u>a priori</u> expected settlement in Britain to be associated with a decline in conspicuous expression of religious belief.

That evening my new Kanbi Patel acquaintance Premjibhai took me down to their temple in a semi-detached residence which had been converted to house a Swaminarayan shrine. Before the shrine, men and women sat in two separate groups. Beside the men bearing the vermillion <u>tilak</u> on their forehead, sat five or six boys still wearing their school uniforms. As they began to sing a devotional hymn, I was struck by the unusual character of the gathering. It was not without some feeling of astonishment that I became absorbed into the temple

scene as it unfolded before me. When the prayers ended, men, women and children began to disperse. Premjibhai led me towards the shrine where a few men had gathered for a conversation and introduced me to them, singling out the Mandal President and Secretary who greeted me assessingly. After preliminary greetings which established my identity as a Gujarati student from Kampala, Uganda, the Mandal President asked me what my name was and what n̄at did I belong to. After I had responded to his question, he asserted, "We do not let people from other n̄at in our congregation". Before I could begin to evaluate the sociological significance of the link he implied between n̄at and the congregation, a feeling of acute discomfort swept over me as I did not know what to say. He soon added, "But before Lord Swaminarayan all n̄ats are equal and what n̄at one belongs to does not matter at all". The relevance of caste difference which could matter in an inter-personal instance was in this specific context instantly substituted for the equality which men enjoy before god.[38] Not only was the equality emphasised but to my relief it was pointed out that the sect founder Sahjananda Swami had had a Barot disciple by the name of Brahmananda Swami who was his great poet devotee. Our subsequent conversation melted the feeling of barrier which I had feared would arise. We dispersed cordially and I was invited to come to the temple once again.

Although my visit to the Mandal temple in Hendon was a striking experience, I was too worried about my accommodation to see this temple encounter as an indication of a future fieldwork possibility. As I had a few more days within which to find a room, I spent much of my time running between the University Lodging Bureau and a number of

of different addresses in North London. In the ensuing rush I found
a place some distance away from Hendon, thus at least temporarily
getting away from the Mandal. After settling down in my new residence,
I began to think about fieldwork once again. In considering possibilities
before me, I found the impersonal character of metropolitan London
both daunting and overwhelming. There was no concentration of Indians
where I lived. Information I began to gather about Indians gave me
no comfort. I was in a state of despair as I began to comprehend the
highly fragmentary character of social life in London. I felt it was
impossible to do anthropological fieldwork in London. My East African
Ismaili host promised to help me and introduced me to a number of his
Gujarati friends in Wembley. I met several young couples in circum-
stances of living room politeness which I found unfavourable to the
kind of fieldwork based on regular contact marked by mutual trust and
understanding. In any event, it was not easy to maintain these Wembley
links as the families lived apart scattered over a wide area. Visiting
them regularly would have involved travelling long distances and con-
siderable expense which I could barely afford. As I struggled to work
out something worthwhile from these practical rigmaroles, my earlier
impression of the Swaminarayan temple had become quite remote. It was
not something I thought about consciously in fieldwork terms, until
after I had received a message from Premjibhai of Hendon,who, as it
were, brought the Mandal back to my awareness.

In a telephone call, Premjibhai explained to me that the leader
of their sect Swami Muktajivandasji was on a three months visit to
London. A procession to take him on a chariot shaped vehicle from
Hyde Park Corner to Trafalgar Square was being organised. He invited
me to join him and other sect members on this auspicious occasion. I

was delighted with the news and the opportunity and arrived at the

Hyde Park Corner to meet Premjibhai and others. When I saw a small

group of Kanbi Patels preparing for the procession, I became much

more aware of the Mandal as an organised collectivity. It was there

and then that I made up my mind to do an in-depth study of the Mandal

and also made a symbolic beginning by making notes of all that I saw

during the procession from Hyde Park Corner to Trafalgar Square, though

I still needed a formal permission from the President and the Secretary

of the sect to begin systematic participant observation. There was no

difficulty on that count and as soon as I spoke to them about my

intention of doing a detailed study of the sect, they willingly gave

me their consent and offered to give me whatever help I needed.

Subsequently, I began visiting Hendon as frequently as I could.

Since their leader was in London, sect members were almost entirely

absorbed in the activities which were centered on honouring their

spiritual leader. After I had several meetings with the Mandal Secretary,

he was kind enough to introduce me to the sect leader himself. Although

the meeting was very brief and excluded any possibility of discussion,

its occurrence was significant for fieldwork. The event generated a

feeling of some mutual trust and understanding and the Mandal members

increasingly seemed less uncomfortable in exchanging views with me. I

travelled to Hendon almost every day and began to develop a degree of

familiarity with fieldwork conditions. With these visits to Hendon, I

realised travelling was cumbersome, tiring and expensive. As I had

already established rapport with my first Mandal acquaintance Premjibhai,

to remedy the situation, I asked him if he would have the kindness to

find me some sort of accommodation. He instantly offered to let me a

bed or a room in his own house. I happily accepted his offer and shifted to Hendon in December 1970 and began living in a house which accommodated two brothers, the wife of one of them, her five children and two tenants. The tenants left the house after Premjibhai's wife arrived from Cutch with her three children. Thereafter the house consisted of three men, including myself, two middle-aged women, three boys and five girls. I lived with them till I concluded my fieldwork in early 1972.

Living in Hendon was an instructive experience in that I became acutely aware of the kind of pressures and stresses a migrant and his family can experience given the difficulty of finding suitable accommodation in London. To make my own ends meet, initially I rented a bed in a room which was also shared by sons of Premjibhai's elder brother. As three of us were cramped in a small room, it meant not only loss of privacy but also a great deal of discomfort and inconvenience. None of us had much personal space left in the room. In addition, the boys prepared to sleep early so that they could wake up at six in the morning to do their newspaper round. The conditions were such that it was almost impossible for me to do any reading or writing. In desparation, I asked Premjibhai if it was at all possible for me to have a room to myself - although I was aware there was no more space left in the house. However Premjibhai himself saw no difficulty in making rearrangements as long as I was prepared to pay a little extra for the room. The boys were then transferred to the lounge and I had the room to myself, not without some mixed feelings of relief and guilt.

Although there was a communal atmosphere in the house, it was obvious that a division of social space was implicit in the living arrangement. Lack of privacy was apparent rather than real. For each

tenant in the house had the choice of locking himself or herself in his or her own room - a choice most of us exercised only late in the evening just before going to bed. Although the lounge was occupied by two boys, it was a common social area. Visitors were entertained there and we all assembled there whenever the television could produce a picture. Another common area where I rubbed shoulders with everyone was the kitchen. Before accepting me as a boarder/lodger, Premjibhai had not only ascertained that I was a vegetarian but had also asked me not to eat either garlic or onion as the Mandal members believe that both these substances create impurities. As I had accepted to be a boarder in the house, initially the question of cooking separately did not arise at all. But before long I had to separate my cooking arrangements, as there were difficulties in depending on the family for my meals. On certain occasions of ritual significance they fasted and expected me to do likewise. But as I was unable to share their enthusiasm for fasting, it seemed best for me to cook and eat on my own, though after sharing meals with the family, it was hard not to feel uncomfortable. Once I was used to members of the house watching me cook and eat in their kitchen, the feeling of discomfort subsided and disappeared. As my contact with women in the sect was relatively restricted in keeping with the traditional separation between men and women, these kitchen encounters were immensely useful for they enabled me to get to know the wives of the two brothers. As confidence in the relationship between us developed, the wives expressed themselves fully and without inhibitions. They often talked about their varying experiences in Cutch, East Africa and Britain and enabled me to gain some understanding of their viewpoint. I also developed close and intimate contact with Premjibhai, his elder brother and their children.

The children immediately took me as their m&#257;m&#257;, a fictive kinship

category which explicitly defined the relationship between me and

wives of the brothers as being of the same order as between brothers

and sisters. The pattern of our daily interaction and numerous conver-

sations yielded information and ideas which contributed to the study

and its evolution.

It was Premjibhai whose contact proved most useful in two respects.

First he provided me with a link to other sect members, though not

necessarily to everyone. He seemed to have a reasonably stable relation-

ship with the leading members. He was also regarded a loyal and

devoted sect member, though somewhat temperamental. After he converted

to the Mandal from his former affiliation to the Ahmedabad-based seat

of the primary sect, it was obvious that he had made an intellectual

effort to understand theological and doctrinal differences between

primary and secondary sects and had then moulded his devotion to the

Mandal. His keen interest in the Mandal was reflected whenever we

talked about belief and its relevance. Even though he could never get

away from his devotional commitment to the sect leaders, which to him

was the only way to relate to the Mandal, during our many conversations

I benefited from the depth of his understanding. Among other matters,

he enabled me to appreciate the degree to which his loyalty to the

Mandal was almost inseparable from many of his every day activities.

In a sense, in him I could see devotion as a living part of his

experience. If I made any efforts to enlarge our conversation to see

the Mandal in a wider framework of Hinduism, Premjibhai, like other

members of the sect, was invariably unwilling to step outside the

perspective of his sectarian ideology.

After living for several months in the house, I soon began to
learn about the stresses and strains which marked the relationship
between the brothers and their families. In keeping with the pattern
of migratory settlement in Britain, Premjibhai had bought the house and
had let rooms to tenants who were his close relatives. As his roles as
landlord and relative embodied contradictory expectations, this facet
tended to influence his social tie with relatives who came to the
house as his tenants. Premjibhai's first tenants were his wife's
brother and his immediate family. During their tenancy the social
relationship between the two sides was marked by a misunderstanding and
bitterness focussed on rent of the rooms and facilities available to
the wife's brother and his family. When the affines finally arranged
to have their own accommodation in Hendon, they were succeeded by
Premjibhai's elder brother, his wife and their children. Premjibhai's
own wife was still awaiting entry certificate clearance in India.
Although kinship obligations were important in the arrangement Premjibhai
made for his elder brother, the relationship was not free from contractual
expectations according to which the elder brother paid a fixed weekly
rent of £8.00. The relationship between brothers seemed cooperative,
stable and harmonious till the arrival of Premjibhai's wife from India
in mid 1971.

Soon after her arrival in Hendon, the situation in the house changed
as Premjibhai's wife assumed a more commanding role vis-a-vis others as
the landlady responsible for the maintenance of her property. Ill-feeling
began to develop between the women as the elder brother's wife saw her
own authority and influence declining in the house. The ill-feeling was
exacerbated as the wives began to divide what was regarded as a joint
family venture. For instance, at the beginning of my stay, the division

which applied in the kitchen was between me and the rest of the family.
But as soon as the wives began quarelling, they brought about a further
division as they not only separated pots and pans but also split their
food supply to the last bit of tea and sugar. The division marked a
change in the relationship between brothers as it progressively
worsened during my stay in Hendon. From the fieldwork point of view,
the circumstances were awkward as each side expected me to listen to
their list of complaints about the other. As this family agitation
continued, once under one pretext or other Premjibhai beat a son of
his elder brother. This made the situation much worse as confrontation
and argument broke out between the brothers. With the excitement
building up, restraint became more tenuous and the brothers began to
abuse each other in a manner likely to lead to a violent fight. On
this particular instance in question, as Premjibhai rushed towards his
elder brother with extraordinary ferocity, I literally threw myself
between them and held Premjibhai aside and persuaded tne elder brother
to retire to his own room.

The event made a strong impact on us all, but especially on the
family. As each side set about expressing defiant avoidance, Premjibhai
decided to exert more pressure on the elder brother to make him leave
the house. He demanded increased rent and asked them to quit the
house unless they paid the new rent. By then the dispute had already
become known within the sect. A sect member offered accommodation to
the elder brother, his wife and children. In their informal judicial
role, a committee of the sect members persuaded the brothers to
compromise and to remember their togetherness as seekers of salvation.
Though the brothers did make a public gesture of compromise so as to

honour the sectarian precept of solidarity, they were deeply hurt and too estranged from each other to restore the earlier sentiment of cooperation and understanding.

Besides my growing friendship and involvement with Premjibhai and his brother, I was also able to concentrate my attention on the congregation as a whole which expressed itself as a collectivity in the Mandal temple. It was the temple which provided an ideal setting for participant observation, for the sect members assembled there every evening to say their prayers and to chat with each other. I began to attend evening meetings every day along with Premjibhai. This important step enabled me to absorb as many different kinds of impressions as possible so that I could learn to grasp what it was that moksha, salvation meant to the Mandal members.

In evolving participant observation as a method in the present research, the distinction Edmund Leach draws between sociological and anthropological method is relevant.[39] In other words, unlike, in the case of sociological investigation, the object of the present study is much less, if at all, to present any statistically valid findings derived from a predefined sample of the sect members. The research is concerned with symbolic reality and relationships which develop within the culturally and subjectively determined context of the sect, and accordingly, the relevant categories of the analysis are the ones which the sect members themselves articulate. The validity of an anthropological contribution to the present study lies much more in discerning the pattern of ideology and social relationships as they appear at the level of consciousness and in the context of sectarian interaction. Rather than deriving any standardised pattern of responses

from his informants, the anthropologist is involved in a more complex

social process which, to a degree, generates a social relationship

between him and the group he sets out to study. In forming these

relationships with others, the anthropologist involves himself simul-

taneously in inclusion and exclusion. The inclusion part of his

experience relates to the nature of his involvement in the field, which

is qualitatively different from one who, from some distance, obtains

information according to a set of precoded categories. As the anthro-

pologist develops his relationships with members of a group he is

concerned with, he can lay claim to knowing people through his first

hand experience and through a whole range of interpersonal encounters.

And it is through these experiences that the process of inquiry develops

to provide a basis for an understanding of a symbolic universe in

question. The process of exclusion also operates simultaneously as the

anthropologist attempts to order and organise his field material into

a systematic whole. As an intellectual exercise, exclusion from the

context of study in progress requires a disciplined posture of some

detachment so that the anthropologist can clearly distinguish various

facets of his fieldwork and clearly separate his observations and

participation to prepare an account which is as accurate as it is

humanly possible. This task is not unproblematic as areas of participation

and involvement have an enchanting quality which can considerably under-

mine degrees of detachment. Within this framework of interaction, which

requires inclusion and involvement on the one hand and exclusion and

detachment on the other, all an anthropologist can hope is to strike

a reasonable balance between the two - an equilibrium which enables

him to observe, participate and report accurately.

It was with these considerations that I began my visit to the
Swaminarayan temple in Hendon.  Initially I wanted to remain in the
background so that I could become familiar with my surroundings before
choosing appropriate areas for participation.  Once within the temple,
I soon realised how difficult it would be to carry out this intention.
As soon as I stepped inside the temple, what I did was to occupy a
seat at the back where I could feel most comfortable. But a sect
leader called out my name and invited me to give my salutations
(darshan) to the shrine in the manner of other members of the Mandal.
There was no time to ponder about the best possible response to the
situation since I was under the scrutiny of the entire assembly.  It
was not without a strong feeling of trepidation that I walked up to
the shrine and performed the salutory act haltingly and awkwardly.
Thereafter I decided to learn all the temple rituals as best I could
in order to understand their full significance to the sect members.
In learning to perform the salutory temple rituals I was aware that
this would generate greater mutual trust and confidence in the progress
of my study. While this particular judgement appeared correct at the
time, its consequences were not free from certain difficulties.
Although I continued to explain to the sect members that what I was
doing was the best way to learn all about their sect, my interest in
sectarian ideology and rituals was taken as a sign of some sort of
deep religiosity as well as an expression of my own reverence and
commitment to the sect and its leaders. This theme cropped up every
now and then throughout my fieldwork, especially in some situations
where my identity as an outsider was disregarded and I was in fact
treated as if I was a member of the sect. Given this situation, I did
make efforts to ensure that some sort of distinction was maintained

between my interest in the sect as being different from their commit-
ment to the sect. On the whole, many sect members appeared to ignore
this distinction as the sect values tended to dominate the nature of
our discourses.

Be that as it may, I began to attend temple gatherings every
evening. In following their regular temple routine, the sect members
usually read Swaminarayan scriptures, followed by some discussion
before they would sing a devotional hymn and disperse. At the beginning
of my fieldwork I would enter the temple and occupy a seat at the back
of the assembly. The seating arrangement in the temple reflected
division between sexes, and amongst men, an informal hierarchy according
to which the most prominent Mandal members sat in front facing the
shrine, the temple priest and the remainder sitting behind. As my
attendance became a regular feature of evening prayer and as I began
participating in discussion, occasionally asking a question or two for
clarification, the regard the sect members had for me began to change.
Before too long, I was asked to sit along with the prominent sect
members. This was a fruitful and productive development as it offered
me an opportunity to establish better acquaintance with the leading
members of the sect. In due course, I also discovered that apart
from being a focal point of sect's religious activities, the temple
was also a place for a great deal of social life. After the prayers,
members would stay on to exchange conversations with their friends and
relatives. On some occasions, several small groups would form in
different parts of the temple and the members would continue their
conversations till later in the night. As I began to feel more confident
and comfortable in my relationship to others, I started participating

in these temple based conversations. During these talks, I managed to
meet sect members of all shades and opinion. This included those whose
sense of loyalty to the Mandal was unquestionably firm to those who
took the Mandal more habitually and less devotionally, with a small
minority who viewed their own sectarian affiliation with a touch of
scepticism. As the sect members essentially saw me as a novice, who
needed to be informed and taught, I learned from them a great deal
that cleared ambiguities and confusion and gradually enabled me to
focus on the themes which were central in the formation and organisation
of the Mandal as a Swaminarayan sect.

It was in mid-1971 that a prominent sect member - whom I name
Motabhai throughout this thesis - arrived in Britain. As a highly
regarded elder who coordinates Mandal organisations in India, East
Africa and Britain, he provides an organisational link to the congreg-
ations which are apart in three continents. From the airport reception,
he was brought straight to the temple where a sabhā - a meeting
embodying a discussion of scriptural text - was held. After Motabhai
had conveyed to the sect members news from their spiritual leader
resident in India, he began a discourse during which he asked sect
members questions to test their knowledge of Mandal scriptures as well
as to reinforce the ideal of devotion among them.  In this didactic
exchange, he asked them the meaning of two Gujarati expressions,
kushāgra buddhi (sharp mind) and mushāgra buddhi (dull mind). The
The assembly became quiet as Motabhai began to ask the members if any
of them knew the meaning of these terms. As there was no response from
anyone, he repeated his question looking at all the members, glancing
at each of us separately.  In a few moments he fixed his gaze at me.
The attention of the assembly was expectantly directed towards me.

Then he asked me if I could explain the meaning of the words he had uttered. After I had given the correct meaning, Motabhai gave a fuller explanation to the meeting. The outcome influenced the course of inquiry in two different ways. First, it offered me an instant opportunity to establish rapport with Motabhai. Knowing him brought out the relevance of his role and that of his family in maintaining the Mandal identity and solidarity across the national boundaries. Further, Motabhai's personal association with the sect as it had developed in the thirties and forties provided useful material. The details of conflict he filled in gave me a much better insight into the cleavage which is a crucial factor in relationship between sect and caste among the Mandal members.

As the participant observation became more intense in the progress of fieldwork, the distinctiveness of my identity as an outsider who wanted to study the sect became progressively blurred, in spite of all the caution that I exercised. No one actually took me to be a sect member, for there were no Mandal members who were not Leva Kanbi Patels. From the observations made, it was evident that descent, kinship and affinity as socially expressed among the Leva Kanbi Patels were as much a part of sect membership as devotion and loyalty to the sect leaders. I had never been asked to pay a subscription to become a member. Also I was entirely excluded from general meetings of the Mandal as well as its executive meetings which were strictly open to the members only. Nevertheless, the expression of my interest in all affairs of the sect was tantamount to my dedication and admiration for the sect leader. Once the Mandal members defined the situation in this manner, it was not easy to alter this perception. As my relationship with Motabhai developed during his several months stay in Britain, he

talked to me in a manner very similar to the one he adopted towards other Mandal devotees. During Motabhai's stay in Britain, many Mandal members had made it a practice to visit him late at night at his residence where they held informal conversations concerning affairs of the sect and its followers. Whenever I had an opportunity to participate in this informal gathering involving about fifteen devoted members, Motabhai often drew me in the conversations. I usually responded by asking him questions about the Mandal's development in India and East Africa.

At this particular point in the fieldwork, the Mandal had purchased a large hall in Hendon to accommodate its expanding congregation. Once the hall was converted into the sect's Swaminarayan temple, some discussion occurred as to who should act as a temple priest, a position which entailed performance of various rituals before the shrine. The accommodation arranged at the temple was less adequate for a family of a husband, wife and children to whom the ritual responsibilities had been assigned hitherto. In a conversation, when Motabhai suggested to me that he would arrange for me to live at the temple so that I could 'look after' the shrine, I was somewhat startled to discover the extent to which my presence was defined in the devotional context of the Mandal. I was spared the discomfort and awkwardness of making a response as the topic was not pursued with any further insistence. The events soon to follow gave me an opportunity to convey to the Mandal members the fact that I was primarily a student interested in the sect and neither a sect member or a devotee. The occasion arose when the new temple was ceremonially inaugurated in June 1971. A day long opening ceremony culminated in a session to raise funds for the Mandal. Almost

all the sect members including Hindus who were not members of the sect
made contributions. As it was Motabhai who led the proceedings, carefully
scrutinised those who had made no contributions. Although Motabhai
seemed to regard any act of non-contribution with implicit disapproval,
I had decided to refrain from making a subscription so as to signal
and emphasise my exclusion from the realm of worship and devotion. The
message was thus conveyed without any explicit verbal communication.

Thus the temple and its regular congregational gathering provided
me with an important source of material which consisted of a succession
of sectarian events I observed and many long and unstructured conver-
sations. During this period, I was able to direct my inquiry on certain
important issues related to the cleavage which the sectarian affiliation
had generated among the Leva Kanbi Patels. In order to pursue this and
other themes, I decided to supplement participant observation with
what can be termed 'selective interviewing'. At the beginning I was
tempted to interview all the adult members of the sect. And though this
seemed to be an attractive proposition, it was obvious that there was
no time to interview everyone. To introduce interviewing as the main
technique would have entailed reducing participation which had developed
satisfactorily within the temple. In addition, preliminary observations
revealed that the degree to which the sect members grasped and under-
stood their own situation and circumstances varied considerably from
member to member. In view of these considerations, it seemed most
appropriate to do selective interviewing or in other words, to restrict
interviewing to those who were most likely to be knowledgeable about
the Mandal's development in India, East Africa and Britain. While I
recorded information from everyone I spoke to, the interviews were
restricted to a set of selected members. In participant observation,

events and encounters invariably preceded what was recorded and documented about them. Hence there was a separation between events and fieldnotes - though I always carried a notebook to make jottings to remind me of instant impressions and reactions. Since I was used to carrying out all writing separately from the actual fieldwork setting, it was not without apprehension that I included a fair amount of writing in the process of interviewing the sect members. Without any previous interviewing experience and having regarded interviewing itself as an artificial and contrived social event, I half anticipated unfavourable reaction, difficulties and failure. Contrary to such expectations, interviewing proved to be a successful method of gathering field material. After initial feelings of discomfort which seemed to be much more in the mind of interviewer, the sect members not only responded to questions but also provided additional material and stimulus for thought. They also cooperated to give their verbal account at the speed at which I could take down notes in full hand. The interviews were always carried out in the house of sect members and usually lasted for at least up to two hours. The material supplemented information derived from participant observations.

An area of fieldwork which remained inadequately explored concerned women in the sect. Sexual division is a dominant feature of caste and sectarian groups - especially for those whose socialisation bears a distinct imprint of Indian subcontinental culture. In a male-dominated congregation distinguished by relatively rigid separation between sexes, although I established a fairly good rapport with men, my contact with women remained relatively restricted, though not non-existent. Apart from the wives of two brothers I stayed with, there was only one older woman with whom I managed to develop some conversational acquaintance.

This acquaintance was limited as it was not possible for me to inter-
view someone like her without the presence of her husband. Although
there was no opportunity to elicit an independent female response to
the sect and its organisation, in a number of interviews where older
rather than younger wives were present, they participated in the
interview conversation to contribute their viewpoint, almost invariably
consistent with the dominant interpretation of caste and sectarian
norms. The traditional male-female dichotomy was particularly high-
lighted in an instance when I was asked to accompany an eighteen year
old girl to the local post office to report the loss of her saving
account book.  In walking towards the post office on West Hendon Broadway,
we walked on two separate footpaths. This was probably less common but
certainly an orthodox and illuminating instance of dichotomisation
between sexes. The sectarian ideology and organisation assumes inequality
between men and women and given the normative constraint on my own
behaviour, there is no doubt that the female point of view in this
study has remained unsatisfactorily explored.

Besides most Mandal members who live in London, a small number of
sect devotees have also settled in Bolton, Lancashire, where under the
guidance of London based leadership, they have developed a branch of
the Mandal centered on their local Swaminarayan temple.  In other words,
the sect is geographically divided between locations separated by a
distance of several hundred miles. Although traditionally anthropologists
rarely study spatially divided social units, in Britain distance between
work and residence often make it difficult for groups to form single
residential communities. And although the Mandal members have consciously
sought to maintain residential proximity to sustain their activities,
pressing employment and housing difficulties have led some members to

settle in Bolton. A fieldwork situation such as this one can present
difficulties less common in a traditional anthropological milieu.
Taking into account the current fieldwork experience, firat of all,
given the constraints on time and resources available, to evolve
participant observation in two separate places was an impractical
objective, especially when the participation was conceived to entail
viable and stable social relations. It is only within the context
of such constraints inherent in a metropolitan setting that one has
to define fieldwork in the best possible manner. In contrast to
congregations in Hendon, the contact I had with sect members in Bolton
was less intense. Apart from several short field trips to determine
the composition of the congregation, the only opportunity to live in
Bolton extended for little more than a week. During this period, there
was no problem of building up fresh contacts. In London I had already
met Bolton-based members of the sect as they visited Hendon on a regular
basis. When the Mandal inaugurated its new temple in Hendon, the entire
Bolton branch of the sect was present in Hendon. Through Hendon Mandal
members, I was able to develop acquaintance with devotees from Bolton.
As I had already built up some personal knowledge of the Bolton branch,
during my stay there it was possible for me to work with a degree of
familiarity. Although the information relevant to the study was collected
during this short period, it is obvious that spatially split field
locations require better planning and organisation. Had it been practical
to evolve a focus of participant observation in Bolton, the effort
would have probably yielded the kind of data to illuminate differences
between locations and their relevance for differences distinguishing
the Mandal branch in Bolton.

In building up an anthropological account of a group such as the
Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal, the ability of an anthro-
pologist to speak and use the language of his participants is an
indispensable and necessary part of the field method. When a particular
ideology and its practice is expressed in a specific language, lack
of its knowledge can prove to be a serious deficiency. For the members
of a sect such as the Mandal use their own language to organise their
social relations and to regulate their behaviour. Apart from anything
else, knowledge and understanding of the language facilitates easier
and even informal communication and contributes immeasurably to good
relations and rapport between the anthropologist and the people among
whom he carries out his research.  It was less difficult for me to
meet this particular requirement being a native speaker of Gujarati.
Education and training in India and East Africa also enabled me to
appreciate a pattern of variation which marks the use of Gujarati in
Western India and between natives of Gujarat as distinguished from those
speakers of Gujarati who largely live abroad.  As I was able to share
a common medium of expression and communication with the sect members,
I carried out the fieldwork almost entirely in Gujarati - although, as
it is common with Indians from East Africa, not without a liberal
sprinkling of Swahili and English words. Communication in Gujarati
contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of sectarian ideology
and practice.

The knowledge of the Gujarati language was also directly relevant
for examining a body of sectarian literature and its significance for
the Mandal members.in Britain. An assessment of certain sectarian accounts
prepared by leading members based at Maninagar in Gujarat reveals that

importance of a devotional mode of thinking which is dominant in the
texts as well as in concrete sectarian discourses. Devotion, which is
usually translated as bhakti is such a compelling mode of expression
that it gives a special gloss to all that is said and described about
the sect, its leadership and organisation. It modifies and refines
reality in such a way so that the ideological element of the sectarian
ethos is distinctively emphasised. This unusual fusion between devotion
and reality can alter the perception of events, which, once seen through
devotional lenses, fit the encompassing sectarian ideology. Once the
element of devotion is embodied in the description of events, the
task of separating events from a thick veneer of devotion is not a
simple matter. For instance, the divinity seen to be inherent in
sectarian leadership and the belief in devotion influences accounts
of political differences within the sect. Instead of describing or
discussing the differences and antagonisms as they might have empirically
occurred, a dissenting sect member may be identified as someone making
an effort to comprehend the sectarian ideology. Using categories of
devotional discourse in compilation of sectarian texts, strife, friction
and conflict may be either altered or ironed out to present a somewhat
idealised picture of the sect and its various leaders. In keeping
with this particular tendency a sectarian view of history can turn out
to be little more than devotional glorification of various leaders.
In a context such as this, in examining texts and concrete events, it
is important to separate and distinguish devotional adoration from
events so that the meaning of devotion and social significance of events
can be evaluated and analysed separately. Unless the relationship
between devotion and its effect on sectarian definitions is grasped
and understood at the outset, one cannot distinguish specific events
from statements which essentially affirm devotion and commitment.

4. A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

With the completion of fieldwork in Hendon and Bolton, as the research material was ordered, organised and analysed, a pattern which evolved is embodied in the following seven chapters. Following the sociological and historical framework outlined in this chapter, general introduction to the Mandal members in Chapter 2 concentrates on the formation of an Indian settlement in East Africa marked by class divisions but in which racial and cultural differences also formed an important part of social differentiation. Just as colonisation created conditions for migratory settlement of Indians such as the Leva Kanbi Patels in East African societies, the process of decolonisation in early sixties generated a wave of secondary migration to Britain. An account of this migration is related to the settlement of Mandal members in Hendon and Bolton. In the description of their residence and work in Britain, the significance of the British class structure and the meaning of race and colour in determining the social position of the sect members is discussed and analysed. The third chapter furnishes an ethnographic profile of the Mandal members so that the theoretical relevance of class and caste can be related to sectarian affiliation and organisation.

As the Mandal members in Britain define the organisation of their sect as deriving from the Swaminarayan movement as it has developed in India, it is essential to set the Mandal in its Gujarati historical context. To distinguish the genesis of the Mandal as a sectarian phenomenon in the Swaminarayan movement, the fourth chapter is concerned with explaining the formation and development of the primary Swaminarayan sect and the importance of the assets of the sect in generating a dissent

leading to a process of segmentation giving rise to the Mandal as a separate sect. The historical account particularly emphasises the relationship between caste and sect and the way in which material and ideological differences created a cleavage among the Leva Kanbi Patels.

A central theme of the thesis is developed in chapter five, namely the Mandal ideology of salvation as it is embodied in the opposition between moksha and man. The moksha component of the ideology is manifested in a ritual complex. This temple-centered complex coupled with prayers and worship encompasses individual, domestic and institutional dimensions of ritual acts which prepare each member towards personal salvation. However, besides commitment to salvation expressed in rituals, the opposition between moksha and man is closely related to the social and political relationship between the Mandal members and their leaders. At the level of social organisation of the sect, moksha defines the formation and legitimátion of sectarian authority and therefore necessitates the generation of compliance to sectarian ideology and leadership. In contrast, man being antithetical to salvation creates defiance. It is the dynamic interplay between compliance and defiance as it is conceptualised in the opposition between moksha and man that constitutes the focus of discussion in chapter six.

Chapter seven is a description and analysis of the sectarian cleavage and its manifestation in Britain. The theme of the chapter clearly brings out the difficulties in the relations between those who support the sect and those who do not. The difference between the two sides is profoundly significant as it shows that even in the traditional relationship between members of a particular group, there

is a potential for conflicting perspectives to arise. Although the
categories through which these perspectives are expressed appear to
be traditional, a systematic examination of differing viewpoints
indicates that the categories concerned with traditional cleavage
acquire a new meaning specific to the conditions of Indians living
in Britain. The change in the significance and meaning of the traditional
categories forms an important element in the discussion of social change
as it affects the Mandal.

In discussing and analysing the significance of the complex
cultural experience that the sect members bring to bear on their
circumstances in Britain, the final chapter of the study concentrates
on the process of social change which the Mandal members are most
likely to experience in their settlement.  In addition to the change
that affects the meaning of traditional social categories described
and analysed in Chapter 7, the class structure of the society in
Britain alters the relationship between work and residence. The greater
separation between the two has some implications for the activities of
the sect. As the Mandal members are increasingly exposed to the British
ideologies and institutions, a possibility of social change occurs as
the wider society influences the everyday life of the sect members.
The change becomes distinctively manifest in the relationship between
ideology and socialisation as it is mediated much more by use of
English than by Gujarati.  The fact that the younger believers are
exposed, not only to separate languages but also to less compatible
processes of socialisation between the sect and the school has important
potential implications for the transmission of Sect's belief and practices.
The concluding discussion develops this theme more fully to indicate the

contemporary and future scope of these changes. The experience of the Mandal members is contrasted with the members of Shia Imami Ismaili sect who have evolved secular institutions in the traditional frame-work of their sect.

It must be emphasised that on the basis of observations made in one particular ethnographic context, it is hardly a mark of wisdom to argue that the discussion of social change contained in this study could be generalised to all the settlers from the Indian subcontinent and East Africa. The socio-economic and cultural conditions of the South Asians are too complex for a simple set of generalisations to be applied to the entire population. The statements about the patterns of change, therefore are tentative and speculative in character. This study is best seen as a small contribution to a body of literature on South Asians and an attempt to stimulate constructive discussion on the future of minority groups in Britain rather than an unauthoritative or a conclusive work in anyway.

NOTES : Chapter 1.

1. See Appendix 1 for maps which show the location of Gujarat in India, the main regions of Gujarat, villages in Cutch where members of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal come from and the areas of their current settlement in Hendon in London and Bolton, Lancashire.

2. In her article 'Anthropology: Child of Imperialism', Monthly Review, Volume 19, No.11, April 1968, pp. 12-27, as well as in her 'New Proposals for Anthropologists', Current Anthropology, Volume 9, No.5, 1968, pp.403-407, Kathleen Gough critically examines the Western dominance in anthropological research. Some contributors to Talal Asad's (ed.), Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter, 1973, London, Ithaca Press, also stress the significance of the European colonial rule as a factor in anthropological studies.

3. Edward Hallett Carr, What is History? 1961, New York, Vintage Books, pp.42-43.

4. For a historical account of Indian labour migrations abroad, see Hugh Tinker's detailed study, A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas 1830-1920, 1974, Oxford, Oxford University Press and his The Banyan Tree: Overseas Emigrants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, 1977, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

5. Yash Tandon, Problems of a Displaced Minority: The New Position of East African Asians, Report No. 16, 1973, London, Minority Rights Group, p.9.

6. Raymond Williams, Keywords, 1976, London, Fontana/Croome-Helm, pp.126-130.

7. John Plamenatz, Ideology, 1971, London, Macmillan and Co.Ltd., p.23 et seq.

8. Although the word Asian is applied to all those who come from the Indian subcontinent, South East Asia and the Far East, in this study, the expression Asian is restricted to the population from the Indian subcontinent.
   In their account of Sikhs in Britain, Roger and Catherine Ballard use the word 'settlement' rather than community to describe South Asians in Britain. Settlement is a better choice as it does not presuppose any corporate character applicable to all Asians. See Roger and Catherine Ballard 'The Sikhs: The Development of South Asian Settlements in Britain' in James Watson's (ed.) Between Two Cultures, 1977, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, pp. 21-56.

9. Vidya S. Naipaul, An Area of Darkness, 1964, London, Andre Deutsch, See especially pp.252-262.

10. Shiva Naipaul, North of South: An African Journey, 1978, London, Andre Deutsch. See pp.68-75.

11. John Gaffar La Guerre (ed.) Calcutta to Caroni, 1974, London, Longman Group Limited. For an account of persistence of Indian culture among the East Indians in Trinidad, see J.C. Jha's 'The Indian Heritage in Trinidad'in the above study. John Gaffar La Guerre's concluding essay 'The East Indian Middle Class Today' gives an illuminating account of the significance the Indian culture has in the context of politics in Trinidad.

12. Badr Dahya,'Pakistanis in Britain: Transients or Settlers?' Race, XIV 3, 1973, pp.241-277.

13. Badr Dahya, 'The Nature of Pakistani Ethnicity in Industrial Cities in Britain' in Abner Cohen's (ed.), Urban Ethnicity, ASA 12, 1974, Tavistock Publications, London, pp.77-118.

14. Patricia Jeffery, Migrants and Refugees: Muslim and Christian Pakistani Families in Bristol, 1976, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

15. Verity Saifullah Khan, 'The Pakistanis: Mirpuri Villages at Home and in Bradford' in James Watson's (ed.), Between Two Cultures, 1977, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, pp.57-89. See p.62 for the relevant comment.

16. E.J.B. Rose, Colour and Citizenship: A Report on British Race Relations, 1969, London, Oxford University Press/Institute of Race Relations, pp. 459-460.

17. De Witt John Jr., Indian Workers' Associations in Britain, 1969, London, Oxford University Press/Institute of Race Relations, p.65 et seq.

18. Joyce Pettigrew, 'Some Notes on the Social System of the Sikh Jats', New Community, Volume 1, No. 5, Autumn 1972, pp.354-363.

19. Roger and Catherine Ballard, 'The Sikhs: The Development of South Asian Settlements in Britain' in James Watson's (ed.), Between Two Cultures, 1977, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p.37.

20. Rashmi Desai, Indian Immigrants in Britain, London 1963, Oxford University Press/Institute of Race Relations.

21. It should be emphasised that the linguistic cultural category 'Gujarati' is not synonymous with Hindu as there are non-Hindus, both Muslims and Christians who are Gujaratis.

22. E.J.B. Rose and associates, op.cit., p.469.

23. For a sociological account of Ismail's and the social changes they have undergone as a sect, see H.S. Morris The Indians in Uganda, 1968, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. For relevant British studies of the Ismailis, Roger Hallam, 'The Ismailis in Britain', New Community, Volume 1, No.5, Autumn 1972, pp. 383-388. Also see Peter Clarke's (1) The Ismailis: a Study of Community, British Journal of Sociology, Volume XXVII, No.4, pp.1184-1194, December 1976; (2) The Ismaili Sect in London: Religious Institutions and Social Change, Religion, Volume 8, Part 1, Spring 1978, pp.68-84.

24. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty and J. Duncan M. Derrett (eds.), The Concept of Duty in South Asia, 1978, London, School of Oriental and African Studies and Vikas Publishing House, p.14.

25. Sir M. Monier Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, 1899, (1976), Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, p.1141, Column 1.

26. Joachim Wach, Sociology of Religion, 1944 (1967 Phoenix Edition), Chicago, University of Chicago Press, p.128.

27. Ibid., p.128. In applying the word sect to world religions, Bryan Wilson carefully states that "... the concept of sect differs according to the organisational structure of different parent religions. In Hinduism, which is diffuse, uncentralised and pluralist, sectarianiam exists only in a much more limited sense than in Christendom". See Bryan Wilson, Religious Sects, 1970, London, World University Press, Weidenfeld and Nicolsan, p.14. In view of ideological and organisational differences between Hinduism and Christianity, to apply the distinction between church and sect to dharma and sampradāya will prove to be misleading.

28. A historical account of Swaminarayan sect relevant to this study is presented in Chapter 4.

29. Edmund Leach (ed.), Introduction in Dialectic in Practical Religion, 1968, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.1.

30. Melford E. Spiro, 'Problems of Definition and Explanation' in Michael Banton (ed.), Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion, 1969, London, Tavistock Publications, p.93.

31. Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, 1963, Boston, Beacon Press, Chapter 1, p.1.

32. Ibid., p.1.

33. Raymond Firth, Problem and Assumption in an Anthropological Study of Religion, Huxley Memorial Lecture, 1959, The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Volume 89, Part I, July-December 1959, pp.129-148.

34. Ibid., p.133.

35. Clifford Geertz,'Religion as a Cultural System' in Michael Banton (ed.), Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion, 1966, London, Tavistock Publications, p.42.

36. Peter Worsley, Religion as a Category, from The Trumpet Shall Sound, 1968. McGibbon and Kee, pp.21-35, reprinted in Roland Robertson's (ed.), Sociology of Religion, 1969, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, pp.221-236.

37. Stephan Feuchtwang, 'Investigating Religion' in Maurice Bloch (ed.), Marxist Analysis and Social Anthropology, 1975, London, Malaby Press Ltd., pp.61-82.

38. In her article 'On the Road: A Maharashtrian Pilgrimage', Journal of Asian Studies, Volume XLII, No.1, November 1962, pp.13-29, Irawati Karve gives a vivid account of the tension which arises as members of lower and higher castes find themselves in a situation where the inequality inherent in their caste identity is confronted with their spiritual equality before the Lord.

39. Edmund Leach, 'An Anthropologist's Reflections on a Social Survey' in D.G. Jongman and P.C.W. Gutkind,(eds.),Anthropologists in the Field, 1967, Assen, Van Gorcum, pp.75-88.

CHAPTER 2

MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT : THE MANDAL MEMBERS IN

EAST AFRICA AND BRITAIN.

The British colonial rule in India and its subsequent extension

to East Africa is an important element in explaining the primary

migration of the Mandal members to Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika

(renamed Tanzania in 1964).  Further their secondary migration to

Britain has been a product of socio-economic and political conditions

which developed in colonial and post-colonial East African societies.

This chapter describes their primary and secondary migratory settlements.

The main focus of the account is the place of Mandal members in Britain.

In considering their incorporation in the British class structure, their

housing and employment opportunities are examined in the context of

life in London and Bolton.


1.    PRIMARY MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE SECT

      MEMBERS IN EAST AFRICA.

In a presidential address to the East African National Congress

on 25th December, 1927, Mr. Tyeb Ali is reported to have asserted,

> It is an established historical fact that Indians
> were carrying on a prosperous trade in East Africa
> in the century in which Jesus Christ was born.  [1].

Although this and similar statements[2] were no doubt intended to lend

some legitimacy to the Indian settlement in East Africa, the fact that

Western India has maintained centuries old trading relationships with the

East African coast is not without historical foundation.  As Robert G.

Gregory observes in his detailed study, the Greek author of Periplus of

Erythraean Sea provides concrete information about the Indian trade with

East Africa dating back to the first century A.D.[3]  Apart from some

decline at the time of the Portuguese hegemony in the Indian ocean,

the pattern of trade between India and East Africa did not undergo

any significant change.[4]

As the British consolidated their power in India and established

naval supremacy in the Indian ocean, Indian trade with the East

African coast entered a new phase of expansion.[5]  The process of

British colonisation of East Africa created a range of opportunities

for the Indians to settle along the East African coast.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Indian

merchant communities from Cutch and parts of Gujarat played a significant

part in the development of trade along the East African coast, especially

in Zanzibar. After the British Consulate was established in Zanzibar in

1841, as Mangat observes, the growth of British influence and the

activities of Indian traders were closely interrelated.[6]  Under increasing

British protection, the Indian population in Zanzibar increased from

little more than 2,000 in 1856 to 6,344 in 1887.[7]  What was remarkable

was that most of the Indian merchants in Zanzibar came from trading

groups such as Bhattias and Shia Imami Ismaili Khojas from Cutch and

surrounding areas in Gujarat.[8]  As Mangat observes further, "The

'enterprising Bhattias' of Cutch were in fact generally regarded as

the 'merchants par excellence of Zanzibar' and as 'probably the most

important by wealth and influence'".[9]  Besides their dominant particip-

ation in wholesale and retail trade, the merchants from Cutch and

Gujarat provided banking and financial services in Zanzibar[10] and

generally contributed to the transition of British politican and commer-

cial influence from Zanzibar and the coastal strip to mainland East Africa.

The colonisation of the interior began with the formation of
Imperial British East Africa Company. The company employed Indian
personnel and eventually, from January 1896,[11] began to import
Indian indentured labourers to construct the Kenya-Uganda Railway.
By the turn of the century in 1902-3, 31,983 labourers were recruited;[12]
of these 79% were repatriated to India and 21% chose to stay in East
Africa.[13] Besides the mobility which the establishment of railways
created, the officially sponsored nature of Indian immigration[14] and
the rise of new economic opportunities, stimulated the migration of
free Indians to East Africa.[15] The enterprising and ambitious Indians
came there and spread out to remote areas where they established small
shops - dukan - which was rendered as duka in Swahili. Subsequently
dukwallah as an expression for the shopkeepers became identical with
the Indian presence. In this process, Indians stimulated trade and
commerce in centres which in due course grew into towns and cities in
Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and elsewhere in central Africa. In the
evolution of the colonial society in East Africa, they accepted for
themselves a position below the colonial rulers and above the indigenous
Africans. In the colonial context, their class interest as the petit
bourgeoisie became synonymous with their social and cultural identity.
In this position, they controlled and monopolised a network of whole-
sale and retail trade all over East Africa. With more than 200,000
Asians[16] living in Eastern Africa in the late 1960s, the Indians
remained a numberical minority in relation to the total populations
of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. Although a numerical minority, they
did not form a minority in the usual sociological sense. They constituted
what Georges Ballandier calls a dominant minority[17] in that they owned

and controlled resources considerably disproportionate to their

numbers. Their relatively privileged concentration in the urban

areas of East Africa enhanced the conspicuousness of their economic

standing. In addition, as a distinctive cultural category, they

formed an important but largely encapsulated layer of the colonial

society in East Africa.

The Cutch region of Gujarat presents a remarkable contrast to

areas of Indian subcontinent such as Punjab where the pressure of

population on the available land[18] has been an important factor in

stimulating Sikh emigration abroad. The Sanskrit word kachh as it

is applied to marshes, lowlands and river banks refers to the Little

Rann, a vast stretch of salty marshes which constitute much of the

unpopulated northern part of the province.[19] The region south of

the Little Rann has a population of 849,769 inhabiting the areas

closer to Bhuj.[20] The entire region is hot and dry with temperatures

averaging a maximum of $39.8^\circ$C and the rainfall averaging only 323mm

over fourteen to fifteen days per annum.[21] No less than 76% of land

in Cutch is uncultivable.[22] These adverse ecological conditions

explain a low density of population which varies from 50 persons per

kilometer in the central area, to between 50-100 in the more populated

region around Bhuj.[23] Even in the absence of demographic pressures,

in view of these material constraints on the local agrarian communities,

it is not unusual that migration outside Cutch has always been an

important alternative for earning a livelihood. As a substantial

number of merchants trading along the East African coast came from

Cutch, it is reasonable to assume that their mercantile activities had

diffused information about East Africa in rural areas near Bhuj, the

capital of the province. The accounts of the Mandal members clearly

suggest that their fathers and grandfathers possessed a distinct awareness of the Swahili coast in the later part of the nineteenth century. An older Mandal member who commented on the Cutchi immigration to East Africa explicitly linked his father's decision to leave their village to the fact that Allidina Visram,[24] an Ismaili merchant who pioneered trade and commerce in various parts of East Africa, came from their own village Kera. He is known to have persuaded the Kanbi Patels to find work in and around expanding centres of trade and commerce. According to one account, Allidina Visram persuaded two Kanbi Patel brothers to sail with him to Mombasa. It was their experience of better prospects which attracted others to East Africa until working on the coast and the interior became an accepted norm. Recalling grim rural poverty and the hard labour needed to earn a bare minimum in Cutch, the Mandal Kanbi Patels assert that living in East Africa provided them with a measure of well-being and prosperity unattainable in their rural homeland.

Initially the Leva Kanbi Patels tended to settle in Mombasa and Nairobi from where they spread to other East African towns and cities. Before the second world war, the Leva Kanbi Patels did not settle in Kenya on a permanent basis. Men came to work for short periods from two to five years. They would visit their homes at regular intervals to maintain contact with their wives and children, as well as their kinfolk. A more permanent settlement of the Leva Kanbi Patels grew immediately after the second world war. By then it had become a common practice for most of the East African Indians to have their wives and children living with them. As the Mandal members were also joined by their dependents, their settlemtn grew larger and the Mandal began to

emerge as a distinct Swaminarayan organisation in Nairobi and Mombasa.
As was common among Indian groups in East Africa, both Mandal and non-
Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels settled in a particular area of Nairobi which
has since then remained the sect of their temple-centered organisations.
Having been workers and skilled craftsmen in their villages, Cutchies
tended to enter the local construction industry which was badly in
need of labour. Many of them became highly skilled or semi-skilled
workers. Although traditionally uninvolved with the merchants of
Gujarat, a small minority of Kanbi Patels entered the construction
industry in Kenya and became successful entrepreneurs; their
accumulation of wealth has been a decisive factor in the development
of the Mandal, especially in attracting non-Mandal Kanbi Patels into
the sectarian fold. Along with other Asian groups from the Indian
subcontinent, Kanbi Patels, irrespective of their specific sectarian
affiliation, enjoyed a degree of material prosperity which was in sharp
contrast to the grinding poverty and precarious existence many had
known back home in Cutch. This prosperity, however, largely depended
on the colonial social structure which entailed extreme inequalities
between the European rulers, the Indian merchants and the Africans.
This structure was threatened when the African demand for independence,
(uhuru) became the main political theme in the late 1950s and early
1960s.


2.   SECONDARY MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE MANDAL
     MEMBERS IN BRITAIN.

     The secondary migration of the Mandal members and other Asians
from East African countries to Britain, should be clearly distinguished
from their primary movement from the Indian subcontinent to East Africa.

Besides, this secondary phase should be further differentiated from
the pattern of migration which saw Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis
coming directly to Britain in early and mid 1960s. Although economic
considerations always influence the choices migrants make in their
primary or secondary moves, the circumstances which drew East African
Asians to Britain are rooted in social and historical circumstances
which mark the aftermath of colonial rule. When a colonial society
becomes independent, the transition from foreign rule to sovereign
autonomy generates changes which can radically alter the economic and
power structure in the society in question. It is the transition
from the colonial rule to what became known as _uhuru_, self-rule, in
Eastern Africa which generates secondary East African Asian migrations
to Britain in mid and late 1960s. It is this complex structural change
rather than constraints of poverty and unemployment (as in the Indian
subcontinent) which seems to be a decisive element in the explanation
of secondary migration and settlement of East African Asians in Britain.
This account is a brief outline of this change and the way in which it
influenced, amongst others, members of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta
Sajivan Mandal to choose Britain for their settlement.

The "wind of change", as Harold Macmillan termed it, was a result
of the rise in political consciousness all over East and Central Africa;
echoes of African independence on the west coast and in the Congo
reverberated in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. In the colonial hierarchy,
the Asians were always regarded as being rich, privileged and insular.
This meant that on the whole they failed to develop any viable connection[25]
with African political movements or parties and thus made themselves
vulnerable and marginal to the main stream of the African politics.
Once colonial rule ended in East Africa, the African elites held the

reigns of power and authority and posed a critical challenge to the

established socio-economic inequalities. In turn the Indians grew

increasingly conscious of a threat to their dominance and culturally

distinct position in the new era of African independence. Besides the

local challenges to Asian dominance, the course of events in the

neighbouring Congo made the Asian population acutely insecure. As

self-rule in the Congo brought about strife and conflict, a stream

of refugees - among them a substantial number of Europeans - came

fleeing to East Africa. This heightened the Indian fears as they

expected to see comparable disorder erupting all over East Africa.

Although these intensified fears proved to be groundless in the months

and years following the independence period, insecurity became an

essential ingredient of social life in East African Asian communities

in the 1960s.[26]

Once Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (later Tanzania to symbolise

its union with Zanzibar) became independent, their respective govern-

ments embarked on Africanisation. The Africanisation policy was intended

to increase the number of Africans in public and private employment to

remedy colonial inequities and inequalities. In order to make existing

employment opportunities available to aspiring Africans, each East

African Government introduced citizenship of its own country as a

basic condition for employment and residence. In other words, the

Asians could envisage a long term settlement in East Africa only if

they became local citizens.[27] A substantially large number of Asians

were in fact British citizens with a minority who were either Indian

or Pakistani nationals. The East African governments offered a grace

period of two years during which the Asians could acquire local

citizenship. Although thousands chose to become local citizens, a

majority decided to maintain their status as non-citizens. Their decision to refrain from accepting local citizenship largely stemmed from the feeling of insecurity which had, in fact, become institutional in character. A sequence of events after the independence made Asian fears more acute. A number of Asians and Europeans were deported from Kenya. After the revolution in Zanzibar, in the late sixties, the African politicians were saying that the Asians should demonstrate their willingness to assimilate by letting their daughters marry the Africans. A few instances of forced marriages between Asian girls and African men in Zanzibar had an unsettling effect on the Asian population throughout Eastern Africa.[28] The African resentment continued to intensify Asian fears. In view of prevailing uncertainties, a vast number of Asians decided to retain their non-African citizenship – which, for a substantial number, was the option of remaining British subjects – a choice the British authorities had left open to them.[29]

Once the African Governments extended categorical distinctions between citizens and non-citizens, they implemented legislative measures to reduce and control the active part that non-citizens could play in the local economy. The new immigration laws gave an impetus to Africanisation for non-citizens were required to obtain work permits to justify their residence in the country. Work permits were issued only to those non-citizens whose skills and services were vital to the local economy.[30] The effect of these legal restrictions on non-citizens was remarkable in that they undermined numerous small-time shopkeepers and severely curtailed work opportunities for a large number of non-citizen Asians. The economic privilege which the Asians had enjoyed under colonial protection was progressively weakened. The

Asians began a distinct transition from their earlier posture of dominance to a state of relative powerlessness in the new African states. In this transitional phase, Kenyan Asians, forced out of small trading settlements to towns and cities, usually came to Nairobi to find work or to make arrangements to leave Kenya.

As the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act had not affected the status of Asians who were British citizens, a small number of the more ambitious and enterprising East African Asians had been migrating to Britain from the late 1950s. Substanial Asian migration to Britain did not begin till the mid-1960s. This secondary movement commenced when the African states brought more legal pressure to bear on non-citizen Asians. Tnose non-citizens who found themselves redundant began entering the United Kingdom for settlement in 1966-67.

During this period, anti-immigration campaigns in Britain were essentially concerned with the entry of non-European migrants to Britain. Hostility and opposition towards South Asians and West Indians had already become a permanent feature of the political debate from 1964 onwards.[31] As a social and political issue, immigration had also become identified with 'race' and primarily with those who did not wear white skin on their bodies. East African Asians began coming to Britain when the political opposition to their arrival had become intensified. As this opposition culminated in a demand for restrictions, fearing that they would lose their right to enter Britain, Asians began to come to Britain in large batches. Eventually the British Government passed the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act which brought about, what Robert Moore has aptly described as "the erection of an immigration colour bar".[32] For the Act introduced an ascriptive element of descent, the grand-parental clause as a condition of free entry, and effectively

deprived Kenyan Asians from exercising their right to enter the
United Kingdom as British citizens. The subsequent movement of
Asians from East Africa to Britain was controlled through a rigidly
administered voucher system. The hardship and suffering these restric-
tions created remain a well-known aspect of the British response to
the East African Asians.[33] The dimension of injustice to the Asians
was highlighted by the European Commission of Human Rights when it
held in 1970, "...that Britain had discriminated on grounds of race
against the Asians by passing the 1968 Act".[34]

The secondary settlement of East African Asians in Britain thus
developed in a context marked by the process of decolonisation and
restrictions on non-citizen British Asians in African states and the
British opposition to their entry in the United Kingdom embodied in
the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 and the voucher system which
phased and regulated their subsequent move and settlement in Britain.
It was in this changing political relationship between Britain and
East Africa that, among others, both Mandal and non-Mandal Leva Kanbi
Patels decided to migrate to Britain.

As for the Leva Kanbi Patels who are within the Mandal, it was
one of their enterprising contemporaries who responded to what was at
first only a potential for settlement in Britain. He travelled to
Britain in 1961 and worked on a construction site in London for one
year. His personal experience convinced him that a settlement in
Britain was possible as it was relatively easy to find work on con-
struction sites in the early nineteen sixties. Once his London stay
created interest in further migration to Britain, leading Mandal members
not only endorsed his initiative but also argued that it derived from
the divine authority of the sect's leadership. According to his own

account as the President of the Mandal at present, the Kenya-based
sectarian body arranged to send sect members in small batches to
London so that the first group could establish itself to pave the
way for the remainder. In keeping with this scheme, the first sect
members arrived in London in three pairs in 1963, followed by a larger
batch of twelve in the early part of 1964. Men came on their own,
leaving their wives and children either in East Africa or back home
in Cutch.

An important feature of their migration was that from the earliest
stage of their settlement in Britain, the Mandal members were already
in the process of forming a nucleus of their sect. Therefore their
migration to Britain was not merely a matter of individual choice.
For it was within the Mandal framework in Kenya that each member had
decided to leave for Britain. Since the migrants had the organisational
backing of the sect, it was not surprising that they decided to live
together from the start and also established a residentially based
sectarian community in both London and Bolton in due course. They
managed to achieve this objective despite the fact that the market
forces severely restrict choices a migrant can make in finding housing
and employment. The members who formed the first phase of the settle-
ment lived in rented rooms, successively in Chalk Farm, Belsize Park
and Kentish Town in London. Although the Mandal did not exist as a
formal organisation, the members always lived together and met every-
day in a small room which in a sense became their miniature temple.
These daily meetings were immensely important for prayers as well as
for sustaining social solidarity in a foreign and often inhospitable
society. With the gradual but continuous arrival of sect members from
East Africa, the leading organisers of the domestic temple decided to

give the Mandal a more substantial and formal expression. On 27th
March, 1965, they established the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan
Mandal as a formal organisation in Britain. Subsequently they also
registered it as a charitable institution concerned with the welfare
of its members, thus lending the sect a measure of British-based
legitimacy.

The leading Mandal member Motabhai who, as I have said in Chapter
1, coordinates the activities of the British and East African extensions
of the Mandal with the sect's headquarters in Maninagar Gujarat, played
a decisive part in further developments. Immediately after the Mandal
was formally established in Britain, Motabhai visited the sect members.
He urged them to move out from their existing rented accommodation in
a relatively less attractive area, to a house to be owned by the Mandal
members in a better part of North London. In their survey for a
residential property, the area Motabhai and sect members regarded as the
most suitable place for developing the Mandal, was Hendon (see Appendix
1, Map D). At this stage, it was Motabhai himself who initially bought
a large semi-detached house on Sevington Road in Hendon. To emphasise
the resourcefulness of Motabhai as a wealthy and successful contractor
in Kenya, the Mandal President asserted that a cash amount was paid for
the purchase of the property. Thereafter the members shifted from the
open market rented accommodation to a residence where the rent was paid
to a Mandal landlord. This transition was important for the sect members,
as their Kentish Town landlord objected to temple prayers being carried
out in a room of a private house. With a house now owned by a Mandal
member himself, they were free from the immediate interference of a
non-Mandal landlord in their everyday sectarian activities. In due

course, with some financial assistance from Motabhai, another property
next door was also obtained to house incoming sect members from Nairobi.
These two houses remained pivotal in the settlement process. It was
here that Mandal members coming from East Africa found relatively less
expensive accommodation along with the informality and warmth of the
sectarian fellowship. It was from here that they could build up a
financial basis for buying their own houses in Hendon.

The Mandal grew steadily between 1965-1968 as more sect members
left East Africa. The miniature "temple" set in a room of one of the
houses on Sevington Road, was no longer spacious enough to accommodate
the members who were then being joined by their wives and children.
In view of the rapidly growing numbers in Hendon, there was need for
a much larger place which could be used for everyday prayer meetings.
In the autumn of 1968, leading members therefore arranged to raise
substantial finance from within the sect so that they could buy a house
in Hendon to be used exclusively for daily prayers and for social
activities of the Mandal. From the point of view of Mandal leaders,
it was better to pay cash for the property so that it could be used
and maintained without any interference from an institution such as
a building society. Eventually a house on Audley Road, positioned
exactly behind a Mandal house on Sevington Road, was bought.

To accommodate the entire Mandal gathering in one place, the
members converted two separate rooms on the ground floor into a large
hall. The following year, in December 1969, the leaders installed their
Swaminarayan shrine according to a ritually prescribed ceremonial.
However, the temple activities could not be conducted without some
local difficulties. Once the Mandal meetings became regular at the

Audley Road House, the English residents became apprehensive. They sent a petition to the local authority complaining about overcrowding and noise at the house. The inquiry which the local authority carried out, did not substantiate the complaints. The Mandal leader who dealt with the officials, insisted that the place was primarily used for informal and private family meetings and did not constitute a public place in any sense. Although the matter rested there, it was evident throughout my fieldwork, that a fair measure of rude unfriendliness was expressed towards Mandal men and women in Hendon.

The Mandal population continued to grow and the Audley Road House as a place for informal and private sectarian gatherings, symbolised a degree of institutionalisation of the Mandal. Besides a small but steady trickle of voucher holders from East Africa, the male breadwinners of the sect, were increasingly joined by their wives and children. As a consequence, the settlement began to appear more collective. The sect members themselves distinguished this difference by saying, "Now the Mandal is taking a proper shape in Hendon". The increased membership was especially evident in the temple gatherings. Soon it became obvious that the space at the Audley Road house was no longer sufficient to accommodate all those who wished to attend. When the leaders started to look for a bigger hall, the most important factor for them was to find a place within walking distance of their homes in Hendon. It was not easy to find a reasonably priced hall in the immediate vicinity, but the leaders confidently believed that they would succeed since the spiritual leader of the sect had blessed their own effort as well as those of the estate agent. Although some members were pessimistic at the start, under Motabhai's careful direction the Hendon Mandal finally

raised £6,000 for buying an unused Church Hall, Elim Tabernacle, on Somerset Road. Besides their financial contributions the sect members, their wives and children, also provided their labour to convert the hall into a Swaminarayan temple. The entire congregation saw this as a most significant development for the sect as well as an important achievement. The leaders, under Motabhai's patriarchal direction, opened the temple with a formal, ritual ceremonial accompanied by day-long activities. The inauguration of the temple gave the congregation a concrete and more permanent institutional expression.

Bolton in Lancashire has attracted a substantial number of Gujarati migrants since the beginning of the 1960s when many Muslims and Hindus from the Broach and Surat areas of Gujarat went there to work in textile mills and factories. During the sixties, London could offer only unsuitable and inadequate employment and housing prospects to newly arrived migrants, so the pressures in the metropolitan area often necessitated further internal migration to industrial areas in the Midlands and the North. Mandal members who found work and accommodation conditions unbearable began going to Bolton in 1965-1966 in small numbers. They argue that although they found factory work hard and monotonous, it was relatively less difficult than labouring on building sites in London. Over the years, a small number of Mandal-based Leva Kanbi Patels and a substantial number of non-Mandal Kanbi Patels have settled in the inner city areas of Bolton (see Appendix 1, Map E). As many Leva Kanbi Patels in Bolton came from Dahisara village in Cutch, jokingly, they identify their settlement as 'a little Dahisara' in Bolton.

In the initial phase in the mid-sixties, there were not more than five or six Mandal members living in Bolton. Once the number increased,

a devoted follower made a personal contribution of about £100 (sic)

for a small terrace house on Ramwell Street to be used as the local

temple. During the fieldwork period in Bolton, it was evident that

the entire ground floor was used for organising everyday temple

meetings. Although the available space was adequate at the beginning,

fuller congregational meetings could not be conducted without uncomfort-

able overcrowding. To meet the demand for more space on weekends and

special occasions, the leaders had arranged to buy a substantial three-

storey house on Deane Road when they were also planning to obtain Elim

Tabernacle church hall in Hendon.  Converted to hold the local Mandal

assemblies, the house provides a locus for the Bolton based congregation.


3.    CLASS, RACE AND SECT : THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT IN BRITAIN.

The British class structure and the inequalities it generates,

remains the most important institutional context for South Asians who

live and work in Britain.  In a Weberian as well as in a Marxian sense,

the structure of inequality hinges on the fundamental difference

between those who own property and those who do not and the assymetrical

relationship between them.[35]  This relationship entails both cooperation

and conflict according to specific historical circumstances.  The

inequality that property ownership creates is usually embodied in

production, distribution and exchange relations as they occur in the

relatively unregulated context of market forces. In the sense of a

process which determines the life chances of individuals in the hierarchy

of power and privilege, class entails much more than the occupation

that a person chooses. Class encompasses the entire realm of socio-

economic and cultural pattern of life and has a decisive influence on

the distribution of opportunities in society. Although property

owners and those who own no property are usually differentiated into

strata and fractions according to their specific place in the class

structure, the prime analytical distinction is that of property

ownership. According to this distinction it is the property owners

who have means and capacity to buy labour power as opposed to those

whose livelihood depends on selling their labour power in the open

market. This process of buying and selling labour entails the different

degrees of power that each particular category or a group brings to

bear on its specific market situation. It is often asserted that

South Asians in Britain aspire to setting up their own small shops

so that they have a basis for accumulating capital and having social

and political aspirations similar to those whose interest is distinguished

by property ownership. There is probably a very tiny proportion of

South Asians who own property and entirely depend on it for earning

their livelihood. It is more accurate to say that the majority of

them do not own property in the sense in which it can be deployed to

earn an independent livelihood. Most of them, in fact, enter the

metropolitan labour market to sell their mental or manual labour

power[36] and the few self-employed are not, by definition, members of

a dominant employer class.

As John Rex has indicated in his study,[37] as labourers from ex-

colonial societies, South Asians and West Indians are often stigmatized

by racial and colour stereotypes and experience patterns of racial

discrimination.[38] Their place in class relations has been historically

imbued with particular ascriptive effects. This gives their class

position in the market a distinctiveness which stems from the fact that

British society distinguishes them as belonging to a low and inferior
social category to which colour and cultural differences are ascribed.
The class position in which skin pigmentation or cultural difference
acquire ascriptive significance has led John Rex to identify the non-
indigeneous labour force as an "underclass".[39]   Though my own account
is not concerned with the extent to which South Asians form an 'under-
class' as an entity apart, John Rex's contribution highlights the
interplay between class and colour and the degree to which colour
impinges on the life chances of South Asians and West Indians entering
the market to sell their labour power.  This relationship between
class and colour provides a more satisfactory way of analysing the
social and structural situation of South Asians in Britain which
sharply contrasts with the viewpoint Leo Kuper has advanced according
to which class and race are regarded as mutually exclusive categories.[40]
It is obvious that such a distinction is less useful for examining
the significance of link between class and race.

When the Mandal members arrive in Britain, their primary concern
is work and income and not the social and political dimensions of class
in Britain.  Although they share a structural class location with South
Asians, West Indians, and the majority of indigenous workers, they
share little else. The necessity for the overwhelming proportion of
them to sell their labour power does not generate a class consciousness
as it is usually related to political action.[41]  Much less does class
location generate common cultural patterns binding migrant and indigenous
workers in the initial settlement phase.  However, the class places
made available to the sect members upon their entry in Britain do
influence their settlement, in particular housing and employment
opportunities to which they are given access. The following account is

concerned firstly with describing the housing that has become available
to the sect members in Hendon and Bolton. Secondly it concentrates on
the kind of employment the sect members find in Britain. The third
section is a discussion of race and colour as they affect the everyday
life of the sect members.


## 3.1. The Housing Ecology of the Sect

The Mandal members have settled in two socially and ecologically
contrasting urban areas of Britain. Hendon is a clean and tidy North
London suburb which stands in sharp contrast to the inner city area
in Bolton, grimly distinguished by monotonous rows of terraces dominated
by textile mills reminiscent of an earlier industrial age.

Hendon is situated in North West London, in the Borough of Barnet
which has attracted a substantial population of Asians from Eastern
Africa. Bounded by Colindale in the north, Golders Green in the east
and Cricklewood and Neasden in the south, and with Hendon Tube Station
near the centre, the area has a distinct middle class appearance about
itself. There lie prosperous detached and semi-detached houses with
immaculately maintained large gardens and carefully cleaned and polished
saloon cars. The houses are expensive and in the early seventies
during the research period, their prices ranged from £17,000 to £22,000.
But the scene, its social and material character, changes as one walks
towards West Hendon. Roughly from Sevington Road to West Hendon Broadway
houses grow smaller in size and so do the gardens. As most members of
the Mandal live in the area bounded by Sevington Road and West Hendon
Broadway, for them Sevington Road marks the boundary between houses for
the rich and the ones for not so rich. Jokingly, some refer to the

boundary as the beginning of "their" Mandal area. It is in "their" part of Hendon that the sect members bought houses in the late sixties and early seventies. 1971-72 saw the housing boom during which houses worth £4,000 to £6,000 began selling for £10,000 to £12,000 and more.

In keeping with differences in the kind of housing available to prosperous and less prosperous sections of the population, Hendon Central and West Hendon provide contrasting shopping facilities. The Mandal members use both the areas, which abound with grocers, chemists, banks, estate agents, employment agencies and the ubiquitious Woolworth and coin-operated launderettes. West Hendon Broadway shopping area has two Indian grocers whom the sect members patronise. They also have an easy access to Kilburn which has proved popular with its many Indian shops. These are additional facilities which greatly concern the Mandal members. Towards West Hendon, there are schools and a surgery. Algernon Primary School and St. David's School, a local comprehensive, have many children of the sect members as their pupils. The surgery has one English doctor, whose ability to speak some Gujarati has attracted, among others, sect members as his patients. In the summer months the Mandal members make good use of the spacious park situated in the vicinity of their settlement and, during the season, women in their colourful saris and small clusters of Mandal men sit in little groups watching school boys who play soccer, seeking to emulate their contemporary football heroes.

Bolton inner city area enclosed by Deane Road, Derby Street, and Willows Lane, looks very different. The central location of the mills and factories suggests that the dilapidated rows of terraces were built for the production line proletarians. Although the relationship between

work and housing might have changed in the area, it is a settlement

of English and South Asian workers who, according to my observations,

obtain lower levels of social and material well-being. It seems as

if their despair is inscribed on the gloomy terraced houses. Although

this grim and dull character of Bolton sharply differs from the neat

and clean sprightliness of Hendon, the Mandal members in the area

have easy and even convenient walking access to the city amenities.

To them, this narrow territorial focus is comparable to community-

based housing to be found in Cutch as well as in their earlier settlement

in East Africa. Indeed the Mandal members typify their settlement as

well as that of the other Indians as constituting "their village". The

differences in the urban ecology of Hendon and Bolton did not seem to

be important for the interpretation of the research findings.

Even though the focus on contrasting housing circumstances of the

Mandal members is intended to provide a descriptive account, it is

useful to evaluate their housing in terms of the seminal observations

John Rex and Robert Moore made in their study of Sparkbrook in

Birmingham.[42] Central to their argument is the notion of twilight

zones which they define as "areas where large old houses, too good to

be classified as slums, become multi-occupied lodging houses";[43] these

are usually assumed to deteriorate rapidly. If this characterisation

is applied to the kind of housing that has become available to the

Mandal members,then certain important differences between Sparkbrook

and Hendon can be noted. Although it might be correct to argue that

areas such as parts of Hendon become zones of transition as a consequence

of socio-economic and demographic changes, not all zones of transition

necessarily share the twilight character outlined in Rex and Moore's

study. Although Hendon has experienced an influx of the Mandal members

as well as the East African Asians, and even though deterioration

was alleged by the indigenous residents, there was no evidence of

actual deterioration in the condition of houses the sect members

lived in.  Indeed, since many of the sect members were experienced

construction workers they have improved the quality of their housing

by working on their properties in their spare time. As for the rise

of multi-occupied lodging houses, it is correct to say that the initial

phase of migratory settlement would entail multi-occupation partly due

to lack of access to other modes of housing as well as due to desire,

on the part of newcomers, to live together.[44]  As for the multi-occupation

in Hendon, there is an important difference in regard to the recruitment

of tenants. While the Sparkbrook Pakistani landlords appear to take

on tenants from different ethnic groups, the Mandal landlords rarely,

if ever, let rooms to non-South Asians and rarely to non-Hindus.  In

addition, as resident owners of the properties, they are usually

concerned about maintaining their domestic property - not so much as

a capital asset only but also as a place which is their home and there-

fore should be kept in a reasonable order. These differences, instead

of contradicting Rex and Moore's findings, only point to differences

in circumstances which are bound to be found in different housing zones.

Though in transition, Hendon does not seem to possess the twilight

character typical in wards such as Sparkbrook.  Distinct from Hendon,

the inner city areas of Bolton, according to the Rex and Moore's

formulation, are beyond the twilight category.  In other words, most

of the old terrace dwellings are doomed for demolition and clearance.

They provide the cheapest kind of owner occupancy to those whose social

circumstances and the market position prevent them from aspiring to

better and more desirable housing. Although the Bolton-based members

of the sect buy dwellings which are least desirable, they cherish their independence as well as the ownership of their property. They regard these dwellings as superior to rented accommodation which might be a shade better than their slowly disintegrating terraces.

As far as the access to the housing market is concerned, the Mandal members entirely confine themselves to the private sector. There was not a single instance in which a sect member expressed interest in public sector housing. The relationship between class and housing in the private sector is more important in that the amount of income one receives determines expenditure and saving and the kind of deposit one can pay to a building society. During the multi-occupation phase, as well as thereafter, it is not uncommon for a member of the Mandal to have substantial savings - often amounting to several thousand pounds, carefully accumulated by frugal living and abstinence from conspicuous patterns of consumption. Part of the saving is invested in housing. A key stage in the process of house purchase is the encounters buyers have with the estate agents who are often regarded as gatekeepers in so far as they can influence the purchasing process. The extent to which the Mandal members experience discrimination in the housing market and end up paying "colour tax"[45] was less easy to establish in the absence of research beyond the sect. In their search for a property in the area, the Mandal members would sometimes refer to estate agents as being cunning and crafty. They would point out the way a particular property was withdrawn from the market after a firm offer had been made for its purchase. It is likely, although this is empirically unsubstantiated, that some Mandal members may have, in fact, experienced discrimination. The fact that the Mandal members and other South Asians occupy one of the least desirable sectors of the

housing market in Bolton might lend credibility to the thesis that colour discrimination is a factor in excluding them from access to better quality housing. The extent to which discrimination coupled with other socio-economic factors has a decisive influence on the housing needs of the migrants is a topic beyond the scope of the present inquiry. An investigation of their work and housing conditions calls for the kind of contextual research Rex and Moore carried out in Sparkbrook.

An important stage in the process of purchase is the finance needed above and over what a seller can put down as a deposit. From the conversations I had with the Mandal members in Hendon, it was evidently clear that most members know that credit facilities were available to them either through building society mortgages or through the local authority loan system. In the majority of instances, a senior office bearer of the sect who had established a good rapport with an estate agent, a couple of building societies and the local branch of the Barclays Bank, acted as a successful intermediary between inexperienced Mandal buyers and the institutions concerned with providing credit. In contrast to Sparkbrook in the early 1960s the Mandal members had better access to credit facilities from the building societies. If a Mandal member needed additional finance, unavailable from the credit institutions, he could use the Mandal's caste and sect network as a source of credit. In one particular example, a Mandal member depended entirely on loans from fellow sect members to buy a house. The amount of credit available in the context of informal multiplex relationships and the procedures followed in determining interest, repayments etc., are difficult topics to investigate as there is an understandable

reluctance to discuss detailed financial arrangement with outsiders.
Nevertheless, from the information collected, it was abundantly clear
that saving rather than spending was the more desired practice. Savings
amounting to more than £1,500 to £2,000 were not uncommon. It is also
equally likely that those sect members who migrated to Britain from
East Africa under the voucher scheme had transferred their savings to
banks in Britain. Be that as it may, during the fieldwork observations,
the Mandal members were not particularly short of cash and they did
not seem to encounter special difficulties in having access to building
society or local authority credit facilities. Information collected
from the Bolton members of the Mandal indicated that those who bought
houses in the demolition zone did not particularly worry about borrowing
from the credit institutions as their investment in doomed terraces
entailed expenditure rarely exceeding a few hundred pounds including
the property price. There were two members who had bought large houses
costing about £1,600 each. The low prices reflect low tenure as well
as an amount which a member could raise from within the sectarian fold.

In their sociology of zone transition, Rex and Moore distinguish
the following types of housing situations:[46]

1) that of the outright owner of a whole house,

2) that of the owner of a mortgaged whole house,

3) that of the council tenant

   (a) in a house with a long life

   (b) in a house awaiting demolition

4) that of the tenant of a whole house owned by a private landlord,

5) that of the owner of a house bought with short term loans who is

   compelled to let rooms in order to meet his repayment obligations.

6) that of the tenant of rooms in a lodging house.

In the framework of this typology, those Mandal members who own
their properties share attributes of a housing situation in which the
ownership is coupled with regular letting. The necessity of letting
does have some relationship to repayments, but letting is also a source
of extra income. All property owners become landlords and provide
rented rooms to the sect members or to other Indians. In so far as
their house ownership is combined with letting, their circumstances
approximate the fifth housing situation in the Rex and Moore typology
with an important difference, that is, not many of them buy houses on
short term loans as the mortgages are negotiated for them. Letting is,
in fact, considered a source of income independently of repayments.
Although some of the income may go towards repayment, whatever surplus
is available can be used for social and sectarian purposes. Property
ownership in Bolton presents a very special difficulty. David Smith
highlights this as a paradoxical housing pattern amongst the South
Asians.[47] His evidence indicates that the owner occupation rises
steadily as one moves down the socio-economic groups.[48] In keeping
with Rex and Moore typology, several sect members in Bolton are out-
right owners of a whole house according to the housing situation one.
But the quality of accommodation they buy is one of the least desirable
in the market. Situations such as the ones found in the demolition
zone area require the qualification of the Rex and Moore typology.

During the fieldwork, the Hendon members of the Mandal owned 26
houses and there were several purchases which were being transacted.
These houses are terraces, some with front and back gardens and
approximately with five rooms, a kitchen, a bathroom and a toilet.
Whereas in Bolton, the sect members owned about 10 houses most of which
are four roomed terraces with grossly inadequate ablution facilities.

It should be noted that the owner occupation in Hendon and to a lesser

extent in Bolton, generates a relationship between Mandal members in

which they stand as landlords and tenants to each other. This dimension

of their relationship remains a significant feature of activities in

the house. The following account provides a description of this relation-

ship and difficulties which arise between the property owner and his

tenants in a multi-occupation situation.

As a general practice, sect members who are property owners

prefer to find their tenants from within the Mandal. Their loyalty

to the Mandal is supposed to override any differences which arise in

their relationship as landlords and tenants. If no Mandal member is

available as a tenant, the landlord may still find a fellow Leva Kanbi

Patel. In such an instance, the landlord usually has some personal

knowledge of the tenant and therefore some possibility of putting

informal pressure on him if arrears do build up. The landlords may

also take on Gujarati Hindus as tenants if they are reliably recommended

or personally known. Finding tenants from within the Hindu population

is significant in that the landlords can and do expect their tenants

to conform to certain sectarian practices. For example, the tenants

are expected to refrain from cooking egg, fish and meat. They are also

asked not to consume alcoholic drinks in the house. Further, they may

not use onion, garlic, asfetida and toilet paper as these substances

are believed to cause impurities.[49]

Allocation of the space in houses varies from one landlord to the

other. Unless the landlord has a large family, especially grown up

daughters or sons who require separate sleeping arrangements, he, his

wife and children may use just one room. The remaining space can be

then let to accommodate several tenants. Instances of overcrowding
are not uncommon and often a topic of caricature and joking. A standard
joke often heard was that a desperate prospective tenant could find
living space under a landlord's bed. The landlord in question would
be often named and criticised for his greed.

During the fieldwork period in 1970-72, landlords had established
a fairly uniform pattern of rents. In Hendon, a single room cost
between £5 to £6 per week. A small box room - the kind of accommodation
rented during the fieldwork - might fetch between £4 to £4.50. If a
tenant was prepared to rent a bed with other tenants, a situation Rex
and Moore describe as "multi-letting single rooms on a per capita
rent",[50] then he might pay as little as £2.50 per week. A tenant also
had the choice of having his meals in the house. The additional charge
for meals - which might not be provided on the days when the sect members
fasted - was about £2.75 per week. Most landlords charged about 75 pence
for heating, electricity and gas. Those landlords who began to compute
the value of every amenity provided to the tenants applied the logic
of cash nexus and charged their tenants about 10p a week for running
their television sets. Landlords also installed slot meters to avoid
recurrent disputes about electricity and gas bills. Tenants changed
often for a variety of reasons. Though landlords preferred to have
tenants who stayed longer, even frequently changing tenants provided
an income which was welcome. The acute shortage of rooms in Hendon
meant that the rooms seldom remained vacant. Examples of landlords
earning between £60 to £70 a month in rent alone were not uncommon
during the field research. In contrast, the landlords in Bolton
lamented the fact that letting was not an attractive proposition as,
the amounts available in rents were much smaller there. A Bolton

landlord could rarely charge more than £2-3 per week for a normal
sized room and about £1.50 for a box room and much smaller a sum for
a single bed. The meals too seem to cost much less as the tenants
seldom paid more than £1.00 for them.

Though tenants remain a desirable source of extra income, as
the Mandal landlords themselves recognise, they can also create trouble
for the landlords. First of all, depending on the number of tenants
living in a house, space available per person is considerably reduced,
especially for children. For people from East Africa or Cutch, confine-
ment to one or two rooms can be both an alien and disturbing experience.
As the tenants increase, there is always greater pressure on all
available facilities in the house. Unless the use of facilities is
clearly defined and demarcated, quarrels easily arise in regard to
who should first use the bathroom or kitchen. In one particular case,
involving a Mandal landlord and a Hindu family from Tanzania, the
recurrence of quarrels reached neurotic proportions; the severe
constraints imposed by the landlord and the lack of alternative housing
in Hendon, brought the adult tenant and his wife to the brink of mental
breakdown. However, if both the landlords and tenants belong to the
sect, then there is always a possibility of a Mandal intervention which
can bring about the resolution of the dispute. However market forces[51]
and the desire to increase earnings and diminish costs can inject an
element of continuing instability in landlord/tenant relationship. The
landlords who believe that it is contrary to building society regulations
to rent rooms nourish rather wild anxieties. For example, when the
census enumeration was carried out in 1971, many landlords believed
that the local government would use the census to prosecute landlords
who were stepping outside the law. It is likely that this anxiety

contributed to some under enumeration. In sum, property ownership which is coupled with renting rooms, is both a source of income, and as the Mandal property owners would assert, equally a source of head-aches!

3.2.    The Mandal Members in the London and Bolton

        Labour Market.

When the Mandal members established themselves in Kenya, at first they entered the construction trade to sell their labour power. But once several of them became successful contractors they were able to offer employment to other sect members. In other words, a range of employer-employee relationships were generated within the temple and sectarian community. Given the shortage of skilled and semi-skilled workers in Kenya's construction industry, it was not unusual for sect members to receive what was believed to be a reasonable remuneration backed up by the informal social security of the sect. The pattern of advantage they enjoyed was reinforced by the Indian-dominated sectors of the market all over East Africa.

In the metropolitan labour market, the Mandal members enter the economy with nothing like the advantage they had in East Africa. Though none of the members settled in London or Bolton could hope to provide employment to sect members as in East Africa, it is still within the Mandal that the individuals exchange information about available work opportunities and assist their sectarian brethren in finding jobs on construction sites in London. Experienced workers often know the'tricks of the trade' and maintain friendly relationship with the foreman responsible for recruitment and persuade him to take up their men on the site. The shortage of labour often coupled with the friendly attitude

of a foreman has enabled the Mandal members to find employment in London. During my Hendon stay, Premjibhai's brother's wife's brother arrived from East Africa for settlement. Premjibhai asked me to take him to a site in Golders Green where he had spoken to someone about placing this man. I was asked to escort him to the site where semi-skilled and unskilled work was available. I accompanied the man - who, as a stranger to London, was rather bewildered and depressed. Although he spoke not a word of English and therefore did not even know how to use the buses and the underground, he was instantly offered employment on the second or third day of his life in England. As the time went on, such experiences became less common. Unemployment as an enduring feature of life was almost entirely unknown although there was a minor incidence of transitional unemployment. After completion of construction work on the site, some working sect members would be discharged. They would then have a short phase of unemployment before commencing work somewhere else.

In contrast to what some members regarded as highly attractive work conditions in London, Bolton presented an unfavourable and harsh picture of work opportunities. It was common knowledge that the textile mills were running down and those Mandal men and women who did hold jobs rarely worked full time. Besides, phases of unemployment were frequent. In one instance, a man had been out of work for more than two years. When he was interviewed, it was evident that the community context of the settlement had generally proved to be supportive. Even though others criticised him for allegedly not trying hard enough to find work, they respected him in the sect - which, it was certain had protected him from despair and demoralisation. An important implication of the above discussion is that most members of the sect work on

construction sites in London while those in Bolton find employment
in textile mills. The following table shows the occupations the sect
members have taken up in addition to their predominance in construction
work and textile mills. The occupational categories also indicate that
most individuals perform manual rather than mental work. The table
does not include female workers as information about their work was
only indirectly available to me. The impressions formed about work
women do is contained in the discussion to follow.

### TABLE 1.

THE MANDAL MEMBERS IN DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| Construction workers | 34 |
| Factory workers | 7 |
| Car park attendants | 3 |
| Adult students | 2 |
| Insurance Agents | 1 |
| Laboratory Technicians | 1 |
| Bus conductors | 1 |
| Motor mechanics | 1 |
| Office clerks | 2 |
| Textile workers | 30 |
| Non-working members | 3 |
| Total | 85 |

Those who take up work on London construction sites can be
divided into familiar levels of skills. First of all there are those
who possess specific skills as carpenters, electricians, plumbers,
bricklayers and plasterers. Secondly there is semi-skilled work such
as 'making good' (filling holes in a plastered wall) and purely unskilled
work such as loading, lifting or cleaning. The differences between

skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers are regarded as self-
evident and the jobs on sites are allocated accordingly. If several
members of tne Mandal were on a particular site, they would often
'train' an unskilled or a semi-skilled worker for a better wage. In
absence of institutional training facilities for migrant workers, the
sect members introduce what can be described as 'informal apprentice-
ship' for their less skilled Mandal colleagues. To implement this
form of 'apprenticeship' in practice, a skilled Mandal man would take
a helper under his wing and then teach the man a specific skill, say
sucn as carpentry - often without the knowledge of his supervisor but
sometimes with his tacit approval. It was emphasised that this method
of training a fellow Mandal was often unrewarding if the learner's
mistakes drew others' attention. If the 'trainee' was found out in
adverse circumstances, he could lose his own job and put his fellow
workers in an awkward situation.

Irrespective of whether they are skilled or not, when the Mandal
members begin working in Britain, they say there are important differences
in work techniques and organisation between East African and British
conditions. First of all the sect members have to accept more subordinate
work places than the ones they held in East Africa. Secondly, the novelty
of work experience coupled with language difficulties the members
encounter, requires new adaptive responses. Members explain that the
adaptation entails learning all the English words for different jobs
on the site and the names of the tools and equipment less familiar in
East Africa. Describing his early work experience in London, my host
Premjibhai explained the way he regularly recited the most important
work words so that' there was no confusion as to what it was that he
was expected to accomplish.

Construction site work offers different degrees of permanence according to the level of skill members possess. Those who are skilled often work for the same construction firm on a permanent basis. Those who are less skilled or unskilled usually lose their jobs as soon as the work ends on a particular site. Some Mandal members had changed six to seven jobs during the year. Whenever the work was available, with additional hours a person puts in, the take-home wage could be as high as £50-£60 a week in 1970-72. The construction workers argue that although they receive 'good money' when they are in employment, the temporary nature of their work means that the 'good money' does not constitute their regular income. They all know of the trade union, but union participation amounts to little more than paying subscriptions, and involvement in union activities is insignificant and minimal. The language barriers and cultural differences which acquire ascriptive importance because of the colour boundary do not stimulate greater interest in the union activities.

Members of the Mandal who work in the textile mills of Bolton usually undertake semi-skilled and unskilled employment. Less skilled work involves cleaning, sweeping, packing and loading. Semi-skilled and skilled work involves working on the machine where a person is responsible for spinning and weaving operations. In contrast to day time work  the Hendon members do, mill work entails regular night shifts. As a local norm, women work during the day and have either morning or afternoon shifts so that they are home to discharge their domestic responsibilities in the evening. Men prefer the night shifts because the pay is better. Both men and women earned little by London standards. Some women workers took home as little as £14 a week and the highest wage men earned on the night shifts was rarely more than £26 a week.

Bolton residents speak of 'slack time' to refer to periods when there

is little work. The whole area suffers from economic depression and

unemployment is a looming prospect as the mills close down or work

shorter hours. When it was pointed out to the sect members that there

were many construction sites in Manchester where they could find work,

they emphasised that working on construction sites in the North-West

was much harder. They said it was like 'chewing the iron beans' a

Gujarati expression that speaks for itself. As the members lack viable

work alternatives outside the textile mills, their own perception of

work and the future is not without a trace of gloomy despair.

Table 1 shows clearly that adult male and female members of the

Mandal enter the market to sell their labour power. It was also

equally evident that the social distinctions associated with the

difference between mental work and manual work were relatively unimport-

ant. Further, the social differences between manual occupations were

small. Although the construction workers know that the mental work

has higher social prestige, they argued that it could be far less

remunerative than skilled or semi-skilled manual work. It was also

commonly known that the workers in Bolton earned much less than those

in London. Knowledge of this difference and awareness of the fact that

occupational differences are socially significant in relation to manual

and mental work was a diffuse rather than a sharply manifest factor

in the sectarian organisation. As most members of the Mandal are in

fact manual workers, a relative degree of similarity among them is

unlikely to generate the importance of a particular occupational standing

within the sect. If the occupational aspirations related to education

and income differences develop sharply, then there is a possibility that

these distinctions might become related to the sect's ideology of salvation. The present inquiry reveals no such development.

In Cutch villages, in the more traditional circumstances of the Mandal members and other Leva Kanbi Patels, women do appear to have sought paid employment outside the home. In my limited acquaintance with women, but especially from long and extended conversations with the wives of the brothers I lived with, it was clear that women from less prosperous families did take employment as seasonal labourers during the cultivation period. Although most of these women did no remunerative work outside home in East Africa, neither their husbands or guardians nor the women themselves had had any hesitation in joining the labour force. In London as soon as an adult daughter of a member began working in a clothing factory, she began to introduce other Mandal women to the personnel office. In due course, the factory employed about fourteen women workers from Hendon. The possibility of an additional income also attracted mothers with small infants who were quite prepared to leave their children with the women who stayed at home. They created child-minding work for older women who looked after the children at a weekly rate of £2.50. In comparison with pay packets men brought home, women earned small wages. Their incomes ranged from £10 to £18. With overtime work, they earned about £25, but such an income was regarded as being exceptionally 'high'. On the whole, women did not seem to regard employment as a sphere for their own independent earnings, the prevailing view is that whatever a woman earns is a supplement to her husband's income. After her arrival from Cutch, once the wife of my host became familiar with the work situation, she began to emphasise her supplementary rather than her independent work potential. She tended to say that she ought to work 'to help him'

as other wives were helping their respective husbands, rather than
earning an income on their own right. The latter conception of work
is generally unfamiliar to women brought up in Cutch or East Africa.
It seems that it is with this traditional attitude to the husband that
women accept the temporary character of their employment and the
dismissals and redundancies which accompany it.

The Mandal women in Bolton illustrate the way migrant workers
can abandon significant cultural practices for economic ends. When
the women first approached the textile mill for employment, they were
told that the work was available if they were prepared to fulfil one
condition. The condition laid down was that the women should wear
trousers instead of their traditional saris so that the loose ends of
the saris were not caught in machines causing an accident. Women
responded unanimously, in that those who were offered employment
began wearing trousers at work. Thereafter, although the use of
trousers has extended from work to home among the younger women, senior
women with grown up sons and daughters change into saris after work
and to the best of my knowledge, with the exception of very young women,
no women come to the congregational meetings in trousers. Nevertheless,
this change is significant in view of the traditional idea that it is
rather shameful for a Hindu woman to expose the shape of her body. The
forces of the labour market and the need for an income, even if it is
seen as a supplement, outweigh the traditional constraints.

Work and money as the dominant categories of an advanced industrial
society, affect children as well as adults. The school boys I became
acquainted with spent some of their spare time finding irregular part-
time work in the Hendon neighbourhood. Some of them had worked part-time
for more than a year. Several young lads delivered newspapers everyday,

often doing their own 'overtime' by working for two newsagents

simultaneously. They earned up to £3 a week and several of them boasted

post office savings exceeding £50-£60. At times the young lads worked

for the adults on odd building repairs undertaken for their Indian

clients in Hendon. They usually recruited young boys for tasks such

as scraping walls, cleaning debris and painting. This was a form of

training in building work. It also paid about £2-£3 a day. A couple

of young boys had been more daring in their search for work. They

had approached English families in the Hendon area and taken up domestic

work such as cleaning and washing to increase their income.

In Hendon a Mandal family could derive a reasonable income from

employment and in many instances this was supplemented by rent. I

present below the weekly income of a landlord family in Hendon. The

husband worked for a construction firm and the wife in a factory.

Their daughter was employed in a light industrial plant near Hendon.

Their income profile is more likely to be representative of those who

were property owners and received at least three wages and some rent

every week. The figures for those who were tenants would show no rent

receipts and therefore would be lower.

At the rate of £69.50 per week, their monthly income is £276.50

excluding what the husband may earn from his private work and overtime.

Overtime is probably one of the most important categories in regard to

work among the migrants. As Rashmi Desai observed, "Overtime work, in

fact, has become a feature of immigrant life".[52] Among other Indian

groups, for instance among the London Patidars, as Harald Tambs-Lyche

suggests, overtime is a well-accepted prevailing norm. Similarly the

Mandal members also regard overtime as an important aspect of work, so

## TABLE II.

### THE INCOME PROFILE OF A LANDLORD FAMILY IN HENDON.

| Members | Take home pay per week |
|---------|------------------------|
| Husband | £35.00 |
| Wife | £10.00 |
| Daughter | £12.00 |
| Son | £ 2.50 |
| | £59.50 |
| Rent Income | £10.00 |
| Total Income | £69.50 |

much so that work itself is seen as somehow incomplete unless it is supplemented by overtime - whatever its social consequences for reduced rest and leisure. In the first quarter of 1972, with overtime, some memoers of the Mandal were known to have earned from £70 to £100 per week. Uncommitted to the British pattern of consumption, most Hendon Members, but especially the landlords, could and did accumulate up to £1,000 or more in savings per annum. These savings were used for social expenses and especially for supporting the congregational activities of the Mandal - fully explained in Chapter six below.

Harald Tambs-Lyche refers to the London Patidars and their merchant ideology and their interest in maximising their financial gain.[54] He further argues that the Patidars see themselves as distinct and do not identify with the British workers or their pattern of consumption. They utilise all their existing resources, including their houses, to earn as much cash as possible. Since they see their own mode of saving and

spending as being different from those English with whom they share a common class situation, all that they can save and accumulate in contrast to the English workers is their clear gain. It is in this sense that they can define their situation as being better than the circumstances of English workers whose spending habits are less regulated by a similar ideological view. The ethnic boundary between the Patidars and the English therefore acquires 'economic significance'[55] in so far as the Patidars do not share features of class consumption with the English workers. Although the Mandal members do not show as strong a predisposition towards the merchant ideology as do Tambs-Lyche's London Patidars, they draw a comparable line between themselves and their English workmates. According to their evaluation, the English workers are even irresponsible because they 'drink their money'. Like the London Patidars, sect members claim that their income from rent is often sufficient to pay their mortgage repayments. A landlord in such an instance argues that he lives in his own house without incurring rent expenditure and makes additional gain from whatever surplus is left.

The economic significance of this difference between 'us' and 'them' is not entirely unproblematic, as shown by Harald Tambs-Lyche. The perception of such differences and the gain arising out of it may not necessarily reduce unequal life chances of the Mandal members. The measures migrants take to boost their income can contribute to a perpetuation of the inequalities they experience in relation to the English irrespective of their savings. In any event, inequality is not merely a matter of having little more money or little less although it is an important element in the creation of unequal life chances.

Mandal members whose sole concern is with the maximum financial gain, can, for instance, influence educational performance of their children. To take a concrete example, while having several tenants in a house provides an income, it also creates conditions in which children have no facilities to study. In multi-occupied dwellings in Hendon, it is not too unusual to see young boys or girls desperately attempting to concentrate on home work in a room full of individuals engaged in a loud conversation. In so far as the need to make financial gain and to save can create adverse conditions for children's education, it could cripple whatever opportunities for advancement they might have. Thus what may appear to be a gain can cause harm. For some Mandal members in Hendon, the gains were not without costs.

This account has so far concentrated on housing and employment as two most important institutions decisive in the settlement of Mandal members in Britain. However, the sect members and their families deal with a wider set of institutions such as the school, the health services and social security. While it is not possible to discuss in detail the influence of these agencies on the lives of migrants, there is no doubt that a systematic account on this topic could illuminate significant social processes in the settlement of migrants in Britain.

3.3.  Race, Colour and the Mandal.

The notion of race has a long and complex history in the European societies.[56] Briefly, race as a category was believed to have foundation in science. It was first held that it referred to permanent and heritable biological and cultural attributes. Later, in the late

nineteenth century, under the influence of Social Darwinism, the idea

of permanent types gave way to theories purporting to explain evolution

of races in which higher evolution of Europeans was usually contrasted

with that of the Africans, the so-called Asiatic races falling inbetween.

These pseudo-scientific theories have been discredited and it is now

well known that race possesses no scientific value for explaining

social behaviour and social relations. Although the focus of scientific

inquiry has shifted from the biological to the socio-cultural meaning

of race, the popular belief in races as groups with permanent and

heritable attributes has changed less rapidly. The belief in assumed

racial differences and the unequal treatment of groups in view of this

belief, is usually described as racism.  In Britain, Michael Banton

and John Rex - as two leading authorities - define racism as the belief

according to which groups are defined in terms of fixed inheritable

characteristics and ascribed to superior and inferior statuses and

positions in society.[57]  Explicitly stated racist ideas do not seem to

command much respect in Britain and therefore in view of this negative

normative evaluation, it is not uncommon to find racial differences

expressed as if they were cultural differences.  John Rex refers to

this particular mode of ascription which often has its roots in racist

ideas. Further, there is the question of the way racism finds expression

in practical situations. Given the diffuse pervasiveness of racism in

Britain as evident in patterns of discrimination,[58] it is no  more

necessary for a person who discriminates to be fully aware of the

propositions which constitute a formal sociological definition of

racism than it is for a lay worshipper to know all the theological

complexity in the simple expression of his faith.  A single word or

a few tacitly understood expressions can convey the way the actors

perceive the essential difference between physically and culturally

distinct populations. A dimension which reinforces this plane of

difference is rooted in the colonial and imperial feature of Western

European expansion. Supremacy and domination synonymous with the

European presence is a distinctive element of this historical legacy.

The diffusion of racist ideas in British society can not be comprehended

adequately unless the social significance of race and relations it

entails is situated in this wider context.[59]

As an expression with its multifarious historical and social

meanings, race and its phenotypical attribute colour is widely and

commonly used in Britain. Although references to European groups and

nations as races can still be noted, it is well-known that the clearest

social boundary the British draw is distinguished by colour, the

demarcation which is popularly understood in contrasting distinctions

between 'whites' and 'coloureds' as they have been identified as odious

stereotypes. In terms of this social construction, institutionally the

'coloureds' have the lowest status in the British social hierarchy. It

is important to emphasise the institutional dimension of this ascriptive

labelling. As a feature of relationship between groups the ascribed

label serves to mark distance rather than close contact between

individuals. Whereas a close relationship between individuals is

usually dependent on human attributes and a complex pattern of shared

understanding, the institutional categorisation of a minority usually

depends on an unflattering and negative viewpoint. It is at this

particular level that hierarchy and difference are implied in distinguishing

the 'coloureds' from 'whites'. In so far as the meanings these labels

carry acquire enduring and even permanent cultural expression, as they

do in Britain, their manifest and latent effects on the actual behaviour

can give rise to a regulated social practice. Although Michael Lyon

has usefully distinguished race as a boundary of exclusion,[60] it ought

to be emphasised that there is more to race and colour in Britain than

the now well-studied exclusion of minorities from housing and employment.

Observations and experiences in and out of the present research indicate

that the institutional distinctions between the 'whites' and the

'coloureds' acquire a dialectical quality which influences those who

create the category of exclusion and those to whom it is applied. Here

then the word 'coloured' does not only refer to an excluded category

but also to the exclusion which generates self-categorisation. In

other words, those to whom the expression 'coloured' is applied

internalise this external definition which then becomes a self-definition.

The clearest demonstration of this process is provided in the BBC1

Sunday morning television programme Nai Zindagi Naya Jivan. In the

items presented in this programme, it is not at all unusual for a

distinguished M.P. to refer to the non-European population in Britain

as the 'coloured people', but what is quite remarkable is that the

term 'coloured' should be translated as rangadār, literally the one

whose skin pigmentation bears colour. This linguistic construction is

then addressed to the South Asians as a legitimate expression - which

generates a majority determined media self-image among the members of

a minority. The penetration of racial categorisation becomes complete

and Michael Lyon's well-known boundary receives dual reinforcement,

from the 'coloureds' as well as the 'whites'. An authenticated instance

of this process is vividly documented in Dilip Hiro's essay 'Another

Kind of Minority'[61] where he says:

> During my stay in Britain, I had been made to consider
> myself 'coloured' and the realisation remained with me
> in America. So when, while filling an application form

for a driver's licence in Baltimore, Maryland, I
was confronted with the question 'Race'?  I ticked
off 'coloured'.

(Italics added).

Members of the minorities whose social situation is defined in
terms of colour and the inferiority associated with it, usually know
that colour as one important factor can influence the course of their
lives in Britain.  As the above discussion indicates, migrants are not
always fully conscious of the kind of difference which the process of
categorisation implies for their own place in the society. Therefore
it is not uncommon for the non-Europeans to accept 'coloured' as a
label for self-identification and even to conform to the dominant
expectations associated with this category. Those who do become aware
of the hierarchical difference and inferiority conveyed in the racial
categorisation, reject the word 'coloured' and often choose to identify
themselves as Blacks to express and emphasise their rejection and
defiance of majority definitions. Some choose to assert their identity
by emphasising the national and regional cultures of their respective
societies. The ways in which members of the minority population respond
to the dominant categorisation, and in particular their social and
political ability to establish and legitimate identities which generate
feelings of dignity and self-respect, remain important factors in their
future social development in Britain.

In their perception of hierarchical relations and values in
Britain, the Mandal members are aware of lack of equality between
powerful and less powerful nations and the way this assymetry is
reflected in encounters between the English and South Asians in Britain.
If the rigidity of inequalities can not be eliminated in actual life,
there are ways in which the perception of reality can be reversed so

that there is at least a moment in which a symbolic trancendance of
inequalities can occur. As members of a sect whose spiritual heritage
is embodied in the rich experience of moksha, salvation, the Mandal
members often assert that this particular dimension of 'true reality'
is hidden for the English majority since their culture is preoccupied
with material pleasures. This fairly popular viewpoint is frequently
stated to imply superiority of the spiritual over the material. During
one of our extended conversations on this topic, the question was
material and technological advances typical of a Western European
country. A senior member participating in the discussion narrated a
story which was clearly intended to emphasise, not only notional
equality but also superiority of craftsmen and sailors from Cutch
over their English counterparts. According to this story, long ago
before Europeans began travelling round the world, fishermen and
sailors from Cutch used to travel up the Thames estuary to trade with
the local people before returning to India.[62]  It is not the historical
and empirical authenticity that matters here but the symbolic signific-
ance such a story has in a society for a Cutch migrant who finds himself
confronting highly structured nature of inequalities of class and
colour in Britain.  Although the contemporary superiority of the
English is acknowledged in this story, an attempt is also made to
convey "We are as good as you are" aspect of equality.

However, in their every-day life, the Mandal members in Hendon
and Bolton remain acutely conscious of the colour factor as and when
it is manifested in the encounters they have with the British.
Members claim that it is not always easy to demonstrate concretely
the extent to which the colour criterion is applied in a specific
situation.  In so far as the colour factor determines their class

position in regard to access to housing and employment, members'
responses are based on their own observations as well as their
intuitive sensitivity to the difference with which they are treated.
In their search for employment, if they are told there is no work and
if they see European recruitment taking place on a site or a factory,
they know they are "being taken into colour". There is an extent to
which "being taken into colour" becomes synonymous to "because we are
coloured" and then to "we are coloured" as a mode of self-ascription.

In Hendon as well as in various parts of London, encounters between
the English and the sect members are usually predetermined by hostility,
distance and a minimum degree of shared understanding. There is a
range of situations varying from verbal abuse to the more overt
expression of hostility and intimidation which could lead to violence.
There is general unwillingness among the sect members to retaliate if,
to take a concrete example, someone called them black bastards or
niggers.[63] It was believed that unless one were physically assaulted,
it was hardly worth one's while to quarrel with Englishmen. Mandal
members reported that they were fairly often subjected to abuse while
some had found themselves in encounters where their personal security
was at some risk. The following examples illustrate the kind of
experiences which were not uncommon for the sect.

(1) A thirty year old Mandal member was returning home with
his son one evening. Not far from their home in Hendon, both of
them were surrounded by several young fellows, later described as
hooligans. They demanded money, grabbed both of them and threatened
to set them alight. When the father realised what was likely to happen
as the men took out their match-boxes, he shook himself free and punched

one of his attackers. This freed his son who then dashed to the nearest house to call for help. As the residents from the house came out to see what was happening, the men ran away.

(2) As Ramjibhai was returning from work, just before he entered the Aldgate tube station, several young persons surrounded him and pelted him with eggs and ran away. He said that he simply stood there in a state of shock not knowing what to do. The Jamaican ticket collecter, a woman, came to his rescue. She took him to the bathroom, wiped him clean and helped him to regain his normal composure so that he could make his way home less bewildered. He said he appreciated the assistance from the Jamaican woman which partly modified his own stereotype of 'Africans'. He also emphasised that the experience induced a feeling of fright whenever he was at an East End tube station.

(3) An elderly Mandal man had a humiliating experience in a tube train as he was returning home late one evening. In a compartment where he was sitting by himself, two men entered and sat down on either side of him. After abusing him, as he himself put it, they began to play with him as if he was some sort of toy. They pulled his clothes, took away his cap, slapped him on his head and threatened to beat him. A number of men and women watching them did not dare to intervene. As the train slowed down and stopped, the man scrambled his way out. Before catching the next train, he selected a compartment which was fairly crowded.

More than a dozen such instances were narrated to me in conversation and not as responses to any questions. My own impression is that although the sect members do not make such experience a focal

point of their everday concern, the events such as these were by no

means isolated instances even in 1970-1972. In addition to the

experiences the sect members themselves narrated, it was also possible

for me to discern the unfriendliness and hostility felt by the Mandal

members in Hendom. When the temple activities were carried out in a

house on Audley Road, the local residents had complained to the local

authorities that the conditions in the neighbourhood were, allegedly,

deteriorating. However, the establishment of a proper place or

worship at what used to be Elim Tabernacle did not diminish the pattern

of hostility. As soon as the sect members began to use the hall on

Somerset Road, young men and lads began to harass the Mandal women

and children walking to the temple. The leaders had to organise these

walks in small groups so that the local trouble makers could be deterred.

Immediately after the inauguration of the temple, one evening the sect

members found that several glass windows on the premises were smashed

from outside. On the following day, the temple flag from the mast was

lowered and torn apart and the Mandal lettering on the entrance was

defaced. The incidents were reported to the police but no police support

was expected. The sect members made their own unsuccessful efforts to

guard the temple. However, the temple remained a focus of interest

for outsiders who wanted to express their opposition to its presence.

The feelings of fear and insecurity were particularly heightened when

some dead fish were found, pushed through the letter box. Finally

several sect members began sleeping in the hall and the unfavourable

events petered out - although not without leaving some unhappiness

among the Mandal devotees. Bolton based sect members also indicate that

hostility to them and other Indians is an unavoidable feature of life

in the city. From my limited personal observations there, it was

apparent that there was a serious communication gap between the two

sides. The Mandal members were often unaware of abusive stereotyping

and the unfriendly behaviour directed towards them. In events such

as the ones presented above, the sect members are least likely to

seek assistance from the police. Many of them believe the police to

have unfavourable attitudes towards all non-Europeans. Above all, as

they say, 'police too take you in colour'. As far as knowledge of

Race Relations Board and Community Relations Commission (amalgamated

as Commission for Racial Equality from 1976) is concerned, with the

exception of the Mandal secretary and one or two members, no one knew

that there existed organisations concerned with the rights of the

minorities.

As for the reaction of the Mandal members to the English, it is

important to emphasise that on the whole they do not seem to create a

reverse stereotype or display a negative attitude to the entire British

population. On the one hand they know that the British apply to them

the colour label and many refuse to see them as human beings of the

same order as the British. However, awareness of this viewpoint has

not crystallised into an unshakeable dogma. If anything, it is usually

coupled with the proposition that besides some Englishmen who "take

them into colour", there are Englishmen who are good, considerate and

prepared to associate with migrant groups and lend them support. In

talking about their British experiences, besides examples of ill-treatment,

the Mandal members also give instances of fair reasonableness they often

experience in their everyday dealings with specific English individuals.

Therefore instead of a blanket disapproval of the English ways, their

perspective expresses the complexity of their experiences as they occur

in their life. In more concrete terms, the sect members know that there

are those who would abuse them in public. But then there are also
those who would spend an entire evening a week to provide English
lessons to the Mandal boys and girls. As these experiences stand in
sharp contrast, so do sect members' feelings: they vary from different
degrees of hope and despair.

## A Brief Summary

The British colonial and imperial framework is an important
dimension for explaining the primary migration of Leva Kanbi Patels
of the Mandal to East Africa. Their African settlement and prosperity
essentially depended on the colonial class structure in which, along
with other Asians, they occupied a distinct socio-economic and cultural
niche. The forces which stimulated independence and decolonisation in
East Africa brought about the secondary migration of the Mandal members
and other Indians to Britain. The account has focused on their class
position in Britain as sellers of labour power - who in terms of their
distinctive position have had access to differential employment and
housing opportunities in London and Bolton. As their class position
is related to their categorisation as 'coloured people' the concluding
discussion has concentrated on the effects of the colour boundary as
it manifests itself in their everyday life.

The Mandal members attach considerable importance to the fact
that their ancestral homes are situated in villages in Cutch. The
distinctive features of rural social and cultural life remain significant
in the lives of the sect members. Further, the fact that as the Mandal
members they also belong to their Leva Kanbi Patel nati remains an
important element in their social organisation of their sect. As an

ethnographic introduction, the following chapter provides the necessary

picture against which caste-based sectarian affiliation can be

evaluated vis-a-vis Mandal members' class position as participants

in the British Society.

NOTES : Chapter 2.

1. Quoted in Robert G. Gregory's excellent historical study
   India and East Africa: A History of Race Relations within
   the British Empire, 1890-1939, 1971 Oxford, p.5.

2. A hundred years after the discovery of the River Nile, during
   centenary celebrations organised in Jinja, Uganda, N.S. Toofan,
   a correspondent of the Nairobi-based Sunday Nation argued that
   the source of the Nile was known to the ancient Hindus in an
   article titled 'History Books are so wrong about the Nile'.
   See Sunday Nation (Nairobi, Kenya) 8 July, 1962, p.27. Those
   who criticised Toofan took his view to be empirical rather
   than a symbolic assertion of links Hindus envisaged between
   their contemporary East African settlement and their distant
   past. For a comparable 'Hinduisation' of the Nile into "Nilotri"
   to correspond to "Gangotri" for the Holy Ganges, see Kaka
   Kalelkar's East African travelogue in Gujarati Purva Africaman
   1953 Ahmedabad, Navijivan Publishing House.

3. Robert G. Gregory, op.cit., p.9.

4. Ibid., p.16.

5. See J.S. Mangat, A History of the Asians in East Africa c.1886
   to 1945, 1969 Oxford, Clarendon Press, Chapter 1, p.2.

6. Ibid., p.5.

7. Robert G. Gregory, op.cit., pp.36-37.

8. J.S. Mangat, op.cit., p.12.

9. Ibid., p.12. Mangat quotes an FO communication 84/1391, Sir
   Bartle Frere to Granville.

10. Ibid., p.10.

11. Ibid., p.11.

12. Ibid., p.39.

13. H.S. Morris, The Indians in Uganda, 1968, London, Weidenfeld and
    Nicolson, p.8.

14. J.S. Mangat, op.cit., p.39.

15. Robert G. Gregory, op.cit., pp.61-70.

16. This approximate estimate is derived from figures available in
    Yash Tandon's Problems of a Displaced Minority: the New Position
    of East Africa's Asians. Report No.16, 1973, London, Minority
    Rights Group, p.4.

17. Georges Balandier,'The Colonial Situation' in Pierre C. Van den Berghe's (ed.), Africa: Social Problems of Change and Conflict, 1965, San Fransisco, Chandler Publishing Company, p.38.

18. E.J.B. Rose (ed.), Colour and Citizenship: A Report on British Race Relations, 1969. London, Oxford University Press/Institute of Race Relations, p.52.

19. James M.Campbell (ed.), Gazetter of the Bombay Presidency, Cutch, Palanpur and Mahikantha, Vol.V, Bombay 1880. Printed at the Government Central Press, p.67.

20. Nakshaman Gujarat (Gujarat Through Maps) (Gujarati edition), 1973. Ahmedabad, University Grantha Nirman Board, Gujarat Rajya, p.66.

21. Ibid., p.65.

22. R.L. Singh (ed.), India: A Regional Geography, 1971, Varanasi, National Geographical Society of India, p.903.

23. Ibid., p.903.

24. For a brief note on the successful enterprise of Allidina Visram, see J.S. Mangat, op.cit., pp.51-53.

25. Although there was a degree of political collaboration between Asians and Africans in the 1950s (see J.S. Mangat, op.cit., p.179, 1969), it never achieved any institutional character involving Asians in the African political developments. Further as the political initiative passed into African hands, the Indian political activity faded into insignificance and led to what J.S. Mangat aptly calls the road to a dilemma (J.S. Mangat, op.cit., 1969, pp.172-178).

26. A part of this outline is based on my own observations and knowledge of social and political conditions during my long residence in Uganda in the 1960s

27. A degree of ambiguity has tended to distinguish citizenship and Africanisation as non-African citizens emphasised their legal status whereas the Africans stressed social and solidaristic dimension of citizensnip as rooted in their conception of community. For a discussion of this point, see Donald Rothchild's Chapter 6, 'The African Crisis over Citizenship' in his Racial Bargaining in Independant Kenya, 1973, London, Oxford University Press/Institute of Race Relations, pp.186-187 et seq.

28. Cf. Yash Ghai and Dharam Ghai, The Asian Minorities of East and Central Africa, Report No.4, 1971, London, Minority Rights Group, p.16.

29.   As Paul Foot observes, "In an article in the Spectator, in
      February 1968, Mr. Ian Macleod, who was Minister of Labour
      at the time of Kenya Independence Act, argued that the
      Conservative Government had deliberately extended the right
      of free entry to Kenya Asians.  'We did it', he wrote.  'We
      meant to do it, and in any case we had no other alternative'".
      See Paul Foot, The Rise of Enoch Powell, 1969, Harmondsworth,
      Penguin Book Ltd., page 105.  Also cf. E.J.B. Rose and
      Associates, op.cit., pp. 611-612.

30.   Yash Ghai and Dharam Ghai, op.cit., pp.18-22.

31.   E.J.B. Rose and associates, op.cit., p.606 et seq.

32.   Robert Moore, Racism and Black Resistance in Britain, 1975,
      London, Pluto Press Ltd., p.37.

33.   For an account of operation of immigration controls and the
      administration of the voucher system, see Robert Moore and
      Tina Wallace, Slamming the Door: the Administration of
      Immigration Control, 1975, London, Martin Robertson and Co.Ltd.

34.   Derek Humphry and Michael Ward, Passports and Politics, 1974.
      Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd., see pp.19-20.

35.   Max Weber's statement on class is contained in his famous essay
      'Class, Status and Party' in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills
      (eds.), Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, 1946, Oxford University
      Press, pages 180-195 where Weber takes unequal distribution of
      property and its 'most sovereign importance' as a condition
      for class based communal action.  Integral relationship between
      division of labour, property ownership and conflict is central
      to Marxian theory of classes. The link between division of
      labour and property ownership is, for instance, clearly stated
      in Feuerbach's 'Opposition of Materialistic and Idealistic
      Outlook' (Chapter 1) of the German ideology as quoted in
      Karl Marx and Frearick Engels, Selected Works, Volume One,
      1969, Moscow, Progress Publishers, pp.22-24 et seq.

36.   Though the distinction between mental and manual labour is
      often used to demarcate class boundaries, its analytical
      usefulness is increasingly questioned. For a critical debate
      on this topic among the Marxist scholars, see Vic Allen's
      'The Differentiation of the Working Class'and  Alan Hunt's
      'Theory and Politics in the Identification of the Working
      Class' in Alan Hunt's (ed.), Class and Class Structure, 1977,
      London, Lawrence and Wishart.

37.   John Rex Race, Colonialism and the City, 1973, London, Routledge
      and Kegan Paul, pp.156-157 et seq.

38. See W.W. Daniel's Racial Discrimination in England, 1968, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd., and a more recent study of discrimination carried out by Political and Economic Planning. See David Smith's Facts of Racial Disadvantage, Volume XLII, Broadsheet No.360, 1976, London, Political and Economic Planning.

39. John Rex, op.cit., pp.156-157, et seq.

40. See Leo Kuper's 'Theories of Revolution and Race Relations' in his Race, Class and Power, 1974, London, Duckworth.

41. For a discussion of possibilities of political militancy and political mobilisation among the South Asians and West Indians, see Bob Miles and Annie Phizacklea's Class, Race, Ethnicity and Political Action, Political Studies, Volume XXV, No.4, December 1977.

42. John Rex and Robert Moore, Race, Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrook, 1969, London. Oxford University Press, the Institute of Race Relations.

43. Ibid., p.20 et seq.

44. Badr Dahya, "The Nature of Pakistani Ethnicity in Industrial Cities in Britain", pp.77-118 in Abner Cohen's (ed.), Urban Ethnicity, 1974, London, Tavistock Press.

45. For a discussion of arguments about price discrimination termed as 'colour tax', see Michael Banton's 'Two Theories of Racial Discrimination in Housing', Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol.2, No.4, October 1979, pp.416-427.

46. Rex and Moore, op.cit., p.274, et seq.

47. David Smith, 'The Housing of Racial Minorities: Its Unusual Nature', New Community, Volume VI, Nos.1 and 2, Winter 1977/1978, pp.18-26.

48. Ibid., p.19.

49. A prescribed ritual avoidance of these substances is discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

50. Rex and Moore, op.cit., p.134.

51. Rex and Moore provide a more complex account of links between Market forces and the circumstances of a lodging house. See Chapter 5 "The Lodging House" in Rex and Moore, op.cit., pp. 133-146.

52. Rashmi Desai, Indian Immigrants in Britain, 1963, London. Oxford University Press, The Institute of Race Relations, p.70.

53. Harald Tambs-Lyche, London Patidars: Case Study in Urban Ethnicity, 1971, Bergen, A "Magistergrad" thesis for the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen, pp.69-77.

54. Ibid., pp. 7, 11, 77 et seq.

55. Ibid., p.77.

56. For a good general introduction to the topic, see Michael Banton's Race Relations, 1967, New York, Basic Books; Michael Banton and Jonathan Harwood, The Race Concept, 1975, London: David and Charles, especially the first three chapters and Michael Banton's The Idea of Race, 1977, London, Tavistock Publications.

57. See Michael Banton, 'The Concept of Racism'and John Rex's 'The Concept of Race in Sociological Theory' in Sami Zubaida's Race and Racialism, 1970, London, Tavistock Publications.

58. Cf. W.W. Daniel and David Smith, op.cit.

59. The significance of this wider context is emphasised in John Rex's Race, Colonialism and the City, 1973, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

60. Michael Lyon, 'Race and Ethnicity in Pluralistic Societies', New Community, Vol.1, No.4, Summer 1972, pp.256-262.

61. Dilip Hiro, 'Another Kind of Minority' in Bhikhu Parekh's (ed.), Colour, Culture and Consciousness: Immigrant Intellectuals in Britain, 1974, London: George Allen and Unwin, p.23.

62. James M. Campbell (ed.), op.cit., refers to the skill of Cutch craftsmen and sailors with an added footnote in the third chapter in the Gazetter of the Bombay Presidency. According to this footnote 3, "Cutch pilots have always interested Europeans by skill and daring of their voyages to Arabia and Africa. They understand the compass and steer by charts and nautical tables as well kept as those of an Indianman. The best example of their voyage and skill was Rao Godji's (1761-1779) ship, which built, equipped and manned in Cutch made the voyage to England and back to Malbar coast (Tod's Western India)". Although this information is interesting, the extent to which it has any bearing on the diffusion of the story I heard is difficult to determine.

63. One Hendon resident had made it a regular practice to scream nigger at me every time he saw me from the vantage position of his driving seat. He tactfully ignored me if I was walking along with a European or an Englishman. As I had never exchanged a word with him, his response to my presence was based on his own conception of what he believed 'niggers' to be. It was the intensity of sheer rage in his voice that deterred me from walking up to him as 1 felt he would assault me without any hesitation.

CHAPTER 3

SECT, CASTE AND CLASS

The Mandal members are affiliated both to sect and caste, i.e.
to sampradāya and nāt according to categories they themselves use.
It is this dual affiliation to two separate categories which is a
distinctive feature of their social organisation. Although the nāt
membership does not depend on the affiliation to sampradāya, belonging
to the Mandal in Britain is entirely dependent on the membership of the
Leva Kanbi Patel nāt. It is in this sense that the dual affiliation
is both concurrent and simultaneous. Though the Mandal members them-
selves give primary importance to their sectarian affiliation, the
nāt composition of the Mandal is also an important dimension of the
sect. For it is the nāt that gives corporate character to the
congregational community. As long as sampradāya and nāt remain
coterminous, the problem of conflicting loyalty does not arise. How-
ever the nāt boundary extends beyond the Mandal, the sampradāya.
Choices which can bring about conflict between sect and caste can
present difficult dilemmas. In theory as well as in practice, two or
three separate kinds of choices are possible. In some circumstaances,
a Leva Kanbi Patel may have to choose between the primary Swaminarayan
sect or one of its secondary off-shoots such as the Mandal. Further,
one may have to choose between one's sect and caste. If sect and
caste become irreconcilable for any political reasons, then the dual
affiliation can become a source of conflict and dissent. As the nāt
remains the cornerstone of the sectarian organisation, the first part
of this chapter is concerned with its fuller exposition. Further, sect
and caste are not always compatible with the class-based secular

tendencies of some Mandal members. To illustrate the conflicting
pulls of sect and caste on the one hand and the class on the other,
a case study is presented at the end.

1. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND TO CASTE AMONG
   THE MANDAL MEMBERS.

For an adequate ethnographic account of caste and its significance
among the Mandal members, first of all, it is important to focus on the
socio-cultural context in which the caste relations are seen to be
meaningful and viable. There are at least three aspects which appear
to be predominantly related to any discussion regarding caste among
the Mandal members. First of all, there is the territorial focus of
the village which remains an important social category for identifying
and organising caste ties in the Mandal and beyond. In its relation-
ship to caste, village obviously implies some continuity between the
rural social organisation and the settlement abroad - although the
village-based caste relations overseas are not exactly the same as
those found in Cutch. The focus on village in turn depends on the
fact that as the inhabitants of Cutch, the Mandal-based Leva Kanbi
Patels speak a particular dialect of Gujarati. This common medium of
communication known as Cutchi Gujarati, coupled as it is to the
conception of village, facilitates a fuller enactment of caste relations
which the Mandal members usually express in the context of their sect,
distinguishing kin and affines who do or do not belong to the Mandal.
Further, it is through this shared medium of communication that as Leva
Kanbi Patels, members of the sect maintain an awareness of their common
agrarian origins. It is with an account of their territorial notion of
the village, their Cutch-based Gujarati language and the stories of

their common origin that I introduce the Mandal members as belonging to a particular caste community.

As for their identification with villages of their origin, the Leva Kanbi Patels claim that their entire Kanbi population is spread over twenty four villages surrounding the city of Bhuj which is the capital of Cutch District in Gujarat State (see Appendix 1, Map C). A substantial population of these Kanbi Patels live abroad, increasingly in Britain since the gradual decline of their settlement in East Africa. Those who are members of the Mandal came from eleven villages recorded in the following table.

## TABLE I.

### DISTRIBUTION OF THE MANDAL MEMBERS ACCORDING

### TO THEIR VILLAGES.

| Villages | Number of Mandal Members |
|----------|--------------------------|
| Dahisara | 30 |
| Bharasar | 13 |
| Kera | 10 |
| Madhapor | 13 |
| Naranpur | 4 |
| Badadia | 10 |
| Golpur | 1 |
| Mankuwa | 1 |
| Samantra | 1 |
| Sukhpur | 1 |
| Rampur | 1 |
| Total | 85 |

After their migration from the rural areas of Cutch, it has not been uncommon for the Leva Kanbi Patels to return to their villages for short or prolonged stays. On the whole, however, most of them seem to spend a greater part of their lives overseas. Despite this, their village affiliation remains a significant social category for the Mandal based Leva Kanbi Patels. For instance, in identifying specific individuals it is a common practice to use the village name. In conversation, one may say, "Karsan Lalji of Rampur" or "that Rampuria man" referring to Rampur village to identify the person concerned. In introducing fellow sect members to me, my host Ramjibhai always emphasised the village ties by adding the Gujarati expression Ato amāra gāmna che meaning "He is in fact from our village". However, the interest in the village does not stop at the level of identity of individuals. Over the years, intensity of sentiments for home and village is crystallised in creation of informal committees and associations which maintain keen interest in the affairs of the village. These informal associations organise meetings to discuss village affairs and channel funds to support projects such as building of a temple, a clinic or a school. Those Leva Kanbi Patels who come from Dahisara claim that several thousand pounds have been remitted to the village to support several such projects over the past six or seven years. Besides loyalty to the village as an act of committment to one's 'home', the members who provide assistance also endeavour to consolidate social relations with those who live in the rural communities. Thus the provision of assistance is motivated both by a degree of altruism as well as material interest. Many Leva Kanbi Patels own property - land and houses which they regard as important assets back home. Their

continued interest in the village and generous donations for local

projects maintain their property rights and their status as "those

of the village" in focus at the local level. Leva Kanbi Patels'

recent experiences as settlers in East Africa and currently in Britain,

appear to influence their ideas of property and ownership in the

villages of their origin. The East African experience has brought

home to them the extent to which even an affluent minority can become

vulnerable to political pressures. The effects of such pressures are

part and parcel of their secondary settlement in Britain. Their

British experience itself is not without difficulties. Experience of

racism and periodic national focus on "coloured immigrants" with the

talks of repatriation in the air generates insecurity and fear. In

drawing a simple parallel between East Africa and Britain, the members

express their concern about possibilities of persecution and rejection

in Britain. In view of the perception that there isn't anywhere else

to go, it is felt that it is prudent to safeguard one's stake in the

village. Understanding of this perspective gives the village an

added significance as a social entity.

The Leva Kanbi Patels themselves express the significance of

village in the regular contact they maintain with their kin and affines.

There are fairly rapid channels of communication between their British

settlement and their respective villages in Cutch. First of all, there

is a regular exchange of correspondence between the two sides. Further

the Kanbi Patels regularly visit Cutch whenever they are in India. As

a result they have a good knowledge of the village and the villagers

in turn receive information about migrants' work and homes in Britain.

This information is often 'dressed up' to convey an enhanced impression

of the economic position of Kanbi Patels in Britain. The village

thus provides a focus for two-way diffusion of information about

conditions in Cutch and Britain. A Leva Kanbi Patel may also have

a firm link to his village through what is usually known as Bharamania.

It is probable that the expression Bharamania derives from the Gujarati

word bhalaman which means to recommend or to assist someone by using

informal influence. Whenever a Leva Kanbi Patel talks about his

Bharamania, he refers to a trustworthy agent who administers all his

affairs in the village and generally looks after his interest as well

as that of his dependent relatives. A Bharamania who is not necessarily

a kinsman, can play a crucial part on behalf of his migrant patron.

He advances loans to migrant's relatives, negotiates marriages, obtains

passport and plane tickets and accompanies his patron's wife and

children to Bombay when they travel to Britain. By definition, the

Bharamania has to have the kind of social standing which would enable

him to deal with the institutions beyond the village. For instance,

in preparing his patron's dependents for their journey to Britain,

he has to obtain legal documents such as birth certificates, marriage

certificates and affidavits from the village panchayat - the local

authority - or from the Magistrate's Court in Bhuj. The Leva Kanbi

Patels know from their past experiences that dealings with the local

bureaucrats requires considerable diplomacy and skill. In the absence

of a dependable male agnate, it is usually one's Bharamania who is

familiar with the best method of getting things done at the level of

local bureaucracy. His relationship to his migrant patron constitutes

an important link between the Leva Kanbi Patels in Britain and the

villages of their origin in Cutch.

Just as the affiliation to the Mandal can conflict with caste

relations, some incompatibility may arise between loyalty to the

village on the one hand and loyalty to the Mandal in Britaih on the

other. Some members of the Mandal clearly distinguish the sectarian

sphere of their concern from the village and conceive no necessary

conflict between the two even if village-based considerations make

some cooperation with non-Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels necessary. Others,

especially those committed to the sect with intense devotional fervour,

may give absolute priority to their allegiance to the Mandal. When

they take this priority into account, they tend to define the affairs

of the village from a Mandal viewpoint rather than from the perspective

which emphasises village solidarity. On one occasion, members of an

informal association concerned with Dahisara were collecting funds

for a school building in the village. The Mandal members concerned

were prepared to donate enough funds for the construction of one class-

room provided that the village authority was prepared to put up a

plaque saying that the money for the classroom had been contributed by

London Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal. Situations such as

these where a Kanbi Patel has to choose between priority of the sect

over the village solidarity can give rise to tension and conflict -

although the evidence available during the fieldwork did not indicate

that the Mandal was always seen separately from issues which affected

considerations of one's village.

Despite their attachment to the village, it is not uncommon for

the Leva Kanbi Patels to experience a fair degree of ambivalence about

their rural origins. On the one side, there is memory of the village

and an image of its good life. On the other side there is continuous

accumulation of new experiences which results from the overseas urban

settlement. Although the Kanbi Patels rarely deny the good life

view of the village, when pressed to respond to an actual possibility

of returning permanently to Cutch, they begin to express a measure

of ambivalence. It is reasonable to suggest that this ambivalence

is an indication of the difference between living in a Cutch village

as opposed to living in Britain. In view of this actual difference,

preference for the village is in fact tinged with some doubt if not

with a trace of antipathy towards it. This feeling of doubt is

conveyed in discussion of specific experiences which sharpen the

contrast in material conditions between Britain and Cutch. Given the

ambivalent expression of these differences, the perspective which

defines a migrant's settlement in Britain as an extension of his rural

social organisation is a questionable sociological proposition.[1]

Being original inhabitants of villages in Cutch, the Leva Kanbi

Patels speak Gujarati which is the vernacular language spoken all over

the state of Gujarat. One of the earliest linguistic surveys of India

documents twenty one varieties of Gujarati.[2] It is well-known that

this kind of diversity is typical of most language areas in India.

The Leva Kanbi Patels speak what is known as Cutchi Gujarati, which,

according to Grierson's survey,[3] incorporates elements from Gujarati

and Sindhi. Although Cutchi Gujarati is not a separate language, it

has patterns, expressions and words which are unknown outside the Cutch

region. These linguistic characteristics are important for the Leva Kanbi

Patels as they utilise these differences to distinguish themselves as a

category apart from other Gujarati groups.[4] The popular proverb that

bar game boli badlaya, namely the speech patterns change every twelve

miles you travel in Gujarat, is a matter of some social and cultural

significance.

Overseas migration and settlement has influenced the character
of the Cutchi vernacular. Although the Swahili language did not enjoy
a dominant status as a medium of communication during the colonial
rule in East Africa, it was nevertheless understood by nearly all
Africans. The market interaction which brought the Indians and
Africans together required the use of Swahili as a medium of communic-
ation unless a specific tribal language such as Kikuyu or Luganda was
used. The regular nature of this contact meant that most Indian men
and women learned some spoken Swahili and also incorporated many
Swahili words and expressions in their own vernacular. Some of these
Swahili words have found a permanent anchorage in Gujarati, just as
have many English words. Along with other East African Asians, the
Leva Kanbi Patels of the Mandal use words such as _gasia_ (dirt), _fagia_
( a broom), _sani_ (a plate), _bakuli_ (a bowl) almost unconsciously.
Further, the East African Asians who possessed limited or no proficiency
in English almost invariably used Swahili to communicate to the Indians
from a different linguistic area such as South India. They also used
Swahili to communicate to non-Indians. The notion of Swahili as a
language to be used with outsiders had become a deeply rooted trait.
It was reported to me that there were several instances of Leva Kanbi
Patel workers who had spoken to their English supervisors and workmates
in Swahili on London construction sites, generating some bewilderment
and amusement.

Although the Leva Kanbi Patels maintained contact with their
rural home when they lived in Africa, their relatively permanent stay
in African countries influenced their use of Cutchi Gujarati. Those
pioneer migrants who had grown up in Cutch as young men and adults
generally maintain the richness of their vernacular expression. Their

children, unless they spent much of their childhood in their home
villages, have tended to lose many attributes of Cutchi Gujarati.
As they were brought up in East Africa, they were exposed to a
particular style of speaking Gujarati which has its own distinctive-
ness among the East African born speakers of the language. They can
in fact distinguish their own linguistic expression from the one used
in Gujarat - the more polished and Sanskritic version of the latter
being somewhat pedantic from their point of view.  In the process of
assimilating the East African style of speaking Gujarati, the younger
Leva Kanbi Patels have tended to lose the Cutchi flavour in their
expression.

Two groups of children can be distinguished with respect to the
adoption of English language.  First of all, there are those boys and
girls who arrive in Britain at an age at which they experience the
sharpest degree of discontinuity between their Cutch or East Africa
based school experience and that which they encounter in primary schools
and comprehensives in London or Bolton. Their age seems to be an
important factor in determining the extent to which they make some
success of their school days.  If the children are already fourteen
or fifteen years of age, their age determined class in the school puts
them at maximum disadvantage as they spend much of their time learning
English.  Most of them tend to use the vernacular to communicate to
each other and possibly develop a more restricted command over spoken
and written English. Secondly, there are those children who either
have been born in Britain or have entered the school system at an
early age.  As a result, they receive earlier primary training in
English and use the medium with a British proficiency and flavour.

Although they continue to use Cutchi Gujarati at home and in all
community contexts, for all practical purposes English becomes their
primary means of communication. The implications of this linguistic
change are more fully explored in Chapter 8.

Overseas settlement, first in Africa and then in Britain, has
generated changes in the linguistic pattern which are likely to
diminish the significance of the Cutchi vernacular as a medium of
communication within the Mandal as well as among the Leva Kanbi Patels
as a whole. This aspect of social change deeply concerns the more
senior leaders of the Mandal. Although they accept that English is
the dominant language for work and employment, they also express a
keen concern for the retention of Gujarati within the Mandal. The
senior leaders feel that they are responsible for the transmission of
the sectarian ideology of moksha as it is a pillar of their social
organisation. Recognising the sectarian importance of the language,
to foster interest in Gujarati among the second generation children
of the sect members, the Mandal has instituted a programme to ensure
that the younger children learn to read, write and communicate in the
vernacular. During the fieldwork period as well as thereafter, special
Sunday classes were held to provide instruction in Gujarati. The
leaders attempted to achieve two separate objectives in these classes.
It was decided that the children should learn Gujarati using one or
two sectarian texts concerned with history and development of the sect.
The idea was to utilise Gujarati to reinforce the sectarian ideology
and commitment to it. The fusion of learning of the vernacular through
the sectarian ideology was regarded as a proper response to the direction
of linguistic changes. The degree to which the provision of such

teaching is likely to be effective is discussed more fully in

Chapter six, which focuses on the relationship between ideology and

the organisation of the sect. The substance of the argument is to

illustrate the prospect a South Asian sectarian minority faces in

order to maintain and foster its cultural identity.

The Leva Kanbi Patels, especially the pioneers who left Cutch

to live abroad, take pride in their agrarian origins. Throughout

all parts of Gujarat state and beyond the word Kanbi is used to refer

to peasant cultivators. In an earlier account of Indian tribes and

castes, Enthoven refers to the wider currency of the expression

Kanbi.[5] Similarly, Alexander Kinlock Forbes in his account of Gujarat,

identifies the cultivators as "Koonbees of Goozerat", describing them

as "an industrious and orderly class of people, simple in their mode

of life".[6] In his anthropological account of Leva Kanbi (Patidar)

of the Kaira District of the Gujarat State, David Pocock has also

noted the use of the word Kanbi to identify agriculturists throughout

Gujarat.[7] For the Patidars, many of whom are now successful entre-

prenurial migrants living in Britain,[8] with their successful transition

from peasantry to a petit-bourgeois position at home and abroad, the

word Kanbi has acquired uncomplimentary and even derogatory meaning

conveying lack of culture and sophistication. However, the Cutchi

Patels do not seem to find the word Kanbi uncomplimentary in spite of

their successful settlement abroad. In contrast to Patidars from the

Kaira District of Gujarat, they proudly call themselves Kanbis and

also assert a sense of dignity in their past association with

agriculture and cultivation. They then explain the etymology of Kanbi

as "the sower of seeds" referring to a story of their distant past

which was as follows:

> Once upon a time, there lived a spiritual master,
> a _guru_ in Cutch. He had two disciples one of whom
> was a Kanbi Patel and tne other was a rich _vania_
> merchant. When the _guru_ decided to impart spiritual
> enlightenment to them, he presented them with a
> seed each and asked them to preserve it with greatest
> care, reminding the disciples tnat the preservation
> demanded was of utmost spiritual significance. There-
> after, three years lapsed and the master returned to
> the village to visit his disciples. What had happened
> to the seeds was a matter of concern for the _guru_.
> Tne _vania_ merchant had carefully wrapped it in a piece
> of _cloth_ and deposited it in a small gold case securely
> kept in a safe vault. When the _guru_ asked him to return
> the seed, the merchant opened tne gold case and
> unwrapped the cloth. The seed had already rotted and
> there was no end to the _guru's_ disappointment. When
> the _guru_ turned to the Kanbi Patel, he responded to
> the master joyfully and said, "Maharaj, my seed is
> now so enormous that one cannot lift it any more".
> To show this seed to the master, he led the puzzled
> _guru_ to his field where lay a large heap of harvested
> grain. The Kanbi then explained to the master how he
> had planted the seed in his field and multiplied it
> over the years. The master blessed him and the Kanbis
> became the true sowers of seeds.

In relating this story to the word Kanbi itself, the Cutchi Patels

say that if the word is divided between _kan_ and _bi_, the former part

refers to the grain and the latter to the seed. Components of the word

are thus believed to signify their agrarian origins.

As the Kanbi Patels separate themselves into two major divisions,

Leva and Kadva, they explain these divisions with reference to a story

which on the one hand emphasises their legendary ancestral unity and their

contemporary separation and mutual exclusion on the other. As for the

comparable divisions among the Patidars of Kaira, David Pocock informs

us that the names Leva and Kadva are derived from the names of two sons

of Rama-Lav and Kus. The Patidars then claim descent from them directly

or from those who assisted Lav and Kus in the performance of a sacred

sacrifice.[9] It is interesting that as yet the Cutchi Patels have not

reproduced these stories. The potential for their diffusion can not be

denied as such stories provide <u>Ramayana</u>- based legitimation for the
socio-cultural identity of a particular group. However, the Cutchi
stories appear to point much more to Islamic influences which might
have been syncretic and then might have led to a sharper distinction
between the Hindu Patels and others who might have partly subscribed
to Islam, drawing both Hindu and non-Hindu elements in their cultural
organisation. As this statement is largely based on the content of
the stories about Leva and Kadva brothers, however, it is best
regarded as an untested speculative hypothesis. The Cutchi Patels in
the field provided two variants of the story, both of which point to
a mutual exclusiveness between Leva and Kadva Kanbi Patels and possible
links between the Kadva and the local influence of Islam in Cutch.

According to one version of the story narrated to me, Leva and
Kadva as brothers were going on a pilgrimage to holy places. On their
journey, they met a Muslim saint known as the Pir. As both the brothers
were thirsty, the Pir invited them to a nearby waterhole he had made
himself. When the Pir learned that the brothers were going on a pilgrimage,
he said to them, "Why do you want to go on a pilgrimage when I can show
you all the gods and goddesses in this waterhole?" Performing a
miracle, the Pir showed the brothers the entire spectrum of the Hindu
pantheon. As the Pir then invited both the brothers to follow his own
teaching, the Leva suspected that the Pir wanted to convert them both
to Islam. He then decided to pursue his pilgrimage leaving his brother
with the Pir. The Kadva committed himself to the Pir to follow the
latter's teachings.

The second version of the story varies from the first one in one
respect. After the Pir invited them for a cool drink, he imparted

spiritual knowledge to Kadva by spitting into his mouth. Leva noticed that the Pir had polluted his brother by spitting into his mouth. Since Kadva had willingly placed himself in a state of ritual impurity, Leva severed his ties with him. Thereafter the descendants of the brothers separated and formed two mutually exclusive divisions of the Kanbi Patels named after each brother.

When the Leva Kanbi Patels identify the Kadva Kanbi Patels as a separate group notwithstanding the fraternal bond between their ancestors, they use the word Mumna as it is applied to a group which observes Islamic practices. In ranking themselves above the Kadvas, identified as Mumnas, the Leva Kanbi Patels assert that the distinction between the two groups derives from religious differences. In the absence of any fieldwork material on the Kadva Kanbi Patels, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these differences were rooted both in cultural and socio-economic changes taking place in Cutch. However, for the Leva Kanbi Patels these differences are important. It is in view of these differences that they also call the Kadvas the Khanawallah as the latter call their place of worship Khana. According to the connotations attributed to Khana it is regarded as being similar to jamatkhana where the Shia Imami Ismailis assemble to pray and worship. Calling Kadvas Mumnas or khanawallah, the Leva Kanbi Patels relate them to Islamic values and bring the opposition and exclusiveness between the Leva and Kadva into a sharper focus. Levas are also contemptuous of the Kadva marriage ceremony. Although the Kadva follow Hindu prescriptions, they do not incorporate a sacrificial fire into their marriage rite.[10] A particular part of the ceremony entails a symbolic slaughter of a cow. A string is tied around a miniature cow made out of some sugar molasses. The following ritual formulae is uttered when the string is pulled to perform the ritual slaughter.

> I did not slaughter her
> You did not slaughter her
> The string slaughtered her.

Thereafter the bride, groom and others take the brown sugar as ritually

consecrated food (prasād).   In all probability, the ritual expresses

an ideological tension between non-vegetarianism and vegetarianism

and a sense of social inferiority and ambivalence the Kadvas might

have experienced on increasing acceptance of Hindu values. Although

the Leva Kanbi Patels themselves are not concerned with the meaning

and symbolic complexity of this ritual, they regard the performance

of a symbolic slaughter, now a dying custom, as an act both antithetical

and inferior to their cultural values.

If the assertion that the Kadvas are Mumnas viewed as Muslims,

is accepted, than Enthoven's observations[11] lend some credibility to

the thesis that they were in fact in the process of accepting Hindu

values. This being the case, they are also likely to have experienced

some hostility from the Leva Kanbis with whom they sought status

parity by calling themselves Kadva. Although the ancestral affinity

between Leva and Kadva does not seem to have been translated into

contemporary fraternity between the two groups, the Mumnas do seem to

have moved towards a degree of acceptance among the Hindus. Enthoven

informs us that the Mumnas were first converted to Islam by Imam Shah

or Pir Sadruddin.  Later, dissociating themselves from Islam, they

apparently styled themselves as Kadva Kanbi Patels.  Enthoven's

suggestion that many of them have become members of Swaminarayan sects

is at least partly corroborated by the Mandal members themselves. They

inform me that the Mumnas accept the Hindu values, build Laksniminarayan

temples, follow Hindu customs and their leaders express persistent

willingness to have marriage ties with the Leva Kanbi Patels. Although

the Leva Kanbi Patels assert that they maintain no relationship with

the Kadvas, it is reasonable to assume that some of those Mumnas who

style themselves as Kadva Kanbi Patels may have become members of Hindu

groups such as the Leva Kanbi Patels and their Swaminarayan sects.

Those Leva Kanbi Patels who are pioneer migrants from the Cutch

see the story of their origin as the true sowers of seeds and their

separation from the lower ranking Kadva Kanbi Patels as an important

part of their identity as a corporate group irrespective of whether

they are in England or not. Children of the pioneer migrants either

born in East Africa or Britain are less likely to share these stories

with the same degree of intensity. If the loss of effective communic-

ation between the pioneers and their British born children does occur,

it might inhibit effective transmission of this part of their Cutchi

tradition in Britain. What is, however, most likely to remain significant

for the Mandal-based Leva Kanbi Patels is the central importance of

their membership to the nāt group and their affiliation to the sect.

It is to their caste membership to which the following account is

devoted.


2. CASTE COMMUNITY AMONG THE LEVA KANBI PATELS.

The distinction between the caste system and individual castes

and the transition of the former to the latter, distinguished by

David Pocock[12] and others, provides a useful starting point for a

discussion of caste among the Leva Kanbi Patels in Britain. The

transition or shift as Pocock calls it[13] is an important dimension.

For it highlights the nature of change as traditional groups enter a

modern economy characterised by the complex division of labour
and marked by the dominance of market forces.

According to David Pocock and Louis Dumont - who provides one
of the most systematic accounts of the traditional caste system in
his stimulating and seminal study Homo Hierarchicus[14] - three conditions
distinguish the caste system in India.  Using Bougle's definition,
both Pocock and Dumont argue that the following characteristics
distinguish one hereditary caste from the other and connect them into
what is generally envisaged to be an organic whole. These are:

1.    hierarchical organisation

2.    institutional separation

3.    division of labour and the interdependence it entails.[15]

In Dumont's exposition, these principles rest on the fundamental
opposition between pure and impure. The opposed dichotomy of pure and
impure and the interdependence in the division of labour constitutes
the core of the traditional organisation of castes. Though Dumont
puts primary emphasis on the significance of ideology in the constit-
ution of the system, his use of Bougle's definition provides an
important conception of caste as a system. David Pocock applies
Bougle's three conditions to the settlement of Gujaratis in East Africa.
His analysis illustrates clearly that castes in East Africa are torn
out of their original social contexts and find no "surround of higher
and lower castes in relation to which they could gauge their own social
status".[16] Once villagers migrate to cities in India or abroad, any
possibility of consensus on hierarchical organisation, rules of
separation and interdependence between groups, becomes redundant. As
Pocock argues, "The hierarchy to which each caste belongs is the

hierarchy of its area".[17] In cities and in overseas settlements,

individuals come from different areas and different local hierarchies

which are not identical and interchangeable entities. They exclude a

scope for commonly accepted standards for a traditional reproduction

of the caste system. Outside the socio-cultural context of the system,

caste groups emerge as separate elements rather than entities bound

together in a system. In other words, as the migration becomes a

significant social process, as David Pocock puts it succinctly, "Castes

exist, but it would appear, the caste system has ceased to be".[18]

This distinction is particularly illuminating as it provides a clue

to an understanding of caste groups as categories dissociated from

the traditional system.

As for the factors which bring about the shift from the system

to separate and distinct groups and categories, the Pax Britanica in

India and the progressive incorporation of traditional groups into

the institutions of modern political economy have played a decisive

part in undermining traditional hierarchical relations. The development

of a capitalist division of labour at the national and international

levels, often described as "modernisation", generally dominates the

traditional division of labour and undermines the social arrangements

it gives rise to. In alluding to this historical transformation and

referring to the urban social structure, Pocock affirms, "...in cities

of India, the various factors of modern industrial life make for a

dimunition of emphasis upon hierarchy and hereditary specialisation".[19]

As the modern division of labour makes the caste system redundant, the

residue which members of a particular caste carry over in new circum-

stances is the language and psychology of hierarchy —a part of which

is the conception of difference. The notion of "difference"[20]

implicit in the categorisation of groups as castes becomes an

important criteria for defining group identity and group boundaries.

Outside the traditional system, it is the difference between the

castes which is substituted for the hierarchy and its statuses.

Both in East Africa and now in Britain it is the difference rather

than who is high and who is low which remains the distinctive feature

of caste. In contrast to the scale of groupings in a more traditional

setting, the modern caste groups have a much wider horizontal spread.[21]

A caste category is transformed into a caste group when hitherto

unrelated groups share a common name and cultural attributes which

they utilise as a basis of association. The contemporary focus on

caste is more likely to be on such a wider grouping and its development

in the modern economic and political order. It is in this sense that

the Leva Kanbi Patels as well as other Indians form caste groups in

East Africa.[22] From the available evidence it appears that a similar

process of group formation is under way amongst the Indians in the

United Kingdom.[23]

In the present account, it has been already suggested that the

word Indians use to describe their caste group is nāt, jāt or jāti.

However, it is the word caste which is used to describe the social

organisation of Indian society particularly in relation to named

endogamous kin groups. As a term on its own, the word caste can prove

to be misleading if it is applied to different levels of segmentation

occuring in specific groups. To avoid terminological confusion, it

is better to use the words group members themselves use in order to

identify segmentation and division in their own caste. This procedure

was found to be fruitful in the study of a city-ward in Kampala Uganda and it was decided to adopt a similar approach in the field-work in the present study.

There are three words the Indians from Gujarat use whenever they talk about their caste affiliation. These words are varna, nāt, or jāt often compounded as nāt-jāt and atak.[24] It is well known that whenever the Indians, especially the Hindus, use the word varna, they refer to the classical division of Indian society into a fourfold hierarchy consisting of the Brahmins, priests at the top, followed by Kshatriya, the warriors, Vaishya the merchants and Shudra, the workers in a descending order of importance. The fifth category of the out-caste untouchables is often placed beyond the pale of this legitimate scheme. It is also equally well known that varna as a category does not correspond to any actual groups but merely to an ideal model of a social order. The Leva Kanbi Patels are familiar with this particular usage, although they themselves rarely use the word varna to talk about their own caste affiliation. However, if they are pressed to define their place on varna hierarchy, they would usually identify themselves as vaishya (merchants) despite the fact that their actual work would correspond much less to this particular category. Besides this widely known use of varna in India, it is not uncommon to find the word used to identify a particular corporate group. For example, Donna Nelson's researches among the Catholic Goans of Nairobi has shown that they use three of the four varna categories to differentiate Bamon (Brahmins), Chaddo (Kshatriya) and Sudra, each of which is a specific group. The scheme dispenses with the category vaishya, the merchants whom the Portuguese are believed to have chased away.[25] Similarly, the use of

varna acquires a specific corporate meaning among the Leva Kanbi Patels.
So in a narrower social sense, they use varna rendering it varan, used
synonymously with the word nāt or jāt. Used this way, instead of
referring to the classical hierarchy, varna stands for a corporate
group which is the source of all kinship and affinal relations for an
individual.

On the whole, varna is a residual and even a redundant category
among the Gujaratis in Britain, unless, as among the Cutchi Patels, it
is used to describe the effective social group, the nāt or jāt. However,
there is one particular aspect of life in Britain which might give the
word varna a new meaning and this meaning may correspond to the original
denotation of varna as colour.[26] In giving formal description of race
relations in Britain, it is remarkable that instead of using the more
widely and commonly understood Gujarati word ranga for colour or
rangabhed for colour discrimination, the London based Gujarati weekly
papers Garvi Gujarat and Gujarat Samachar use the word varna to describe
relations and events which are usually expressed in terms of race.
Gujarati phrases such as varniya sambandho (race relations) or varniya
vyawastha as arrangements concerning race relations, are regularly
used in Garvi Gujarat and Gujarat Samachar editorials and news focussing
on British race relations. In view of this particular currency of the
word varna in Britain, it is not surprising that it has found its way on
the posters the Commission for Racial Equality has prepared for the
Gujaratis. One such poster reminds Gujaratis to become more conscious
of their civil rights and refers to racial discrimination as varniya
bhedbhar. In other words, there is a possibility that the socio-cultural
meaning that the word colour has among the British may increasingly
become linked to the word varna among some speakers of the Gujarati

language. The association between varna and colour in Britain may give

the word varna a distinctiveness which might not correspond to the

more traditional use of varna in India. Even though the Cutchi Patels

themselves are not fully familiar with this particular link between

varna and colour in Britain, its use in the Gujarati weekly papers and

elsewhere is an excellent illustration of the way a category of

traditional social organisation can acquire a special social significance

and meaning in the migrants' new circumstances in Britain.

As stated before, the significance Leva Kanbi Patels attach to

varna primarily concerns their use of the category to describe their

own corporate group. For a Leva Kanbi Patel, as for most other

Gujaratis in Britain, it is one's own nāt or jāt that provides a basis

for primary social affiliation as well as a framework for all kinship

and affinal relations. A particular nāt usually maintains separation

from other nāt so that no social ties of kinship and affinity cut

across the nāt boundaries. As a socially exclusive and autonomous

unit of social relations and as an important basis of social identific-

ation, it is one's own nāt that makes one a Leva Kanbi Patel from

Cutch. Using nāt as a base for a significant social identity, a

Leva Kanbi Patel would clearly distinguish nātila as opposed to those

who are parnātila. Nātilas are the ones with whom one shares a

common context of endogamy and a whole range of interpersonal relation-

ships. Whereas parnatita, the prefix par meaning beyond, refers to

those who are outside nāt and therefore ipso facto excluded from the

relationships which entail kin and affinal obligations. The categories

nātila and parnatila entail no explicit hierarchical evaluation, although

a diffuse feeling of nātila as being desirable and better if not

superior than parnātila is not entirely absent. What is crucial is

not any perception of hierarchy between the two categories but a

knowledge of basic difference between them, a difference most clearly

manifested in nāt-jāt endogamy. As traditional standards such as the

distinctions between pure and impure become redundant, rules of

endogamy acquire greater significance in determining the difference

between those who do and do not belong to the nāt or jāt. The Leva

Kanbi Patels in and out of the Mandal generally disapproved of

deviations which breached the nāt based rules of marriage. The field-

work inquiry yielded no instances of any marriages across the nāt

boundary. There were one or two unverified instances of Cutchi Patels

outside the Mandal who were known to have struck up alliances with

their English girl friends. These alliances were strongly disfavoured

and the parties to such relationships were always thought to have lost

a fair degree of moral worth in breaking one of the most important

rules of their nāt membership. If the deviants should return to the

nāt fold, their commitment to the agnates and affines is rarely regarded

as being similar to those who conform to the endogamous pattern of nāt

marriages. These might stem from the training and education of the

young in Britain. As long as the young accept to marry in their own

nāt, it is believed that the cultural identity of the group will remain

unaltered. There was no evidence of any rejection of nāt-based marriages

among the young, who, after some symbolic opposition to marriages in

general, happily accept marriages as arranged by their parents.

It is in relation to marriages within the nāt that atak becomes

an important factor. In other words, as among other Gujarati nāt groups

such as the Lohanas,[27] the Leva Kanbi Patels are divided into a

number of atako as it is termed in plural in Gujarati. The simplest

marriage rule regarding the atak is that one always marries outside

one's own atak.  Those who share the same atak are usually regarded

as siblings and marriage between them is seen as constituting incest.

The exogamous feature of atak is evident in different names such as

Hirani or Varsani placed after one's proper name. Those with the

common atak name share an agnatic ideology which is expressed in

fraternal terms. Asserting that "we are all brothers" or that "we

descend from a common ancester" does not require any spelling out of

the actual genealogical relationships. The common atak name itself is

a sufficient assertion of shared agnatic descent. Since marriages

always take place between members of different ataks, they are inter-

related through numerous affinal links. Within the nāt, the ataks

are not graded or ranked in any hierarchical scheme. The relationship

between exogamous units is marked by equality. A particular atak does

not possess any corporate character. The corporate dimension would

apply only where actual agnatic relationship is included into atak-

based fraternal ideology.  However, this corporate character grows

nebulous where the relationship is affirmed as a matter of ideology

rather than as a matter of fact. The Gujarati dictionary Sarth Gujarati

Jodni Kosh[28] defines atak (or adek) as referring to gotra, occupation

or a place of origin.  Leva Kanbi Patels see it as referring to an

ancestor or to a place of their origin.  In the final analysis atak is

concerned with the ideal of fraternity expressed in exogamous marriages

within the caste.

The following table shows a number of different atako to which 85

members of the Mandal belong.

TABLE 2

ATAKO OF THE MANDAL MEMBERS

| Atak Name | Number |
|-----------|--------|
| Pindoria | 18 |
| Varsani | 8 |
| Vekaria | 4 |
| Kara | 2 |
| Halai | 23 |
| Hirani | 7 |
| Kerai | 7 |
| Sanghani | 2 |
| Vaghdia | 1 |
| Jesani | 3 |
| Gami | 2 |
| Rabadia | 2 |
| Gorasia | 1 |
| Khokhrai | 2 |
| Bhudia | 3 |
| Total | 85 |

To examine the kind of relationship atak has to the nāt, the distinction Adrian Mayer draws between kindred of recognition and kindred of cooperation[29] can be fruitfully applied. The explanation that Adrian Mayer develops to distinguish caste from subcaste is less relevant in the present study as it is unnecessary in the British context to account for an overall structural map of caste appropriate in India. In other words to apply the distinction between kindred of recognition and kindred of cooperation to the Leva Kanbi Patels, the categories are set apart from their original framework although their specific meaning is retained fully. However, their validity in the present study does not exactly correspond to Mayer's original formulation.

Mayer defines kindred of recognition as "the population within which
marriages are made and/or kin links can be traced through mutual kin".[30]
This is, as Mayer emphasises, de facto an endogamous body. A Leva
Kanbi Patel sees his entire nāt as constituting his kindred of
recognition, an endogamous body whose members are now spread from
Cutch and East Africa to Britain. By contrast, the kindred of cooper-
ation forms an effective local group. On the basis of individual
choice and decision, the kin in this particular cluster build up
specific relationships. They form a much smaller part of the whole
nāt. It is important to emphasise that the kindred of cooperation
is not identical with those who bear a common atak name, and indeed
must comprise people of different atako. In theory the Leva Kanbi
Patels often distinguish agnates from affines, formally relating the
distinctions to the differences in atak names. However, in practice
the separation between the two is inconsequential. For in practical
situations, ties of reciprocity and of obligations generate solidarity
and cooperation not only among agnates but also between them and their
affines. A degree of priority attributed to agnatic affiliation does
not undermine the significance of affines within the kindred of
cooperation. The international migration and settlement in Britain
is most likely to influence the attitudes to the kindred on the
father's or mother's side. For example, young girls betrothed to men
living in Cutch express a categorical reluctance to settle in their
homeland. In one particular instance, a seventeen year old girl
stated she did not wish to return to "the mud" as she herself put it.
Socialisation in England and a desire to improve material conditions
in London and Bolton may generate less favourable responses to the
agnatic and affinal kindred who live in Cutch. The migratory movements

and settlements can alter more traditional patterns of kin obligations.
For example, in more customary circumstances in Cutch or East Africa
solidarity between brothers might inhibit a social relation between
a man and his wife's brothers.  However, overseas the same man might
establish closer contact with his wife's brother if his own brother
continued to live in Cutch.  In such an instance the sibling solidarity
remains weak and the affinal connection grows stronger.  In other
words, within the context of kindred of recognition as a de facto
grouping, difference might grow between British and India based kin,
and this in turn might influence individual choice regarding the
boundaries of the kindred of cooperation.

The fact that Swaminarayan sects recruit from among the nāt of
Leva Kanbi Patels gives a distinctive character to the social
organisation of nāt-jāt and atak.  The segmentation within the primary
Swaminarayan movement and a degree of opposition between the primary
and secondary sectarian organisations have introduced an element of
divisiveness in the social organisation of the nāt.  A fuller account
of the genesis of this divisive cleavage is fully developed in the
following chapter. The circumstances which lead to the manifestation
of the cleavage in the United Kingdom are discussed fully in the
seventh chapter. The analysis of the cleavage illustrates the kind
of social significance it acquires among the Leva Kanbi Patels. At
this stage in the study, it is important to emphasise that the inter-
relationship between caste and sect cuts across the closest kindred
among whom solidarity and cohesiveness are commonly assumed.  However,
the organisation of the Mandal shows clearly that dual affiliation to
nāt and sampradāya is an enduring source of cleavage and it creates
a fair measure of opposition and conflict in the kin based organisation

of nāt. As for their sectarian connection, the Mandal members say
that although they do not deny the importance of their nāt-based
relationships, if they had to choose between their caste and sect,
their own commitment to the Mandal would outweigh their loyalty to
the caste. Sectarian adherence can often divide the closest kin in
those situations where the conflict between nāt and sampradāya
becomes manifest. This element of sect-based divisiveness does not
generate a permanent division between those of the sect and those of
the caste. It is the divisive cleavage rather than actual division
that affects interrelationship between sect and caste. As long as a
degree of identity can be maintained between the two, the cleavage
remains a latent category. On the other hand, if the identity between
sect and caste is questioned, that is if a person is required to
choose between his sectarian commitment and caste loyalty, the
particular context of this choice can make the cleavage manifest.
Then different degrees of rigidity can be brought to bear on the
demarcation and the extent of mutual exclusion between sect and caste.
It is this bilateral membership of two overlapping categories and
the potential of opposition between the two which makes the relation-
ship between the Mandal and the nāt of Leva Kanbi Patels unusually
distinctive.


3.   CLASS, CASTE AND SECT:

Distinct from the dual affiliation a Mandal member has to the
sect and caste there is the British class structure. As the livelihood
of the Mandal members primarily depends on the British economic system,
the relationship between class on the one hand and sect and caste on
the other, assumes some importance in this study. To examine the

sociological significance of this interrelationship, it is best to
begin by making a distinction between the actuality of class situation
and the participants' consciousness of it. As argued in the previous
chapter, members of the Mandal, like other Asians, have a historically
specific position in the British class system. In the Mandal members'
initial settlement in Britain, forms of consciousness which seem to
matter most, centre on the sect and the caste, but this does not mean
that class position and consciousness are irrelevant. A degree of
class consciousness can be discerned among some Mandal members even
when they are mostly concerned with the duality of their connection
to the sect and caste. If it is assumed that this awareness of class
largely stems from their daily experience of the actuality of the
class structure, then it is appropriate to suggest that their class
perspective has some influence on the sum total of their activities
including their caste and sectarian participation. It ought to be
emphasised at the outset that these categories are not mutually
exclusive in any simple and mechanical way. Becoming class conscious
does not exclude maintenance of some intense awareness of caste and
sect even when the former does clash with the latter. In reverse,
sectarian and caste consciousness does not presuppose a total exclusion
of class-based considerations. As the case study presented here
illustrates, the interplay between all the three factors can occur
in practice and therefore can often generate conflicting pulls for
the actors concerned.

Although explicit class analysis of caste and sectarian communities
is not commonly attempted in accounts of caste among the overseas
Indians, the class aspect can be discerned in the kind of explanation

constructed to show the absence or presence of the caste system or
of some of its residual attributes. For example, Barton Schwartz's
book[31] provides useful data on the declining significance of caste
as a principle of social organisation among the overseas Indians.
Adrian Mayer's Introduction to the contributions in this study high-
lights that caste is not a significant factor among the Indians who
live outside India. In raising the question why this should be the
case, Adrian Mayer indicates that "caste is not the primary basis for
activities and relationships, except to some extent in endogamy".[32]
The contributors to this volume are more concerned with showing the
absence of caste by comparing it with caste relations in India rather
than with those social and historical processes which undermine the
significance of caste. However, Adrian Mayer does allude to this
dimension of change when he says,

> Caste status is therefore generally only a reflection
> of a person's social status rather than a governing
> influence on it, status being derived from elements
> such as education, occupation and wealth and political
> power. 33.

Although Mayer does not refer to the class structure as such, it is
clear that the elements he takes as important in determining statuses
are usually rooted in the development of a class structure in a
particular society. Although class consciousness arises from material
class relations, the actuality of the class structure does not give
rise to class consciousness in any invariable fashion. Class con-
sciousness in the sense of awareness of one's material interest in a
wider socio-cultural and historical context can take diverse forms.
As argued before, although the Mandal members do not share with the
British workers the appropriate class tradition and culture, there is

an extent to which they express a measure of their class identity.

Their identification with labour is distinctive. Some members of

the sect would use the Gujarati word majoori, meaning labour to

emphasise the manual work they do. They would also use the phrase

such as ame majoor vargana manaso to convey "we the working class

people". It should be stressed that the phrase "we the working class

people" in English language in Britain, conveys an image of history

and social solidarity which does not correspond to the Gujarati phrase.

Connotations of the two phrases are not interchangeable if the words

are to carry their full meanings. In my observation, the Gujarati

phrase was used much more to emphasise manual work, rather than a

perception and understanding in which work is explicitly related to

the class structure. It is probable that wider class awareness may

one day become an important feature among the sect members, though,

during the fieldwork, it was mainly expressed in a concern for obtaining

work. Apart from a degree of identification with labour, non-manual

Mandal workers do aspire to what is usually described as a middle

class way of life. This mode of living is centered on semi-detached

suburban residence, ideally desired away from "where all the immigrants

live" with an emphasis on self-advancement through a professional

career or at least a reasonable, even respectable clerkship. If a

Mandal member subscribes to this particular ideal, the direction of

his self-interest may partly conflict with the totality of his commitment,

especially to the sect and therefore to his caste as well. The following

case study addresses itself to sect and caste affiliation on the one

hand and to the class aspirations on the other. It is essential to

point out that the consciousness of class that occurs in this instance

is not the kind of awareness which, being radical and progressive in

character, is directed towards class-based mobilisation and focused
on some interest. Class consciousness in the following instance is
concerned with individual interest and personal advancement, which,
as Mayer has pointed out[34] relate to education, work and wealth and
political power. As far as the Mandal members are concerned, though
the sect-based status does class with an awareness of middle class
status, the two are not necessarily and totally discontinuous.  It
is the lack of mutual exclusion between the two which is a source of
ambivalence and ambiguity about alternative statuses.

## 4.    CLASS, CASTE AND SECT : A CASE STUDY

A Mandal member who I will call Kanji as a pseudonym in this
case study, is exceptional in expressing a measure of doubt about
the sect and its organisation.  However, his own behaviour reflects
inconsistency which is also expressed in his attitude to issues and
matters which alternatively concern class or caste and sect.  It is
useful to develop this case study with a brief synopsis of his bio-
graphy so that his transition to more prestigious mental work can be
related to his partial desire to see himself apart from the Mandal
although not entirely separated from it.

In keeping with the pattern of migration discussed earlier, Kanji
left his natal village Kera in Cutch as soon as he was married in his
early teens. First he travelled to Nairobi where he was initially
enrolled in a junior school.  His educational career was not to last
too long. For, when his wife was due to join him, his father expected
him to find employment so that he could lend his financial support to
the family. Despite his desire to receive adequate schooling, Kanji

had to leave school to find work. With the assistance of a good
friend, he managed to become an apprentice clerk in one of the local
courts. Although he proceeded with limited English, he worked hard
and built up a sound knowledge of work procedures and proved himself
to be an efficient worker. His superiors, initially the colonial
English expatriates, were satisfied with his work performance and
made him responsible for a range of duties. They also indicated to
him that he had an opportunity to earn more as well as to obtain
promotion if he studied for 'O' levels. Kanji had never given up
his willingness to educate himself and he applied his spare time to
prepare for 'O' level examinations. Working fully and studying at
the same time combined with family responsibilities meant what Kanji
called "hard life". At the end, he obtained the bital 'O' levels,
including a pass in English after an initial failure. This educational
success brought to him several benefits. First, it improved his
employment prospects and pay. Secondly, his ascendant white collar
career also made him a prominent member of the caste community as well
as of the sectarian congregation. The sect members, however, tended to
view his success with envy and suspicion as it was felt that the
prominence attributed to him was giving rise to egoism and arrogance.
Nevertheless, Kanji was highly successful at his respectable employment.
His reasonable command over English, close familiarity with the local
immigration offices, and in general his ability to use literacy to
considerable gain and personal advantage, brought him some esteem,
even among the Mandal members who questioned the genuinesss of his
devotion to the sect.

In the mid-sixties, it was in the context of decolonisation and
Africanisation that Kanji decided that the best course of action open
to him was permanent settlement in England where many of his associates
were going. He arrived in London with his wife and five children.
According to Kanji, his initial stay in London was critical for one
important reason. Whether or not he would obtain a reasonable white
collar employment was a matter of vital concern. For he knew there
were many instances where the East African Asians who were white
collar workers had to undertake manual work as they could obtain no
office jobs. However, Kanji diligently searched for a clerical post
and eventually succeeded in finding a place in a Government Department.
In Kenya, it was through his white collar employment that he had seen
himself apart from those members of the sect whose acceptance of
manual work was ungrudging. Kanji was happy that his work status
in Britain had remained unchanged. He applied himself to the London
post with enthusiasm and, in due course, established his reputation
as a hardworking person in his particular section. Then, he said,
there was no more trouble, implying that initially he might have
experienced some difficulties.

His London settlement had necessitated a degree of dependence on
the caste and sect members. Once his wife began working in a local
factory, both of them accumulated sufficient funds to put down a
deposit for a house. They finally bought a property in Hendon to keep
in close touch with their relatives and friends. It was in relation
to his housing choice in Hendon that Kanui expressed his strong desire
to be away from "them" - the Mandal members - so that he could pursue
his ideal of independent and individualised suburban life. Responding
to our conversation about the Mandal settlement in Hendon, he expressed

this suburban preference in terms of differences between himself and his wife. He said, "Really speaking, I had no desire to live here amongst the Cutchis. I wanted to buy a nice house somewhere else and this would have been better for me and my children". Attributing their choice of Hendon to his wife, he asserted, "You see it was my wife who wanted to remain close to the Mandal and the temple and therefore she insisted that we should settle in Hendon". He also explained that his wife was deeply religious, an attribute he did not appear to regard highly. All the same, he added, he did not desire to hurt her. His statement, "You know how these women are" expressed complex feeling of criticism and sympathy. Then referring to the sect members in an uncomplimentary manner, he said, "We bought this house in Hendon as she wanted to be with 'this' people".

Criticising the Mandal and emphasising his separateness from it, Kanji said, "You won't see me mixing with these people" referring to his infrequent appearances at the temple. As for the most committed sect members, he had a complaint. "These people have such blind faith in their leaders that they cannot see anything else. If you suggest to them something new, they never seem to like it". In this instance his concern was to stimulate greater interest in the education of the Mandal children so that they could aspire to office jobs instead of following their elders on the construction sites and factories. He said he had suggested to the sect leaders in London to do something about this important issue. However, the Mandal leaders were not prepared to accept Kanji's assertive role which they associated more with mān, an attribute antithetical to moxsha salvation. They believed that Kanji's participation was motiviated to show only how clever he

was and that he had never made a proper financial contribution to the

Mandal as an expression of his firm commitment. Kanji's general

behaviour, especially his superior aloofness, contributed to some

feeling of hostility towards him. Kanji had felt frustrated and had

argued saying, "You can not change these people", referring to what

he thought was their sectarian conservatism.

In contrast to Kanji whose presence was resentfully tolerated

in the sect, it was evident that his wife's devotional participation

in the temple and the regularity with which she attended the prayer

meetings, were positively approved. This approval was not extended

to one of her daughters whose school progress and outward signs of

anglicisation, especially her choice of fashionable clothes, was

regarded with a degree of undisguised scorn. Her mother had noticed

the social disapproval and had felt that other girls were being unkind

to her daughter by refraining from speaking to her. Although the

daughter was not entirely estranged from the Mandal women, the relation-

ship she had with them was fraught with antagonism and mutual avoidance.

Although Kanji tended to set himself apart from the Mandal

members whom he regarded as orthodox and narrow minded, his own actual

dissociation from the ideology and organisation of the sect did not

seem to have much substance. Despite some of his middle class aspirations,

he remained firmly rooted in the Mandal as well as among the Leva Kanbi

Patels. Even though he was always critical of Mandal members' blind

faith and conservatism, his own apartness from them was more symbolic

than real. For over the years Kanji has paid his normal subscription

to the sect and has maintained his presence at sect's temple on all

important occasions. Thus his actual behaviour has tended to express

his continuing attachment to the congregation, if not his full

commitment. His class-based opposition to the sect has certainly

not extended to any meaningful rejection of the sect and its ideology.

Kanji made this fairly clear to me when we were discussing the

sectarian concept of salvation as it is expressed in the Swaminarayan

scriptures and biography of Sahajanand Swami, the founder of the

movement. Here Kanji did not extend his secular criticism of the

Mandal members' conservatism to the moksha ideology. In fact he did

not have much hesitation in upholding the supremacy of moksha and

access to it through Swaminarayan, the deified founder of the movement.

Kanji continues to maintain his affiliation to the sect and

involvement with fellow Leva Kanbi Patels. However, there is no doubt

that white collar employment and the prestige it carries has influenced

his outlook. Maintaining his affiliation to the sect and caste, he

has criticised conservatism in the sect without rejecting the ideology

of salvation. His own material interest, employment and housing, and

a need to provide professional education to his children, is important

to him. In this connection, if he advocates personal welfare and

individual advancement, he arouses a degree of hostility towards him

as his individual concern appears to be less in keeping with institution-

ally defined norms of salvation. It is certain that if he had less

restricted choices open to him and had he succeeded in decreasing the

degree of his dependence on his kin, he would have probably opted for

the suburban living which can weaken traditional community ties. Kanji

maintains the ideal of good life in the suburbia. He also maintains

his caste-based sectarian membership. As a result his behaviour

expresses a concern with achievement and advancement as well as a pre-

occupation with moksha. He illustrates that the awareness of class

sect are not opposed and dichotomous. He has, in fact, coped with both perspectives and emphasised one or the other according to his individual circumstances. Although Kanji is somewhat exceptional in voicing his assertive criticism of the Mandal, his behaviour clearly indicates that it is important for him to bring his class-based aspirations to bear on his sectarian and caste affiliation. First of all, his dependence on sect and caste is an important factor in giving him and especially his wife, a measure of well-being as they settle down in Britain. In terms of his suburban aspirations for a comfortable existence centered on a semi-detached house, he believes he could and should dissociate himself from those whose life is grounded in manual labour and what he sees as their "blind" commitment to the sect. In practical terms, he knows he is within the Mandal despite his opposition to it. He attributes his Mandal participation to his wife's devotional commitment to the sect and her social and cultural dependence on her Mandal associates. What Kanji often implies is that he would not be in the Mandal were it not for his wife's attachment to the sect. However, since Kanji does not reject belief in moksha, this rationalisation does not prove to be an adequate argument. Ideological acceptance of salvation and a concern with purely material interest are not totally opposed in Kanji's consciousness. In other words, class on the one hand and sect and caste on the other do not coincide with neat dichotomisation.

In summing up this case study, it is important to emphasise the general argument this example attempts to illustrate. First of all, it alludes to the possibility that the Mandal members are likely to develop a conception of their class-based material interests. From the

available evidence and observations it is reasonable to suggest that
the potential awareness of this material interest may be expressed
more in relation to a concern with individual advancement. The
extension of this interest to class-based political action in Britain
can not be, however, excluded as a future possibility. Further, when
someone like Kanui becomes conscious of his material interests in
regard to his aspirations, it does not necessarily follow that this
concern is incompatible with the sectarian belief. Even if incompat-
ibility is assumed to exist between the two, in individual awareness,
class and sect manifest no mutual exclusiveness in a simple either/or
sense.

## 5. A BRIEF SUMMARY

This chapter has focussed on the caste and nāt jāt affiliation
of the Mandal members. Their self-identification as Leva Kanbi Patels
is clearly related to the fact that they come from the Cutch part of
Gujarat. As the original inhabitants of villages situated near Bhuj,
they share a common culture. Their particular Cutchi dialect of
Gujarati is a vehicle for the expression of this culture. Their group
identity as Kanbis is symbolised in the stories of their origin as
the true sowers of the seed, alluding to their peasant background.
In describing themselves as the Leva Kanbi Patels of  Cutch, the emphasis
on their distinctiveness is expressed in rules of endogamy according
to which a Leva Kanbi Patel is expected to marry in his own nāt. How-
ever, the membership of the Mandal divides the Kanbi Patels between
those who belong to the sect and those who do not.

Besides their caste-based affiliation to the sectarian organisation, as workers in the British society the sect members are likely to develop distinct awareness of their class interests. In their contemporary settlement, such awareness is more focused on individual interests and a concern with status rather than on the wider British politics of class-relations. Class interest as it is individually expressed through a concern for employment, housing and education, is not entirely incompatible with the ideology of salvation and the sectarian membership. If it is reasonable to assume that the sect members are likely to have a growing concern for their class interests over the years, then an examination of the sect in relation to class is likely to illuminate the process of social change as it occurs within the Mandal in future.

And affiliation to caste and sect is a distinctive feature of the Mandal as a social organisation. Sectarian affiliation is a source of cleavage as it divides the caste members between those who give primacy to the sect and those who do not. As the rise of this cleavage is rooted in the history of primary Swaminarayan sect in India, the following chapter outlines the evolution of the primary sect and the context it provides for a segmentary genesis of the Mandal.

NOTES : Chapter 3.

1. In her study of Mirpuri villagers in Bradford, Verity Saifullah
   Khan advances a comparable argument. For instance, in referring
   to migrant's visit to his village in Pakistan, she says, "The
   fact that migrant has returned at all, his profuse gift giving,
   buying of land or building a brick house, is an obvious declaration
   of association, not with vilayat (Britain), but with his home,
   kin and village". (See 'The Pakistanis: Mirpuri Villagers at
   Home and in Bradford' in James L. Watson's (ed.) Between Two
   Cultures, 1977, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p.69). As the material
   on the Mandal indicates what is likely to be most obvious is that
   the migrant wants to consolidate his security and gain both in
   Britain as well as at home. He wants a base in his village
   should his personal or other circumstances compel his return to
   the Indian subcontinent.

2. Grierson, G.A., Linguistic Survey of India, Volume IX, Indo-
   Aryan Family, Central Group, Part III, Specimens of Rajasthani
   and Gujarati, 1908 Calcutta, Superintendent, Government Printing,
   India, p.323 et seq.

3. Grierson, G.A., Linguistic Survey of India, Volume III, p.1,
   Specimens of Sindhi and Lashanda, 1919, Calcultta, Superintendent,
   Government Printing, India, p.183.

4. A baffling array of Cutchi Gujarati words were encountered during
   the fieldwork. The following table records differences between
   more standard Gujarati and Cutchi Gujarati in regards to words
   used for parts of the human body.

### Table 2.

| Gujarati | Cutchi Gujarati | English |
|----------|-----------------|---------|
| gal | gatta | cheeks |
| hotth | chap | lips |
| pet | bhodu | stomach |
| gothan | guda | knees |
| val | jatiya | hair |
| bardopith | potho | back |
| dok | nedi | neck |

The linguistic differences such as these often demarcate social
boundaries between groups and categories.

5. Enthoven R.E., The Tribes and Castes of India, Volume II, 1922
   Bombay, Government of Bombay, pp.134-157 et seq.

6 .   Alexander Kinlock Forbes, Ras-Mala: Hindoo Annals of Province
      of Goozerat in Western India, Volume 2, 1924, London. Oxford
      University Press, pp.242-253, where Forbes also highlights
      exploitative agrarian relations the peasants were subject to
      in Western India.

7 .   David Pocock, Kanbi and Patidar: A Study of Patidar Community
      of Gujarat, 1972, Oxford, Clarendon Press, see p.56 et seq.

8 .   For an account of Patidars in Britain, see Harald Tambs-Lyche's
      'Encompassed Communities: A Note on the Ethnic Boundary in the
      Metropolitan Setting' in Jan Brogger's (ed.), Management of
      Minority Status, 1973 Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, pp.47-75, and
      'A Comparison of Gujarati Communities in London and the Midlands',
      New Community, Volume IV, No.3, Autumn 1975, pp.349-355.

9 .   David Pocock, op.cit., p.56.

10.   Enthoven confirms this by saying, "The marriage ceremony of the
      Momna Kanbis differs in some particulars from those observed
      by the Levas. They do not erect the chori or marriage alter,
      or kindly a sacrificial fire". Enthoven, R.E., op.cit., p.156.

11.   Op.cit., p.188, et seq.

12.   David Pocock,'"Difference" in East Africa: A Study of Caste
      and Religion in Modern Indian Society', South Western Journal
      of Anthropology, Volume 13, No.4, Winter 1957, pp.289-300.

13.   Ibid., p.290.

14.   Louis Dumont, Homo Hierarchicus, 1970, London, Weidenfeld and
      Nicolson.

15.   Ibid.,  pp.42-43 et seq.  Also cf. David Pocock, 1957, op.cit.,
      p.290.

16.   David Pocock, 1957, op.cit., p.291.

17.   Ibid., p.291.

18.   Ibid., p.290.

19.   Ibid., p.290.

20.   See Ibid., pp.293-296 et seq. for David Pocock's illuminating
      comment on the Gujarati word jat, which besides its use as an
      expression to identify a caste group, is also used to refer to
      distinctiveness of both animate and inanimate objects.

21.  In his Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India,
     1952 Bombay, Asia Publishing House, pp.31-32.  M.N. Srinivas
     differentiates between horizontal and vertical solidarity in
     caste relations.  In this regard, solidarity in the traditional
     caste system should be clearly set apart from the solidarity of
     groups outside this social framework. As for the caste groups,
     their contemporary solidarity is likely to possess a political
     aspect termed as the process of 'horizontal mobilisation' by
     Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne H. Rudolph in their book, The
     Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India, 1968,
     Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.  See Part One of this
     study.

22.  For a detailed account of formation of caste groups in East
     Africa, see H.S. Morris's The Indians in Uganda, London 1968,
     Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

23.  There is a striking paucity of material on Gujaratis in Britain.
     Maureen Michaelson's research focusses on the two Gujarati
     trading castes in Britain in her unpublished paper Gujarati
     Castes in the United Kingdom, London 1976, Graduate Seminar
     Paper, Department of Social Anthropology, School of Oriental and
     African Studies.  Also 'The Relevance of Caste among East African
     Gujaratis in Britain,' New Community, Volume VII, No.3, Winter
     1979, pp.350-360.

24.  For an account of these terms in regard to Kampala Hindus, see
     Rohit Barot's Varna, Nat-jat and Atak among Kampala Hindus,
     New Community, 1974, Volume 2, No.1, pp.34-37.  To maintain
     consistency of expression I use the word nat as far as possible.

25.  Donna Nelson Caste and Club: A Study of Goan Politics of Nairobi,
     1971, Nairobi University of Nairobi.  A Ph.D thesis, pp.80--81
     et seq.

26.  See Sir Monier William's A Sanskrit - English Dictionary, Oxford
     1899 (1976 Reprint).  The Clarendon Press, p.924, column 2.

27.  For a brief account of atak among the Lohanas, see Barot 1974,
     op.cit.

28.  Sarth Gujarati Jodni Kosh, 1967, Ahmedabad, Gujarat Vidhyapith,
     p.13, column 1.

29.  Adrian Mayer, Caste and Kinship in Central India: A Village and
     its Region, 1966 Berkeley, University of California Press,
     p.4, et. seq.

30.  Adrian Mayer, op.cit., p.29 et seq.

31.  Barton M. Schwartz (ed.), Caste in Overseas Indian Communities,
     1967, San Fransisco, Chandler Publishing Company.

32.   Adrian Mayer, Introduction to Barton M. Schwartz (ed.) <u>op.cit.</u>
      p.9.

33.   <u>Ibid.</u>, p.9.

34.   <u>Ibid.</u>, p.9.

# CHAPTER 4.

## GENESIS OF THE MANDAL AS A SWAMINARAYAN ORGANISATION

Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal derives its congregational
identity from the fission that occured within the primary Swaminarayan
sect in Western India from the beginning of this century, as I have
already described. The process of segmentation within the primary organis-
ation generated a cleavage among the Leva Kanbi Patels of Cutch. As a
consequence, members of the n̄at now affiliate themselves to two
separate Swaminarayan sects. First of all, there are those who remain
members of the primary Swaminarayan sect. But a minority of influential
Leva Kanbi Patels have joined the Mandal, and, under Swami Muktajivandasji's
charismatic leadership, have contributed to the establishment of the
Mandal as a separate organisation. The historical opposition between
the primary sect and the secondary Mandal has now extended to the social
organisation of the Mandal in Britain, as described and analysed in
Chapter 7. The sociological significance of this cleavage can be
explained only after giving a brief account of the historical development
of the primary Swaminarayan sect as it occured in the Vaishnavite
tradition of Gujarat. In the context of the Ahmedabad-based seat of
the primary sect a basis can be found for explaining the emergence of
the Mandal as a schismatic sect coterminous with a segment of caste
among the Leva Kanbi Patels. Development of the Mandal as an autonomous
Swaminarayan sect is inseparable from the sect-based cleavage in the
caste community and it is to this theme that this chapter is addressed.

1.  THE VAISHNAVA SECT OF VALLABHACHARYA AND THE

    RISE OF THE PRIMARY SWAMINARAYAN SECT.

The following account is an historical outline of the Swaminarayan

movement as it grew in the ideological tradition of Vishnuism or

Vaishnavism in Gujarat.  The term 'Vaishnva' applies to those Hindu

sects whose members worship Vishnu as their supreme God. The Hindus

conceive Brahma as the formless spirit of the Universe in the trinity

of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva who create, preserve and destroy the

cosmic order.[1]  The sects which take Vishnu as their supreme God

then set aside the triune equality of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu in

favour of one God, Vishnu.  It is he who absorbs the attributes of

the trinity as one personal God, not only as a preserver but also as

creator and dissolver.[2]  The theology which attributes all encompassing

ideological exclusiveness and a sui generis character to Vishnu is a

distinct feature of the Vaishnava sects.

As an ancient sun god of Rigveda, Vishnu predominantly evolves

as the redeemer and giver of salvation in the post-Vedic period.[3]

In calling Vaishnavism the religion of 'avatars' Weber emphasises the

importance of incarnation of Vishnu.[4]  It is in the Hindu epics of

the Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas that Vishnu's transition

from fish to a complete human form is depicted. This transition as

it is marked by incarnations (avatars) develops fully in the divine

persons of Rama and Krishna popularly known all over India. For

centuries, Rama and Krishna as forms of Vishnu have been worshipped

in the tradition of devotional worship (bhakti) which assumes a close

and loving relationship between a worshipper and his personal God.  In

personalising the relationship between the worshipper and his

redeemer bhakti, as the passionate inward devotion to the redeemer

and his grace,[5] is clearly tied to erotic or crypto-erotic adoration

of the personal god,[6]   As a mode of worship in the post-Vedic age,

bhakti was a radical departure from the more intellectual tradition

of classical Hinduism. The earlier Brahmanism had conceived the

supreme being as formless spirit - the Brahman of the universe with

whom the individual spirit of man sought contemplateive fusion and

oneness (advaita).  This conception as an intellectual heritage of

the Vedanta tradition was probably alien to the mass of people who

are more likely to have been concerned with the subjective realities

of daily life rather than with the formless, undefinable and unknowable

universal spirit.  In contrast, the bhakti tradition not only recognised

the subjective world of the actor, but also accepted it as a context

in which salvation could be achieved. The concept of human form as

personal deity gave some substance to a hitherto distant God.  Unlike

earlier Brahmanism, devotional worship brought God much closer to man

and to his emotional and personal experiences as a social being.

Instead of supporting the intellectual understanding of the formless

universal spirit in mental detachment, bhakti emphasised man's close

relationship to his personal god and a deep sense of involvement and

oneness with him.  In his analysis of bhakti, what Weber calls "an

inner emotional relation to the redeemer"[7] is an important psychological

dimension of devotional mode of worship. As Weber emphasises it, the

emotional relation was interpreted as similar to the erotic experience

of lovers.[8]  The intensity of this experience conceptualised as an

encounter between the lovers and a feeling of deep longing derived

from it would, it was believed, induce a state of consciousness favourable to salvation from the bondage of birth and death. It is this ideology of devotional worship that appealed to what Weber calls 'aliterary but wealthy middle class'[9] as an alternative to more intellectual and rigorously ascetic pursuit of spiritual knowledge.

The names of Ramanuja, Madhva, Chaitanya and Vallabha[10] as the great acharyas, the teachers are closely associated with the development of Vaishnavism in different parts of the Indian subcontinent from the 11th century onwards. Although the archaeological evidence shows that the cultic worship of Vishnu in some form was known in Gujarat from as early as the 10th century,[11] the beginning of Vaishnavism as a popular religious movement in Gujarat is associated with Vallabhacharya, a South Indian Brahmin who is known to have preached devotional worship and surrender to Krishna, approximately from the beginning of the 16th century[12]. Ideologically, Vallabhacharya rejected asceticism as the way of knowing god.[13] As Richard Barz snows in his account of the sect, Vallabhacharaya regarded celibate asceticism and renunciation as concentrating much more on the self and the ego and thus creating pride, which, it was believed, would turn a devotee away from experiencing a state of oneness with the supreme being.[14] In opposition to renunciation, Vallabhacharya emphasised that as the body contained soul, it deserved some reverence and even fostering.[15]

It was with this rejection of self-centered ascetic renunciation that Vallabhacharya's Vaishnava sect came to be known as Pushtimarga; pushti as meaning "well-nourished condition" and the word marga

meaning "a path of a way" and the expression _pushtimarga_ meaning

"a way of well-being".[16] There is no doubt that the word _pushti_

was applied to the fullness of devotion which would lead a devotee

to a state of surrender and everlasting oneness with Krishna.[17]

However, in addition to this spiritual meaning of _pushti_, it is also

likely that the word might have encompassed the notion of physical

and material well-being. At least in the context of the Pushtimarga

ideology renunciation was no longer a necessary condition for obtaining

salvation.[18] For Vallabhacharya himself symbolised the status of

"Grahastha _acharya_" non-ascetic leadership by marrying and having a

family.[19] As the Pushtimarga sect incorporated the search for god

within the context of the daily material life of the householder, it

was not surprising that the sect recruited widely among the mercantile

communities of Gujarat.[20] Weber therefore characterised it as "a

merchant and banker sect".[21] The merchants and traders such as rich

Bhatia, Luhana, Marwadi and Bania merchants acknowledge Vallbhacharya

and his descendants as their religious head.[22] In this connection,

Weber also observes that the richest trader caste, the Bania, was also

able to "find a taste for service of god" in the context of Pushtimarga

and that "an extraordinary large numberof them belonged to this some-

what socially exclusive sect".[23]

Vallabhacharya's sect was consolidated by his son Vittlesvara

from 1544 to 1583 and for nearly forty years under his personal

influence Vallabhacharya's Pushtimarga spread all over Gujarat and

beyond. Through the missionary activities of various sect leaders,

Pushtimarga developed many seats (_gadis_) and Vaishnavism as a mode

of devotional worship to Krishna became what Majmudar terms "a living

religion among the masses of Gujarat".[24] The sectarian influence of

the leaders became sufficiently well-established so that they began

to title themselves as Gosain Maharaj or Goswami. The words Gosain

and Goswami, referring to a cowherd, identified them with Krishna

and many of his divine attributes. Over the course of past centuries,

the Pushtimarga of Vallabhacharya has become an important feature of

social and cultural life of the merchant castes in Gujarat.

With the passage of time, Pushtimarga became firmly established

as a Vaishnava sect in Gujarat. Gradually the layman's obligation to

Vishnu and Krishna was interpreted in such a way that lay members

became subject to extreme degrees of sectarian control. Certain

aspects of this control, which extended to layman's personal life,

were scarcely in keeping with the ascetic component of traditional

Hinduism. For example, although the use of partly erotic images of

Radha and Krishna were always thought to emphasise the spiritual

bond between the worshipper and his personal God, it is certain that

"the followers of Vallabha interpreted that attachment in gross and

material sense".[25] Apparently the sect leaders and the lay followers

alike indulged in worldly pleasures and the Gosain Maharaj ceased to

command the respect of many of their followers until, as Majmudar

suggests, "the word Pushti became synonymous with becoming fat".[26]

As the devotional ideology of the Vallbhacharya sect assumed the

devotee's complete surrender to the earthly spiritual master as a

personification of Krishna, the leaders extended the notion of surrender

to dominate and exploit their followers. An extreme example of this

surrender was the offer of virginal brides to Gosain Maharaj before

the consummation of marriage by husband and wife in the sect. This

act of what was called self-devotion (samarpan) was criticised. A

certain Karsandas Mulji, a Gujarati Bania reformer had been a member

of the sect and made some of the sectarian practices public. This

attracted a strong moral disapproval from the British rulers socialised

in Victorian morality and from the middle class Hindus who were no

less puritanical in their moral fervour. The public exposure occured

in what is known as Maharaja Libel Case which came before the Supreme

Court of Bombay on 26th January, 1862.[27] Although the Vallabhacharis

and their Gosain Maharaj still maintain their sectarian organisations

and congregations in Gujarat, there is no doubt that the emergence of

a puritanical Swaminarayan sect challenged the Pushtimarga from the

beginning of the 19th century.

Vallabhacharya's Pushtimarga as it developed within the context

of Vaishnavism thus provides the ideological baseline against which

the evolution of the Swaminarayan sect in Gujarat is interpreted.

The earliest accounts of the primary Swaminarayan sect suggests that

it grew as a puritanical and reformist movement directed against the

corruption that affected the Vaishnavism of the time. H.G. Briggs'

account of the sect founder Sahajananda Swami's life, probably

provides the earliest evidence of this puritanical reaction when he

refers to Sahajananda's preaching as "his crusade against the Walab

Kul".[28] Monier M. Williams affirms this more explicitly and categorically

when he says, "No wonder that a corruption of the Vaishnava faith so

abominable should have led to the modern Puritan movement, under the

reformer Svami Narayan".[29] Almost all subsequeht accounts of the

primary sect emphasised the discontinuity between Pushtimarga as a

decadent sect and the developing Swaminarayan sect as being more ascetic.[30]

This discontinuity between the epicurianism of the Vallabhacharya
sect and the emergent asceticism of Sahajananda also expresses a
tension between two ideals of sectarian leadership. Accordingly, the
ideal of the householder (grahasthi) as a leader, is distinctly
opposed to the conception of an ascetic (sanyasi) as a leader. The
interplay and antithesis between the two in the genesis of the
Swaminarayan sect recurs in the primary sect itself when a further
sectarian segmentation reproduced the opposition between ascetic and
non-ascetic leadership in the sect.

Besides the ideological incompatibility expressed in the distinction
between ascetic and housholder, the linkages between class, caste and
sect illuminate opposition at the structural level. Generally, the
coterminous character of the class, sect, and caste generates rigidities
in which class interest is closely identified with overlapping and
dual affiliation to caste and sect. For instance, Vallabhacharya's
Pushtimarga has been synonymous with those Gujaratis who have been
traditionally members of merchant and trading castes. The traditional
exclusion of lower castes from the Vallabhacharya sect is thus an
ipso facto exclusion from the activities and privileges which the
mercantile communities enjoy.  In his brief comment on the two sects,
Weber clearly states that the exclusion of lower castes from the
Vallabhacharya sect gave the Swaminarayan sect, what he calls 'the
possibility of doing considerable damage in the lower and also in the
middle strata".[31]  In his background to Sahajananda's life, Stephen
Fuchs focusses on the exclusion to illustrate the harsh inequalities
which the members of lower castes, untouchables and the tribal
population, suffered at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of

the nineteenth century. It is against what he calls this "dark background" that he presents an account of Sahajananda's life as that of a person who brought "spiritual and moral reform to the Kolis and other low castes and depressed classes of Gujarat.[32] It is most probable that as the primary Swaminarayan sect recruited from the lower class and caste backgrounds, it offered some opposition to Pushtimarga. This opposition is equally likely to have expressed the threat that the Swaminarayan sect posed to the dominance of the Vallabhacharis in Gujarat. Briefly, in its genesis as a puritanical response to the Vallabhacharya sect, the Swaminarayan sect brought into focus the opposition between ascetic and non-ascetic sect behaviour, possibly coupled with antagonism between castes whose class interest was least likely to have been identical. It is reasonable to assume that their interests were influenced by the social and political fluidity prevailing in Gujarat in the early 19th century. During this period, the tripartite struggle for power between the declining Moghul empire, the Marathas and the ascendant East India Company, provided the broad historical and structural context for the emergence of the Swaminarayan sect. It must be emphasised that though this wider social context of the early 19th century is an important aspect for an understanding of the growth of the Swaminarayan movement, it is not the aim of the present account to provide any detailed analysis of this dimension or of the influence of British rule in Gujarat on the development of the Swaminarayan sect.[33] The extent to which the rise of British rule contributed to the growth of the Swaminarayan sect is a topic which requires systematic historical research.

As the development of the primary Swaminarayan sect centers
on the life of its charismatic founder Sahajananda Swami, it is
useful to begin this account with a biographical sketch.  This
biography is much more than a chronology of events, in that the
phases of the founder's life are closely related to the formation
and consolidation of the primary Swaminarayan sect.  It is in this
sense that the available biographical material can be used to high-
light the sociological aspects of primary sectarian organisation and
its development.

Sahajananda Swami, variously known as Hari Krishna, Nilkantha
and Ghanshyam, was born in A.D. 1780 in the village of Chhapaiya,
about eight miles north of Ayodhya,[34]  in what used to be known as
N.W. provinces and then later as United Provinces and Uttar Pradesh.
The fact that he was a second son of Hariprasad, a Samvedi Sarvarya
Brahman[35] becomes a significant aspect when he assumed the leadership
of the primary Swaminarayan movement. As a child he appears to have
displayed those attributes which are usually considered essential to
the lives of  ascetic teachers and leaders of the movements and sects.
For instance, as a child he is believed to have known by heart the
entire text of Bhagvada Gita and Vishnu Sahsra-Nam.[36]  After acquiring
a good knowledge of the Hindu scriptures from his father, it is said
he left home at the early age of eleven, and according to a traditional
pattern, underwent severe ascetic practices in the Himalayas and then
returned to the plains from where he commenced his extensive journeys
traversing the entire sacred complex of holy places from Badri Kedar
in the extreme north, to Rameshwar in the south of India.

Although it is difficult to construct a precise and systematic
account of his sub-continental journeys, from the available sources
it is evident that he arrived in the Saurashtra part of Gujarat
towards the close of the eighteenth century.  Both Briggs and Monier
M. Williams record 1800 A.D. as the year when Sahajananda was already
in Gujarat.  It is certain that by 1800[37] he had reached Lojpur
village near Mangrol where he came into contact with Ramanand Swami,
the head of an ascetic order. Although the account of this order in
the text is usually idealised, it is certain that Sahajananda became
an eminent and an influential member of this order.  H.T. Dave's
account of Sahajananda's association with the Ramanand's order suggests
that his influence did not rise without some opposition from those
disciples who saw themselves as having greater insight in theological
and organisational matters.  However, he was formally initiated into
the sect and received his name Sahjananda as a renouncer. Before his
death, Ramananda appointed him as successor to his order which provided
Sahjananda with a baseline for the development of an independent and
autonomous Vaishnava sect of his own.[38]

From the beginning of 1804 Sahajananda Swami seems to have
developed a following around him in Ahmedabad and the surrounding
areas of Gujarat.  His charismatic personality coupled with ascetic
and devotional appeal, immediately attracted a large following.
Those who came to hear him are known to have experienced samādhi,
a state of divine ecstacy dissolving the duality between the worshipper
and his personal god. Those who experienced these states are known
to have had visions of the gods and goddesses they believed in. There
is no doubt that this euphoric experience of the divine within the

context of bhakti ideology swelled the number of his followers

into a congregational setting which was increasingly becoming a

well-defined institutional body. In contrast to Vallabhacharya's

Pushtimarga which was associated with merchants and traders,

Sahajananda recruited from a wider class and caste base. As he faced

competitive opposition from the followers of Vallabhacharya and other

sects, as J.N. Bhattacharya notes, Sahajananda proceeded cautiosly

to develop and consolidate the social basis of his sect. As not many

merchants or traders were likely to follow him, according to

Bhattacharya, the Swami "was obliged to admit to his faith low castes

such as the Dhobi, the Mochi, the Darzi and the Napit, who were

rejected by the Vallabhaites".[39]  The Gazetteer of the Bombay

Presidency records Brahmans, Bharasars, Chamars, Darjis,Ghanchi,

Golas, Kanbis, Kathis, Kolis, Luhar, Malis, Rajputs, Salats, Sathvaras,

Sonis and Suthars as caste groups within the primary Swaminarayan

sect at the beginning of this century.[40]  According to Bhattacharya's

observations, the admission of lower castes to the congregational

fold did not diminish esteem for Sahajananda amongst his fellow men,

for he excluded unclean untouchable castes such as Chamars  and Bhangis

from recruitment and thus maintained respectability for his fold

acceptable to a wide range of Hindus at the time.[41]

With the increasing size of his congregational assemblies and

the growing degree of their institutionalisation, Sahajananda and

his adherents met with considerable opposition and hostility. Although

it was the language of sectarian differences which defined this

opposition it is not unreasonable to assume that the sect-based

antagonism expressed conflicting class and caste interests.  However,

in the absence of data outlining the nature of interrelationships
between groups, it is difficult to establish the extent to which the
opposition gave rise to conflicting economic interests. Be that as
it may, there is evidence to indicate that Sahajananda's following
faced opposition from the local Brahmans and Vallabhacharis who
probably saw Sahajananda's popular ascendancy as a potential threat
to their own sects. H.G. Briggs provides a graphic account of the
hostility and persecution Sahajananda met with in and around Ahmedabad,
in the following quotation:

> The nature of Sahajananda's avocations, and the
> singularity of his tenets, soon attracted notice
> and ire of priestcrafty who spurred the bitter
> passions of men in power to work against Sahajanand.
> Among these influential individuals was Bawa Lolanger
> (of the iron-waist belt), a favourite at the Mahratta
> court, who came into Ahmedabad with a band of his
> adherants from the Mandir of Gomtipur, and commenced
> persecuting the young reformer. He was in consequence
> obliged to fly the city with the myrmidons of his
> antagonist at his heels showering stones and filth,
> while violent imprecations were not suppressed in this
> opportunity of destroying the rising popularity of
> Sahajananda. 42.

As Briggs reports further, as a consequence of this opposition and
persecution in Ahmedabad, Sahajananda sought refuge at Jetalpur, a
jagir village near Ahmedabad, under the jurisdiction of Govind Rav
Gaikwad, which was independent of the ruling authority of the city.[43]
After the agitation against him had subsided, he is known to have
invited Brahmans and notables from the surrounding area to the perfor-
mance of a great non-violent sacrifice, Maharudra. When the Maratha
Diwan of the place, Vitlrav Balaji, learned about this assembly, he
despatched a party of horsemen to Jetalpur to arrest Sahajanda who
then was cast into a dungeon, according to Briggs. However, by then
Sahajanda had built up such massive popular support that his Maratha

captors probably found it politically undesirable to detain him.
After his release, and after the performance of the great sacrifice,
Sahajananda's following appears to have increased by thousands.
Stephen Fuchs suggests that these sacrifices, or yagnas as they are
known in Gujarat, contained a potential for a mass movement of a
political or revolutionary character.[44] Although these large
gatherings might have brought structural tension to the fore, Sahajananda's
following grew in to local congregations organised along sectarian
lines regarding the sect founder as their preceptor. With this
development, from 1810 Sahajananda moved to Vadtul, which in due
course became established as an important center of the primary
Swaminarayan sect.

It is during this period that his sect appears to have drawn
the attention of the local British administrators. The British
officials appear to have regarded Sahajananda Swami's activities
positively as the recruitment into his movement of unruly and
rebellious groups such as the Kathis, Kolis and Bhils which appears
to have contributed to the general pacification the British themselves
undertook.[45] Bishop Reginald Heber gives a vivid and interesting
account of his meeting with Sahajanand Swami as it occurred in March
1825.[46] Although the sect members tend to emphasise Bishop Heber's
positive evaluation of Sahajananda, the Bishop's own account reveals
the complexity of his personality as a Christian missionary whose
desire to impart Christian teaching to Sahajananda and to his
followers is manifest in his own narrative. His account, nevertheless
conveyes the devotion with which Sahajananda's followers regarded him.
Although the Mandal members themselves are unfamiliar with the story

of the meeting between Bishop Heber and Sahajananda Swami, most of
them know that Sahjananda did meet Sir John Malcolm, then the Governor
of Bombay. According to R.V. Russell and Hira Lal Raibahadur, this
meeting occurred on 26th February 1830 in Rajkot, at the bungalow of
the resident political agent. Besides the Governor and the Secretary,
Mr. Thomas Williamson, six other European gentlemen and the political
agent, Mr. Blane, are known to have met Sahajananda Swami and his
entourage. During this meeting Sir John Malcolm inquired about the
sect's beliefs and presented Sahajananda Swami with a pair of shawls
and some piece goods. The sect leader himself reciprocated by presenting
a copy of the sect's codem Sikshapatri to the Governor.[47]  Although
it is difficult to summarise the relationship between the sect and
the rise of British rule in Gujarat from these encounters, it is
certain that the British officials concerned held Sahajananda Swami
and his activities in some esteem.

As Sahajananda and his disciples travelled in Gujarat, Saurashtra
and Cutch, they preached a Vaishnavism which, being ascetic and
puritanical, was antithetical to the ideal of the householder as a
sect leader as in the Vallabhacharya sect.  The ascetic and puritanical
element became firmly embodied in the sect as the founder made the
division between the renouncers and householder members a distinctive
feature of the sect.  Further, in contrast to Pushtimarga sect of
Vallabhacharya, Sahajananda introduced a rigid division between sexes
as a fundamental feature of his following. To eliminate the possibilities
of contact between sexes leading to sensual temptations, male and
female members of the laity were required to say their prayers
separately. As a part of the sect's code of conduct, this precept

became so important that separate temples were built in India for men and women to pray in mutual exclusion. Even stricter rules were established for the renouncer sadhus if they came into contact with females. No renouncer was ever allowed to touch a woman except his mother and he was required to fast for a day if he touched a woman even accidentally.[48]

Sahajananda developed the Swaminarayan philosophy and theology within the wider context of Hinduism particularly in the Vaishnavite tradition. Following the great Vaishnava teacher Ramanuja, Sahajananda accepted qualified monism or Vishistaadvaita as the basis of his theological and philosophical approach. The fact that the Veda, Vedanta Sutras of Vyas as interpreted by Ramanuj, Bhagvat Puran, Skandha Puran and chapters from Mahabharata[49] provide the basis for Swaminarayan sect's main scriptural text Vachnamrat illustrates the kind of integral link the sectarian belief has to the wider ideological tradition of Hinduism. This link is concretely demonstrated in the interpretation of Hindu texts such as the Brahmasutra in terms of sect's belief. The necessity to develop the sectarian belief exclusively thus creates a situation where the exclusiveness has to be reconciled to its base in the Hindu ideology. However, the sect elites made every effort to give the sect traditional elements so that its authenticity was unquestionably rooted in the distant past of the Vedas.

As the sect became firmly established, Sahajananda encouraged the construction of temples in different congregations as a material dimension of the sect's expanding organisation. The temples are divided into three categories. Those with oblong domes and elaborate structures

are called shikharbandh mandir, whereas harimandir, the ordinary

temple, does not have domes or elaborate architectural refinements

and nana mandir is the category identifying a small place of worship.

There were several dome-shaped shikharbandh mandir which were built

in Vadtal, Ahmedabad, Gadhada, Junagadh and Bhuj under Sahajananda's

direction. According to one census report, there are forty shikharbandhi

temples and twelve hundred harimandir temples in Gujarat.[50]

By contrast to the Vallabhacharya sect which opposed renunciation

as an egoistic practice[51] the Sahajananda Swami created an order of

renouncers and thus highlighted ascetic and puritanical dimension of

his approach to salvation. Although caste values and renunciation

are often thought to be opposites, it is important to note that the

division between Brahmans and non-Brahmans was maintained amongst the

renouncers of the sect. As the primary organisation consolidated, the

sect appears to have evolved a number of distinctions. Besides the

lay members who are generally called satsangis, the seekers of

truth brahamacharis and sadhus are hierarchically distinguished from

prashads or pallas, who are recruited from lower castes. Only Brahmans

appear to be recruited in the brahamachari category and the sadhu

status appears to have been open to castes above the pollution line.

Pallas seem to have been lower caste recruits who are generally

confined to performing menial tasks.[52] Besides male renouncers

differentiated according to their nat background, the primary sect

has also established a separate order in which women could renounce

to lead ascetic and devotional life apart from the male renouncers.

Known as sankhyayoginis, the female renouncers provide sectarian

knowledge and instruction to the female laity who pray and worship

separately from men. The male renouncers, especially the noted elites such as Brahamananda Swami, contributed to developing a corpus of ritual complex, prayers and hymns which became important features in the process of legitimation of the sect.

According to tradition, it is believed that with the fuller institutionalisation of the sect Sahajananda declared himself to be Swaminarayan, a divine embodiment of the supreme god. This was the most important theological development in the sect as Swaminarayan, as Sahajananda was then called, promised to release his devotees from death and birth by ensuring them instant and absolute salvation and a return to his celestial abode, the akshardhām, often shortened to dhām. The deification of Sahajananda appears to have occurred in two phases, one of which associated him with the Hindu incarnation of Vishnu[53] and the second one in which he transcended Visnnu to become an autonomous and supreme lord of the highest order in his own right. His autonomy and transcendant supremacy gives the Swaminarayan sect a degree of exclusiveness as an organisation within the Hindu tradition.

In all, the appearance of Sahajananda as possessing charisma and promise in the unstable social and political conditions of 19th century Gujarat; the rapid development of his following among castes aspiring to a higher status; the progressive institutionalisation of his following into an organised form; the initiation of renouncers into the sect; the establishment of temples and related organisational bodies; the compilation of scriptural texts from the corpus of religious literature provided by the Hindu tradition; the transformation of the sect founder into the supreme divine; the evolution of a ritual complex along with the composition of devotional hymns and music;

these are some of the main elements which provide a legitimate basis

for a sect developing within the socio-cultural context of the

Indian sub-continent. The ideology of salvation, moksha in some form,

provides the axis around which other elements obtain coherance and

meaningfulness. An outline of Sahajananda's biography illustrates

the evolution of these attributes which make the primary Swaminarayan

movement a fully-fledged sect. These attributes are historically and

sociologically significant as they seem to recur as a theme in the

genesis of the Mandal as a secondary Swaminarayan organisation.

There is no doubt that before Sahajananda's death in 1830, the

Swaminarayan sect had spread all over Gujarat under the sect founder's

personal leadership. Although Sahajananda had established ascetic

leadership as a norm in rejecting the householder model of leadership

provided by the Vallabhacharis, in responding to the question of

succession within the primary Swaminarayan sect, he appears to have

accepted the principle of hereditary succession. Since he himself was

an ascetic founder of the sect, hereditary succession could be arranged

only through the appointment of sons of his brothers who were the

householders. It was in 1826 that Sahajananda Swami made what Stephan

Fuchs calls his 'testament'.[54] He divided his sectarian jurisdiction

in Gujarat into two parts to establish two administrative divisions,

gadis or seats of the sect. Ahmedabad became the northern headquarters

of the sect and included villages and temples in North Gujarat including

parts of Dholka and Dhandhuka, Limbdi, Wadhwan, Morbi, Navanagar,

Rajkot and Cutch and also Ujjain, Benaras and Calcutta and Jagannath.[55]

Vadtal became the main center of southern Gujarat and included Nadiad,

parts of Dholka and Dhandhuka, West Kathiawad, Gadhda, Junagadh,

Dwarka, Broach, Surat and Bombay, the river Vatrak forming a boundary

between the two regions.[56] Sons of his brothers who were appointed

acharyas to the two sects were Ayodhyaprasad and Raghuvir. Raghuvir

as a junior acharya headed the southern division of the sect at Wadtal

and Ayodhyaprasad headed the Ahmedabad seat as a senior acharya. In

contrast to Vallabhacharya who had left both the sect doctrines and

organisation in the hands of his descendants, Sahajananda separated

secular management of the sect from the ideology and teaching within

the congregation,[57] making his acharya descendants responsible for

secular matters and assigning ideological teaching to his renouncer

disciples the sadhus. Thus, besides the lay members of the sect,

the primary organisation included the acharya and the renouncer as

secular and spiritual components of the sectarian leadership. As far

as the practical organisation of the primary sect was concerned, it

is likely that it would have been difficult to maintain strict

separation between spiritual and non-spiritual matters in the sect.

In the process of its growth and development the primary Swaminarayan

sect had accumulated land and property. In addition, the earliest

account of the sect suggests that the organisation received a sub-

stantial income from the lay members' regular contributions. Although

the acharyas were always believed to be the hereditary custodians of

the sect, it was when they began to exercise personal control over

the sectarian assets, that difficulties began to arise. The opposition

that developed in the context of the Ahmedabad[54] gadi of the sect

generated confrontation between the acharayas - the hereditary house-

holder leaders of the sect - and the ascetic renouncers who saw a

threat to the sect in the increasing personal authority of the acharya.

As the opposition began to take more organised form, its leaders built

up a following which gradually crystallised into Shree Swaminarayan

Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal as a secondary Swaminarayan sect. The

following section provides an account of the Mandal as it developed

in opposition to the primary Swaminarayan organisation in Gujarat

and the kind of impact it made among the Leva Kanbi Patels of Cutch.


2.    GENESIS OF THE PAKSHA DIVISIONS WITHIN THE

      PRIMARY SWAMINARAYAN SECT

During Sahajananda Swami's life time, the problem of management

and the administration of temples had presented difficulties in view

of the enormous accumulation of assets in the form of temples,

buildings, land and substantial cash contributed by the lay followers.

As the renouncer _sadhus_ were restricted from handling cash, as H.T.

Dave records, an intelligent and honest Brahmin disciple by the name

of Gopi Nath was appointed to manage the temple affairs at Ahmedabad.

However, in due course it became apparent that Gopi Nath was in fact

dismanaging the affairs in his own interest. As the renouncer _sadhus_

were largely dependent on the temple organisation for their upkeep,

they were critical of this abuse of secular authority and complained

to the sect founder. Though Dave does not provide a detailed account

of this incident, it is clear that Gopi Nath had attempted to acquire

personal control of the temple and it needed the sect founder's presence

for the temple and its assets to be returned to the sect.[59]

However, it was after the appointment of hereditary _acharyas_

following Sahajananda's death that difficulties began to arise as the

differences developed between the _acharyas_ and the renouncers when the

former began to use their hereditary position to make personal gain

from their authority. At the turn of the present century, when the

fourth acharya Vasudevprasadji (1899-1937) became the hereditary head

of the primary sect at Ahmedabad, it is said that he assumed personal

ownership of the sect's assets and subjected the renouncer sadhus to

less favourable treatment by denying them their traditional access

to certain temple rights.[60] According to informal accounts of the

Mandal members familiar with this particular phase of their history,

the acharya and his associates were investing income derived from the

sect in commercial enterprises of dubious character. Briefly, confront-

ation occurred between the householder leader of the sect and the

renouncers as the acharya extended his personal control over the

temples and all incomes derived from it.[61] To show the relationship

between this confrontation and the sect-based divisiveness that then

developed among the Levi Kanbi Patels of Cutch, it is important to

give a brief introduction to Abji Bapa, a Levi Kanbi Patel, who emerged

as a leading figure in challenging the acharya's claim to assets of

the sect. As an opponent of the acharya he was destined to develop an

organisation which eventually crystallised as a separate Swaminarayan

sect.

During Sahajananda's own life time the Swaminarayan sect had

widely spread in Cutch and especially among the Leva Kanbi Patels.

Abji-Bapa, who lived from 1845-1930, had emerged as a saintly house-

holder deeply committed to the sect. He appears to have extended his

influence within the sect in Gujarat through his devotional study of

Swaminarayan belief. The Mandal members say it was he who transformed

their life by inducing them to accept the teaching of the Swaminarayan

sect. During his lifetime, he contributed to theology of the sect by

preparing a detailed commentary on _Vachnamrat_ - which is the main
text of the Swaminarayan sect.[62] The version that contains his
commentary has come to be known as _Vachnamrat: Rahsyarthapradipikatikopetam_
which is _Vachnamrat_ with the commentary revealing its inner meaning.
He also enunciated a principle according to which he urged his followers
to regard Swaminarayan of the celestial abode (akshardham), Sahajananda
Swami as he appeared in the human form, variously known as Shri Ji
Maharaj, Ghanshyam Maharaj, or Hari Krishna Maharaj, as identical
expressions of the supreme divinity. The singularity of devotion to
Swaminarayan he showed paved the way for a stricter sectarian exclusive-
ness.

Those renouncers and the lay members who found the acharya's
activities a threat to the stability of the sectarian organisation,
conveyed their concern to him on this issue. As the acharya paid no
heed to their apprehension, they voiced their opposition to him more
openly and the division between those who supported the acharya and
those who supported dissatisfied renouncers and lay members, became
openly manifest.  It is in view of this growing rift that the
renouncers and lay members invited Abji Bapa of Cutch to give them
guidance and direction. The efforts Abji Bapa made to restrain the
acharya from making a personal use of the sect's assets did not resolve
the dispute as the acharya did not yield to pressure and persuasion.

When it became clear that the acharya was not prepared to restore
the traditional administration of the sect's assets, Abji Bapa and a
leading renouncer Ishwercharandasji established a formal body Satsanga
Mahasabha[63] to oppose the acharya publicly and formally.  Satsanga
Mahasabha simply  meant a gathering of those members of Swaminarayan

sect opposed to the acharya. With the formation of this body, the

cleavage within the sect became a matter of public knowledge. All

those who supported the acharya were identified as the Acharya

Paksha or acharya's side and his opponents were identified as belonging

to Dev Paksha. The word dev meaning a deity was used to imply that

the supporters on this side believed that the estate of the sect

belonged to the supreme lord Swaminarayana and to no one else. To

prevent the acharya from extending his ownership to all sectarian

property the Satsanga Mahasabha took the dispute to the law courts.

According to the Mandal account[64] the legal proceeding lasted for

several years and the case is known to have been adjudicated by the

Privy Council[65]. The Privy Council is known to have accepted the

hereditary status of the acharya as the administrator of the estate

but assigned to him only a proportion of income from the dues contributed

by the sect members. Although the legal resolution of the dispute

restrained the acharya from appropriating assets of the sect, the

dissent as it emerged in the formation of Acharya Paksha and Dev Paksha

created the potential for a division within the primary sect. Since

the Leva Kanbi Patels were members of the Swaminarayan sect, the

separation between those who chose to support the hereditary sect

leader and those who decided to support their own dignitary Abji Bapa,

generated social tensions which were to create paksha divisions among

the Leva Kanbi Patels.

Following the success of Abji Bapa and Swami Ishwercharandasji

had in curbing the acharya's influence, Abji Bapa himself was increasingly

regarded by his followers and admirers as a devotee of Swaminarayan

who was believed to enjoy a sense of fusion with the celestial lord.

As long as he was alive, his status as a saintly householder had
restrained an open manifestation of paksha conflict in Cutch con-
gregations among the Kanbi Patels.

Although the paksha-based antagonism between the acharya supporters
and those who supported Dev Paksha had remained unexpressed in Cutch
during the remainder of Abji Bapa's life, he himself is known to have
been aware of the resentment the Cutchi supporters of the acharya
harboured against him. He is believed to have warned his close
associates about a possibility of harrassment in his absence. When
he died in 1930, there were two developments which probably occurred
simultaneously. First of all the close associates, admirers and
followers of Abji Bapa, who had increasingly regarded him as a
carrier of Swaminarayan's divinity, sought his deification in
Swaminarayan temples in Cutch. The supporters of acharya saw his death
as an opportunity to undermine his influence in the sect.[66] It is at
this stage that the cleavage between the acharya and his opponents
was recreated among the Leva Kanbi Patels in Cutch. As Abji Bapa
supporters attempted to incorporate his image as a Swaminarayan saint
into the temple shrines in Cutch, the acharya supporters opposed
this with a measure of hostility and violence which was probably
covertly sanctioned by the hereditary leader and his various represent-
atives in Cutch. The opponents appropriated the images which followers
of Abji Bapa wanted to enshrine and threw them away in latrine pits,
thus desecrating them.[67] To undermine Abji Bapa's influence, his
detailed commentaries on the sectarian text Vachnamrat were declared
heretical and the copies of the text were collected and thrown into
a pond.[68] During this period Abji Bapa's birthplace, Badadia, was a

focus of violence and disorder involving the opposing sides.
According to recollections of a senior member of the Mandal, Abji
Bapas's daughter was put to shame and disgrace when she was compelled
to walk unclothed through the village. The father of a leading member
of the Mandal was tied up in a sack and beaten to death[69] in the
courtyard of the village Swaminarayan temple. Numerous supporters
of the Abji Bapa's side were tried in informal moots and then fined
and punished. This violence divided the entire community into two
unequal and opposed halves: the acharya supporters, who were in a
majority, came to be known as Moto Paksha, the majority side. Supporters
of Abji Bapa came to be known as Nano Paksha as they were much smaller
in number. During the period of conflict between the two sides the
paksha developed as a hard boundary of mutual exclusion.[70]

As this account illustrates, the paksha boundary among the Leva
Kanbi Patels first developed at the level of opposition between the
acharya and his opponents led by Abji Bapa and after his death the
sectarian antagonism acquired a social dimension within the nāt group.
The character of conflict between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha was
such that sectarian affiliation became an important feature within
the caste community. As the Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha emerged to
create a deep cleavage, the closest kin and affines within the nāt
of Leva Kanbi Patels found themselves estranged from each other. The
intensity of conflict and opposition was expressed through the available
medium of the caste system. According to the Mandal members, Moto Paksha
supporters stopped accepting food and water from the members of Nano
Paksha, thus creating inequality to supersede equality between members
of the same caste. In other words, the relationship of mutual avoidance
was defined in terms of opposition between values of purity and impurity.

Accordingly, those who belonged to Moto Paksha regarded themselves

polluted if they came into contact with their opponents. The growing

separation between the two sides generated tension and stress between

kin and affines. Those who were rigidly committed to their paksha

refused to honour their traditional obligations to such an extent

that it was not uncommon for husband and wife, father and son or

brothers and sisters to practise temporary or even permanent avoidance.

The Mandal members give many examples of lasting.separation between

closest relatives. The degree to which the split between Moto Paksha

and Nano Paksha disrupted the multiplex fabric of the rural society is

best illustrated by Abji Bapa's own genealogy and the way in which his

descendants have been divided between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha.

## Figure 1.

### Abji Bapa's Genealogy and the Paksha Divisions
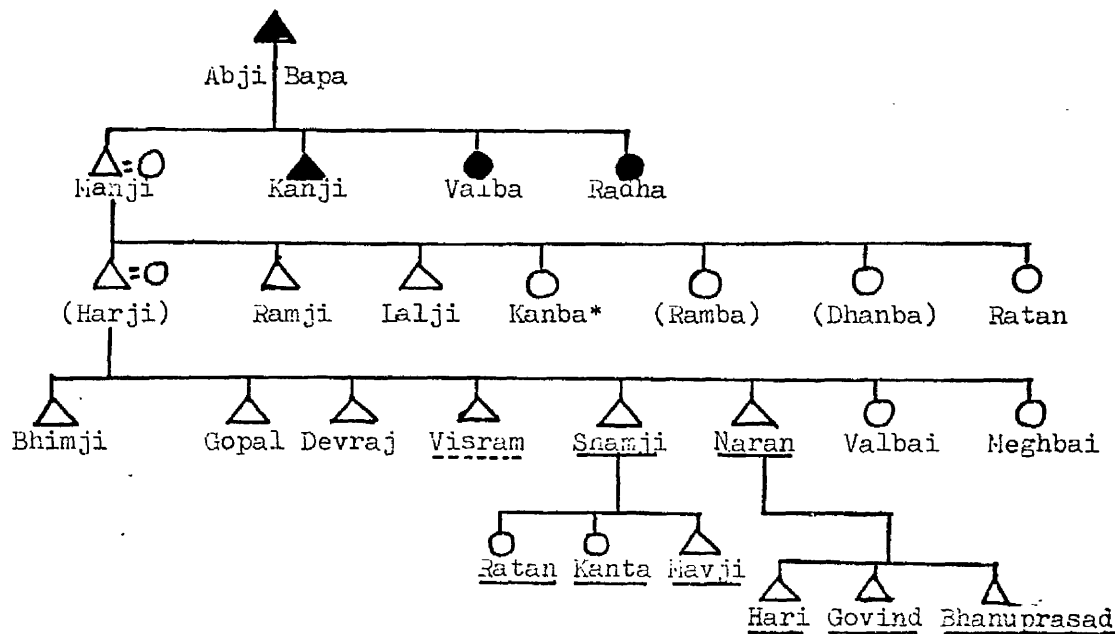


Notes on the diagram:

1. Those descendants of Abji Bapa where names are underlined, namely
   Shamji Naran, their wives and children live in Britain as active
   members of the Mandal.

2. Those whose names are bracketed are members of the Moto Paksha
   with sectarian affiliation to the acharya-led primary Swaminarayan
   Sect.

3. Kanba, whose name is distinguished by an asterisk, is the head
   of the female renouncers, the sankhyayoginis in the sect in Cutch.

4. The symbols which are darkened represent dead ancestors.

5. Visram, whose name is underlined by a dotted line, has declined
   affiliation to both of the pakshas.

A glance at the genealogy shows that the descendants of Abji
Bapa have not necessarily followed him because of their kinship
loyalty. As his third generation descendants in London reported, the
paksha cleavage has become an important feature cutting across the
family and straining relationships between those who have not shared
a common paksha affiliation. Almost every member of the Mandal has
kin and affines who belong to the opposing paksha affiliated to the
primary Swaminarayan sect. As an important aspect of caste relations,
the division based on the paksha-determined sectarian affiliation
has influenced the traditional pattern of nāt endogamy. First of all
marriages in which the relatives find themselves on opposing sides
have often created conflict between kin and affines. In the genesis
of paksha, in the initial stage, the enmity between the sides was so
intense so that marriages across the paksha boundary were rare. However,
despite the estrangement that the paksha cleavage has created, the two
sides are not so divided from each other to constitute two sect-based
entirely endogamous groups. Even though the antagonism between the
sides has diminished in the past three decades, the cleavage engendered

has become an enduring feature of life among the Leva Kanbi Patels.
As the Mandal eventually developed from the Nano Paksha, for the
Mandal members the paramount significance of the cleavage lies in the
way it defines the sectarian identity of the Mandal in contrast to
the acharya- led sect in Cutch and Ahmedabad.

When the Leva Kanbi Patels migrated overseas, initially to
Kenya, the distinction between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha was an
important feature of their social organisation. The development of
separate organisations and affiliation to two separate Swaminarayan
sects with their seperate Swaminarayan temples has symbolised the
continuity of the cleavage within the nāt·in Kenya. In the process
of their settlement in Britain, the paksha cleavage has emerged as
an important feature of social life among the Leva Kanbi Patels.
However, it must be emphasised that the recreation of the cleavage
is not simply an extension of pre-migration social and cultural
experience based on living in Cutch or East Africa. Although Nano
Paksha and Moto Paksha refer to the categories familiar to the Mandal
members before they settled in England, there is an extent to which
these categories express feelings and aspirations of Mandal and non-
Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels about their social life in Hendon and Bolton.
Therefore it is important to know what paksha has meant to them in
the historical evolution of their sect so that its relevance in the
new surroundings of the Mandal members can be fully appreciated.
The aspects of British experience that these categories express is
discussed as a separate topic in Chapter 7, which is devoted to out-
lining the manifestation of paksha cleavage in Britain. For the
moment, the following section provides an account of Nano Paksha,

the followers of Abji Bapa who, in the aftermath of the paksha

conflict, developed a separate following which eventually culminated

in the formal establishment of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan

Mandal.

## 3. THE FORMATION OF THE SHREE SWAMINARAYAN SIDDHANTA

### SAJIVAN MANDAL.

Nano Paksha followers of Abji Bapa had suffered a serious set-

back after the death of their leader. One of his contemporaries,

the renouncer Ishwercharandasji was determined to sustain Abji Bapa's

influence and following amongst his supporters and admirers in Cutch.[71]

In view of the hostility of the Moto Paksha and the ill-treatment

meted out to the followers of Abji Bapa in Cutch villages, it was

important for Ishwercharandasji to reaffirm the legitimacy of Abji

Bapa. To achieve this aim, he organised a parayan, which is a recital

of a scriptural text before a gathering of the devotees. The text chosen

for the recital was Vachnamrat which contained Abji Bapa's detailed

commentaries. As the acharya and his representatives had already

banned the use of this particular text, those who supported Abji Bapa

were unwilling to attend the recital, which as a defiant act could

invoke more punitive reaction from the Moto Paksha.[72]

Ishwercharandasji and his associates recruited a young man, who,

after his initiation into the sect as a renouncer, undertook to organise

the defiant recital. It was he who was destined to become the founder

of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal. The young man

Purshottambhai Patel was born in 1907 in Kheda in the Charotter region

of Gujarat. As his parents belonged to the Swaminarayan sect, it is

likely that he received some initial sectarian training as a child.
After undergoing some primary and secondary education in his home
town and Ahmedabad, he settled in Bombay where he worked as a shop
assistant and then established a business of his own.[73]  It was through
his contacts in Bombay that he learned about Abji Bapa's prominence
in the Swaminarayan sect.  Ishwercharandasji had compiled Abji Bapa's
discourses into a book, titled'Stories of Abji Bapa ' (Shree Abji
Bapa Shreeni Vato)which Purshottambhai Patel had an opportunity to
study. Stimulated by the teaching of these stories, he resolved to
meet Ishwercharandasji. The encounter attracted him to the sect and
then to renunciation.  He gave up his business as well as his plans
to migrate to East Africa,[74] and became a renouncer and was renamed
Swami Muktajivandasji. He became a firm supporter of Ishwerchavandasji -
who as his guru urged him to expand and sustain Abji Bapa's teaching
within the primary sect.

Under the direction of his own guru, Muktajivandasji began
travelling to Cutch from the early 1930s. When he arrived in Abji
Bapa's own village Badadia in 1933, his presence there was a clear
assertion of the Nano Paksha.  The recital of Vachnamrat  that he
commenced was much more than a message of moksha.  The recital was
also a political act in that it brought together the members of Nano
Paksha as a group.  In their opposition and defiance of the acharya-
led Moto Paksha, the recital of a banned scriptural text provided a
rallying point for the Nano Paksha members and their leader Muktajivandasji.
In this process of mobilising support, Muktajivandasji recruited about
eighty families in Badadia village in support of Abji Bapa.[75]  As
Muktajivandasji began to consolidate the Nano Paksha in their loyalty

to Abji Bapa, the _acharya_ decided to prevent the use of Abji Bapa's text within the congregations, especially in Cutch. In a conference organised in 1939 to exclude Abji Bapa's text from the sect once again, according to the Mandal account,[76] Muktajivandasji put up a good intellectual and theological defence of the commentaries in question. As the conference was inconclusive and divided on the issue, the matter rested there.

From the events occurring in Cutch, it was apparent to the _acharya's_ supporters that, though the Satsang Mahasabha was not yet fully separated from the congregations of the Swaminarayan sect, if anything, it was gaining strength among the Leva Kanbi Patels in the form of _Nano Paksha_. In order to curb Muktajivandasji's distinctive influence amongst all the admirers and followers of Abji Bapa, the _acharya_ decided to expel him from the Swaminarayan temple in Kadi in Gujarat where the renouncer had his residence. When the _acharya_ sent his expulsion order to the renouncer, a confrontation occurred between the hereditary sect leader and the renouncer. With the support of his associates whose disenchantment with the _acharya_ was undiminished, Muktajivandasji asserted that as a renouncer in the Satsang Mahasabha, he was not prepared to abide by the expulsion order of the _acharya_.[77] In retaliation the _acharya_ had a declaration proclaimed that Muktajivandasji was expelled from the sect. However, the Satsang Mahasabha rejected and opposed this proclamation. The _acharya_ sent out a party of armed men to eject Muktajivandasji from the temple by force. When he and his associates were physically ousted from the temple, a police complaint was made for the assault and the armed attackers were tried and punished and the control of the temple was restored to the

local congregation which supported Muktajivandasji. The event appears
to have restrained the acharya from wanting to appropriate authority
and autonomy of the local congregations within the Swaminarayan sect.[78]

The measures the acharya side took to undermine the influence
of a rival renouncer and his supporters defined the Nano Paksha
opposition as articulated through Satsang Mahasabha, and increased
the separation of the two sides, although the latter was far from
fully divided from the primary sect. The process of separation became
marked as the senior elders of the Satsang Mahasabha purchased land
near Ahmedabad, now in a separate town Maninager, which has developed
as the headquarters of the Mandal in India.  In 1942 the foundation
stone was laid for a separate Swaminarayan temple for all those who
had joined Satsang Mahasabha to oppose the acharya.  The organisation
related to this territorial focus of the following was named Shree
Swaminarayan Siddhanta Uttejjak Trust - which was formally renamed
Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal from 1947 onwards.[79] Abji
Bapa's contemporary and his staunch supporter Ishwerchavandasji is
known to have asked the young renouncer to teach the Swaminarayan
message of moksha as defined and developed by Abji Bapa, and appointed
Muktajivandasji as his ascetic successor to the new following.[80]

Before Ishwerchavandasji died in 1942 Muktajivandasji had already
accomplished two tasks which made the Satsanga and his own leadership
of it more legitimate. First of all, he compiled three devotional hymns
and showed them to his master.  Ishwerchavandasji was pleased with the
composition and encouraged his disciple to write one hundred hymns so
that the following of Abji Bapa as an emergent sect, would have an
acceptable body of devotional bhakti literature. What was most significant

was that these hymns stressed worship to Swaminarayan and his
representatives - who, then, within the context of Satsang Mahasabha
were Gopalanand Swami, a disciple and a contemporary of the primary
sect founder, followed by Nirgunanand Swami and Ishwerchavandasji.
In other words, as the leader of the emergent Mandal, Muktajivandasji
was constructing a genealogy of sect leaders which excluded the
acharya, the hereditary householder leader of the primary sect. Although
moksha was an element common to the primary sect and the emergent
Mandal, for the followers of Muktajivandasji moksha was attainable
only through the principles enunciated by Abji Bapa. When a substantial
body of hymns became available, Muktajivandasji compiled this into a
collection titled Shri Hari Gnanamrat. Later the collection was
published by the Maninagar temple for the use of Mandal members. The
evening prayers in the Mandal congregations in India and Britain
conclude after the devotees sing one of these hymns.[81]

A body of renouncers is an essential feature of a Hindu sect.
Ishwerchavandasji also persuaded his disciple to start to initiate
renouncers into the Satsanga Mahasabha. When Muktajivandasji
initiated his first disciple in 1942, he gave Satsanga Mahasabha a
legitimate standing vis-a-vis the existing sects in the area.[82]
Subsequently as the following consolidated, he initiated more
disciples to increase the body of renouncers. A substantial number
of these renouncers have come from among the Leva Kanbi Patels and
this feature has tended to make the relationship between the sect
and caste much closer among them.

From his residence at the Swaminarayan temple of the primary
sect in Kadi, Muktajivandasji moved to Maninagar in 1943 - a step

which was an important phase in the evolution of the Mandal as a separate Swaminarayan sect.[83]  In the presence of less than a dozen devotees, in a room then used as a miniature temple, he installed shrines of the sect founder Sahajananda Swami along with an image of Abji Bapa to symbolise the commencement of a separate sect.  It was from this miniature temple in Maninagar, not far from a main seat of the primary sect, that the renouncer leader began to consolidate his following among the Leva Kanbi Patels whose recruitment to the sect coincided with their migration to East Africa. This consolidation progressed in phases extending from 1940s to 1970s.  In 1944, Muktajivandasji and his associates organised a festival which drew thousands of followers to Maninagar. They assembled there to celebrate the installation of a Swaminarayan shrine in the existing temple. The event marked the kind of congregational support the Mandal had gained. The feast was organised during the days of food-rationing and according to the Mandal account, Muktajivandasji fed about three thousand people, the food for them coming out miraculously from a small container.[84]  An event such as this was bound to highlight the charismatic character of the renouncer leader, who, in the Vaishnavite tradition, was increasingly seen to possess divine attributes.  It was therefore not unusual that his immediate followers saw it appropriate to deify him by including his image on the existing Swaminarayan shrine.

In order to establish parity with the Swaminarayan sect at Ahmedabad and elsewhere, what the Mandal needed was a temple with oblong shaped domes (shikhar).  A temple with several oblong shaped domes (shikarbandhi mandir) is a concrete expression of the fact that a sect has become properly established. Construction of such a temple

entails a large expenditure and investment. In order to raise the
money needed for the temple, Muktajivandasji and his followers
travelled widely in Cutch where the Mandal was developing its
following. He also travelled to East Africa where his prospering
Leva Kanbi Patel followers made substantial contribution for the
construction of the temple in Maninagar. These journeys were followed
by extensive preparations made to celebrate its inauguration. When
the temple was opened ceremonially in 1955, all the pomp and festivity
coupled with the presence of thousands of the Mandal followers con-
stituted a step towards the further institutionalisation of the
Mandal and its separation from the acharya-led primary Swaminarayan
sect.[85]

Along with the progressive consolidation of the Mandal in
Maninagar, the developments which occurred in Cutch also marked the
increasing influence of the Mandal and a sharper distinction between
the primary and secondary sects which was further reflected in paksha
divisions among the Leva Kanbi Patels. Since the beginning of the
forties, Muktajivandasji had been travelling to Cutch where Abji
Bapa's birthplace Badadia had become a focus of his activities. The
birthplace was converted into a memorial (chattri), where the Mandal
shrines of Abji Bapa and Ishwerchavandasji were installed so that it
was distinctly separate from the primary sect temple. As the Mandal
became a corporate custodian of the memorial, it meant that it
extended its control over all the contributions the devotees made there.
The Mandal account suggests that differences have occurred between the
Mandal and the descendants of Abji Bapa as the latter appear to have
resented the collective ownership of a privately owned property.[86]

Despite this difference, Muktajivandasji held a festival in which
the recital of Abji Bapa's text was used as a central focus to
mobilise support for the growing Mandal and Nano Paksha among the
Leva Kanbi Patels.

The sharper division between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha had
created unusual conditions with regard to the use of local Swaminarayan
temples in Cutch. With the separation between the primary Swaminarayan
sect and the Mandal, and the divisive cleavages among the Leva Kanbi
Patels, each side clashed with the other over the use of temple
facilities provided by the acharya-led sect. For instance, in Naranpur
village, after initial quarrels, the space in the temple was divided
into two sections for the use of each side. Although each paksha held
its services at a different time, the lack of consensus over the
affairs and organisation of the temple added to existing tension
and hostility. Besides, the acharya's representatives continued to
exercise control over the temples in Cutch. Whenever Muktajivandasji
came to Cutch, the representatives of the acharya attempted to
prevent him from gaining admission to temples. When this occurred,
for instance in Dahisara village where Muktajivandasji and his
associates were asked to leave the temple, there was a strong feeling
among the Mandal members that it was essential for them to have
separate temples so that members of the Nano Paksha could perform
their prayers and services without meeting any Moto Paksha opposition.
As soon as the Mandal members in Dahisara village responded to the
idea of having a separate temple, a small place was built to install
shrines of Sahajanada Swami and Abji Bapa. The construction of a
separate Mandal temple stimulated devotees in other villages who then

organised themselves to build their separate places of worship.
Subsequently, sect members in villages such as Madhapor, Mankuwa,
Karanpur, Badadia, established separate temples for the followers
of Abji Bapa. This phase marked a complete schism between the
acharya-led sect and consolidated the Mandal in Cutch. During the
fieldwork period, Mandal devotees living in Kera village inaugurated
a temple of their own. The increasing number of temples related to
the Nano Paksha congregation has given the Mandal a distinctive
institutional identity. From the late forties and early fifties, it
was evident that the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal had
emerged as a separate Swaminarayan sect under Muktajivandasji
leadership.

As the Mandal acquired a well-defined institutional character,
the close associates of Muktajivandasji resolved to celebrate his
fiftieth birthday with great festivity. They unanimously decided to
weigh the renouncer in gold and to call the occasion his Golden
Jubilee.[87] According to Mandal sources, though Muktajivandasji
initially refused to accept this proposition, he finally yielded to
the devotional insistence of and affectionate pressure of his followers.
As on the earlier occasion of sectarian significance, the members
from the congregations in India and East Africa subscribed sums to
finance this occasion - this was firm evidence of the fact that the
Mandal members settled in East Africa enjoyed material prosperity and
contributed to the Mandal generously to enhance their own moksha-bound
status. In a public ceremony which was carried out with appropriate
rituals, Muktajivandasji was weighed in gold. Subsequently a trust
named Anadi Mukta Sadguru Shree Muktajivandasji Swami Suvarna Jayanti

Mahotsava Smarka Trust, was set up to administer the fund collected
for the Golden Jubilee. Muktajivandasji himself desired to see the
accumulated capital used for creating educational institutions and
facilities to be centered at the temple in Maninagar. A school and
a college of arts and science were constructed and important state
and national dignitaries were invited to perform opening ceremonies.
For instance, Morarji Desai and Dr. Radhakrishnan, then the President
of India have inaugurated sect's institutions. The appearance of an
association between Muktajivandasji and the leaders of national
prominence has helped to project an image of the Mandal as a modern
and progressive sect. Besides the eminence Muktajivandasji has
achieved as a sect leader, events leading to the expansion of the
sect beyond the formation of temples have aroused devotional reverence
among all the followers of the sect. The rapid growth of Shree
Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal as an organised and well-
established sect was no more a matter of dispute or ambiguity. Although
the figures for the total sect membership are not available, the accounts
of sectarian gatherings in India indicate membership running into
thousands. A key factor in the expansion of the sect was the prosperity
Leva Kanbi Patels in the Mandal enjoyed during their settlement in
East Africa in the fifties and sixties. The second occasion which
illustrated this prosperity occurred in 1967 when the senior associates
of Muktajivandasji decided to celebrate his sixtieth birthday which
was to be his Platinum Jubilee. The event attracted Mandal members
from the local and overseas congregations, a small party arriving from
Britain on this occasion. As before, the sect members contributed
generously to honour and weigh their leader in platinum and enhanced
the status of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal as a legitimate
Swaminarayan sect.

The consolidation of the Mandal in Maninagar, was accompanied
by the formation of the Mandal in Nairobi, which is the main seat
of the sect in East Africa, with active branches in Mombasa and,
until 1972, in Kampala, Uganda.  In the initial period of Indian
settlement in Nairobi, Indians who belonged to different sects in
the Swaminarayan movement maintained a semblance of unity. They
formed a single Swaminarayan Association which was called Purva
Africa Swaminarayan Satsang Mandal. The differences between the
sects were initially subdued and a single Swaminarayan temple was
built to cater for all the followers of Swaminarayan. The facade
of unity did not last too long as members affiliated to a particular
Swaminarayan sect found themselves in constant disagreements about
the affairs of the temple. The association of sects lost its initial
vitality as each Swaminarayan sect proceeded to set up a separate
organisation and a temple for itself.[88]

From the beginning of the forties, Motabhai, who has been
referred to as a devoted associate of the Mandal, has provided dynamic
leadership in the formation of Mandal congregations in several
African towns and cities. After a substantial number of Leva Kanbi
Patels had settled in Nairobi as workers, small businessmen and
entrepreneurs, a Mandal temple was constructed to give the congregation
a fuller sectarian expression. The leader, Muktajivandasji, who began
visiting East Africa from the late 1940s, performed the opening of
the temple in 1952. Although the Nairobi Mandal has lost those members
who have migrated to Britain, it remains an important center of the
sect as it is the prosperous Nairobi-based devotees such as Motabhai
who provide substantial financial support for activities of the Mandal.

When I visited Nairobi in 1971, I was informed that there were about a hundred members in the local congregation. Their number has probably decreased since then as many of them have left Kenya to settle in Britain. I also found that the Kampala-based congregation of the Mandal formed a residential community centered on a small Swaminarayan temple established in a private house, in the Bakuli ward of the city. When the Asians were expelled from Uganda in 1972, most members of the Mandal left Kampala, came to Britain as refugees and subsequently settled down in London or Bolton.

The second chapter has already outlined the growth of the Mandal in Britain and the part Motabhai has played in its development. The British Mandal has developed an institutional character in the formation of temple based sectarian communities in Hendon and Bolton. The fact that the Mandal has an important overseas extension in Britain has greatly added to the prestige of the sect in Gujarat, the presence of the British members on special occasions such as the Platinum Jubilee being distinguished by their suits, others wearing their traditional dresses. As described in Chapter 8, when Muktajivandasji's first visit to Britain occurred in the autumn of 1970, the event marked an important step in the development of the sect in Britain. The special arrangements the Mandal members made to organise a procession from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square to honour their leader highlighted the collective aspect of the sect and the members' committment to the ideology of moksha. In the organisation of the Mandal in Britain, Motabhai as the closest associate of Muktajivandasji, plays a vital part. He is in a sense a sort of roving ambassador of the sect. He travels between Nairobi, Maninagar and London regularly,

completing the circuit once every year. Spending several months in

each domain of the sect, he coordinates and controls sectarian

activities and his directives have bearing on the decisions which

the Mandal leaders make in Britain. During the fieldwork period in

1972, the Mandal members were preparing to commemorate Muktajivandasji's

sixty-fifth birthday in India. Later in the year a party of the

Mandal members travelled to Maninagar to participate in the festivity,

thus sustaining and nourishing the relationship with the main Mandal

congregation in India.

Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivanda Mandal has now developed

as a secondary and separate Swaminarayan sect in its opposition to

the primary organisation led by the hereditary acharya at Ahmedabad.

Among the Leva Kanbi Patels of Cutch the opposition is evident in

the distinction made between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha - the latter

of these, now represented in the Mandal, has evolved a distinct and

autonomous sectarian organisation.

## 4.    A BRIEF SUMMARY

The account of the development of the Swaminarayan sect has

focused on the social and political processes which have led to the

emergence of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal as a

secondary sectarian organisation. Within the primary sect established

in the 19th century, the opposition between the hereditary leader

(the acharya) and his adversaries centered on the rights which each

side claimed to the use of sectarian property. The conflict of interests

within the primary sect created social conditions in which Abji Bapa

as the saintly figure opposed and challenged the extension of the

acharya's authority to sectarian assets. The opposition took an
organised form, under the umbrella of the Satsanga Mahasabha and
developed a distinctive following of its own within the primary
context of the sect. This following created a sectarian potential by
seeking a deified position for its leader Abji Bapa. The conflict
between the two sides gave birth to the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta
Sajivan Mandal led by a renouncer leader Muktahivandasji.

The division between the primary Swaminarayan sect and the
Mandal had repercussions for the endogamous nāt of Leva Kanbi Patels.
Following the creation of the divide between the primary and
secondary sects, the Leva Kanbi Patels, hitherto members of the
primary sect, found themselves divided in their mutually exclusive
sectarian affiliations - the divisions which were identified as
Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha. The differences in sect membership has
created a cleavage which has become an important and a relatively
enduring feature of social life among the Leva Kanbi Patels in Cutch,
East Africa and  Britain.

Thus the opposition  characterises two sets of relationships
which are linked to each other. The first set concerns the primary
and secondary Swaminarayan sects, one of which has established its
congregational identity in opposition to the other. The second set
concerns the opposition within the endogamous nāt derived from the
first set of relations. The opposition introduces a new element
within the nāt requiring its members to define relationships with
reference to the first set. These two sets, each involving relation-
ships of conflict, are analytically separable, though in actual
social and political situations they remain closely meshed with each

other. The understanding of these features is best provided by a
brief history of the primary and secondary sectarian organisations
which constitute these elements, give them durability and eventually
alter their sociological significance with the passage of time. The
use of paksha categories in the British context as outlined and
analysed in chapter 7, illustrates this clearly.

Besides the identity that the Mandal has evolved as an organisation
separate from the primary Swaminarayan sect, it has also developed
its distinctive ideology of moksha. The following chapter is an
exposition of the meaning of this ideology and the relationship it
has to the regulated organisation of ritual and prayer encompassing
the everyday life of each member of the sect.

NOTES : Chapter 4.

1. See Monier M. William's Preface to his <u>Brahmanism and Hinduism</u>
   <u>or Religious Thought and Life in India, as based on the Vedas</u>
   <u>and other Sacred Books of the Hindus</u>, 1891, London, John Murray,
   pp.1-22.

2. <u>Ibid.</u>, Chapter 5, Vaishnavism or Worship of Vishnu, p.96.

3. Max Weber, <u>Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and</u>
   <u>Buddhism</u>, translated and edited by Hans H. Gerth and Don
   Martindale, 1958, London, Collier Macmillan Ltd., pp.306-307 <u>et</u> <u>seq</u>.

4. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.306.

5. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.307.

6. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.307.

7. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.308.

8. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.308.

9. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.307.

10. Monier M. Williams, <u>op.cit.</u>, pp.134-137.

11. M.R. Majmudar, <u>Cultural History of Gujarat</u>, 1966 New York,
    Humanities Press, p.219.

12. For an illuminating account of Vallbhacharya's sect see Richard
    Barz's <u>The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya</u>, 1976 Faridabad,
    Thomson Press (India) Ltd.

13. Monier M. Williams, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.134.

14. Richard Barz, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.30, <u>et</u> <u>seq</u>.

15. Monier M. Williams, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.134.

16. Monier M. Williams, <u>Sanskrit-English Dictionary</u>, 1899 (1976 Edition)
    Oxford, Clarendon Press, p.639, Columns 1 and 2.

17. Richard Barz, <u>op.cit.</u>, pp.86-87.

18. M.R. Majmudar, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.214.

19. For an interesting account of his marriage and its effect on the
    organisation of the <u>Pushtimarga</u>, see Richard Barz, <u>op.cit.</u>,
    pp.29-43.

20. M.R. Majmudar, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.214.

21. Max Weber, op.cit., p.315.

22. M.R. Majmudar, op.cit., p.214.

23. Max Weber, op.cit., p.218.

24. M.R. Majmudar, op.cit., p.218.

25. Monier M. Williams, op.cit., p.136.

26. M.R. Majmudar, op.cit., p.220.

27. Monier M. Williams, "The Vaishnavite Religion with Special Reference to the Sikhapatri of the Modern Sect called Swaminarayan", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1882. New Series, Volume XIV, pp.289-316. Also see David Pocock's Mind, Body and Wealth, 1973, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, pp.94-120 for a brief account of Maharaja libel case.

28. H.G. Briggs, The Cities of Gujarashtra: their topography and history illustrated in a journal of a recent tour, 1849. Bombay, printed in the Times Press by James Cheeson, pp.235-243.

29. Monier M. Williams, 1882, op.cit., p.30.

30. See J.N. Bhattacharya's Hindu Castes and Sects: An Exposition of the Hindu Caste System and the bearings of the sects towards each other and other Religious systems, 1896 (1973 reprint), Calcutta, Editions Indian, see pp.373-376. Also R.V. Russell and Hira Lal Raibahadur's Tribes and Castes of the Central Province of India, 1916 (1975 reprint) Delhi, Cosmo Publications, pp.326-330. Similarly see Stephen Fuchs, Rebellious Prophets: A study of Messianic Movements in Indian Religions, 1965 London, Asia Publishing House, pp.209-218.

31. Max Weber, op.cit., p.316.

32. Stephen Fuchs, op.cit., p.210.

33. For instance, in his account of Cities of Gujarat, H.G. Briggs says, "It has been urged, and justly, that the presence of British administration accelerated the views of Sahajananda – which under either Muslim or Mahratta regime would have perished". See H.G. Briggs, op.cit., pp.239-240.

34. James M. Campbell, The Gazeteer of the Bombay Presidency, Volume IX, Part I, Gujarat Population: Hindus, 1901, Bombay, printed at the Government Central Press, p.537.

35. Ibid., p.537.

36. Ibid., p.537.

37. See H.G. Briggs, op.cit., p.235, and Monier M. Williams 1882, op.cit., p.309.

38. H.T. Dave, Life and Philosophy of Shree Swaminarayan, 1974 London, George Allen and Unwin, p.44 et seq.

39. J.N. Bhattacharya, op.cit., p.374.

40. James M. Campbell, op.cit., p.537.

41. J.N. Bhattacharya, op.cit., p.375.

42. H.G. Briggs, op.cit., pp.235-243.

43. H.G. Briggs, op.cit., p.237.

44. Stephen Fuchs, op.cit., p.217.

45. R.V. Russell and Hira Lal Raibahadur, op.cit., pp.327-329.

46. Reginald Heber, Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-1825. (With notes upon Ceylon). An Account of a Journey to Madras and the Southern Provinces. Fourth Edition, Three Volumes, 1826 London, John Murray, see Volume 3, pp.29-42.

47. R.V. Russell and Hira Lal Rai Bahadur, op.cit,, p.329.

48. James M. Campbell, op.cit., p.539.

49. Ibid., p.537.

50. R.K. Trivedi Census of India, Volume V., Gujarat, part VII-B, Fairs and Festivals, 1964 Delhi, Government of India Press, p.310. This account does not distinguish between the primary and secondary sectarian organisations and the number refers to all Swaminarayan temples in the movement by mid 1960s. The number of temples in the movement as a whole is likely to exceed this number greatly by now.

51. Richard Barz, op.cit., p.30 et seq.

52. Ibid., p.538. Also see R.K. Trivedi, op.cit., p.307.

53. Monier M. Williams refers to incorporation of Swaminarayan into the temple shrine at Wadtal where he was worshipped as a "kind of tenth incarnation of Vishnu". See Monier M. Williams, 1882, op.cit., p.313.

54. Stephen Fuchs, op.cit., p.217.

55. James M. Campbell (ed.), op.cit., p.537.

56. Ibid., p.537.

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57. David Pocock Ritual Symbiosis and the Influence of Vaishnavism in Gujarat, 1970, London. A Paper presented to a Social Anthropology Seminar at the London University School of Oriental and African Studies, p.30.

58. An account of similar development of the Vadtal seat of the sect is essential for an understanding of differences between the acharya and sadhus and the way these differences generated the formation and growth of the secondary Swaminarayan sect Shree Akshar Purshottam Sanstha at Bochasan.

59. H.T. Dave, op.cit., p.164.

60. B.C. Patel, V.B. Patel, J.K. Pandya (eds.), Shriji Sankalpa Swarup Sad Shree Muktajivandasji Swami Sashti Prashashti Grantha, 1967 Ahmedabad (Maninagar), Shree Swaminarayan Mandir, p.45 et seq.

61. Shree Ghanashyam Vijay, January-February 1970, Volumes 1 and 2, p.11 et seq.

62. The following chapter provides a brief introduction to these texts as they are accepted within the Mandal.

63. Shree Ghanshyam Vijay, Volumes 1 and 2, January-February, 1969, p.16.

64. Shree Ghanshyam Vijay, Volume 1 and 2, January-February 1970, p.11.

65. Although the Mandal members affirm that the dispute between the acharya and his opponents was adjudicated in the Privy Council, my own search for the documentation has proved unsuccessful.

66. See B.C. Patel, V.B. Patel, J.K. Pandya (eds.), op.cit., p.57 et seq.

67. Shree Ghanshyam Vijay, Volumes 1 and 2, January 1969, p.17.

68. Ibid., p.17.

69. B.C. Patel, V.B. Patel, J.K. Pandya (eds.), op.cit., p.61.

70. In the absence of evidence from the Mandal members, it is difficult to assess the extent to which this conflict within the sect was related to socio-economic changes occurring in Cutch and Gujarat. A historical survey of the wider social context can show the influence structural factors had on the formation of paksha cleavage. However, the present account is not addressed to this topic.

71. B.C. Patel, V.B. Patel, J.K. Pandya (eds.), op.cit., p.58.

72. Ibid., pp.58-59.

73. Shree Ghansyam Vijay, Volumes 1 and 2, January-February.1969, p.18.

74. B.D. Patel, V.B. Patel, J.K. Pandya (eds.), op.cit., p.56.

75. B.C. Patel, V.B. Patel, J.K. Pandya, op.cit., p.64.

76. Shree Ghanshyam Vijay, Volumes 1 and 2, January-February 1969, p.20.

77. B.C. Patel, V.B. Patel, J.K. Pandya (eds.), op.cit., p.64.

78. Ibid., pp.64-65.

79. Ibid., pp.65-66, also see p.552 et seq.

80. Ibid., p.67.

81. Ibid., p.66.

82. Ibid., p.68.

83. Ibid., p.69.

84. Ibid., pp.73 & 74.

85. Ibid., pp.86-88

86. Ibid., especially see pp.71-72 and 80-83.

87. Shree Ghanshyam Vijay, volumes 1 and 2, January-February 1970, provides a detailed account of this occasion.

88. This information was collected in Nairobi during a short visit to Kenya in 1971.

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# CHAPTER 5.

## MOKSHA AND MĀN : IDEOLOGY AND THE ORGANISATION OF

## RITUALS IN THE MANDAL.

### 1. MOKSHA AS AN IDEOLOGY OF SALVATION.

Members of the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal

believe in salvation (moksha) as the foundation of their ideology.

The belief in moksha is derived from the intellectual tradition of

Hinduism. It is this tradition which offers a set of ideas about

the meaning of life, death, birth, rebirth and which provides a

conception of the relationship between man and divinity. In the

genesis of a Hindu sect such as the Mandal, these ideas find specific

expression. As the link between moksha and divinity is associated

with the sect founder and his successors, it is they who become the

source of salvation. Although the belief in moksha is part and parcel

of Hinduism as a whole, elites of the sect attribute a separate and

distinctive character to their particular conception of moksha. In

this process, the meaning of moksha acquires a degree of exclusiveness

in the specific context of a given sect and is not reducible to a

general Hindu conception of salvation. It is the sect members, and in

this particular context members of the Mandal, who accept the primacy

of this meaning of moksha in their own organisation and they universalise

the specific connotation of moksha to argue a case for the highest

attainment of salvation within their own sect. In this connection,

it is relevant to compare this feature of sectarian ideology with what

Louis Dumont has to say about ideology in general. According to him,

"...any general social ideology, any ideology that predominates in a given society is by its nature global, all embracing, all encompassing".[1] Although the sectarian ideology concerns a specific social group, members of the group tend to define the dominant component of their ideology as having an all encompassing character of universality. This characteristic is, for instance, expressed in the view that the highest and true salvation can occur only through the affiliation to the Mandal. The committed members of the Mandal express the encompassing dimension of moksha ideology when they use their perspective on salvation as an essential basis for understanding their social life.

Although the primacy of moksha emerges as an essential attribute of Mandal membership, the sect members in Hendon and Bolton are exposed to a way of life in an advanced industrial society not always fully compatible with seeking salvation according to their sectarian tradition. The paradigm of social life in Britain, based as it is on the ideology of equality and individualism coupled with a widespread acceptance of the rational explanation of phenomena provides a back- ground against which the Mandal members hold their beliefs and practices. The creation of the Mandal in Britain is a complex develop- ment and, in view of its recent formation, it is fruitful to give an account of moksha ideology and its practice before a tentative discussion is attempted to illustrate the kind of influence secular society is likely to have on the ritual and social organisation closely associated with the notion of salvation.

In addition to a potential for incompatibility between pursuit of moksha and demands of social life in Britain, moksha itself is not always a source of harmony and cohesion in the sect. For, as a social

organisation, the Mandal rests on the central antithesis between
moksha and man,that is the opposition between pursuit of salvation
and pursuit of ego-centered material interest.  In so far as man
as an attribute of the human condition creates a disjunction between
salvation and self-interest, the antithesis between the two categories
constitutes a source of discord and differences within the Mandal.
The relationship which the antithesis of moksha and man has to the
social organisation of the Mandal is a topic separately followed up
in Chapter 6.  The two planes - the link moksha and man has to
sectarian social relations, and the influence British social life
has on Mandal ideology and organisation - remain salient themes of
the thesis.

I begin this chapter with a sectarian story which the Mandal
members use to attribute supremacy to Swaminarayan in their own sect.
It is in relation to Swaminarayan as the highest divinity that moksha
is conceptualised in a hierarchical order. The hierarchy of salvational
states provides an ideological yardstick used for assessing the
conduct of the sect members.  Opposed to man, the conception of moksha
becomes meaningful in relation to salvational states which define
different degrees of proximity between a sect member and Swaminarayan.
Whereas it is the polarity between moksha and man that is related to
the organisation of authority in the Mandal, moksha and the need for
purity entails ritual performance. Regulated performance of sectarian
rituals is a concrete expression of belief in moksha.  Observance of a
complex set of rituals connect sect members to the temple rituals which
express the institutional primacy and significance of moksha as described
and analysed in this chapter.

## 2.    SUPREMACY OF SWAMINARAYAN AS A BASIS OF MOKSHA

In both primary and secondary Swaminarayan sects, leaders and intellectual elites perform an exercise which is similar to what a 'bricoleur'[2] achieves in Levi-Strauss's account of myths and their constitution. A bricoleur has a limited number of tools with which to perform a variety of tasks. The framework of history and society limits the elements he has at his disposal for reconstitution. In creating a set of categories which form the basis of a myth, the bricoleur acts within a predefined universe of discourse. In the context of Hinduism, the sect leader and intellectuals carry out a 'bricoleur' exercise in that cultural tradition provides them with a limited number of basic elements out of which they select those dimensions which form the basis of their sectarian ideology. In this process of reconstructing and rearranging a set of ideas, they redefine well-known themes to give their movement an exclusive identity and well-defined boundaries.

The evolution of Swaminarayan as the supreme divinity above the entire pantheon of Hindu gods and goddesses illustrates the bricoleur at work. After the founder of the sect Sahajananda Swami became divine in the form of Swaminarayan or Ghanshyam Maharaj or Shree Ji Maharaj, initially he is viewed as an incarnation of Vishnu. In subsequent developments, he is established as the supreme and sovereign god who transcends Vishnu. In other words, in bricoleur style, the sect elites not only bring to their congregations the values of traditional Hinduism but rearrange the classical hierarchy of Hindu gods. Although the Hindus regard Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Mahesh the destroyer as the highest manifestation of the divine, in the

sectarian context their omnipotence is reduced and they are subordinated to Swaminarayan. In this development, Sahajananda is deified as Swaminarayan and then redeified and elevated to become the supreme ruler of the entire cosmos.

Within the Mandal, this process is illustrated in stories of Abji Bapa, the Leva Kanbi Patel who contributed to the formation of the Mandal as a separate Swaminarayan sect. A story which explicitly touches this theme is regularly quoted in prayer meetings to affirm that Swaminarayan presides over all gods and goddesses and that his divine character is not identical with any known god of the Hindu pantheon. According to this story which is translated here from its Gujarati version,[3] a woodcutter and his wife worshipped Swaminarayan with such intense devotion that they enjoyed a state of permanent unity with the supreme god. Both of them observed all the rituals and set aside a tenth portion of their income to Swaminarayan, thus remaining his true followers.

Once the woodcutter became ill and could not go to the forest to chop wood. He was then so weak that he had hardly sufficient strength to chop wood. He then decided to cut the base of a cactus. As he struck his axe on the base, even his feeble blow began to shake the entire universe, for so great was his spiritual strength.

Brahma, the creator of the universe was disturbed and complained to his superior Vairaj Purush, "Your devotee is shaking my entire universe. Please stop him or else my cosmos will collapse". Vairaj Purush, however, realised that the woodcutter was in fact a follower of a deity superior to him. Subsequently Brahma's complaint passed upwards from Vairaj Purush to Anirudh, Pradyumna and Sankarshan, then

to Mahattatva, Pradhan Purush, Mul Purush, Vasudeva Brahma, Mul Akshar and ultimately to supreme Swaminarayan. Thus, Brahma's complaint passed, as it were, through the seven levels of 'celestial hierarchical order' before being heard by Swaminarayan himself.

Then Swaminarayan said, "If anyone can divert my devotee from his truthfulness and faith, then only can Brahma's universe be saved from total collapse". Thereafter Brahma decided to deceive the woodcutter. He put on a disguise as Swaminarayan and appeared before the woodcutter and his wife with a disguised body of renouncers. Then he said to the woodcutter, "I am Swaminarayan and these are my renouncers. I will fulfil your most cherished desire". The woodcutter looked at disguised Brahma and meditated to "see" if he corresponded to the visual image of Swaminarayan as he had known it. He soon realised that it was not Swaminarayan but some rogue. With his divine powers, the woodcutter looked at all the dwellings of gods. When he saw that Brahma's seat was empty, he immediately retorted, "I know you are the ignorant Brahma. But I am a true follower of Swaminarayan. Just as a Brahman accepts no defiled food from a low caste Vaghri, nor can I accept anything from you". The woodcutter then explained to Brahma the levels of hierarchical domains above him, pointing out that he was a minor functionary of a subordinate rank. Brahma the creator admitted that he was ignorant of the celestial hierarchy and offered his profound apologies to the woodcutter for underestimating his spiritual knowledge and power.

The story ends with the appearance of Swaminarayan before the woodcutter and his wife. They were offered the choice of enjoying all the fruits of the temporal world or accompanying him to his divine

habitat, the <u>akshardham</u>. The woodcutter and his wife rejected the

material world, and, in their total humility and devotional surrender

to Swaminarayan even refrained from expressing their inner wish to

seek a union in his dwelling. Knowing their heart, Swaminarayan

carried them to his abode, the <u>akshardham</u>. There they received their

highest <u>moksha</u> in the everlasting union with their deity.

In establishing the absolute supremacy of Swaminarayan, hierarchy

as an underlying principle redefines the relationship between gods and

their domains. The homology between the celestial hierarchy and the

hierarchy governing caste based social relations, is highlighted in

the woodcutter's unwillingness to accept Brahma's paramountcy as the

creator which is similar to refusing defiled food from a lower caste

Vaghri. In so far as the social and ritual conception of exclusion

is brought to bear on the celestial hierarchy, the exclusion between

the layers of the celestial hierarchy acquires a rigidity which gives

the sect a greater degree of superior exclusiveness and establishes

its separation from other similar sects. It is in terms of a convergence

between social and sectarian ideologies that the reconstituted hierarchy

of gods subordinates Brahma, the traditional creator of the universe,

in the elevation of Swaminarayan to the apex of the divine ranking

order. The relationship between the supremacy of Swaminarayan and

woodcutter's eventual salvation establishes an important feature of

<u>moksha</u>. Salvation of the highest order is available only through

Swaminarayan, whose charismatic representative is the contemporary

leader of the sect. For members of the Mandal, the absolute primacy of

their sect as the vehicle for the highest attainment of <u>moksha</u> is a self-

evident truth.

## 3.    THE ANTITHESIS BETWEEN MOKSHA AND MAN.

The opposition between moksha and man should be located at two

levels of the formation of belief, based on the distinction made in

chapter one between dharma and sampradaya.  As a sect, a sampradaya

derives its identity from the encompassing dharma.  Ideas from the

general level of dharma are extended and utilised in a specific sect

such as the Mandal.  According to broad Hindu precepts the universal

character of the divine is manifest through gods who create, preserve

and destroy as well as through human consciousness as an expression of

jiva, the life force or the human soul.  Jiva in its human aspect is

bound to the transitional material world through the accumulation of

good and bad action.  It is the balance of this accumulation that

determines rebirth and the cyclical pattern of living and dying.  To

free one's self from this cyclical bondage is to seek moksha.   To

receive moksha after death, one has to recognise not only the human

aspect of jiva but its divine character as well.  It is the interplay

between the material human condition and the need to recognise the

divine aspect of jiva that determines moksha after death. These basic

postulates about the universal spirit, its manifestation through jiva

and consciousness, and the need to develop a state of unity between

the universal spirit and jiva for ultimate moksha remain some of the

fundamental Hindu ideas. The expression of these and related ideas takes

a variety of forms and different degrees of complexity according to

the specific circumstances of a particular group.  It is in conformity

to these encompassing ideas that sectarian bodies develop their

ideological specificity.  In using these ideas in their own sects, the

leaders and elites maintain continuity with the encompassing dharma.

At the same time, they also begin to evolve a difference which is expressed in the exclusiveness and implicit superiority of their sect. This concern with exclusiveness often generates tensions between dharma and sampradaya. The expression of this tension among the Mandal members symbolises the opposed trends which simultaneously emphasise both continuity and exclusiveness.

To return to the sectarian or sampradaya · level of belief, it is in conformity to dharma that the Mandal members believe in jiva, its embodiment in the human form bounded by birth, death and rebirth. Linking their sectarian perspective to the dharma tradition, the Mandal members as well as those who adhere to other Swaminarayan sects, emphasise the primacy of moksha. Just as the Hindus in general conceive jiva as being related to the universal spirit or one of its human forms, the Mandal members see jiva in relation to Swaminarayan. The sect founder Sahajananda Swami is believed to have been the incarnation of the supreme deity Swaminarayan. Swaminarayan in turn manifests himself through a succession of sect leaders. Therefore the relationship a particular jiva has to Swaminarayan is mediated through the contemporary sect leader who is thought to be a partial represent- ation of the supreme god. In other words, it is this basic relationship between Swaminarayan, his representative sect leader and lay members of the sect that defines the achievement of moksha.

The Mandal members elaborate the sectarian meaning of moksha according to the following scheme. In contrast to use of moksha as liberation after death, the Mandal members make a diametric distinction between moksha and man. Moksha refers to salvation and man to assertive and ego-centered properties of human nature. It is the opposition

between moksha and mān  that constitutes the cornerstone of sectarian
ideology. To explain and interpret the polarity between moksha and mān,
first of all, it is important to outline what it is that the Mandal
members mean by moksha.

For the Mandal members, through the processes of birth, death
and rebirth, jiva is bound up within the body and subjected to material
human condition, the maya which is ultimately transient and illusive.
As long as jiva remains in the cocoon of wordly knowledge, it fails
in knowing the divine and its path to emancipation from ephemeral
existence.  In the Mandal members' moksha paradigm, such a human soul
is identified as being pāmar or vishayi, as he concerns himself with
wordly experiences and material pleasures.  The word pāmar  refers to
something ordinary and vishayi to the material level of sensual
experiences of pleasurable character.

When a person understands the impermanent and transitional
nature of material existence, he begins to seek his liberation from
it.  He joins a congregation of truth seekers (satsangis) and attempts
to gain knowledge about moksha.  Within the Mandal, everyone as a
satsangi has awareness of moksha.  In other words, each member is a
mumukshu - the one who desires the ultimate liberation.  A mumukshu
is above the level of pāmar or vishayi in so far as he accepts moksha
as a worthy aim.

However, the mumukshu state in itself does not ensure moksha.
A mumukshu must strive towards salvation through devotional worship,
bhakti to Swaminarayan, and order his conduct according to sectarian
precepts.  A deviation from these precepts may be regarded as mundane,

chālamchāl and subject to disapproval. If the mumukshu's devotion
to Swaminarayan is genuihe and his behaviour in conformity to the
sectarian code, he can raise himself to the levels at which he can
experience different degrees of moksha grace. The differences in
moksha grace define different degrees of proximity between a lay
member and Swaminarayan. If a Mandal member intensifies his faith,
(nishta) he can transcend the temporal and spatial differences between
Swaminarayan as he is held to be manifest in the celestial abode
(akshardhām) in his shrine in the temple and in the charismatic
representative Muktajivandasji, the present sect leader. Once a
member acquires an awareness of identity of this "trinity" he can
upgrade himself to the following levels from merely being a mumukshu.

Above the order of mumukshu, there are three hierarchical states
a sect member can achieve: at each stage the devotee is called mukta,
one who is said to have received a particular grade of moksha. Firstly,
a devotee becomes an ekāntika mukta. This means that his devotional
awareness is such that he enjoys a special closeness to Swaminarayan.
However, at this step, the devotee and his lord are still separate
entities. With further devotion and conduct conforming to the Mandal's
norms, an ekāntika mukta may raise himself to the next step of becoming
a param ekāntika mukta: a devotee of this order, it is believed, has
the actual form of Swaminarayan, as in his shrine within his soul. In
contrast to the ekāntika mukta who is separate from Swaminarayan, the
param ekāntika mukta has Swaminarayan dwelling in his jiva - although
there is still a lack of fusion between the two. When a devotee's
commitment to Swaminarayan and the sect leader is distinguished by
unwavering devotion, the ultimate salvation can be attained in undivided

oneness between the devotee and his lord. At this highest level, the person becomes an anādi mukta who is thought to have attained the highest degree of liberation called ātyantika moksha. The word anādi refers to a state without beginning or end and ātyantika to the highest order of salvation. The state of ātyantika moksha symbolises freedom from death, birth and rebirth and a state of permanent and lasting unity with Swaminarayan. It is this condition of union which the sect elites called vishishtaadvaita, qualified monism according to which the achievement of this unity does not dissolve the identity of an individual soul. The sect members themselves define this state as being analogous to the mixture of milk and sugar. Though one, they retain their distinct separateness. The most unique feature of the highest order of salvation is that it is available to the Mandal members in their own life time as well as thereafter. Instead of being a remote state beyond death, ātyantika moksha as a condition becomes a living experience once a high level of devotional intensity is reached. According to the above scheme, the moksha paradigm generates a set of hierarchical salvational states. The lowest status is that of a pāmar or vishayi devoid of salvation consciousness as opposed to states of moksha defining different degrees of closeness between the devotee and Swaminarayan. This scheme is represented in a following diagram.

In keeping with these ideas, Mandal members regard achieving moksha of the highest order a matter of great importance in their life. However, a sect member's intense devotion to Swaminarayan in itself is not a sufficient condition for attainment of highest salvation. One of the most important features of relationship between

Diagram 1.

THE SCALE OF MOKSHA STATUSES IN THE MANDAL

Swaminarayan

↑

Anādi Mukta

↑

Param Ekāntika Mukta

↑

Ekāntika Mukta

↑

The Realm of Moksha                Mumukshu

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

↑

The Realm of Mān                Pāmar or Vishayi
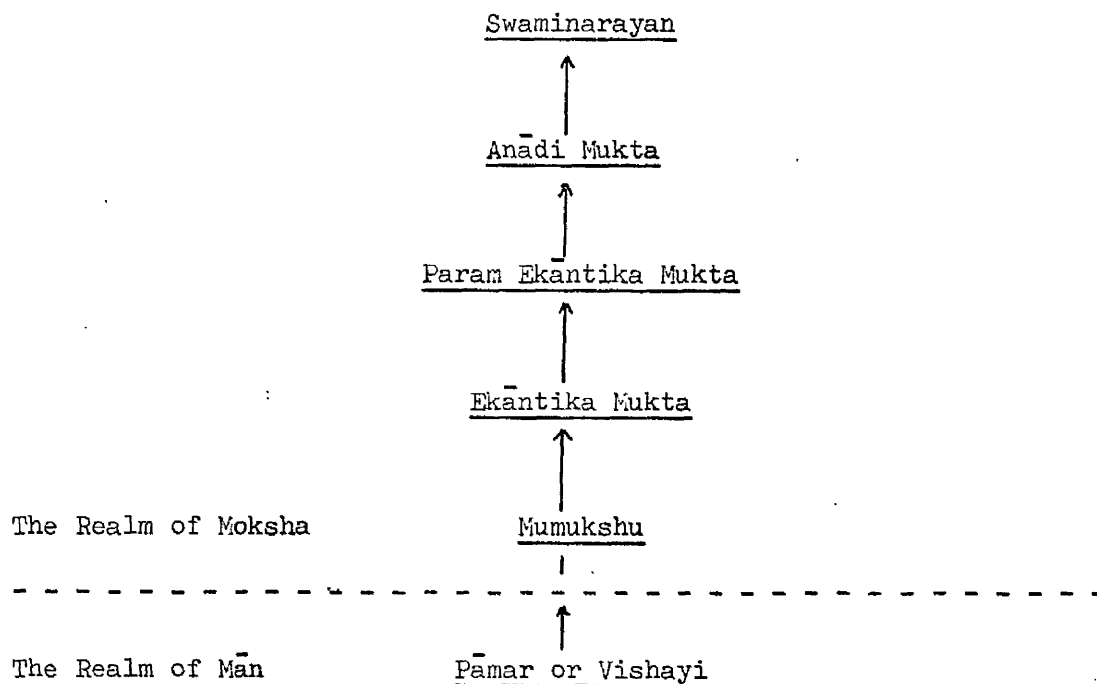
a devotee and the supreme deity is the mediating presence of the guru,[4] the contemporary sect leader without whose blessings and approval salvation cannot be obtained. The decisive part the sect leader plays in one's progress towards moksha is illustrated in the Mandal in the way in which the current leader Muktajivandasji is addressed. For instance, he is called Shreeji Sankalpa, the one in whom Swaminarayan has wished his manifestation, or Shri Anadi Mukta Sadguru. The use of anādi mukta in this context is significant as it conveys an identity between the sect leader and the supreme deity. As a sadguru who is the spiritual leader of the sect, Muktajivandasji

possesses power to grant or withhold moksha. His position as a
mediator between the sect members and the supreme Lord Swaminarayan
is institutionalised and legitimated in the scriptural texts. For
example, venerated Abji Bapa develops the conception of one's
devotion to Swaminarayan in terms of invariable mediation of the
sect leader. The charismatic link between Swaminarayan and his
representative sect leader is emphasised by the repeated use of
expressions such as Maharaj ane mukto (Swaminarayan and his liberated
disciples), Bhagwan ane temna satpurusho (Swaminarayan and his divine
representatives), Maharaj ane Mota (Swaminarayan and the elders).
Although the description uses a plural category for the representative
of the supreme deity, the actual reference is usually restricted to
the sect leader. Sometimes the sect leader's charisma and strong
emphasis on his absolute supremacy receives a much greater saliency
than the fact that he is a recipient of certain divine qualities.
The assumption of this supremacy by the sect leader has important
implications for social and political relations which are discussed
and analysed in the next chapter.

In opposition to the quest for atyantika moksha, each member of
the Mandal faces the potentiality of man which leads a person to
assert himself in relation to others: Moksha and man are opposed
in that the first entails practicing self-submission, the second
involves self-assertion. These opposites and the nature of the relation-
ship between them forms the basis on which the Mandal rests as a
sectarian organisation. The following account explains the meaning
of man and the nature of the polarity which the assertion of man
entails in relation to moksha.

The concept of mān as meaning 'respect', 'honour' or 'reverence'
is widely used in North Indian languages such as Gujarati. In his
account The Remembered Village, M.N. Srinivas refers to the significance
of mān when he says, "In brief, mana was a basic value and everyone
was sensitive about his self-respect including those who were
desperately poor".[5] Although Srinivas's discussion of mān as a
concept is brief, his observations clearly indicate that the word mān
also appears in South Indian social contexts. The Sanskrit etymological
use of the word mān shows that it has multiple connotations. As Sir
Monier M. Williams explains, besides meaning consideration, regard,
respect and honour, the word mān also means self-conceit, arrogance
and pride - a connotation which is distinctly expressed in the word
abhimān.[6] In connection with the first meaning, Gujarati speakers
would talk about mān āpavun as giving honour or respect. The same
word applies to the question of self-respect and honour in the prefixed
expression svamān. Svamān is widely used to express sentiments about
the nature of self-respect which ought to be reciprocally maintained
for specific individuals and therefore for particular social categories
and groups they belong to. There is a further extension of mān in what
is often known as sanmānpatra, literally a letter of honour. Giving
sanmānpatra to someone entails a formal and public acknowledgement
of mān accorded to an individual for his outstanding service to the
community at large. The opposite of mān is apamān which refers to an
act when a person is disrespected, dishonoured or insulted. The
contraries of mān and apamān provide a scale according to which actors
can evaluate the way in which respect and honour are granted or with-
held. In so far as mān is thus related to honour and therefore,

eventually, to hierarchical social relations, its relationship to the

status system, in essence, is comparable to the way the notion of

honour is conceptualised in Meditarranean societies.[7] However, it

is not the antithesis between man and apaman which members of the

Mandal relate to the polarity between moksha and man. Man as it is

usually linked to moksha is clearly related to the second meaning of

man focused on self-conceit, arrogance and pride. Defined in this

second sense, man has a distinctive connotation of egoistic self-

assertion which is believed to be opposed to the state of self-

submission signified by moksha. The Mandal members distinguish the

two meanings clearly and there is no question of any confusion as

to which term is applicable in a specific context. To separate the

two meanings, the sect members use a Gujarati sentence Jo man muksho

to man malshe which means 'if you abandon man, self-assertion, you

achieve man respect.'

Jiva, the soul substance embodied in the human body is equally

responsive to moksha and man. Whether or not a devotee becomes

oriented to moksha or man depends upon his course of conduct and action.

If a devotee becomes receptive to man, then he becomes a mani, a

possessor of man. If he remains mani for a length of time, he stands

to lose his eligibility for moksha. To prevent this from happening,

the Mandal leaders and scriptural texts emphasise the need for

devotees to be aware of the pitfall of man. Even if a sect member

recognises the divine quality of the sect leader and devotes himself

to the congregation, he remains a mani as long as he asserts himself.

Consequently, not only does he lower himself on the moksha scale,

but he also faces the prospect of having his soul confined to the cycle

of birth, death and rebirth.

Mān stands in diametric contrast to moksha. The relation
between the two categories is marked by separation and opposition.
The duality of moksha and mān is somewhat analogous to the nature
of relationship between the sacred and the profane in that the
distinction between the two is categorical. The two can not coexist
and fuse, they are mutually exclusive and the dichotomy between them
is fundamental. In other words, if one has moksha, one can not have
mān. Inversely if one is māni, one cannot attain a state of moksha.
Mutual exclusion of moksha and mān and the expression of these
opposites within the Mandal generates stresses and tensions as the
antithesis between the two categories is related to the social
organisation of the sect. The relationship between the ideological
categories and social relations is fully dealt with in the following
chapter.

To the Mandal members, then, if moksha means self-surrender to
the goal of ultimate salvation, mān means self-assertion in contra-
diction to the sublime pursuit of moksha. Moksha relates to the
divine, divya, mān to the elements of material human condition,
loukik. A māni gives a specific ego substance to himself and pursues
his own interests which shows that he is unwilling to subordinate self-
interest for the sake of his ultimate salvation. Even though a māni
may be formally regarded a mumukshu, a seeker of salvation by virtue
of his membership to the congregation, each manifestation of mān is a
corresponding loss of moksha, a descent from spiritual emancipation.
While moksha is other-worldly, mān is this wordly: the former is
ideal and spiritual, the latter is material and pragmatic.

The ideological tension between moksha and man is vividly evident in discourses in the Mandal temple. A true seeker of salvation is a person who does not possess any man. He is in the sectarian context, a nirmani - the one without man. Ideally a sect member regarded as a nirmani truly lives up to the ideal of salvation. However, man is conceived to be such a subtle force that it can manifest itself in a variety of forms: on some occasions it may be even disguised as moksha. A sect member claiming to have eliminated man may still assert himself contrary to ethos of moksha. If he prides himself as a nirmani, then he has expressed man and his devotion and loyalty to the sect are suspect as the attributes of moksha he assumes show his essential concern for the expression of ego rather than genuine self-submission for moksha. The leaders who make these discriminations indicate that man pervades in subtle ways and stress the prime necessity of being vigilant against it.

How a person may abandon man so as to attain ultimate salvation: this is one of the most important questions the Mandal leaders and members raise in sect discussion. In the tradition of dharma and sampradaya, it is prescribed that a true seeker of salvation grows a deep sense of bhakti devotion for Swaminarayan and his charismatic successor Muktajivandasji. A distinctive feature of devotional worship in the Mandal is the ideal of total surrender to Swaminarayan. It is only through a state of total surrender that a person begins to develop the state of consciousness regarded as necessary for the attainment of the highest possible moksha. In accepting the divine supremacy of Swaminarayan and the existing sect leader, the idea of complete surrender means developing submissiveness which the Mandal

members term dāspanu. The word literally means the quality of being

a servant or a subordinate. Dāspanu as a conception is further

elaborated into the notion of dāsānudās which means 'servant of a

servant'. This double emphasis on subordination expressed in hymns

and discourses affirms the primary importance of absolute surrender.

Once a sect member accepts this mode of devotion marked by absence of

mān, then his aim is to motā ne rāji karvā, that is to 'please the

big one, the sect leader', the phrase expressing the devotional norm

of obedience. Once a sect member can demonstrate through his behaviour

and action that he does not manifest mān, he becomes eligible for

atyantika moksha.

In religious discussions regularly held in the temple assemblies,

the Mandal members demonstrate different degrees of understanding of

moksha and mān. The contextual understanding of the ideology shows

that members usually associate devotion to the sect leader with the

attainment of moksha. Although the opposition between moksha and mān

is not formally stated, the diametric distinction between the two is

illustrated through concrete examples to emphasise the paramount

importance of devotional submissiveness. Although the concept of

moksha and of the hierarchical states it entails constitutes a regular

topic of discussion, the understanding of the degrees of proximity to

Swaminarayan is limited to those who can demonstrate superior knowledge

of the scriptural literature of the primary sect and the Mandal. The

contextual discussion of moksha centers on salvation as an experience

as well as a state after death in devotional unity between the follower,

the sect leader and the supreme deity. The textual elaboration of

moksha takes a more complex theological and philosophical form.

Deriving from the wider Hindu tradition, the main sectarian
scriptures locate moksha in the framework of an elaborate cosmological
scheme. Although it is not the textual version of the ideology that
concerns us here, it is appropriate to give a brief introduction to
the texts the Mandal members use. The texts such as Shree Abji Bapa
Shreeni Vato recreate the context of social life in Cutch. In this
recreation the boundary between text and context often becomes blurred
in the extent to which the textual material derives from the actual
social experiences of the sect members concerned.

Although the Swaminarayan movement is rooted in the Hindu
tradition, the elites of the Mandal have sought to distinguish the
sect as a separate organisation and its identity only indirectly and
partly coterminous with Hinduism. For example, it is significant
that the Mandal sets apart the entire body of Hindu scriptures such
as Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas from the body of literature on
the Swaminarayan sect. In order to emphasise sectarian exclusiveness
and to distinguish it from the Hindu tradition, the categories which
the Mandal applies are pratyaksha, 'direct' and paroksha, 'indirect'.
The literature that the Mandal has developed is direct, in that it
has been composed and elaborated by leaders of charismatic standing.
Opposed to pratyaksha is paroksha, the indirect body of religious
literature of the Hindu tradition which provides much of the substance
of the ideology of moksha. While the distinction between the two is
aimed at giving the Mandal a degree of exclusiveness, the difference
is not taken so far as to establish mutually exclusive categories.
Nevertheless, religious discourses and discussions reveal a trend in
this direction in the 51st story narrated in Shree Bapa Shreeni Vato.[8]

Here paroksha, literature is equated to grass, khad as being useless
and pratyaksha, literature is referred to as grain, kan and therefore
as being useful. In Gujarati, the statement takes the following form:
Paroksha na shashtra khadne thekane che ne pratyaksha na shashtra
kanne thekane che. It is with this distinction as a basis that the
Mandal members define the following sectarian texts.


1. Vachnamrat[9]

Common to all Swaminarayan sects is Vachnamrat, literally "the
nectar of words". It is the most important scriptural text of the
Mandal. During his missionary travels in Gujarat, Kathiawar and Cutch,
Sahajananda Swami gave religious discourses in Gadhda, Sarangpur,
Kariyani, Loya, Panchala, Vadtal, Ashlali and Jetalpur. Five of his
contemporary disciples are known to have recorded his numerous
expositions and compiled them into a volume. The Mandal version of
Vachnamrat has 273 discourses of varying length. Deriving from the
corpus of Hindu tradition, these discourses construct a complex
theology. The distinguishing mark of the Mandal version is that Abji
Bapa has written a detailed commentary of each discourse in the form
of questions and answers. This Mandal version of the text is known as
Vachnamrat Rahasyarthapradipikatikopetam, literally 'the Vachnamrat
with the commentary illuminating its deep meaning'. The text is
further distinguished by lithographic portraits of Sahajananda Swami,
his five renouncer disciples as well as the photographs of Abji Bapa,
Ishwercharandasji and Muktajivandasji. The main body of the text is
preceded by an introductory biography of Abji Bapa who is categorically
referred to as the anadi mukta associated with the apex of the moksha
hierarchy. In other words, the text is such a distinctive part of the

Mandal that the followers of the primary Swaminarayan sect reject it as being heretical and unacceptable to them. However, the Mandal members argue that without Abji Bapa's detailed interpretation, the text would remain largely incomprehensible. What is most important is that Vachnamrat with the commentary establishes the "difference" between the primary Swaminarayan sect and the Mandal as well as signifying the paksha-based cleavage among the Leva Kanbi Patels.

Members of the sect read Vachnamrat several times a year. The usual procedure is for an appointed member to read aloud to others one discourse and the commentary to be followed by a general discussion.

## 2.   Shakshapatri [10]

As Sikshapatri as a code of conduct was composed during Sahajananda Swami's life time, it remains an important text throughout the Swaminarayan movement. Through two hundred and twelve verses in Sanskrit, it prescribes a code of conduct appropriate for followers of Swaminarayan sects. According to verse 206,[11] an appropriate observance of this code can enable a devotee to achieve religious merit, wealth, pleasure and salvation. In any discussion of these objectives, it is the aim of moksha which receives predominant emphasis. Sikshapatri also outlines the rules which regulate the conduct of the acharya, the householders, married and widowed women, and renouncers. Besides referring to the norms of non-violence in the sectarian context, it also touches on purely secular topics such as financial transactions in a contractual relationship. Each member of the sect is required to read and utter a couple of verses from this text as a part of his individual prayer each morning.

The use of following texts is exclusively confined to the
Mandal as the followers of other sects in the Swaminarayan movement
do not consider them legitimate in the same way as Vachnamrat and
Sikshapatri.

3. Shree Abji Bapa Shreeni Vato[12]

Less complex and difficult than the discourses of Vachnamrat,
Shree Abji Bapa Shreeni Vato is of great importance to the Mandal
members as it was Abji Bapa's opposition to the acharya which created
a basis for the evolution of the Mandal. Altogether there are 251
expositions in the book, presented in the form of vartas or stories.
Varta is an important popular vehicle for the transmission of sect's
historical and spiritual heritage. For the sect members, harration of
these stories is doubly significant. First of all, many senior
members of the Mandal were personally associated with Abji Bapa
through family links. For them, the stories are much more than a
particular text of the sect. It is in fact related to the social
context of their life in Cutch. Secondly, these stories are almost
entirely told in Cutchi surroundings. They refer to villages, places
and people familiar to many members of the Mandal. For example, the
third story in the book[13] begins with the following description which
the Mandal members can instantly recognise and relate to in terms of
their own experiences and memory of the rural Cutch. "It was on
Vaishakh Vadi 3 (referring to the Hindu Calendar) that Bapa Shree
had come to Kera. Then on his way to Vrashpur (a sanskritised name of
the village Badadia), he stopped to bathe in the stream of a river in
the proximity of Kera". The subsequent part of the story refers to how

Abji Bapa invites others to bathe with him so that their eligibility for moksha is enhanced. References to settlements and topography familiar to the Mandal members has the effect of making the narration of these stories a deeply personal and meaningful experience. Unacceptable to the followers of the primary Swaminarayan sect, the stories are profoundly important for the Mandal members. Reading of the stories and interpretation of the teaching contained in them, is a regular feature of the temple prayers.

4.  Shree Purshottam Lilamrat Sukhsager[14]

This volume is an important text of the Mandal as it describes evangelical journeys which Sahajananda Swami made in Cutch for a period of 7 years from 1805 to 1812. Swami Nirgunanandji, now seen as a renouncer who preceded Swami Ishwercharandasji, had compiled this volume while Abji Bapa himself was alive. Altogether there are 241 chapters which are described as tarango, the waves. Each chapter is made of certain number of stanzas which total 14888 for the whole volume. Composed in a rhythmic and lyrical verse style typical of the bhakti tradition in Gujarat, Shree Purshottam Lilamrat Sukhsager describes the way Sahajananda Swami attracted Kanbi Patels and others into his congregational fold. The work is important for the Mandal members in several respects: First of all, like Shre Abji Bapa Shreeni Vato, it incorporates their rural habitat into the conception they have of history of the Mandal. The following example from Chapter 158 of the volume links Sahajananda Swami to villages in Cutch where the Mandal members themselves come from, the effect of the description tends to be intense as it is expressed in a devotional language.

> Remembering his beloved devotees, the giver of
> joy (Sahajananda Swami) travelled to different
> villages where his followers lived. To provide
> them an opportunity of seeing him, in travelling
> all over Cutch with his renouncers, he went to
> Mankuwa through Sukhpur village. From there he
> proceeded to Naranpur where his devotees received
> him joyfully; then on to Vrashpur which is the
> Badadia village (here the author uses both
> sanskritic and non-sanskritic names of the place).
> Though his arrival was unlikely to satisfy his
> devotees fully, they were happy that he had
> sanctified their village through his presence.[15]

It must be pointed out that the translation loses the quality of

effective blending between rhythmic and lyrical form and the

expression of the devotional content - which in the vernacular can

be deeply evocative. Besides the fine emotional expression of surround-

ings and people in the bhakti mould, the association of the founder of

the primary Swaminarayan sect with their social and cultural ecology

links the Mandal followers closely to their own sect. This account is

regarded as being exclusive to the Mandal, although the author, Swami

Nirgunanandji is known to have drawn material from the primary sources

such as Satsangijivan and Satsangibhushan. As the introduction to

the volume explains, Ishwercharandasji had passed the original hand-

written manuscript of the text to Swami Muktajivandasji who eventually

arranged to publish it. Although other Swaminarayan sects do not accept

it, it remains an important part of literature the Mandal has been

developing since its inception as an organised body.


5.   Shree Harignanamrat Kavya[16]

Moksha and the notion of devotional surrender associated with it

emerges most vividly in Shree Harignanamrat Kavya - a collection of

hymns the Mandal leader Muktajivandasji has composed over the course

of the past 25 years. The attributes common to most hymns therefore refer to salvation and the unity which is conceived between the devotee, the sect leader, the temple shrine and the supreme Swaminarayan in his celestial abode. It is also remarkable that the expression dāsānudās implying absolute total surrender occurs in the last line of every hymn included in the volume. For example, the hymn number 7 begins with the following couplet:

Áje to Shreeji pragat bhagwan
De che atyantika mokshnu dan.

The couplet says, "The lord is manifest today to give ātyāntika moksha (to his followers). The hymn then ends with the following lines:

Dāsānudās per dayā karine
Ek karāve murtima tan.

The lines convey the following meaning. "Having mercy upon the one who is a dāsānudās (the one whose surrender is complete), the lord unites him with himself". The main focus in many hymns is the association between the highest salvation and perfect submission. Regular use of this collection in the temple and outside can, in theory, continually reinforce the link between the achievement of moksha and the greatest degree of surrender to the sect leader.

As a collection of 168 hymns, Shree Harignanamrat Kāvya was published to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Mandal leader. It remains integral to the prayers which follow the performance of rituals in the sect's temples in Hendon and Bolton.

6. Shree Swaminarayan Niyamāvali[17]

This volume consiste of extracts from Vachnamrat, Shree Abji Bapa Shreeni Vato, Shree Harignanamrat Kavya, Shikshapatri and a collection

of hymns of the sect. It presents a selection to give the Mandal members an over view of the sectarian scriptures. It is essentially designed as a reader rather than as a text with its own specific character.

Apart from this body of sectarian literature, the Mandal head-quarters in Maninagar, India, publishes a magazine Ghanshyām Vijay every month. Each issue consists of about thirty pages. The first page carries a bhakti hymn composed by Muktajivandasji. The remaining matter is divided into two parts: the first part is an exposition of a sectarian theme. Presented by the sect leader himself or a leading member, it invariably focusses on topics such as devotion, the charismatic qualities of the leader and finally the need to submit to a teacher to experience the ultimate salvation. The second part is entirely devoted to news of activities of the Mandal congregations in India, East Africa and Britain. The news may contain detailed descriptions of important sectarian occasions such as the birthday of Muktajivandasji. There are also reports from villages, towns and cities giving details of activities conducted by the local Mandals. This magazine provides an important medium through which the members maintain a degree of collective awareness about the sect as a whole. On certain occasions, special issues of Ghanshyām Vijay are published. For example, on the fortieth anniversary of Muktajivandasji's renunciation and his Golden and Platinum Jubilees, the commemorative issues brought together articles on sect's history and belief, very detailed accounts of celebrations supplemented by a large number of photographs showing the leader and the followers involved in a wide range of festive events. To the Mandal members, these sources constitute an account of the personally experienced development of the sect.

Having been dominant participants in the rapid consolidation of the

Mandal in Britain, they regard Ghanshyam Vijay   as having no lesser

standing than some of the scriptural texts.

More recently, to mark Muktajivandasji's sixtieth birthday and

his recently conducted overseas tour,[18] two special volumes  were

published.  Both the volumes record the contemporary history of the

sect with a prime focus on sect leader's charisma and his oustanding

achievement in consolidating the Mandal as an organisation.

In addition to the texts published in Gujarati, in recent years

the Mandal leaders based in Maninagar have also produced a number of

readers for children and an account of sect's development in the

English language.  As the relationship between Gujarati and English

is an important dimension in the process of social change likely to

affect the Mandal members, I discuss the subject matter and significance

of this material in the concluding chapter.

The sectarian texts Muktajivandasji has accredited, endorsed and

published, provide the Mandal with a body of literature distinctive

in character and closely related to the evolution of the Mandal as a

separate sect within the Swaminarayan movement.  In providing a firm

basis for the belief in moksha,  the text such as Shree Abji Bapa

Shreeni Vato situates the opposition between moksha and man in the

social context of life in Cutch and has a special appeal to the Mandal

members. The discourses in Vachnamrat, which bear the special mark of

Abji Bapa's detailed commentary provides a complex theological and

philosophical background to moksha ideology. While the texts constitute

a basis for a more refined understanding and knowledge of salvation,

the ritual complex of the Mandal creates a focus for the practical expression of the moksha ideology. The following account examines the relationship between moksha and the performance of rituals within the Mandal.

### 4. IDEOLOGY AND THE ORGANISATION OF RITUALS AND PRAYERS.

The Mandal members express their belief in moksha through a complex of rituals and prayers in their homes and temples. The ritual performances refer to those symbolic acts which are believed to create a condition appropriate for moksha. Although the rituals and prayers express predominance of moksha in the Mandal, the opposition between moksha and mān and the hierarchical states of moksha are only indirectly related to the ritual complex. It is the distinction between pure and impure which the Mandal members relate more explicitly to moksha and observe it in rituals and taboos. The Gujarati word which usually refers to pollution is abhadchet. The verb which describes the act of becoming impure is abhādai javun or vatalāi javun. A Mandal member may use one of these expressions to indicate impurity or express his disapproval of pollution by using a moral category, saying, "This is a bad act or a wrong act (ā khotun thāi che etc.)." However, it is important to emphasise that the ideas about purity and impurity outside rural social organisation in India, and especially in an over-seas settlement, can lose much of their traditional importance. In my observation, it was obvious that the sect members maintained traditional Hindu practices related to purity, for instance, in their preference for vegetarian diet or in removing their shoes before entering the temple or eating with their right hand. Though they

expressed these wider Hindu ideas of purity in their personal conduct,

there was little evidence to indicate that the distinctions were

applied to interaction involving Hindus from other castes. Upon

learning that I belonged to the Barot nat, the son of my host had

no hesitation in reminding me that "they" would accept no food from

the Barots were they in their own village. However, I came across

no instance where unwillingness to share food with me or others was

ever expressed. During several festive meals in the temple, there

were always a number of non-Mandal Hindus and others as invited

guests and the rule of commensal exclusion did not appear to have any

significance. If it can be assumed that rules concerning purity and

impurity would be maintained more strictly in certain caste and

sectarian contexts in India, then it was obvious that the rules did

not apply to Mandal members' relationship to other Hindus in Britain.

The différence that has probably occurred as a consequence of migration

and settlement abroad, indicates that the norms of pure and impure

are not applied to those outside the sect and caste and that the

distinctions appear to be much more relevant for those aspects of

personal conduct which have some bearing on the moksha state. Therefore,

as in the Hindu tradition of dharma, though purity is an essential

aspect of progress towards salvation, failure to observe a particular

ritual act in itself does not create an impure condition in Britain.

It is a breach of sectarian taboo that causes impurity. If a Mandal

member breaches a taboo, then at least in theory, he incurs impurity.

For example, drinking alcohol or eating meat would be categorically

regarded as creating an impure state. An incident such as this is

usually met with strong disapproval and even a reprimand. But no rituals

of purification are entailed. As long as the person concerned does not

pursue the course of action regarded as a breach, the deviation does
not call for any collective and institutional sanctions. Although
the distinction between pure and impure is not homologous to the
antithesis between moksha and man, the performance of rituals is
an integral part of the social organisation of the sect. Institutional
rituals which require prescribed prestations to the sect bind the
realm of ritual and social into an inseparable whole - a connection
which does not escape the Mandal members entirely.

The Mandal members perform their rituals and say their prayers
at three separate levels in well-regulated chronological sequences.
The three levels relate to individual, domestic and institutional
performances. As the words suggest, first of all each individual
possesses his personal Swaminarayan shrine which requires a performance
of rituals and prayers highlighting the relationship between the
individual and the supreme deity. The shrine the Mandal members
install in their homes is the focus of domestic prayers and the temple
shrine is the center of institutional ritual performances and prayers.
Although it is useful to distinguish these three levels in the sect's
ritual complex, it ought to be emphasised that the members themselves
make no such clear-cut distinctions and often see their individual,
domestic and institutional activities in a unified way. As for the
chronological order, first all the three levels of ritual performances
and worship occur on a regular day to day basis. Then there are
specific events which cover a wider time spectrum from weekly events
to quinquennial sectarian assemblies most of which occur in the
institutional context of a particular congregation or in the framework
of the entire sect involving all the congregations in India. This

calendrical cycle of rituals can be further distinguished according to a typology of ritual action which Melford E. Spiro has developed in his analysis of Buddhism in Burma.[19] According to Spiro, three concepts of instrumental, commemorative and expressive ritual describe cultural dimensions of rituals, that is the purpose of ritual action. 'Commemorative ritual' is performed to remember and celebrate a historical or mythological event. If a religion or a sect has sacred founders, as does the Mandal, then the significant events in the life of founders are celebrated in the calendrical cycle. 'Expressive ritual' articulates individually felt sentiments and emotions towards that which is held to be divine and sacred. All the three levels of the Mandal ritual performances possess this expressive and devotional dimension as a sign of predominant concern with the ultimate salvation. Finally 'instrumental ritual' concerns attainment of physical, social or natural goal. Although the Mandal complex of rituals appears to be primarily expressive and commemorative, the instrumental component, at the very least in the desire for social and spiritual well-being of individuals is implicit in ritual acts. The usefulness of this typology of ritual action should be qualified by one observation; that is, in empirical instances the three dimensions are usually mingled and invariably related to the overriding concern members of the Mandal have with the highest ātyantika moksha. The following account focuses on the entire time-bound set of expressive and commemorative rituals which occur at the individual, domestic and institutional levels in the Mandal. At this point, it is also important to emphasise that the enactment of all rituals and prayers takes place in the context of social and cultural life in Britain. Although the sect members endeavour to maintain

'purity' of their tradition, the penetration of British influences on the overall organisation of the sect is an inevitable social process in the long run. Therefore it is important to examine the extent to which these influences impinge on the ritual complex of the Mandal.

## 4.1. Individual Rituals and Prayers

Every male Mandal member possesses a personal miniature shrine, which, in a plastic folder, contains the images of the supreme deity in the form of Swaminarayan and Ghanshayam Maharaj along with those of Abji Bapa and Muktajivandasji. The contemporary sect leader is shown as receiving divine light from the supreme lord, Abji Bapa and Ishwercharandasji. Early in the morning, each male member performs ritual worship (puja) involving the following steps.

First of all, every member is expected to wake up early enough to perform his individual puja which is essentially an expressive ritual. According to the precepts of Shikshapatri, he takes a purificatory bath and then wraps a clean, washed piece of cloth around his waist. Sitting cross-legged, he takes a little container of sandlewood paste and makes a 'U' mark on his forehead. With a small metal tube filled with vermillion powder, he then proceeds to make a prominent red spot known as tilak (colloquially tilu) in the middle of the 'U' mark. This symbol distinguishes a sect member as a follower of the Swaminarayan in the Vaishnavite tradition of Gujarat. Before the devotee installs his miniature shrine in front of his seat, he meditates upon Swaminarayan so that the latter may 'dwell' in him. Then he 'awakens' the deities to give them a symbolic offering

consisting of nuts and raisins. The next step is to utter 'Swaminarayan'
whilst turning a rosary. The devotee then stands on one leg in the
posture of an ascetic for a short time. Thereafter he performs the
rite of circumambulation (pradikshinā) around the shrine. Next he
prostrates himself before the shrine five or seven times. In saying
his prayers, the devotee touches each image of his shrine to accept
symbolic blessing from Swaminarayan, Abji Bapa and Muktajivandasji.
He takes a part of the nuts and raisins offered to the shrine as
prasād which in the sectarian context is any edible substances offered
to the shrine. Although the sect members accept that both men and
women are equal in the pursuit of moksha, this belief does not seem
to have any basis in practical affairs of the sect. Women do not
perform individual pujā as the state of impurity during menstruation
is believed to break the consistent regularity of individual ritual
worship. Nevertheless, the Mandal members insist that there is no
formal exclusion of women from the individual mode of worship. Two
women who performed their individual pujā on a regular basis provided
the only instance known to me of female participation in this mode
of worship.

Male children learn to do their individual pujā at a fairly early
age. As the parents require them to do their pujā, they begin to
receive some primary socialisation in the complex of rituals and
prayers. Hence it is quite common to see elders, young men and
children bearing the distinctive tilak mark on their forehead. The
younger Mandal participants, especially the younger boys attending
local schools, often refuse to bear the ritual tilak mark at school
as it might make them look conspicuous. More often than not, the
school boys wipe off their tilak leaving only a residual mark, as a

measure of their conformity to the sect's precept. They carefully allow a lock of hair to fall on the faint <u>tilak</u> which then becomes almost invisible. It is likely that the young boys might have been ridiculed at school for making a mark on their forehead which would perhaps appear distinctive to the outsiders. Be that as it may, the senior Mandal members admonish the youngsters for being ashamed of their tradition and usually urge them to be proud of their Swaminarayan heritage. When the Mandal opened its Swaminarayan temple in July 1971, the subject of marking the <u>tilak</u> was raised during a discourse. A senior leader questioned the boys publicly and demanded that those who rubbed off their <u>tilak</u> mark should show themselves for scrutiny before the entire congregation. There was only one boy who stood up. The elder reprimanded him and then also praised him for his honest openness. The matter was not pursued any further and others were spared from sharp public embarrassment. It was evident from observation that the rule in respect of <u>tilak</u> mark was defied regularly and the institutional response to this deviation was either a mild rebuke, or more often, a tactful non-enforcement of the rule.

In theory, individual <u>puja</u> can last for about twenty minutes. However, purely practical considerations determine the amount of time a sect member can spend in performing his ritual worship. As most Mandal members leave for work early in the morning, often travelling long distances, there is rarely enough time to perform individual worship according to traditional prescription. Sect members' accounts suggested that personal <u>puja</u> was usually compressed into a few minutes following a bath of purification.

## 4.2.  Domestic Rituals and Prayers

Each member of the Mandal maintains a domestic shrine as an entity separate from the personal miniature shrine described above. Adorned with the images of Swaminarayan and other sect leaders, most members of the sect have elaborately decorated shrines in their sitting rooms. The domestic shrine is a central focus of the household enhanced by colour photographs of the male members of the family standing with Muktajivandasji. The shrine at home is much more a symbolic assertion of affiliation and commitment to the sect. For there is no set prescription for domestic rituals. Any offering of ritual edibles such as nuts or a lighted incense stick or a lamp once or twice a day, comprises the only expressive ritual act of domestic puja.

## 4.3.  Institutional Rituals and Prayers

The main focus of institutional rituals and prayers for the Mandal members in Britain is their Swaminarayan temples in Hendon and Bolton. As most men, women and children assemble to participate in collective ritual worship in the temple, it is appropriate to give a description of the main temple in Hendon.

The Hendon temple, situated not far from the local Jewish synagogue, is a large hall accommodating about three hundred people. The arched entrance of the hall bears the inscription Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal Mandir - the addition of the word mandir meaning 'temple'. The roof-top has a mast which flies the white flag of the Mandal - a 'U' sign distinguished by a circular red mark in the center. The hall is divided into two parts: the smaller part

behind the shrine is subdivided into three sections. The first section near the side entrance is the passage where the members take off their shoes so as not to transmit any impurity inside the hall. The second section is a single room where the temple keeper has his lodging. The third part is a fully-equipped modern kitchen where wives of the members prepare prasād food for distribution in the temple.

The elaborately decorated Swaminarayan shrine installed on a large wooden altar piece faces the front entrance. Committed Mandal members have contributed generously to place on the temple shrine specially imported images from India. The shrine itself has four main parts. The central image is that of the supreme deity Swaminarayan surrounded by his many disciples and divine representatives. The divine figures of contemporary interest are portrayed on the left hand side of Swaminarayan, facing the shrine. Their seating arrangement illustrates a hierarchical order headed by Abji Bapa followed by Swami Nirgunadasji, Swami Ishwercharandasji, Vrindavandasji and the contemporary leader of the Mandal, Swami Muktajivandasji. On the right hand side there are additional characters thought to have possessed divinity in their contributions to the development of the sect. Not everyone knows in precise detail the significance of all the figures surrounding the supreme deity. However, everyone knows about Swaminarayan, Abji Bapa, Ishwercharandasji and Muktajivandasji as it is these names which feature prominently in discourses and discussions. On the left hand side of the central part of the shrine, there is a separate image of Ghanshyam Maharaj - a version of Swaminarayan. On the right hand stands Muktajivandasji as the current bearer of Swaminarayan's divine qualities. There is a horizontal image

at the top of the altar piece showing the contemporary sect leader
in a reclining position.  In front of the shrine lie offerings of
ritual food, an incense stick and a lamp. Below the shrine, on a
small wooden stool with a velvet cover, there lies a small stainless
steel plate in which the sect members leave their everyday cash
offerings to the shrine.

The temple walls are well-decorated with photographs of
Muktajivandasji and his disciples. Facing the shrine from the front
entrance, on the left hand side an observer can see a number of
photographs of the sect leader:  Swami Muktajivandasji with Dr.
Rajendraprasad the late President of India;  being weighed in gold;
riding an elephant in a procession in Ahmedabad;  with Dr. Radhakrishnan
another late President of India; standing with the Mandal leaders in
London;  with his renouncers at airports and in the highlands in
East Africa;  and Swamiji giving a religious discourse in Trafalgar
Square.  Similarly on the right side, there are photographs showing
him opening the Swaminarayan College in Maninagar and standing or
relaxing in different postures. Facing the shrine, behind the front
entrance, a large notice board displays more photographs of the sect
leader - the most prominent being the one in which he is standing on
a platform before a multitude of Mandal and Non-Mandal faces in
Trafalgar Square. The shrine and the photographs are deeply significant
for the sect members who often assemble after their prayers to admire
and adore these photographs which give a visual account of expansion
of the Mandal over the years.

An important part of the temple is an audio-visual cubicle
which members have constructed on the top of the front entrance. The
temple owns amplifying equipment, tape recorders, sound projectors

and a 16mm movie camera to record events of importance. It is also significant that the audio-visual equipment is used in order to intensify the experience of participation in temple gatherings. Over the years, the temple has built up a collection of tape-recorded speeches of the sect leaders and devotional hymns sung by the renouncers. These additional aids contribute to making ritual participation a satisfying experience.

Although the Mandal temple in Bolton is set up on a much smaller scale, it is no less significant to the Bolton members. Mandal members in both congregations see the temple as one of most integral and important aspect of their everyday life. In converting a hall in Hendon and a house in Bolton into temples, they have been totally self-reliant, using their own resources and labour, often sacrificing their daily wages for weeks. Given the firmness of their commitment to the sect leader and their belief in ultimate salvation, it is not at all unusual that each minute aspect of the temple and what happens there should arouse keen interest in the congregation. According to more committed members of the sect, a true devotee discerns no difference between home and the temple and, if anything, it is the temple which is, ultimately, one's 'real' home.

. In keeping with the precepts of Shikshapatri everyone within the Mandal, including wives and children, are expected to participate in collective rituals and worship which are distinctively expressive and/or commemorative in character. In India and East Africa the members attended the temple twice a day. However, the British circumstances of the Mandal make it impossible for the sect members to reproduce this traditional pattern. Given that most members leave their homes very early in the morning, not many can manage to attend

the temple in the morning. Separation between work and the temple community in Britain has necessitated a single attendance per day and therefore the evening meetings in the temple are of paramount importance.

The collective temple rituals and prayers begin at around seven o'clock in the evening and last till about nine. Though there is no formal priest attached to the temple, a senior member acts as one and performs all the temple rituals. To distinguish himself in that role, he wears a dhoti, wrapped around his waist in the manner of priests in India. It is he who commences the evening rituals and prayers by performing the evening puja. This consists of hymn singing followed by ritual performances culminating with arti - which can be described as a rite of adoration of the shrine. At seven o'clock in the evening, young school boys and girls arrive at the temple and use the Mandal text Shree Harignanamrat Kavya to sing devotional hymns. While the devotional singing is going on, the priest makes a ritual offering to the shrine. This consists of some fruit, milk and water which he symbolically raises to each image on the shrine. Finally the boys and girls sing the arti song which marks the end of one set of rituals and the beginning of the religious discourse, the kathā.

As a proper Mandal discourse, the kathā begins at eight o'clock in the evening when the adult members, their wives and children arrive at the temple. In theory, everyone should be present before the beginning of kathā. However, in practice, the sect members continue coming in all the way through the kathā discourse. After entering the temple proper, everyone performs a salutory ritual. Facing the shrine, with an expression of devotional reverence, the devotees prostrate before it. Traditionally, one should prostrate about ten times. In

practice, I saw the members doing between seven to sixteen prostrations depending upon the intensity of their devotional fervour. In the actual act of prostration, a member would kneel down then lie on the floor with his hands stretched above the head in a salutory manner. The Mandal members see prostration as symbolising one's complete surrender to Swaminarayan and his divine representatives as portrayed on the shrine. Then the devotee walks up to the altar where he touches the three main images of the shrine, each time bringing his finger tips to his eyes to make a symbolic gesture of acceptance of blessings from Swaminarayan and his successor, the sect leader. He then makes his daily cash contribution to the shrine by leaving a few coins on the stainless steel plate. After bowing before the shrine, he moves towards the left hand side where on a low stool lie copies of Vachnāmrat, Shree Abji Bapa Shreeni Vato and other texts. He makes a further symbolic gesture to indicate acceptance of blessing by touching the texts and raising his fingertips up to his eyebrows. Finally he picks up a rosary with which to utter silently "Swaminarayan" as the discourse goes on. Then he takes up a seat whose location is in keeping with his social and political standing in the sect.

Since Sahajananda Swami established strict separation between the sexes as a distinctive feature of the primary Swaminarayan sect, this has remained one of the most important features in both the schismatic Akshar Purshottam Sanstha as well as the Mandal. The Mandal congregations in Cutch and Gujarat have separate temples for male and female devotees. In East Africa, the main Mandal temple in Nairobi was constructed on two levels to provide separate facilities for men and women so that they could worship in mutual dissociation. The

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separation between sexes at the level of rituals of worship gives

women a less equal status, as their presence is thought to make

concentration on <u>moksha</u> less firm and their proximity entails a

potential or real threat of impurity to the temple. There is a

significant change in the pattern of separation between the sexes

in Britain, for the Mandal does not have the material resources to

construct separate temples for male and female devotees. Though men

and women do worship in the same temple in Hendon and Bolton, a more

symbolic spatial separation is maintained between the two sides. The

temple is clearly divided into male and female parts. Facing the

shrine, men sit on the left hand side and women on the right. When a

woman enters the temple, she does not prostrate herself before the

shrine as men do.  Instead she performs a symbolic act of prostration.

In a squatting posture the woman devotee brings her palms together in

a salutory fashion and raises her two index fingers together a certain

number of times: each movement symbolising an act of prostration.  Then,

from the same squatting position, she lays down her palms on the

floor to make a bowing gesture to the shrine. This is the only ritual

act women perform in the temple. Although they do not go closer to

the shrine lest they cast a shadow of impurity, they are, like all

members of the congregation, expected to make cash offerings to the

shrine so they put them in a separate plate placed less close to the

shrine.

After the salutory rituals begins the religious discourse, the

<u>kathā</u> for the evening. To commence the discourse for the day, a

senior member of the congregation sits next to the shrine facing the

assembled sect members. After invoking Swaminarayan, he proceeds to

read passages from the main text Vachnamrat or a story or two from

the discourses of Abji Bapa. The reading lasts for about thirty to

forty minutes. The reader then begins a discussion to explain the

substance of the discourses read. Sometimes he asks questions to the

male members to determine the extent of their attention and compre-

hension. In the ensuing dialogue, sometimes a more theological and

philosophical discussion may develop and reveal an intellectual

dimension of interest in the sectarian ideology. However, more often

than not it is the importance of moksha that remains the central

focus of most inquiries. With the support of one or two male members

of the sect, the reader then asks the younger boys questions, to

determine the extent to which they read and comprehend texts such as

Shree Abji Bapashreeni Vato. On occasions the questioning can focus

on a number of different aspects of the story concerned with salvation,

especially if the questioner himself possesses a detailed knowledge

of the scriptures. Sometimes the inquiry can take a more symbolic

form and a boy may be merely asked to utter a short quotation memorised

from his reading. If anyone fails to remember a quotation, the

questioner admonishes him and reminds him to read his stories more

attentively. As very small children receive little special training

in reading and writing Gujarati, they can not read texts such as Shree

Abji Bapashreeni Vato. They are usually required to utter the word

Swaminarayan five times. Although their responses create some amusement,

it is the very young who the sect-leaders worry about. For the future

of the Mandal as a viable organisation depends on their understanding

of moksha as an expression of their loyalty to the sect leader. The

fact that none of the women participants are drawn into the discussion

of sectarian texts illustrates not only the separation between sexes

but the manifest exclusion of women from participation in an activity which is crucial for an understanding of salvation. As the younger member of the sect receive their primary training in British educational institutions, they will probably experience a contradiction between the British norm of equality between the sexes and the sectarian norms.

When it is about nine o'clock in the evening, the leader marks the end of rituals by singing a concluding verse called sripatim. Members then sing a devotional hymn, followed by a dhun - a rhythmic couplet which bears the word Swaminarayan. Then there is a short period of silent meditation before dispersal. At the end of the discourse, the temple becomes a social center for the members to exchange greetings, information and gossip.

On Sunday evenings the temple is fully packed as members of the Mandal assemble there for the performance of the weekly arti. The occasion also attracts non-Mandal Hindus living in the vicinity. While Sunday ritual and prayers are conducted along the same pattern followed in daily worship, some details vary. In the place of a religious discourse based on scriptural reading, the congregation hears a tape-recorded speech of Muktajivandasji. The speech lasts for about forty to forty-five minutes. Whenever it is clearly audible, the sect leader invariably appears to focus on moksha through the Mandal as a primary objective for the sect members. Once the tape-recorded speech is over, the important event on Sunday evenings is the arti ritual. Each Sunday, a particular member of the sect and his family bear responsibility for the due performance of this ritual. The male members hold a plate on which are placed cotton wicks dipped in clarified butter. As the congregation sings the arti hymn, the

appointed male devotees rotate the plate in semi-circles representing an institutionally collective adoration of the shrine. After the arti ritual, a young boy and a girl take the arti plate to every male and female present in the temple. As the plate is brought to each person, they "take" the arti- which is a gesture to symbolise acceptance of blessings derived from the performance.of this ritual. At the same time, each person puts a coin or two as their cash offering to the temple. The family responsible for the ritual performances contributes the largest sum, usually between £1.00 to £5.00. Increasing value of one's arti contributions enhances one's prestige in the congregation. Others contribute smaller sums varying from a few pence to a fifty pence coin. A part of the arti ritual is distribution of prasād - which consists of sweets specially prepared for the occasion and first presented to the shrine as a ritual offering. After the distribution of prasād, the Sunday evening meeting ends formally.

On some Sundays, the Mandal leaders arrange to show films to the congregation from the sect's own collection of films. Most sectarian events are filmed in Gujarat, depicting important events such as the Golden and Platinum Jubilees of Muktajivandasji and his numerous processions. The most popular film is the one that shows Muktajivandasji on the top of a float in the Mandal procession from Hyde Park Corner to Trafalgar Square. As the sect members see his visit to London in 1970 as an important accomplishment for them, they always watch the film with a sense of deep reverence. When the film is projected in the temple, it brings past events into the present. It is remarkable that for the most devoted sect members, once

Muktajivandasji appears on the screen, the discontinuity between

past and present is dissolved along with the dichotomy between audio-

visual and real.  For the intense expression of joyful devotion seems

to be no less genuine than the one that occurs in the actual presence

of the sect leader. This convergence between audio-visual and real

forms an important part of the ritual worship enhancing and reinforcing

a feeling of proximity to the leader of the sect.

Although the Mandal leaders expect devotees to attend evening

prayers every day, the actual attendance at the temple varies con-

siderably. Given that the distance between residence and work in

Britain is both spatially and socially greater than it ever was either

in India or East Africa, it is not unusual that work impinges on the

degree to which a member can maintain regular attendance at the temple.

Both in London and Bolton, work on construction sites and textile

mills is hard and exhausting. Working in the textile mills involves

doing shifts at hours which are not always compatible with attending

the temple regularly.  Irrespective of whether one is on a construction

site or on the machine floor, the end of work for the day is associated

with tiredness and long journeys home, especially in London. Those

who return home too late to attend the evening prayers in time, either

reach the temple later in the evening or not at all.  The tendency to

miss several days a week is not uncommon.  During the cold winter

months there is a substantial drop in attendance as adults, women and

children come to the temple less often than usual.  To enforce regular

attendance, the local sect leaders use informal pressures. Questions

such as "where were you last night?" or "you are not around these days"

are reminders to those whose presence at the temple is infrequent. A

stricter sanction to enforce attendance was introduced in 1970 during

Muktajivandasji's visit to Britain. It was decided that the temple

should maitain an attendance register and that the attendance sheet

for each month should be airmailed to the sect leader himself so

that the absentees could be reprimanded publicly. Despite the intro-

duction of this measure to supplement existing informal pressures,

the attendance did not change signficantly during the fieldwork period.

As for the overall pattern of attendance, from the observations in the

temples it is reasonable to suggest that nearly 50 per cent of men and

women attend the evening prayers on a regular basis. On the weekends,

especially on Sunday evenings, the attendance is ery nearly 100 per

cent.

So far the above account has focussed on the individual, domestic

and institutional performance of rituals and worship which the Mandal

members observe on a day to day basis all through the year. The

following section gives an account of those occasions of ritual

significance which occur monthly, annually and quinquennially. There

are certain special events which, as they occur, form a part of the

existing ritual complex of the Mandal. Each year, the headquarters of

the sect in Maninager publishes a little booklet titled Varshik

Vratotsava Nirnaya[20] which lists all events of importance the Mandal

members should observe. The account presented below is recorded from

personal observations along with some details extracted from the afore-

mentioned booklet.

## 4.4.    Monthly Ritual Observations

There are two occasions of sectarian significance which the

Mandal members observe every month. On the 11th day of each lunar

cycle, which is called agiarash in Gujarati, all Mandal participants

fast for the day. Some members fast fully in that they take no food or

liquid during the day. Those who cannot fast fully take one special

meal which consists of boiled food sometimes cooked in clarified

butter. No spices are used in cooking to maintain the good (satvik)

quality of the meal. Symbolically, fasting is an ascetic practice to

control the senses to direct the mind and consciousness towards moksha.

As the consumption of a specially cooked meal is related to the

salvational ideal, great ritual care is taken in its preparation.

For instance, during my stay in Hendon, I was reminded to distance my

cooking from the food prepared for fasting so that the latter would

incur no impurity from the former.

Sadgurudin, literally "the day of the spiritual master" falls

once at the end of two lunar cycles at the end of each Hindu month.

On Sadgurudin day, the sect members remember one of their leaders

Ishwercharandasji who passed away on a moonless night, the amas. How-

ever, there are no special rites or prayers performed in the temple

and the event is commemorative in nature. The daily worship in the

temple is distinguished by arti performance and distribution of

prasad in the memory of the earlier sect leader. The significance of

Sadgurudin is enhanced by the fact that a number of important

commemorative occasions such as the anniversary of sect leader's Golden

and Platinum Jubilees occur on this particular day.

## 4.5. Annual Events of Ritual Significance

The events which the Mandal members celebrate every year fall

into two separate categories. There are those occasions which the

congregation celebrates every year as distinct from special events

which occur as a consequence of certain specific developments. During

the twelve month period in 1971, the following events, some of which

commemorative, were celebrated in the temple. The special occasions

which occurred during this period are marked by an asterisk to

separate them from the annual round of repetitive collective celebrations

in the temple.

Table 1.

Annual Events of Ritual Significance in the Mandal Temple.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 June | 1971 | The Death Anniversary of Sahjanand Swami or Swaminarayan Antardhyanotsava. |
| 6 June | 1971 | Swami Muktajivandasji received a letter of honour, sanmanpatra in Kheda, Gujarat when he performed the opening of a local cooperative bank* |
| 26 June | 1971 | Opening of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal temple in Hendon* |
| 27 June | 1971 | The Death Anniversary of Abji Bapa or Abji Bapa Shree Antardhyanotsava |
| 19 September | 1971 | The Anniversary of Muktajivandasji's Birthday |
| 3 October | 1971 | The Celebration of the Autumn Full Moon, Sharad Purnima |
| 18 October | 1971 | Diwali - The End of the Hindu New Year |
| 20 October | 1971 | Nootan Varsha - The Hindu New Year |
| 30 October | 1971 | The Anniversary of Muktajivandasji's Renunciation |
| 26 December | 1971 | The Anniversary of Installation of the Swaminarayan Shrine in Hendon. |

On such special occasions, the Mandal leaders organise a day long

celebration commencing at ten o'clock in the morning and ending at

around eight o'clock in the evening. Most of the morning is devoted

to a recital of stories of Abji Bapa. Each male member of the Mandal

is asked to read one story so that he can reproduce its brief summary

before the assembly. A communal congregational meal marks the lunch
time before an afternoon of speeches and entertainment consisting of
Gujarati Folk dances (garba) explicitly performed as an adoration of
the shrine. The evening discourse follows the established convention
of ritual performances and worship concluded by the ārti rite and
distribution of sweets as prasād.

Although most of these day long celebrations retain an essential
similarity, a particular occasion may have its unique features. When
the Mandal members celebrated the full-moon day of the autumn, Sharad
Purnima, the occasion was marked by an extraordinary enthusiasm and
gusto which I had not seen manifested on any occasion before. Singing
a devotional hymn, the entire assembly, both men and women alike,
performed a simple dance, hopping a step forward and backward. The
hymn, the dance and the collective rhythm it generated conveyed to me
a feeling of joy and gaiety which was intense and pervasive in character.
The dance was strikingly reminiscent of saturnalian festivals celebrated
in agrarian communities in India. At the end of this celebration,
there was a unanimous consensus among the members that the occasion
was one of the most successful events in their memory.

## 4.6. The Organisation of Quinquennial Events of Ritual Significance

The Mandal leaders have established a tradition of quinquennial
ritual celebrations which express the solidarity of each particular
congregation as well as the unity of the entire sect. On these
occasions, known as jaghan - derived from the Sanskrit word yagna to
mean an important religious occasion - sect members from all the
congregations usually assemble in Maninagar to celebrate a specific

event such as the installation of a shrine or to commemorate an

event in sect leader's life. Almost all members of the sect based

in Britain have travelled to India to participate in these quinquennial

festivals. Over the course of the past fifteen years, till 1972,

members from the Mandal branches in India, East Africa and Britain

have met as an organised collectivity on the following occasions.

## Table 2

### Quinquennial Sectarian Assemblies in Maninagar

| The Year | The Event |
| --- | --- |
| 1957 | Muktajivandasji's Golden Jubilee |
| 1962 | Installation of the Swaminarayan shrine at the temple of Bhuj, Cutch. |
| 1967 | Muktajivandasji's Platinum Jubilee |
| 1972 | Celebration of Muktajivandasji's birthday. |

The quinquennial celebrations involve most elaborate preparations

in Gujarat as well as in the Mandal congregations overseas. Although

a full account of this five yearly assembly of the sect and its social

significance deserves a separate study, it is sufficient to indicate

that each of these events marks the institutionalisation and consolid-

ation of the sect as a whole. The plans for the 1972 quinquennial

gathering were announced in the British Mandal in 1971 and the sect

members waited for the autumn of 1972 with keen anticipation and

excitement. They also formed a bagpipe band to represent the British

branches of the sect on the festive occasion. According to the devotees,

these assemblies create a context for a proper comprehension and

experience of moksha.

An event that deeply concerns the Mandal members in Britain as well as elsewhere is the initiation of young boys into the sect's order of renouncers. Renunciation entails a complete break from the family and social life so that a person can devote himself fully to the service of the sect in pursuit of the highest moksha. A substantial number of renouncers come from the families of the Mandal members themselves. Young persons who sever their familial ties create an experience of great emotional intensity for their parents. Although it is probable that in rare instances, a young boy in the sect living in Hendon or Bolton develops a specific tendency towards renunciation as a way of life, the impressions formed during the fieldwork indicate that an informal process of selection operates in practice. The family heads are persuaded to let their sons join the rank of renouncers. Expression of any unwillingness to abide in this informal process may be seen as an act of disloyalty to the sect and an incompatible expression of man. During 1972, seven young boys from the British congregations were initiated as renouncers at the headquarters of the sect in Maninagar. The local leaders stress the total self-surrender and the intense degree of faith and devotion to Muktajivandasji that allows a father to let his child become a renouncer. Each devotee whose child has the likelihood of becoming a renouncer faces the choice between his commitment to the sect and his attachment to a young son - a situation which creates a painfully difficult emotional state. In terms of affective relationship between the child and his parents, the child's renunciation is a traumatic family loss. However, from the sectarian perspective of highest salvation, renunciation constitutes a step towards true self-realisation as it is envisaged in the fusion between a renouncer and the supreme deity.

The Leva Kanbi Patels who are not members of the sect criticise the
Mandal leaders for imposing renunciation without giving any consider-
ations to the personal wishes of the individual child. They also point
out instances where a renouncer deserts the sectarian order to regain
his identity as an ordinary member of the society. As a topic,
renunciation arouses strong personal and emotional reaction between
those who accept this ascetic mode and the critics, who regard it as
a violation of the child's rights - thus highlighting the incompatibility
between the ideology of salvation in the practice of renunciation and
involvement in the everyday social world.

Besides the daily, weekly, monthly, annual and quinquennial
series of ritual performances and prayers, Mandal members are subject
to a set of life cycle rites which form a part of the total realm of
the ritual. Although these ritual acts concern each Mandal member
as a separate seeker of salvation, their performance occurs within
the institutional context of the Mandal as set out below.

The most important life cycle rite is vartmān, commonly known
as panch vartmān or five vartmāns - each of which is a specific
proscription. According to the first two vartmān precepts, a Mandal
devotee is prohibited from drinking alcohol and eating meat. The third
precept is against stealing. The fourth forbids adultery and all forms
of promiscuity and the fifth vartmān prohibits the devotee from
committing acts which create a state of impurity.[21]

For a lay member of the sect, performance of vartmān rite
constitutes a formal initiation into the sect. It should be the sect
leader himself who performs this rite when a new member enters the sect.
In practice, according to the Mandal members, this contact would occur

either during sect leader's visit to Britain or member's visit to
the main seat of the sect in Maninagar. The fact that a new member
may remain formally uninitiated into the sect until he meets the sect
leader does not alter his de facto participation which is based on
the actual expression of devotion and wilingness to abide by the
sect's code of conduct. The performance of the vartmān rite is not
institutionalised in Geneppian stages. Vartmān constitutes a single
rite which occurs as soon as it becomes possible for a new member to
meet the sect leader. In performing the vartmān rite, head of the
sect holds the devotee's right hand which is cupped to hold consecrated
water. With an invocation to Swaminarayan, the devotee is required to
take the five vows he is expected to observe in practice. Then the
leader presents him with a rosary (kanthi) made of small beads which
the devotee subsequently wears. Ideally it is the leader himself who
should present the devotee with his miniature personal shrine and
instruct him to perform his individual worship. In practice, the
member receives his miniature shrine and pujā instructions in the
local temple. In connection with the rite of panch vartmān, it is
believed that as soon as the sect leader touches the devotee, and if
the devotee is fully and faithfully committed to the leader, he can
have an instant experience of the highest salvation. However, this
experience in itself does not mean that the highest moksha has been
attained. The sect members often raise the question of instant experience
of salvation in regard to the rite of vartmān. Why should an initiate
concern himself with salvation after he has such an experience of
moksha? The leaders usually reply that when it is said that an
initiate has an instant experience of moksha, it primarily means that
he is introduced to the realm of highest salvation which is distinguished

as being apart from the state of lasting salvation received through demonstrated conformity to the sect's code of conduct. An initiate is only a mumukshu, a seeker of salvation who has to develop his devotion, firmness of his faith and a self surrender before he qualifies for a higher place on the moksha scale. Vartman as an initiation rite is a step in the direction of the final release from the bondage of life and death.

In addition to the initiation rite of vartman several life cycle events are ritually significant in the sect. Whenever a child is born to a Mandal father, it is a common practice to send information about the birth to Maninagar. After a child's horoscope has been made, an appropriate name for the child is received from the sect's headquarters.[22] Although parents perform no special rites in giving the name of their child, it is customary to have an arti performed when a male child is born but similar good-will is not expressed for a female child. Sometimes the family may arrange for reading of stories of Abji Bapa in a form of recital called parayan, held in Britain or Maninagar and accompanied with a cash gift to the temple.

The parayan recital is also related to other life cycle events like marriage and death. After a marriage takes place, the family involved may request the sect leader to hold a recital to mark the occasion. The performance of a recital which highlights the auspiciousness of the occasion and brings prestige to the families of the bride and groom. The recital is even more important on death when the deceased is invariably referred to as having ascended to the celestial abode of Swaminarayan - though no references are made to the kind of moksha the deceased may have received. Nevertheless, the discussion

of moksha becomes important on death and a recital of Shree Abji
Bapa Shreeni Vato marks the devotee's passage from here to hereafter.

Further the rites of vastu and padhramni may be performed on
special occasions. Whenever a Mandal member buys a house, he arranges
for the performance of vastu which is the ritual of the primary move
into the house. As all members of the sect are invited to attend the
occasion, the performance acquires a collective character. First of
all, the householder installs the domestic shrine in his new home.
The small gathering then reproduces the temple ritual of puja worship
as an act to show the dwelling of Swaminarayan in the new home,
bringing to the occupants a sharper awareness of moksha.

While the vastu rite marks the symbolic entry of Swaminarayan
into a new habitat, the occasion when a sect member invites the head
of the sect Muktajivandasji to his own house is called padhramani,
literally an act of welcoming. During 1970, when Muktajivandasji
visited Britain, he is known to have been formally invited to every
Mandal household. The preparations for the occasion requires that the
domestic shrine should be placed in a prominent position and a
decorated chair provided for the sect leader. Upon his arrival at the
house, the senior and junior males in the house perform a ritual of
adoration and receive blessings from the sect leader who reaffirms
his promise of ultimate salvation.

In observing the rites of vartman, parayan, vastu and padhramni,
each Mandal member as an individual seeker of salvation is linked to
the institutional ritual performances which give concrete expression
to belief in moksha. Just as the ritual performances and prayers
from the individual level to the institutional context generate and

maintain a pure state, there are certain taboos which threaten to create an impure state capable of undermining the ideological and ritual state of moksha. It is essential for each sect member to observe the following set of taboos to maintain a state which is compatible with being a mumukshu.

The ideology of non-violence is prominently emphasised in the sect's code of conduct, the Sikshapatri. For instance, the eleventh verse states, "Let no followers of mine ever intentionally kill any living thing whatever - not even a louse, flea or the most minute insect".[23] This emphasis on non-violence is reflected in the dietary restriction prescribing vegetarianism. In keeping with the precept of non-violence and purity, Sikshapatri explicitly prohibits the consumption of meat and alcohol as well as the use of medicine containing meat or alcohol.[24] Restrictions also apply to the use of those substances which are believed to create impurities. For instance, Sikshapatri requires that the sect members refrain from eating onion and garlic.[25] In addition, women do not use asfetodia - a spice commonly used in Gujarati cooking. Further the head of the sect has also asked the members to refrain from tea though coffee in boiled milk is allowed. In explaining these dietary rules, the Mandal members invariably refer to the traditional Hindu division of foods into two classes. Satvik Khorak is the food which is inherantly good and maintains a pure state. Whereas Tamsik Khorak is inherantly bad and is incompatible with moksha.

The distinction between satvik khorak and tamasik khorak is derived from the Hindu theory of gunas according to which men and objects are divided into three hierarchical categories: satva, rajas

and tamas.  As Weber informs us, satva refers to "brightness and

benevolence";  rajas to "human striving and passion" and tamas to

"bestial darkness and stupidity".[26]  When this theory is applied to

what is regarded as the ideal diet, it is the satva-based food which

is believed to be most suitable for the pursuit of moksha.

On the whole, the sect members observe these restrictions

strictly. The Mandal members invariably take their own food at work.

School boys and girls carry with them their vegetarian lunch or,

whenever convenient, return home for their meals. Similarly the

prohibition against drinking is observed strictly. Although I heard

rumours that some young sect members visited pubs in the area as

unnoticed as possible, I did not see anyone actually consuming

alcoholic beverages. While members seem to avoid garlic and onion as

their use in cooking is detectable by smells they leave behind,  the

rule regarding tea is observed less rigorously.  It was not uncommon

to find tea-drinking as a private activity.  However, tea containers

were stored out of sight so that a senior Mandal member visiting the

household would not see them.  In regard to medicine, discussion

about whether or not it contains meat or alcohol is tactfully avoided

as the sect members are almost entirely dependent on National Health

Service for medical treatment.[27]  As the members buy some ready made

food such as bread and potato chips, arguments and counter-arguments

are used to illustrate their acceptability or unacceptability. Those

who do buy ready made food from outside rationalise these purchases

by saying that the method of cooking, baking and handling precludes

transmission of impurities to the food bought in shops. This, needless

to add, is not a topic on which there is any wide consensus in the

Mandal.  It is obvious that the practical need to buy food made out-

side would require extending purity to items bought in the open
market.

According to a precept of <u>Sikshapatri</u>, every woman within the
sect is required to observe the menstruation taboo of temporary
exclusion. The rule set out in the code of conduct states categorically,
"No woman should ever conceal the first appearance of her monthly
periods".[28]  According to a further injunction, "A woman at that
season should not for an interval of three days, touch any human
being, clothes, etc., nor ought she to do so till she has bathed on
the fourth day".[29]  In keeping with these restrictions, when a woman
has her periods, she is totally excluded from all domestic and
sectarian activities for three days. During this exclusion, the woman
usually sits in an unusual corner to symbolise her state of ritual
impurity. Except for very small children, segregation is maintained
between her and others so that her touch casts no polluting influences.
All domestic work during the exclusion is performed either by female
or male children or the senior male in the family.  During my residence
in Hendon, I observed one incident which vividly illustrated the
threat of impurity perceived in the proximity of a woman observing
exclusion. She entered the kitchen where her son was preparing some
food for <u>Sadgurudin</u> observance. As soon as his mother approached him,
perhaps being less conscious of the distance she ought to have
maintained, her son responded in anger that was almost an expression
of ferocious rage which brought instant withdrawal of the tearful
mother from the kitchen. From whatever inquiries I could make, it was
manifestly obvious that the menstruation taboo was widely observed
in the sect.

In sum, all the expressive and commemorative rituals and prayers of the sect as performed in individual, domestic and institutional practices are marked by daily, weekly, monthly, annual and quinquennial sequences. The life cycle rituals and the rites performed on special events constitute a part of the total ritual complex. The rituals and taboos the Mandal members observe contribute to improving one's eligibility for salvation and eventual bliss to be experienced in oneness with Swaminarayan.

## 5. A BRIEF SUMMARY

This chapter has presented an account of the moksha ideology of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal and its relationship to rituals and prayers in the sect. The belief in moksha is expressed in the antithesis between moksha and man which corresponds to the opposition between self-surrender and self-assertion. The commitment sect members make to moksha is practised in rituals, prayers and discourses which bring the individual, domestic and institutional dimensions of each sect member's life in to what seems to him to be a unified whole. The ritual performance at each step is essential for creating and maintaining a pure state leading to moksha. Related to the ritual complex is a set of taboos which the sect members observe so that the salvational state is not undermined by the impurities which a breach of taboos can create.

The constraints of social life in Britain do influence the temple organisation and the traditional pattern of rites and prayers. The constraints are manifest in the lack of separate temples for males

and females, in abandonment of twice a day attendance at the temple
and in the inability of all members to maintain adequate attendance
as a consequence of great separation between work and residence in
England. There is also a possibility that socialisation of the
members' children into the ideology of moksha and its ritual practice
may prove less effective in Britain than it was either in Cutch or
East Africa. But the reproduction of the ideology and organisation
of the sect in their new environment has provided the Mandal members
with a firm anchor and a measure of personal and collective well-being
as they grapple with difficulties of living in Britain.

While the ritual dimension is a vital part of the ideology of
salvation, regular observance of rituals and prayers in itself does
not bring about the attainment of highest salvation, atyantika moksha.
Along with rituals and prayers, it is the elimination of man, self-
assertion that raises a seeker of salvation to the highest moksha.
It is this dimension of moksha, conceptualised in the opposites of
moksha and man, that provides the basis for the organisation of
power and authority relations in Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan
Mandal. In the next chapter, I concentrate on the polarity between
moksha and man to explain the association each category has to the
social organisation of the sect.

NOTES - Chapter 5.

1. Louis Dumont, Religion, Politics and History in India, 1970, The Hague, Mouton Publishers, pp.154-155.

2. Claude Levi-Strauss, The Savage Mind, 1966, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolsan Ltd., pp.17-22 et seq.

3. For a Gujarati version of the story, see Sadguru Shree Ishwarcharandasji Swami (ed.), Shree Abji Bapa Shreeni Vato, 1955, Ahmedabad (Maninagar), Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Uttejak Trust, pp.66-70 for the story number 35. In producing a brief translation of this story, didactic repetitions have been eliminated to highlight the main substance of the story.

4. In discussing sects and gurus in India, Weber emphasises the central place he occupies in sectarian developments. He also refers to deification of sect founders and their successors and their leadership as an expression of living god. See Max Weber's The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism, translated and edited by Han J. Gerth and Don Martindale, 1958 London, Collier-Macmillan Ltd. See Chapter 9, 'The Orthodox Restoration in India', especially pp.319-328.

5. M.N. Srinivas, The Remembered Village, 1976, Delhi, Oxford University Press, pp.269-270.

6. Sir Monier M. Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Oxford, 1899, (1976), at the Clarendon Press, p.809, columns 1,2 and 3, for man and p.67 columns 1 and 2 for abhiman.

7. See J.G. Peristiany, Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society, London, 1965, Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

8. Sadguru Shree Ishwercharandasji Swami (ed.), op.cit., p.97. The story in fact proscribes references to traditional Hindu scriptures in the sectarian discourses, see p.98.

9. Muktananda Swami, Gopalananda Swami, Brahmananda Swami, Nityananda Swami, Shukananda Swami (eds.), Vachnamrat, 1969 Ahmedabad (Maninagar), Swaminarayan Mandir.

10. Swami Shree Muktajivandasji, Sikshapatri, 1967 Ahmedabad (Maninagar), Swaminarayan Temple. Also see Sir Monier M. Williams' Sanskrit Text of the Sikshapatri of the Svami-Narayana Sect; Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1882a, New Series, Volume XIV, pp.733-749 and 'Translation of foregoing Sikshapatri', Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society 1882b, New Series, Volume XIV, pp.750-772.

11. Ibid., pp.771-772.

12. Sadguru Shree Ishwercharandasji Swami, op.cit.

13. Ibid., pp.8-10.

14. Swami Nirgunanandji, Shree Purshottam Lilamrat Sukhsagar, 1967, Ahmedabad (Maninagar) Swaminarayan Temple.

15. Ibid., p.451, Stanzas 43-46.

16. Swami Muktajivandasji, Shree Harignanamrat Kavya, 1970, Ahmedabad (Maninagar) Swaminarayan Temple.

17. Swami Muktajivandasji, Shree Swaminarayan Niyamavali, 1967 Ahmedabad (Maninagar), Swaminarayan Temple.

18. Antarashtriya Sanskaryatra Granth, 1972 Ahmedabad (Maninagar), Swamininarayan Mandir.

19. Metford C. Spiro, Buddhism and Society: A great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes, 1971 London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., pp.191-192 et seq. For an exhaustive typology of goals of ritual action, Spiro adds 'expiatory ritual' as his fourth concept. As this category of ritual action is not found in the Mandal ritual complex, it is excluded from the present discussion.

20. Shashtri Shree Anandpriyadasji and Manilal Jagannath Joshi, Varshik Vratotsava Nirnaya, (for 1971-72), 1971 Ahmedabad (Maninagar) Swaminarayan Mandir.

21. B.C. Patel, V.B. Patel, and J.K. Pandya (eds.), Shashtipurti Prashashti Grantha, 1967, Ahmedabad (Maninagar), Swaminarayan Mandir, see p.29 for a reference to the rite of panch vartman.

22. This practice of receiving names from the sect leader has brought about a change in the pattern of naming within the Mandal. The sect leader usually gives Sanskritic names which, as a woman informant pointed out, sound incongruous and odd in a village of Cutch. Traditionally women tend to have short names followed by the suffix bai meaning woman. The original names such as Kanbai or Dhanbai have their Sanskritic equivalent in Kanta and Dhanawanti respectively. The woman informant who discussed this topic pointed out that her daughter named Valbai in Cutch is now referred to as Vanita. There is some awareness concerning change in names as reflecting change in social context and status. It is reasonable to assume that sectarian affiliation coupled with migration and socio-economic prosperity has created a desire for names more compatible with status and respectability. Sanskritisation of names is also applied to village names deemed to be less polished. The village of Badadia - which is literally a rural diminutive of the word badad meaning bull, is rendered Vrashpur which is a polished Sanskritic equivalent. M.N. Srinivas has suggested that the Swaminarayan sect has in fact created and spread Sanskritic influences. See his Caste in Modern India and Other Essays, 1962 New York, Asia Publishing House, p.154.

23.   Sir Monier M. Williams, 1882a, 1882b, op.cit.

24.   Ibid., see verses 15 and 31, pp.753-757.

25.   Ibid., verse 186, p.770.

26.   Max Weber, op.cit., p.171. cf. Andre Beteille, Inequality
      Among Men, 1977, Oxford.  Basel Blackwell, pp.31-33.

27.   Except in those instances where a disease is regarded as being
      traditional and beyond the comprehension of doctors versed in
      western medical science.  One such disorder is called pichoti
      which is a category referring to equilibrium of veins under the
      navel. When this equilibrium is upset, a person becomes ill.
      If the illness is experienced above the navel, the imbalance is
      believed to have occurred in the upward direction, marked by
      vomitting, for instance. When the imbalance takes place below
      the navel, illness is experienced in the abdominal region.
      In explaining to me the nature of pichoti, it was indicated that
      there were experts in London and Bolton who set the pichoti
      imbalance.

28.   Monier M. Williams, 1882b, op.cit., verse 173, p.768.

29.   Ibid., verse 174, p.768.

CHAPTER 6

MOKSHA AND MĀN : IDEOLOGY AND AUTHORITY IN THE MANDAL.

As I have just pointed out, the members of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal express the priority of moksha at three related levels in a unified ritual complex: and ritual performances at individual, domestic and institutional levels show that a state of purity is an essential aspect of the attainment of moksha through ritual acts. However, as a social organisation the Mandal draws a clear distinction between the expression of moksha in rituals and its application in social relations. In evaluating the relative weight of moksha in ritual performances and social relations, members regard moksha in social relations within the sect as being superior to its expression in performances of rituals. They explain the difference between the two aspects of salvation as follows: although ritual acts remain important in one's quest for moksha, one can, however, perform these acts merely as a matter of habit and routine without truly accepting salvation as a main precept in one's life. But whether or not a sect member has fully accepted moksha in his personal and social life in a practical sense becomes evident in his actions within the sect. This emphasis on the practical side of moksha does not imply that ritual performances are unimportant or irrelevant. What is essentially meant is that unless ritual performances match social practice, attainment of the highest salvational state can not occur only on the basis of a purity induced by conformity to ritual procedures. The greater importance of the social rather than the ritual dimension is emphasised in the relationship between the opposites of moksha and

mān and the entire ritual complex. It is a remarkable fact that the opposition between moksha and mān is rarely if ever referred to if a sect member fails to observe a ritual obligation as an act apart from its significance in the social organisation of the sect. As the discussion in the previous chapter has suggested, rituals, though related to moksha, evoke a distinction between purity and impurity rather than the opposition between the two. Breach of a ritual, or in an extreme case, breach of a taboo, does not relate to mān as it is seen opposed to moksha, unless a particular ritual act is closely related to an aspect of social organisation of the Mandal. The dichotomy between moksha and mān finds acute and clear-cut expression in the field of social relationships within the organisational frame-work of the Mandal. These opposed ideological elements acquire their meaningfulness in social and practical realms of the sect. Although the sect members affirm the non-social dimension of moksha in discourses about life and death and life thereafter, in reality, moksha and mān as the main components of the sectarian ideology are principally articulated in social and political relations within the Mandal.

If social relations are the main focus for an understanding of the duality between moksha and mān, then how is the ideological meaning of these opposites transformed into social and organisational categories? At the ideological level, the antithesis between moksha and mān corresponds to opposition between self-surrender and self-assertion. The ideological categories which express moksha as an act of self-surrender derive from the tradition of bhakti - which defines worship as an act of surrender to a personal god. According to this tradition, the specific concepts Mandal members use to express the idea of self-surrender are

those of seva and dasanudas. The word seva meaning service is used
to imply service marked by a total lack of self-interest. As discussed
in the previous chapter, dasanudas refers to a quality of submissiveness
and subordination directed towards unquestioning and absolute surrender
before any self-realisation of moksha can come about. This absolute
character of surrender is important as an ideal and is highlighted by
the multiple use of das(servant) to assert superlative submissiveness
as explained before. The sectarian text Shree Abji Bapa Shreeni Vato
repeatedly emphasises the absolute quality of this surrender. For
instance, in the eighth story devotion is categorically linked to a
state of absolute surrender in a Gujarati couplet.[1]

> "Das na das thaine je rache satsangman
>
> bhakti teni manish rachish tena rangman."

This means, "I will accept and cherish the devotion of the one who
totally submits himself to the congregation". The emphasis on sub-
mission is in relation to Swaminarayan. Similarly, in the ninth
story, the opposition between submissiveness as daspanu and man is
affirmed.[2] The argument is that unless one develops full self-
subordination, one is likely to regard self as a dominant category
and thus become vulnerable to man (self-assertion), krodh (anger)
and other shortcomings which constitute a deviation from the progression
towards a salvational state. According to this particular interpretation
of moksha ideology, total and absolute surrender leads to a fusion
between a devotee and Swaminarayan in the latter's celestial abode.
Although the sect members define Swaminarayan as the focus of their
salvation, what is most important for them is the fact that in all
ages Swaminarayan manifests his divinity through the human agency of

his liberated devotees believed to have received the highest order
of salvation. As the sect leader himself is the human expression of
the supreme divinity, it is he who is the immediate and contemporary
source of moksha within the sectarian social context. In other words,
mediation of the sect leader as the anadi mukta is a crucial aspect
in the process of attainment of moksha. An important logical con-
sequence of the relationship between Swaminarayan and the embodiment
of his divinity into human anādi mukta is that seva and dāspanu as
attributes of submissive surrender to Swaminarayan are equally due
to his human anādi mukta who derives his spiritual standing from
highest salvational status. Further, his representatives as the leaders
of the Mandal in respective congregations are believed to have achieved
an enhanced awareness of moksha and are therefore capable of demanding
obedience if not ideally envisaged submissiveness. Once moksha is
transferred from the ideological plane to the level of the organisation,
the ideology of salvation acquires a social dimension in the sectarian
relations between the anādi mukta sect leader, his representatives,
and lay members of the Mandal. As the ideological polarity between
moksha and mān is translated into practical social relations, the
corresponding categories of self-surrender and self-assertion define
the structure of authority in the Mandal. While moksha legitimates
the Mandal authority, and, in consistency with this legitimation,
demands conformity and compliance, mān as a distinct category concerned
with self-assertiveness, tends to be an expression of implicit or
explicit opposition to the legitimated sectarian authority. There-
fore in contrast to the conformity and compliance of moksha, mān
symbolises a pattern of defiance. And it is the interplay between the

patterns of compliance and defiance expressed in the opposites of moksha and mān that constitutes the organisational focus of the Mandal as a sect.

Given the nature of the affinity between the ideology of moksha, the sectarian authority and the related patterns of conformity and compliance, the distinction between ideology and authority becomes blurred in practice. For sect members, it is what they ought to do as mumukshus, the seekers of salvation, that provides a basis for the obedience to sectarian directives. However, the established leaders use the Gujarati concept of sattā to mean power and authority as being different from the salvation ideology;[3] what the leading members stress is often expressed in Gujarati to the effect that "Dharmamān pan sattā hoy che", meaning "There is power and authority even in religion". The expression "even" is clearly used to imply that matters concerning salvation should not involve power or authority, as at least in theory all mumukshu sect members as seekers of salvation are equal before the supreme Swaminarayan. However, this notion of equality assumes acceptance of moksha-based authority as an important precondition for attaining salvation. In relation to the legitimation of sectarian authority, like moksha, compliance is not an undifferentiated, monolithic category. At least in theory, hierarchical states of moksha, from mumukshu to anādi mukta are definable as related to different degrees of compliance. In practice, the sect leaders seldom define the moksha state of a particular member in any categorical manner. An attempt to relate a moksha state to a particular degree of commitment to compliant behaviour is known to have created severe difficulties in a Mandal congregation in East Africa. Although

it is not uncommon to come across a sect member who may claim to have
attained the highest salvation, on the whole the two states which are
distinguished explicitly are mumukshu (the seeker of moksha) and
anādi mukta (the one who has achieved a state of lasting unity with
Swaminarayan through a full commitment and self-surrender to the
contemporary sect leader). A notable leader such as Motabhai is
publicly addressed as anādi mukta. Intermediate salvational state
is referred to much more as a process according to which a sect member
is seen to possess variable degrees of moksha and compliance. Some
flexibility in determining a particular extent of achievement of moksha
makes the application of ideology less rigid and more compatible with
a situation where the acceptance of salvation and the compliance implied
in it can vary. On the whole, partial and half-hearted acts of
compliance are unambiguous marks of lesser degrees of understanding
of moksha. The nature of interplay between ideology and authority
provides a good illustration of how the ideology of moksha becomes
transformed as an aspect of sectarian social organisation. Once man
surrenders to god, he is not any less prepared to surrender to man –
especially to the man who defines himself and is defined by others to
be an embodiment of the Supreme and therefore in possession of a
capacity to grant or withhold the grace of moksha.

Having established that the antithesis of moksha and mān is
related to the contrasting interplay between compliance and defiance
in the social organisation of the sect, the following section examines
the actual organisation of the moksha based authority in the sect; the
social basis of recruitment in the Mandal from among the Leva Kanbi
Patels; and the significance which moksha and mān have for the

financial organisation of the sect. A case study is presented to show the way polarity between moksha and man is applied in a particular instance.

## 1. ORGANISATION OF POWER AND AUTHORITY IN THE MANDAL

Mandal leaders define power and authority by reference to Swaminarayan and his anadi mukta representative, especially in regard to the present sect leader Muktajivandasji, who, as a founder of the schismatic Mandal as well as an embodiment of the Supreme divinity, possesses a capacity to grant or withhold moksha.

It is the sect leader himself who is the source of power and authority in the Mandal according to the basic postulate of sectarian belief. The delegation of his authority to leading members of congregations in India, East Africa and Britain has been essentially an informal process based on long social association between himself and his devoted followers. In relation to Leva Kanbi Patel congregations in Cutch and abroad, it is Motabhai who has become a carrier of sectarian authority and directives. He has a unique position among the Leva Kanbi Patel segment of the sect in that his influence both as a highly successful and wealthy contractor as well as a trusted disciple of Muktajivandasji encompasses not only the Mandal congregations in London and Bolton but also temple organisations in India and East Africa, especially the one in Nairobi which has flourished under his patronage. His immensely successful career as an independent contractor with a substantial income has freed him to devote his time to activities of the sect. As a result of this unique position, Motabhai is able to link, coordinate, direct and control the intercontinental

activities of the Mandal as a whole. Through his pioneering and
successful migration and settlement in Kenya, he was able to extend
his patronage to many Leva Kanbi Patels by providing them with
employment opportunities in the construction industry thus absorbing
them into the growing Mandal congregation in Nairobi.  For the British
members of the Mandal - many of whom have associated with Motabhai
long before they came to East Africa and Britain, he acted as a
catalyst in transforming their life by stimulating them to emigrate to
Britain for better and more secure prospects. Even though the Mandal
has a local President who is generally in charge of sect's affairs,
it is Motabhai who exercises decisive authority in important decisions.
Whenever Motabhai is here in Britain, as he was for several months
during 1971, he more or less takes over the management of the sect
from local officials of the Mandal - though no doubt, whenever decisions
are made during his presence (such as the decision to buy  Elim
Tabernacle in Hendon for the Mandal temple and the arrangements for
members to visit Maninagar in the autumn of 1972), the local President
and Secretary play an important consultative role as they are most
familiar with individual members and the overall state of resources
within the sect. Be that as it may, Motabhai performs a crucial function
in keeping the British sect members fully informed about the state of
affairs in India and likewise the sect leader equally informed about
developments in the British and East African congregations.  When
absent from Britain, Motabhai does not face any serious opposition to
his own position or to the quality of his influehce.  For the strength
of his patronage is considerable and on the basis of his long standing
leadership, he is always in a position to mobilise majority support

which would indeed be defined as a proper opposition to m̄ani members

out to undermine the Mandal. The fact that his own younger brother

with his wife and children are London members of the Mandal and that

his three daughters are married to members resident in London, is a

factor which weighs to his advantage. The local President comes from

his village of Badadia, and the Secretary has received some support

from him while in East Africa. However, this is not to say that there

has been no opposition to his dominant influence. But it is to say that

through his high moksha status and his capacity to distribute patronage,

he is able to contain any dissatisfaction that may arise in the Mandal.

When Motabhai is away either in East Africa or India, the local

President and Secretary not only maintain contact through the traditional

medium of letters but also use intercontinental telephonic links for

the exchange of information and advice. It is not uncommon for the

Mandal to pay £500 telephone bill in this connection. In the contemporary

development of the Mandal, the link it has to India is crucial because

of the recency of Mandal settlement in Britain. Any significant

differences between the congregations in different continents can be

potentially divisive.[4] However, for an analysis of the Mandal leader-

ship at present, the linkage is important.

Apart from the direction that Motabhai brings from the sect

leader himself, both Hendon and Bolton branches of the Mandal have

their own organisational arrangements. In Hendon, the sect officials

consist of a president, a secretary, a treasurer and an executive

working committee which also acts as a jural body for the informal

settlement of disputes and differences between sect members. Similarly,

the Bolton branch of the sect is headed by a president, a secretary and

a local committee of four members generally responsible for the day
to day organisation of the temple community. The Bolton officials
remain subordinate to the body in Hendon to which all important
matters are referred for consultation and decision making. As for
choosing members to become officials, the Mandal subscribes, at least
in theory, to a democratic process of decision making through
elections.  In practice, those who play consistently leading roles
tend to remain in their official positions. For instance, though
the Hendon Mandal has had some changes in the composition of the
Executive Committee, those who have held offices of President,
Secretary and Treasurer have held their respective offices since
their initial appointment. The individuals concerned are trusted and
their experience of developing the organisation is seen as a valuable
asset for the sect.

One of the main qualifications to hold an office in the sect is
to be fully loyal to the local leaders who carry out directives from
above.  Anyone who is defined as having enduring man can not hope to
play a leading part.  In addition to moksha-based compliance, secular
merit and competence are not any less important though regarded as
secondary to devotion expressed towards the sect leader. A brief
examination of biographies of the individuals who have held offices
as President, Secretary and Treasurer shows that both devotion and
secular competence are decisive in determining the leadership.  One
important element is the time spent in Britain in so far as it implies
a good experience of local economic and social conditions. All the
three office bearers have lived in Britain since early 1960s and
have accumulated between themselves a fund of valuable knowledge of

local conditions. The President of the Mandal in Hendon has displayed exceptional qualities as a leader. Although he has not received any formal education, nor has he become a successful businessman, his conviction in the extension of the Mandal from Nairobi to London, his ability to develop work prospects for the sect members on construction sites, and his confident and dynamic approach to life have made the Mandal a viable body in Britain. The Secretary and the Treasurer have brought to the sect an ability for sound organisation. In this task, education up to 'A' level in one instance, and 'O' level in another, have provided them with a good degree of fluency in English. The Secretary, who has developed a successful business as an insurance broker, can be said to have some professional standing. The treasurer has excellent practical knowledge of work connected with the building trade. There is an extent to which their occupational success has some bearing on their positions in the organisation of the Mandal. However, it should be reiterated that, on its own, their purely secular ability, without unflinching loyalty to the sect and its leaders, is unlikely to have made them holders of their respective offices. None of them are materially better off than other members of the sect in any significant way. Though they and their Executive Committee members form a close-knit team, they could be hardly described as the elite in the sect, given the closeness of their ties to other members of the Mandal. Between themselves they have brought a quality of leadership and ability to manage and control affairs of the sect, and in particular, the important skill of dealing with a wide range of British institutions at local and national levels. For instance, before the Mandal acquired a large hall in Hendon to establish a proper temple, prayer meetings were held in a residential property.

When the local residents petitioned the local authority to stop

these meetings, the Mandal Secretary had to deal with the authority

and press to enable the prayer meetings to be held as private

gatherings of individuals and their friends. The Mandal members

appreciate the skill and tactfulness with which the Secretary can

conduct affairs of the sect in a wider British context.

As an organisation, the Mandal combines varying degrees of

formality and informality in its institutional activities.  In

conjunction with the President, Secretary and Treasurer, the Executive

Committee makes some formal arrangement to hold meetings to make

decisions. For instance, members receive advance information about

the matters to be discussed on an appointed day.  However, the

information is conveyed orally and informally as and when the members

meet in the temple or in their homes. The degree of formality

entailed does not require circulation of a written notice and a

detailed agenda. Whenever the members assemble for a meeting, the

Secretary provides them with details about a decision to be reached.

Though the dominance of the President and the Secretary along with

an overriding importance of compliance remain crucial aspects of

committee meetings, members convey that the meetings are not intended

to impose any authoritarian decisions on sect members. What is

usually achieved is a majority decision or a decision through agreement

and persuasion if differences arise during discussions.  However, as

far as day to day practical working of the Mandal is concerned, face

to face primary relationship between the members is a feature of

informal consultation that contributes to decisions marked by some

formality. Though the committee meetings maintain a degree of formality,

the Mandal has not institutionalised a set of procedures to lend these

meetings an official character and a degree of rigidity of procedures. On the contrary, a somewhat flexible informality commensurate with social ties remains an aspect of sectarian organisation.

In accordance with the community character of the Mandal, the jural role of the Committee is defined in an informal manner. In order to settle disputes, there is no formal procedure according to which the disputants raise their disputes for adjudication. However, as soon as a dispute takes place, and especially if it turns out to be persistent in character, then through the informal social network it becomes known to all the Mandal members. If the disputants feel ashamed and disgraced as a consequence of 'temple gossiping', then a settlement may come about without the Committee's intervention. If the disputants do not resolve their differences, then the Mandal can adjudicate either through the members raising the matter with the Committee or the Committee itself inviting the members for a discussion and a possible settlement. The settlement brought about by the Mandal usually involves two phases which are expressed in the twin concepts of <u>samjooti</u> (understanding), <u>samādhān</u> (the process of reconciliation). <u>Samjooti</u> occurs when the aggrieved parties are brought together even though this may not necessarily lead to immediate resolution of all the differences between them. Once individuals reach an understanding about the difference in dispute, then the Committee can persuade them to restore normal social relations as a mark of <u>samādhān</u> and enable them to evolve a reconciliation in due course. With an emphasis on sectarian solidarity and brotherhood, the general direction of dispute settlement tends to focus on <u>samādhān</u>, reconciliation as a restoration of normal social relations.

However, if the disputants do not resolve their differences in the
established jural pattern of the Mandal, then the matter is brought
to the attention of Motabhai or the sect leader himself whose authority
and decisions are final both in judicial as well as other matters.
If a disputant does not accept Muktajivandasji's final adjudication,
then his conduct would be regarded as being defiant and, at least in
theory, he could face expulsion from the sect as a final Mandal
sanction. The members conveyed that the expulsion would not necessarily
take the form of actual physical expulsion.  It would usually take the
form of social rejection and exclusion not any less effective than a
more formal act of excommunication.

Apart from the executive and judicial meetings of the Mandal
Committee, the Mandal members also assemble from time to time for
general meetings which are open to all - including women and children
who are otherwise entirely excluded from a strongly male-dominated
and male-oriented Executive Committee. The General meeting is one of
the most important events in the sect from a social and political
perspective.  Held under the direction of the sect leader himself,
or Motabhai as his immediate representative, general meetings are
regarded as being fully democratic forums where everyone, including
women and children, are free to air their views on matters concerning
the sect.  However, expression of personal views or complaints takes
place in consistency with the normative pattern of the Mandal - which
is to discourage the defiance of the established leadership and to
prevent any rise of distrust and disaffection amongst the members.
Despite these encompassing constraints, I was assured that the members
did express their views about matters affecting the sect in general,

and grievances and difficulties in interpersonal relationships in particular. In turn, the leaders use general meetings to legitimate their authority and also to reinforce <u>moksha</u>-related commitment of all the devotees. The general meetings also provide a basis for settlement of disputes. As all the Mandal members tend to attend this important gathering, the leaders find it easier to conduct inquiries so as to adjudicate outstanding matters between disputing parties.

In relation to the responsibility of the Executive Committee as a whole, in the initial stages of development between 1965-1971, the Mandal Secretary tended to carry a considerable responsibility in providing the sect members with a whole range of services. According to the present Secretary, in addition to the matters relating to temple organisation, the most pressing non-sectarian issue has been that of immigration. Over the years members have expressed deep concern about their ability to ask their wives and children to join them. In order to facilitate their smooth entry, the Mandal secretary has to make careful preparation to ensure that wives and children do not run into difficulties especially when they are interviewed by the British High Commission officials in Bombay. For the Secretary, this involves not only spending considerable time filling in forms and attending to correspondence but also meeting incoming persons at airports and obtaining their release if their arrival takes place in problematic circumstances. Since the Secretary's duties are not compatible with full-time employment, he has developed his own insurance business which enables him to devote part of his time to Mandal work. During my stay in Hendon, members often felt the Secretary

was overloaded with work - the range of his assistance covering every-
thing from filling in an application form for a new passport to
providing advice in regard to employment, housing, health and social
services, education and immigration.

The Mandal members regard provision for work and accommodation
as crucial priorities in their settlement in Hendon and Bolton. Over
the years, those who arrived in the early sixties have accumulated
not only good work experience but also some knowledge of ways of
finding suitable employment through those who may have established
themselves in their firms or factories. Immediately after the evening
prayers in the temple, one of the most common topics of conversation
is work. Members exchange information about possibilities of
vacancies arising at their work place and in general give each other
assistance in finding employment. Because of Mandal support and the
relatively prosperous conditions in the construction industry, it was
very unusual during the fieldwork period, for a Mandal member in Hendon
to be unemployed for a long period - though short spells of 'no work'
phases usually marked transition from one construction site to the
other. In contrast to the employment setting in London, Bolton
residents tended to face more serious difficulties as many textile
mills were having to operate on a part-time basis with declining
production. The kind of influence the sect leaders and the Mandal
Secretary could exercise on work primarily lay in their emphasis on
lending assistance to those who had difficulties finding work.

As for the provision of accommodation as an important priority,
in the initial period of settlement, the Mandal members had to rent
dwellings in the open market. With the passage of time and especially

from towards the end of the 1970s, the number of houses bought by
the Mandal members has increased both in Hendon and Bolton so that
it has become possible for others to rent rooms from a fellow Leva
Kanbi Patel in the sect. In this regard, the Secretary's most
important task has been to provide assistance in the formal aspects
of house purchase, especially in obtaining mortgages for the sect
members.

Apart from his position as a devoted and committed sect member,
the Secretary has developed competence in areas where the Mandal
members face specific difficulties in dealing with British institutions.
In lending his assistance to the sect members in matters which do not
directly concern the sectarian organisation, the Secretary develops
a special relationship with the members. His ability to provide
assistance presupposes a pattern of reciprocity in matters which may
relate to sectarian affairs. In other words, the non-sectarian
aspects of the settlement process may become significant in sectarian
matters within the Mandal and regulate institutional relations between
the leaders and the followers.

## 2. THE SOCIAL BASIS OF MANDAL RECRUITMENT

In their public announcements, the leading Mandal members
invariably say that their temple is a Hindu temple and that it is
open to all.[5] In theory as well as in practice, no one is barred
from entering the temple. However, relatively easy and open access
to the temple does not mean a similar access to the Mandal as a
social and sectarian organisation. While the temple as a place of
worship is open to all, the Mandal as a congregational body remains

restricted without exception to those who belong to the Leva Kanbi Patel group. In other words, it is only the Leva Kanbi Patels who are fully participating members of the sect in Britain. As explained in the previous chapter, both the Ahmedabad and Vadtal-based primary sect and the secondary Mandal recruit from among the Leva Kanbi Patels. The effect of this development has created a pattern of differential affiliation to two Swaminarayan sects among the Leva Kanbi Patels to which the Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha correspond as separable entities. As a result of this historical development, both the primary sect and the relatively recent Mandal compete for members among the Leva Kanbi Patels. As the Mandal has also developed in opposition to Ahmedabad/Vadtal Swaminarayan sect, most of its members are in fact drawn from the older sect, in particular from Leva Kanbi Patels who are potentially hostile to the Mandal.[6] Though the paksha division can imply mutual exclusion, the degree of exclusion can vary from total exclusion on the one hand to mere recognition of the fact the individuals belong to different pakshas and that this differential paksha membership may not have relevance for social relations within the nāt. The variations between these poles depend on specific circumstances which determine the extent of the paksha cleavage. Wherever sectarian difference and opposition are sharply defined, the degree of exclusion is correspondingly sharper. Since members of the older Swaminarayan sect as well as the Mandal members belong to the same social group nāt, the pattern of descent and kinship and affinity cuts across the paksha divisions. To put it differently and from the perspective of Mandal members, a family or those belonging to the same patrilineage can in fact belong to two different pakshas

alligned to two separate Swaminarayan sects. Though the definition

of paksha division depends upon two separate sectarian entities,

paksha is not coterminous with a sect as each sect has multicaste

membership in India. However within the context of Mandal in London

and Bolton the paksha distinction is a defining feature of affiliation

to the sect. As ties of kinship and affinity remain a crucial

dimension of Leva Kanbi Patel social life, in circumstances where

paksha loyalties do not outweigh kinship relations the Mandal members

persuade their non-Mandal kinsmen to join the Mandal. Whenever

individuals affiliate themselves to the Mandal, the possibility of

crossing the sectarian boundary once again is severely limited. That

is to say, the possibility of changing paksha/sectarian affiliation

frequently is incompatible with a devotional sense of commitment

expected from a member in either Swaminarayan sect. Under this

restraint, according to the Mandal members, one's affiliation to a

particular paksha within the nāt and therefore one's membership of a

Swaminarayan sect tends to be an enduring social feature.[7] In general

it is uncommon for a Leva Kanbi Patel to make an abrupt transfer from

one sectarian side to the other. Instead of being static and unchanging,

the concept of membership is fluid and processual in that a person

makes a gradual transition from one sect to the other, or more precisely

from one paksha to the other. In the process of gradual evolution

towards full membership, interpersonal ties of kinship and affinity

play an important part. In any event, membership is not unidimensional

in the sense of being concerned with sectarian considerations only.

The fact that affiliation to the sect is tied up with kinship and

affinity and related interests renders it multidimensional in character.

Just as one's membership can be a devloping process of sectarian and social solidarity, it can also decline if one's participation is marked by mān and behaviour incompatible with membership to the Mandal. Then the member concerned can become marginal to the sect either on his own volition or through increasing normative pressures.

In addition to the importance of social ties in the sect, a number of additional factors attract Leva Kanbi Patels to the Mandal. Among these, the kind of support the Mandal can lend to a Leva Kanbi Patel is a factor of critical importance. As a collectivity, the Mandal has developed a degree of resourcefulness which an incoming migrant may find attractive and reassuring. Mandal assistance in relation to employment, housing and other areas can prove to be a persuasive inducement for a newcomer to begin to attend the temple meetings in the evening. Especially if he is a lodger in the house of a Mandal member, then in all probability, his host would invite him to the temple meetings. If the lodger responds to this pattern of persuasion, then the frequency of his attendance in the temple coupled with his increased social familiarity in the sect can form a basis for the development of his membership in the Mandal.

In some specific instances, Mandal patronage has extended to obtaining employment vouchers for potential members as well as already established members of the organisation living in India. An appreciation of these positive inducements contributes to strength- ening the membership base in that the beneficiaries express their gratitude to the leaders through their commitment and devotion to the Mandal.

An aspect of the Mandal which has often appealed to Moto Paksha
Kanbi Patels concerns the sect leader Muktajivandasji's ability to
perform acts which are defined as being supernatural. His ability
to exorcise and to perform percho shows miraculous properties.
According to Sartha Gujarati Jodnikosh, percho, probably a derivation
from the Sanskrit word parichaya (to make known)[8] refers to a demon-
stration of power through performance of miracles. In attributing
miraculous acts to the sect leader, members of the Mandal affirm
their faith in the divinity which endows the sect leader with special
powers. In relation to acts of exorcism, on the one hand, in keeping
with the reformist image of Swaminarayan movement in Gujarat, the
members regard the influences of the sect as having eliminated
superstitious belief (vahem) in ghosts (bhut/pret) or withces identified
as denki, an expression likely to be akin to the common Gujarat word
dākan. At the same time they also accept that the sect leader
possesses a spiritual capacity to cast such influences away. During
the fieldwork period, I encountered one instance of a woman who was
accused in a family quarrel of being a denki. Apart from having denki
qualities, she was also believed to have inherited these attributes
from her patrilineage. In view of these predispositions towards
bhut/pret and denki, their significance in the recruitment process is
of some importance. A number of Mandal members referred to specific
instances in which they believed the sect leader had performed miracles.
Several persons had decided to join the Mandal after they had a percho,
that is after they had witnessed the sect leader casting bhut and pret
away. Though many of these stories were related to social encounters
either in Cutch or East Africa, their significance for the continuing
membership of individuals was undiminished. During Muktajivandasji's

visit to Britain in the autumn of 1972, on the eve of his departure
to East Africa, he is believed to have performed a mini-miracle by
opening an automatic door of a coach after it had been firmly closed.
The event was described in detail with a feeling of unambiguous
devotional conviction.

In addition to the importance of these divine qualities in
drawing non-Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels to the Mandal fold, the Moto
Paksha members who have come to the Mandal are impressed by its
better and tighter organisation in Britain, India and East Africa
in contrast to the primary Swaminarayan sect which is consistently,
and to a degree stereotypically portrayed as being disorderly,
chaotic, disorganised and corrupt.

In one particular instance, a Leva Kanbi Patel, who had crossed
the paksha and sectarian boundary in Nairobi, claimed that he was
genuinely concerned about the knowledge of salvation in addition to
its experience. To him, the intellectual conception of salvation and
related theological issues defining the nature of Swaminarayan and
his temporal manifestation were crucial for his own faith and conviction.
In other words, he saw his own devotion not only in terms of experience
of moksha as an instantaneously available state, but also in relation
to an overall intellectual scheme of the sectarian ideology. This is
not to imply that the social and other aspects of the organisation
were any less important in determining the pattern of his loyalty.
But his detached assessment of the ideology of moksha was generally
unmatched in the Mandal.

Even though the Mandal membership is more or less synonymous
with a small segment of Leva Kanbi Patels of Cutch, the Mandal does

attract non-Leva Kanbi Patel Hindus who, at best, can be described
as sympathisers rather than fully participating members. A sympathiser
is often described as a rasia - someone who takes interest in affairs
of the sect and accepts the sectarian ideology as being a legitimate
expression of more general Hindu beliefs. In this respect, he may
attend the temple with a fair degree of regularity. He may take a
keen interest in the affairs of the Mandal without actually
participating in any corporate decision making. Such sympathisers
as regulars are few and far between. During the fieldwork period,
there were two instances of Gujarati Hindus who had acquired a
status of institutional sympathisers. Despite their close association
with Mandal members and their consistently regular attendance at the
temple, none of the sympathisers could claim to participate in
organisational activities like the Leva Kanbi Patels. As far as the
corporate Mandal membership is concerned, the established overlap between
sect    relations and caste relations of kinship and affinity brings
about a closure and insularity to the Mandal. In view of this
particular social feature of the sect, affiliation to the Mandal of
those who may not be Leva Kanbi Patels constitutes a problem the
Mandal is unlikely to face in its present organisational form.

In sum, the Mandal membership is an informal phenomenon linking
social relations of nāt to sectarian relationship between the
spiritual leader and his followers. Satsangi and mumukshu are
concepts applied to the sect members imply a process of development
which culminates in a deep feeling of devotion and loyalty to the
Mandal. In this process social ties of kinship and affinity, a range
of concrete inducements the Mandal can offer to a prospective member

coupled with sect leader's charismatic appeal expressed through spirit healing and exorcism, and finally, and perhaps more importantly, a promise of moksha in this life rather than in the after life, attract many a Leva Kanbi Patel to the Mandal congregation.

## 3. MOKSHA AND THE FINANCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE MANDAL

The contributions lay members make to maintain the organisation of the sect is an essential aspect of a much wider dharma tradition amongst the Hindus. What constitutes a gift (dāna) has been discussed from very ancient time in India. Dāna occurs when an individual willingly transfers ownership of an object or a thing to someone else. The traditional giving is legitimated when the receiver accepts the dāna either physically, verbally or symbolically.[9] Dāna is one of the principal aspects of religious life besides metaphysical knowledge and sacrifices according to the ancient Laws of Manu.[10] Some of the traditional norms regard the householders as being the most worthy as they support the ascetics and renouncers who withdraw entirely from all productive labour. As the dāna contributions were crucial for maintaining the sadhus and the temple organisations, according to Kane,[11] the subject was carefully elaborated in the texts to detail customary and formal rules according to which the distribution of dāna gifts was determined. The dharma texts outline the relationship between the giver and the recipient, the nature of acceptable and unacceptable gifts, time and place of giving, correct ritual procedures and the necessity of non-egoistic charitable attitude in the transference of the gift to the receiver. As the householder lay members accumulate merit (punya) leading to moksha in unselfish giving, the act of dāna, now as before, remains an important dimension of Hindu religious and social life.

The notion of dāna is not only restricted to objects or cash voluntarily transferred to the receiver. As Klass W. Van der Veen has shown in his detailed study of hypergamy amongst the Anavil Brahmans of South Gujarat,[12] groups in the caste category who aspire to marry their daughters to the sons in a group regarded as above themselves, apply the concept of dāna to unilateral giving away of the daughter. Although there are socio-economic and political processes as well as considerations of prestige and gain which determine hypergamous relationship between categories of Anavil Brahmins, the belief in giving plays an important part in the marriages. The expression kanyādān or gift of a virgin signifies the ideological component in the relationships which bind groups in an uneven or unequal pattern of reciprocity in reality. Though the idea of dān in affinal relationship is not explicitly linked to moksha, the ideology of selfless and unilateral giving remains an important element in social processes creating hypergamous union between 'high' and 'low' Anavil Brahmin families.

In a comparative context, the relationship between dāna and salvation is not only confined to the subcontinent Hindu groups. The significance of dāna has also spread to the South Asian societies through Buddhism. In his important study of Thervadda Buddhism in Burma, Melford E. Spiro has shown that dāna has a central place in Kammatic Buddhism.[13] The main precepts of Kammatic Buddhism associate merit making action (karma) as contributing to salvation (nirvāna). As making dāna is one of the most important ways of making merit, its relationship to salvation is crucial for an understanding of Kammatic Buddhist belief. Spiro emphasises the primacy of giving when he says

"Giving (dāna) is the means, par excellence, for acquiring merit in Kammatic Buddhism",[14] which indicates the bearing dāna has on salvation. Spiro also focusses on the element of sacrifice and deprivation entailed in making dāna for accumulating merit.[15]

It is in terms of this wider notion of dāna that the opposites of moksha and mān not only define ideological difference and the opposition between submissive and assertive social conduct but also relate to the financial organisation of the Mandal. Though the ritual expression of moksha is generally regarded as being secondary to compliant devotion and commitment, in defining the character of money and wealth in relation to salvation, both the ritual and social aspects of moksha achieve significance as specific values are related to each of these dimensions in the presentations members make to the Mandal. In other words, institutional rituals do not remain secondary in practice, once each ritual act is associated with giving a specific monetary share to the sect. Even though ideologically moksha is always superior to wealth (artha) at a practical level of sectarian social arrangements the relationship between the two is not unproblematic. For possession of wealth is also a potent source of self-expression and self-assertion.

Though the Sikshpatri recognises the supremacy of moksha over wealth, it in no way undermines the practical importance of wealth and cash values in human affairs. In social relationships which are traditionally regarded as being intimate, harmonious and generally marked by mutual trust, any aspect related to wealth is discussed with a cautiousness reflecting the pervasive mercantile ideology among the Gujaratis. For instance, Sikshapatri verse 143 states,

302.

"No business in regard to giving or receiving land or property should ever be transacted even with a son or a friend without written deed attested by witnesses".[16] A similar prescription applies when persons enter into affinal relationships. In continuity with the above precept, verse 144 prescribes, "When any pecuniary transactions concerned with giving away a girl in marriage have to be transacted for one's self or another person, the money to be delivered over should not be settled by verbal agreement, but by a written contract attested by witnesses".[17] In essence, even in relationships between the closest kinsmen, the Sikshapatri applies contractual prescriptions. In imposing unequivocal codes about monetary transactions, at one level, Sikshapatri recognises the practical importance of wealth in social affairs. However, once wealth becomes an issue in the sect, its use is defined in relation to supremacy of moksha. Though at the ideological level, the Mandal leaders emphasise the use of wealth for sect as legitimately superior, there is always an acutely felt tension between personal use of wealth as opposed to its use for the sect, which is ideologically expressed in opposition between moksha and mān. In order to affirm the use of wealth as an object of superior merit, sect leaders often refer to the 26th story of Abji Bapa to show that the personal use of wealth is contrary to its use for promoting salvation-based activities of the sect. According to this story, the one who uses all his wealth for personal ends is akin to someone who ties a bag of rupees around his waist and jumps into the sea only to be drowned as opposed to someone who invests it in building a boat which enables him to cross the ocean.[18] In reiterating the substance of examples such as this, Mandal members emphasise the primacy of moksha in opposition to mān in an ideological

context within which they can transform potential Mandal resources
into a collective social asset of the sect. In this process, the
willingness of the sect members to accept salvation-based social
control enables them to offer a share of their wealth to the Mandal.
The relationship between control in the form of demand for compliance
and the accumulation of sectarian assets, and the interpretation of
this process in terms of opposition between moksha and man, shows
the way ideological categories relate to the social organisation of
the sect.

Through the set of its institutional activities, Mandal leaders
employ a number of different methods and techniques to raise funds
and a regular income. Leaders reiterate on all events of institutional
importance that if wealth brings personal glory and pride, then it
can only give rise to man and related vices. Whereas wealth - at
least some portion of it - which is devoted to the sect leader and
the Mandal can bring merit or enhance a particular state of salvation -
the legitimation being that the wealth which is devoted to the Mandal
is always a spiritually superior act of self-denial. Loyal Mandal
devotees support this legitimation and define all contributions to
the Mandal as compliance and submissiveness seen and believed to be
consistent with moksha. The accumulation of all the dues and assets
is closely related to moksha based institutional events and activities.

A Leva Kanbi Patel who becomes a full member of the Mandal, first
of all is required to pay a membership subscription of £5.00 per year.
At present membership is restricted to male adults in full-time or
part-time employment. The fact that working women are not similarly
accepted as separate members is an indication of the subordinate position

which is accorded to women within the Mandal. During the fieldwork period, the Mandal had 55 subscribing members in London and about 30 paying members in Bolton. The total subscription received from these members would amount to £425.00 per annum. Though it was not possible to have access to financial records of the Mandal, from my observations it was evident that the dues were paid with a fair degree of regularity.

In addition to the membership subscription, the whole complex of institutional ritual performances generates cash presentations for the sect. When the Mandal members go to the temple, after performing the salutory ritual of prostration, they walk up to the Swaminarayan shrine and put a coin on a stainless steel plate placed before the shrine as a part of their salutory ritual. Every sect member including women and children make a cash offering of between one to five pence. Ten pence and fifty pence coins are less frequent, though by no means absent. If, on the average, by a conservative estimate, a sum of £1.00 accumulates in the plate, then it would give the London temple an approximate income of about £365 at the very least. The Bolton temple would accumulate much less with a smaller membership.

Similarly, on every Sunday evening the temple attracts the largest number of members and their families. As explained in Chapter 5, the Sunday evening temple meetings are concluded by the arti ritual. Every Mandal member has a turn to perform the arti ritual. At the end, the arti plate is circulated around the temple so that each person can accept the blessing after placing a small coin on the plate. The member appointed to perform the ritual may contribute between £1.00 to £5.00 or even more if the Sunday arti coincides with an important event such as marriage in the family. If the Sunday collection reaches

the £5.00 mark, then the temple can earn an income of about

£250.00 from the arti performances every year. On special occasions

such as the birthday of the sect leader, the arti ritual may carry

a higher value and some members may contribute up to £300.00 in an

evening. The arti ritual which is performed at the Swaminarayan

temple in Maninagar on behalf of a British member, can carry a much

higher value. At the quinquennial gathering in Maninagar, artis

worth more than £500.00 are not uncommon. Even though Mandal members

do not relate the specific value of arti to a particular state of

salvation, performance of an arti with the highest possible value

is a clear indication of one's commitment to moksha. In addition,

larger contributions enhance one's social standing and above all

ensure a spiritually desirable use of wealth which can improve one's

state of moksha.

In addition to liquid cash generated by arti performances,

ritual events such as vartman the initiation rite, namkaran the

name giving ritual, vastu the puja performed in a new house before

a member occupies it, padhramni the ritual act concerned with

inviting the sect leader to one's house and parayana, the recital of

a religious text on the occasion of birth and death, all involve cash

contributions of different values. The size of a particular contribution

depends on the significance attached to a ritual event and to one's

social standing as a mumukshu within the sect. In other words, the

importance of a particular ritual and its corresponding value vary

considerably.

Vartman and padhramni rituals involve the sect leader himself.

On most occasions vartman and padhramni are likely to coincide as it

is usually an invitation to the sect leader culminating in padhrāmni
that can lead to vartmān.  The Mandal members consider the presence
of the sect leader on the event of padhrāmni and vartmān  a very
special privilege and accordingly they make generous contributions;
the sums range from £30.00 to £100.00 being commensurate with social
standing of the persons concerned and different degrees of their
devotional loyalty to the sect leader. The recital of sectarian
texts can take place either in Britain or in India. The recital
following births and deaths are of considerable importance. As far
as births are concerned, birth of a male is more important than that
of a female child. And generally a greater significance is attached
to a recital after death than the one after birth. The value attached
to parāyan reading of religious texts varies from birth to death
involving a range of payments from £10.00 to £100.00.  Especially if
a member requires a parāyan recital at the main temple of the sect
in Maninagar in India, then he usually pays a higher amount.  If a
member arranges for a recital to be held in his home village in
Cutch, this involves a smaller amount. Whenever a parāyan  recital
is held in India, the member concerned makes a payment in London on
the assumption that his contribution is transferred to Maninagar.

In contrast to vartmān, padhrāmni and parāyan, vāstu in a new
house and the name giving ritual ceremonial are less important.  Unless
they coincide with an important sectarian event, the cash gifts Mandal
members make carry lower values and relatively smaller contributions.

Associated with life cycle rituals and their monetary values,
there are special occasions of ritual significance - such as the
anniversary celebration of the day when the sect leader became a

renouncer. A practice which carries strong ritual overtones is that of giving dhotiya - a word referring to a white single piece garment men tie around their waist in India. The expression Mandal members use is dhotiya odhadva which is literally to cover with the dhotiya. It could be that originally the practice might have been concerned with the actual provision of cloth material for the renouncers by the lay members of the sect. However, in the present context of the sect, dhotiya odhadva means nothing more than a euphemism for giving cash gifts. On special occasions, the members are explicitly asked to present dhotiyas to the sect leaders and his renouncers. As these gifts are due to the sect leader himself and his body of renouncers, the contributions members make tend to be high and the sums vary from £30.00 to £100.00.

Though the performance of ritual acts in their institutional context of the congregation primarily refer to the ideology of moksha, at a more practical level of sectarian organisation, ritual and ceremonial occasions are closely related to accumulation of cash which may amount to several thousand pounds.

Besides the connection between the institutional rituals and cash formation, an injunction from Sikshapatri provides Mandal leaders with a clearly defined basis for asking the sect members to make additional contributions. According to a Sikshapatri verse 147, the sectarian injunction laid down is as follows: "My followers should assign a tithe of grain, money etc. acquired by their own occupation or exertions to Krishna[19] and the poor should give a twentieth part".[20] The Mandal members know this prescription as dasmo ne vishmo bhag, namely tenth or twentieth portion. Consistent with this code of

conduct, each sect member should subscribe a tenth portion of his income to the Mandal. As set out in the precept, poorer members may give a twentieth portion of their income to the sect. This non-ritual prescription clearly requires the Mandal members to lend pecuniary support to the Mandal as an expression of their devotional loyalty and commitment to the sect and its primary salvational ideology. It is in connection to this emphasis on making cash contributions to the sect that the leaders and members alike use the word dharmado (combination of dharma and dāna) to describe the underlying general principle of making prestations to the sect. The word which is used for making actual contribution is khedo as explained below. How does the Mandal translate the principle of dharmado as expressed as a Sikshapatri code into practice?

During the course of my fieldwork in Hendon, sons of my host's brother applied the dasmo-vismo principle to wages earned every week from the newspaper rounds they did every morning. What they did was to keep an account of their earnings out of which they deducted a tenth portion and set it aside so that they could appropriately transfer it to the Mandal. The sect leaders would urge the Mandal members to internalise this precept so that they would similarly set aside a portion of their income as a true expression of their devotion to the sect. In reality the Mandal members rarely achieve the ideal put in practice by the two young men. In discussing this particular code of conduct in Mandal meetings, the leaders draw a parallel between dasmo-vismo bhag and the institution of income tax. The members are reminded that just as they accept state deduction of income tax from their pay packet, they should similarly accept a regular deduction of a tithe from their income on their own volition to affirm their loyalty

to the sect. Since the Mandal does not and probably can not operate

a system to deduct dues from members' wages, the collection of dues

from the members does not possess a character of tax deduction in any

formal sense. In other words, there is no formal mechanism such as

standing order through banks or a similar arrangement for collecting

a prescribed tithe from the Mandal members. Nor does the Mandal

set any regular pattern so that the tithe can be collected consistently,

for instance, to coincide with times when the members are thought to

have accumulated some funds.

The practice Mandal has established for the collection of dasmo-

vismo bhag is the institution of what the sect members call khedo.

As an expression it is probable that khedo derives from the Gujarati

word khardo which can mean a declaration in public. Generally, it is

through the institution of khedo that the members pay tithe to the

congregation. An interesting synonym the sect members use for the

khedo subscription relates to the concept of seva which is usually

translated as 'service' in English. The actual expression Mandal

members use is seva karvi which has the connotation of 'doing service'.

Both in dharma tradition as well as in a particular sampradaya such

as the Mandal, seva can acquire multiple meanings. First of all, as

Adrian Mayer has explained in a recent article, true seva has nothing

to do with the English word service in so far as it is used to refer

to work undertaken for remuneration in an occupation.[21] It is rare

for the Hindus I have come across to use seva in a purely instrumental

sense. According to Adrian Mayer's informants in Dewas, "seva should

be entirely unselfish and unmotivated by personal ends and desires".[22]

In relating the word seva to the khedo contributions, there are several

elements which sect members seem to emphasise. First, the word seva

has a ritual meaning which is often used in the same way as the word
puja to indicate an act of worship. When the sect members apply seva
to financial contributions, they refer to devotional serving within
the congregation.  In the bhakti tradition, seva also connotes
surrendering one's self to the supreme lord so that the ultimate
unity can be achieved. The Mandal members extend self-surrender to
encompass material support expected from all the devotees. This
support, given in the financial contributions to the sect, is expected
to be an act of unselfish giving in the same way as seva is expected
to be uncontaminated by personal ends and desires in Dewas. Such
unselfish giving is compatible with moksha and true submissiveness
expected from a true seeker of salvation.  In this way, seva or seva
karvi as an ideological component of moksha becomes closely related
to the practice of demanding tithe from the sect members.  In other
words, the relevance of seva in tithe payments is defined in relation
to all encompassing significance for Mandal members of quest for
moksha and self-submission entailed in it.

How does khedo operate as a tithe collection?  Khedo as an actual
event possesses certain formal features.  Initially it develops as an
informal process initiated by the sect leaders, particularly by
Motabhai. As the Mandal collects the tithe payment in reference to
specific sectarian events, through allusion to forthcoming events of
sectarian importance Motabhai himself, if he is resident in London,
or the President and Secretary if he is not, begin to develop a
suitable climate for the khedo.  Essentially, they suggest to the
members the possibility of an important event such as the arrival of
the sect leader in Britain in the autumn of 1970, the establishment

of the Mandal temple in Hendon in 1971, and the visit members of the
congregation paid to the Maninagar temple in Gujarat in the autumn of
1972 to celebrate the 65th birthday of Muktajivandasji. As the sect
members begin to anticipate the imminent sectarian event, a simultaneous
expectation of khedo sets in as well. As the members well know, the
imminence of sectarian events is either preceeded or followed by a
demand for payment through a khedo meeting. At first, instead of any
formalised order, the talk about the forthcoming khedo develops in
the context of informal interpersonal ties and the established pattern
of loyalty between the sect members and their leaders. Sometimes
anticipation about the khedo can coincide with the event itself. In
an assembly meeting either before the event or during it, the sect
leaders set about collecting tithes from the Mandal devotees. During
the fieldwork which began with the arrival of Muktajivandasji in
Britain, a khedo meeting had already taken place. As the members
explained to me, on this particular occasion it was necessary to
raise a much larger sum of several thousand pounds to finance the
journey by air from India, to the U.K., U.S.A. and to East Africa of
the sect leader and his entourage. As this called for large contributions,
persuasion had to be applied wherever unwillingness to take a heavier
burden was expressed. From the information available, it appeared as
if members had paid amounts varying from a hundred pounds to three
hundred pounds - probably raising an amount of several thousand pounds.
To this may be added the additional expenses the members incurred
after Muktajivandasji had actually arrived in Britain.

An occasion to observe a khedo proceeding in practice arose in
June 1971 when the new Mandal temple in Hendon was due for opening.

This was an event of great importance and pride for all Mandal members,
for they saw the occasion as a further consolidation of the congregation
in Britain. After the Mandal had purchased a church hall in Hendon,
the Mandal members, their wives and children, spent all their spare
time in redecorating and renovating the building. During this
preparatory phase, the members were enthusiastic, joyful and in a
euphoric spirit which expressed their solidarity as a congregation.
Before the commencement of inauguration, the building was fully
decorated with the Swaminarayan shrine prominently placed and fully
illuminated. To mark the inauguration, on the evening prior to the
opening day, a three hour singing of Swaminarayan dhun had been
arranged. After the dhun singing had taken place in an atmosphere of
intense devotional fervour, the members began their first daily prayer
meeting sabhā in the new temple. Motabhai himself as an immediate
representative of Muktajivandasji was present throughout the period
leading up to the inauguration ceremony. After the prayers, he began
a religious discourse for the evening by informing the members that
he had several letters from the sect leader himself about the
auspicious occasion. One of these letters was addressed to all the
Mandal members. Motabhai then asked the Mandal secretary to read out
the letter to the Mandal congregation. After conveying preliminary
traditional greetings to the members, one of the first questions[23]
raised in the sect leader's letter, concerned financial contributions.
Did the members set aside a tenth portion of their income for the
Mandal? Motabhai himself repeated the question and posed it to the
members. Only a few members raised their hands indicating that they
observed both the Sikshapatri prescriptions as well as sect leader's

directive about the tithe. What the sect leader had suggested
earlier was that if each member regularly set aside his respective
tenth portion for the Mandal, then he could arrange to transfer his
total contribution to the sect without any financial difficulty.
Instead of responses from other members, a chatter broke out within
the assembly. Then a devoted member expressed what appeared to be a
generally held view within the sect. He asserted that even though
members like himself did not set aside a tenth portion of their
income on a regular basis, they usually made their contributions
without any hesitation. Despite this assurance by a member, Motabhai
reiterated Muktajivandasji's dissatisfaction about the contributions
and urged the members to be more conscientious about paying their
share to the Mandal.

Members of the congregation spent the following day in festivity,
concerned with opening of the new temple. In leading the evening
prayers and the religious discourse thereafter, Motabhai extended
his thanks to all sect members for contributing their time and labour
for renovating the temple. As the purchase of the temple and its
renovation had involved considerable expenditure, a reminder to the
members that they should meet their tithe obligations was regarded
as appropriate and legitimate on the auspicious opening of the temple.
In order to supplement Mandal finances, Motabhai made an announcement
and asked the sect members if they would be willing to make contributions
to the Mandal. At least initially, no one came forward to make any
contributions. Even though Motabhai made several persuasive requests,
lack of enthusiasm on the part of sect members was clearly evident.
However, Motabhai continued urging members to make some contributions,
repeatedly reemphasising the spiritual merit their share would bring

to bear on their ultimate salvation. Some members came forward.

They raised their hands and, in turn, each of them contributed

between £15.00 to £25.00. Gradually, with Motabhai's continuous

inducements and encouragement, a momentum began to gather. As some

members actually handed in their cash contributions, the pace at

which the members announced their subscriptions increased. So did

the amount. With this increasing pace, there was soon an element of

competition in the air. The amounts announced and subscribed went

up from £25.00 to about £60.00. The khedo progressed and gathered

further momentum. Apart from the adult male members, young boys, girls

and women were drawn into absorbing pace of the accelerating khedo.

Soon it appeared as if no one wanted to miss the opportunity to make

a contribution. Motabhai continued his skillful persuasion by asking

everyone to join the partnership of moksha (mokshna bhagidar). A

fifteen minutes count I maintained at the beginning of khedo showed

that the total sum contributed amounted to about three hundred pounds.

Almost all Mandal persons had subscribed a sum to the congregation.

Motabhai's persuasive stimulation had proved sufficiently effective

in creating a euphoric context for a successful khedo collection.

Even non-Mandal Hindus who were in the temple were drawn into it.

One of them contributed £15.00 to the Mandal and others made a

number of smaller subscriptions. As the two hour khedo proceeding

was coming to the end, Motabhai scrutinised the entire assembly to

ensure that everyone had had the opportunity to give a subscription

of some value to the Mandal.[24] Though the total amount which was

raised during the khedo was not disclosed, from the proceedings that

evening it was obvious that total contributions were likely to exceed

£1,000. After the assembly had concluded, additional contributions

came in from two committed members of the Mandal. One of them

agreed to pay for the festive meal that had been organised in the

temple earlier in the day. The other member offered to purchase a

wall-to-wall carpet for the entire temple hall. The Mandal members

make contrasting responses to _khedo_ contributions. For some, these

contributions define their unflinching commitment to _moksha_, and the

reward is a promise of instantaneous possibility of salvation. To

take one example, the person who is the grandson of Abji Bapa, the

founder of Satsang Mahasabha, regards personal subscription

exceeding £1,000 over a decade as a concrete expression of his

devotional commitment to the Mandal.

Even though the opening of the new Mandal temple and the _khedo_

fund raising associated with it had generated an atmosphere of

festivity, joy and satisfaction, voices of dissatisfaction were not

unheard - though they did not sound dominant. Immediately after the

_khedo_ assembly had dispersed,a Bolton member of the Mandal grumbled

in a complaining tone about the many contributions demanded by the

Mandal. In particular, as he put it in his own words, it was unfair

for the Mandal to expect him to pay large sums since he was merely

a labourer. He confided that since his arrival in Britain, he may

have paid at least £500 in _sevā_, largely in Britain, but partly also

in India. He was already aware that a year later in 1972 members of

the congregation were going to India to celebrate the 65th anniversary

of Muktajivandasji's birthday and that this forthcoming event would

mean still further financial contributions to the Mandal.

The Mandal leaders define _khedo_ contributions not only in relation

to _moksha_ but also in relation to _mān_. However, the members do not

make a simple equation between a member's contribution and moksha

and a non-participation as being coterminous with man. In other

words, tithe contribution or non-contributions do not correspondingly

relate to the antithesis between moksha and man. While a non-payment

of khedo is more likely to be defined negatively as an expression of

man, a khedo contribution in itself does not bring about an achievement

of moksha; it is not a sufficient, although it is a necessary condition.

For such a payment may be seen to be an expression of man. As the

Mandal leaders know, some of their followers can make contributions

to show their man rather than any true and meaningful submissive

devotion. Though Mandal leaders never reject a khedo contribution,

what they emphasise categorically is that such a contribution, though

accepted, is not worthy of moksha in the same way as a contribution

backed by a consistency of self-surrendering devotional practice.

Mandal members emphasise that man can take on many subtle forms.

Therefore the willingness of a Mandal member to make financial

contributions, on its own, can not be regarded as a rise towards a

desirable state of moksha. In other words, man applies not only to

those who do not make financial contributions to the sect but also

to those who do.

In relation to tithe contributions, the fact that the sect

members are workers in British society continually impinges both on

the social organisation of the sect as well as on its ideology. In

terms of their position as workers and owner occupiers of residential

properties, members of the Mandal experience pressures stemming from

the organisation of life in Britain. As these pressures primarily

concern the amount of cash a member needs to maintain himself according

to his expectations, their effect is felt in the Mandal whenever
the question of contributions arises. Whatever feelings of dissatis-
faction members express often relate to their need to have funds to
meet their non-Mandal financial commitments sucn as mortgage payments
etc. It is in this sense that their position in the local social
structure imposes constraints on the social organisation of the sect.

Apart from the British structural constraint, unwillingness to
make a tithe contribution can also stem from within the Mandal. A
member who may have felt personally dissatisfied with the conduct of
leaders may either delay his financial contributions or express
unwillingness to make them. Although a distinction can be made between
the structural and organisational aspects of constraint at an analytical
level, in practice both aspects may operate simultaneously. Further,
the financial difficulties which arise outside the Mandal can generate
strain in the social relations and may be articulated in the organis-
ational context of the sect. Even though leaders claim to recognise
and sympathise with difficulties which arise at a structural level,
unless a member has suffered prolonged unemployment no clear-cut
distinction is maintained between structural and organisational
dimensions. The effect of financial constraint is often attributed to
nothing more than to an expression of m̄an. The self-assertive property
of m̄an is accentuated by the social structure as well as the organisation
of the sect. If a member asserts himself by delaying or withholding
his contributions, then as a m̄ani, he clearly expresses defiance as
opposed to expected consistency with moksha ideological norms. Amongst
the leading and devoted sect leaders and members, there is a distinct
awareness that a minority of sect followers possess m̄an or have a
potential for it and are therefore capable of defying the sectarian

leadership either by expressing their mistrust for the leaders or
by withholding their financial contributions or by both. A pattern
of defiance relates both to economic and political relations within
the Mandal and to the interpersonal ties which rest upon village,
nāt and kinship considerations. Given the complexity of social
relations involving both caste and sect, mān as defiance usually
cuts across sect and caste relations as nāt and sampradāya overlap
so closely. Even though sect and caste are theoretically separable,
in fact what one does for a fellow kinsman at the level of caste can
be also counted as an expression of sectarian loyalty - or disloyalty
if it is mān that is involved. In other words, any expression of mān
within the Mandal is inseparable from non-sect social relations of
nāt and other constraints which determine patterns of self-assertion.
Therefore a course of events involving either moksha or mān influences
relationships at the two analytically separable levels of caste and
sect.

4.    MĀN IN OPPOSITION TO MOKSHA : AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE STUDY

An instance of the manifestation of mān is provided by a person
who I should like to call Govindbhai. About forty-five years old
and a Leva Kanbi Patel from Kera Village in Cutch, before his arrival
in Britain Govindbhai had spent many years in Nairobi, where he had
been a member of the Mandal. Before coming to Britain he spent several
years in Cutch, trying somewhat unsuccessfully to establish a mill to
process vegetable oil. Consequently he had built up a large debt.[25]
To redeem himself from this financial burden, it was important for
him to leave Cutch to make a fresh start elsewhere. With a substantial
number of East African Leva Kanbi Patels migrating to Britain,

Govindbhai was well-aware that the communities in London and Bolton
provided attractive bases where accommodation and some form of
employment could be found with ease. A distant patrilineal kinsman
who is a Mandal member in London, visited him and this social tie
influenced his decision to migrate again to become a fully participating
member in the Mandal in Britain.  The Mandal was enthusiastic about
having him as a local member, especially as his knowledge of the
Swaminarayan sect and its philosophy were very well-acclaimed.
Finally arrangements were made for him to obtain an employment
voucher to come to Britain.

Now that Govindbhai is regarded as having been a māni, his
conduct from the earliest point is retrospectively defined as having
been defiant.  For instance, it is alleged that as soon as he received
his voucher, he hurriedly travelled to Britain without visiting the
sect's headquarters in Maninagar where the sect members from London
and East Africa had assembled to celebrate Muktajivandasji's Platinum
Jubilee. The leaders regarded this as somewhat less than acceptable
sectarian conduct, in view of Govindbhai's apparent devotion to
Swaminarayan.

After Govindbhai had settled down to a steady employment, the
Mandal leaders expected him to pay a sum of £200.00 to meet all the
expenses incurred in obtaining his employment voucher and preparing
all the necessary immigration papers for him.  Govindbhai, however,
thought the sum much too high and expressed some reluctance to make
a payment.  Even though he eventually paid up, after some arguments
and delays, the event did not end without leaving some ill-feeling
and bitterness between the local Mandal leaders and Govindbhai. As

it was, according to them, he had already expressed m&#257;n. During a conversation about him with an informant, he was unambiguously referred to as a m&#257;ni.

The Mandal leader who was concerned with arranging Govindbhai's migration to Britain through an employment voucher was involved in a further encounter with him. In 1969 a selected number of Mandal leaders were visiting the United States under the leadership of Motabhai, to prepare for Muktajivandasji's 1970 visit to Europe and the United States. The Mandal leader concerned did not have funds to finance his own journey. Govindbhai was approached through his patrilineal relative who believed that he would be prepared to advance a loan to the Mandal leader. A request was made to Govindbhai to provide a loan of £200.00. Though he did not refuse to loan the sum in question, he claimed all his savings were tied up in a fixed deposit bank account and not immediately available to him. All he had on him was an amount of £45.00. After handing over the sum to the Mandal leader concerned, Govindbhai demanded a formal receipt from him. Even though his demand for a formalisation of this trans-action was according to a precept of Sikshapatri, it was also an expression of mistrust for a Mandal leader. The leader in question, however, agreed to give Govindbhai a signed receipt for the sum borrowed. When he finally returned to London, he assured Govindbhai that his loan would be repaid as soon as he was re-employed. When he finally made the repayment, he asked Govindbhai to destroy the receipt he had signed earlier on. Govindbhai refused to do this so that he could always show the receipt to others to show that he had loaned some money to the leader. However, he did not object to giving a separate receipt to the leader for the repayment the latter had made.

His explicit refusal to cancel and destroy the original receipt
made out to him by a leading Mandal member was an act of defiance
which was taken as an implicit challenge to the Mandal authority.

The dispute between Govindbhai and the Mandal leader soon
developed as a political issue, dividing the members between those
in the majority who supported the leader, and a small minority
dissatisfied with the Mandal leadership supporting Govindbhai. To
the informant who had by and large supported the leadership,
Govindbhai's action was nothing more than an assertion of man .
However, this perception was not shared by those who were either
sympathetic towards Govindbhai or actually supporting him. To them,
the dispute was yet another instance of the authoritarian character
of leadership reflected in the high handed treatment of Govindbhai.
The dispute enabled the minority of dissenters to express their
grievances against the British leaders of the sect. For instance,
they raised doubts about funds accumulated and their final destination.
Though they accepted the principle of sectarian tithe as being
legitimate, they were not entirely certain about the way funds were
in fact transferred to Maninagar in India. Be that as it may, issues
such as these were drawn into the dispute which was threatening to
be disruptive.

It was at this juncture of somewhat strained and tense relations
within the Mandal that Motabhai came to London to plan Muktajivandasji's
1970 visit to London. He used theoccasion to iron out the differences
between Govindbhai and the Mandal leader concerned. The nature of the
strain precluded a possibility of conciliation in the sense of samadhan
as restoration of good social relations. In conducting an informal

jural meeting,[26] Motabhai first chided Govindbhai for his defiant

arrogance and obstinacy and for being a m̄ani. He also talked to

those who had supported Govindbhai to clarify their doubts about

general arrangements and administration in the sect. As a devout

Mandal member put it, he brought home the fact that Govindbhai and

friends were merely revealing their 'inner enemies' (antar shatru)

in manifesting m̄an defiance against the Mandal. Though detailed

accounts of these informal and unstructured jural proceedings are

usually unavailable, it was clear that Govindbhai accepted the under-

standing (samjooti) and offered an apology and the dispute was

regarded as having been settled. However, all the events leading

up to the dispute and thereafter left ill-feeling between contending

parties.

It was this dispute which was to form a background to a sub-

sequent difference which arose in relation to a khedo meeting held

in order to raise funds to support Muktajivandasji's visit to London.

During this fund collecting session, with the exception of Govindbhai,

other Mandal members subscribed sums more or less equal to the tenth

portion of their earned income. Motabhai, who welcomed these sub-

scriptions, inquired if there was anyone who had not offered a

subscription - without explicitly referring to Govindbhai or his

supporters. When Govindbhai did not announce a sum in response to

this request, Motabhai reminded him that as a Mandal member he ought

to subscribe an appropriate amount. Govindbhai retorted saying that

he would have to consult his wife before making any decision about a

contribution. This was a clear act of insubordination and defiance.

First, to express public unwillingness to make a khedo contribution

was a clear breach of the Mandal norm. Secondly, in a sectarian

organisation relatively dominated by men, to say that one would

consult one's wife about a khedo sum was an unacceptable act.

Motabhai was angered and asked Govindbhai to leave the prayer

assembly and return home to consult his wife. These remarks could

imply little else but sarcasm and the imputation of cowardice to

a man wanting to consult his wife in relation to a decision

essentially made by men. Govindbhai walked up to his child, pulled

him away and walked away defiantly and contemptuously. The matters

remained unresolved till Muktajivandasji came to Britain in the

autumn of 1970.

During his stay in Britain, the sect leader held meetings to

sort out differences in relations between members and in general

to foster a sense of community and solidarity within the sect.

Having learned about Govindbhai's conduct preceeding his London

visit, Muktajivandasji is said to have made an effort to draw

estranged Govindbhai into the fold. When he did not appear in a

meeting which was organised to celebrate the sect leader's birthday,

Muktajivandasji's displeasure was conveyed to Govindbhai as a potential

warning of expulsion from the sectarian community. It was hoped that

Govindbhai would attend a jural meeting headed by the sect leader

himself. Govindbhai in fact evaded the meeting by travelling to

Bolton on the same day.

Finally, in one of many assemblies, Govindbhai inevitably met

the sect leader. During this meeting, the sect leader scolded him

severely for his unacceptable and defiant behaviour, reminding him

how unworthy he had made himself for moksha. In an emotionally charged

meeting, Govindbhai accepted that his conduct was not worthy of a
good member of the congregation and to mark his own total acceptance
of moksha-based authority, he prostrated before the sect leader
and asked for his forgiveness so that he could once again become
worthy of the highest state of moksha.

Even though Govindbhai is regarded as having been reintegrated
into the moksha community, the past consistency of his man conduct
does not become irrelevant. In fact it remains sufficiently focused
for the Mandal members to call him a mani if they were asked to name
one. Their own assessment of Govindbhai's conduct is based strictly
on their own understanding of moksha and man. Initially it was the
patrilineal tie between Govindbhai and his Mandal relative which was
crucial in determining his entry into the Mandal in Britain. Once
he was within the sect, it was his position as an upholder of norms
of moksha which was of greater importance than the patrilineal tie.
And even though the sect members clearly distinguish between
sampradaya and nat, once the supremacy of the sampradaya is accepted,
nat social relations are increasingly subsumed within the sampradaya.
In other words, as far as the Mandal members are concerned, and
especially for those who are intensely committed to moksha, sectarian
relations are more important than caste relations and the relevance
of caste relations is definable in the context of the sect and its
encompassing ideology of salvation.

During the course of events which led to Govindbhai's dissatis-
faction, the emphasis on moksha and man in terms of conformity and
defiance is maintained all the way through. Moksha legitimates
authority, its customary exercise and acceptance by the Mandal members.

However, this does not necessarily mean that moksha is always coterminous with conformity. Should compliance convey any traces of man, then it is dubious and unacceptable to the leaders. As far as Govindbhai was concerned, his unwillingness to abide by Motabhai's instructions to the Mandal members was a categorical expression of man.

Man in Govindbhai's defiant conduct in a series of interrelated events is exceptional in its manifestation and intensity. Although the case study is valuable in showing the relationship between his defiant behaviour and its definition in the Mandal ideology, it can not be used as a basis to infer the expression of man as it occurs in the minor acts of defiance within the sect. Besides the emergence of man in the institutional context as Govindbhai encountered it, there is also a possibility for a sect member to show man temporarily in specific situations. Much depends on the way individual tendencies are defined in a particular empirical context. For example, a sect member might express some dissatisfaction about a collective decision to spend money on books or to pay wages to the part-time teachers. If his dissatisfaction was due to his own unwillingness to make his contribution and if this unwillingness was expressed as some mistrust for a leader, then the member concerned could be described as a mani. To be classified as a mani carries a stigmatic evaluation of defiance. If a member accepts either situational or institutional definition of his own man, then, according to the sect members, he could experience both guilt and shame. As no one is prepared to admit being a possessor of man, it is not always easy to determine the feelings individuals experience when they are described as mani. The fact that the leaders

regard man as unacceptable and even stigmatic seems to deter members

of the Mandal from voicing their criticism or opposition to those in

the authority. Sometimes I also found the members using the word man

in lighter vein in their conversations. If a person expressed pride

or egoistic attitude, his associates would often point out, albeit

jokingly, "You are a big mani" or "You are showing too much man". The

pervasive application of man in the institutional context as well as

in informal social relations meant that it could be used as a means

to regulate and control behaviour regarded as undesirable defiance

in the British congregations. Although the sect members use man to

identify noncompliant behaviour, it should be noted that there are

a number of traditional Hindu categories they use to assess the conduct

of the devotees and others. Expressions such as adharmi (irreligious),

papi (sinful), svarthi (selfish), krodhi (prone to anger) etc. are

also frequently used to label those whose behaviour is regarded as

being antithetical to the Mandal codes.

In sum, as the opposition of moksha to man acquires significance

in the financial organisation of the sect, its dynamic has a bearing

on the relationship between the Mandal members and their leaders.

In relation to making Mandal a viable financial organisation, the

institutional complex of rituals as well as the institution of khedo

provides channels for the accumulation of assets. The process of

accumulation is invariably linked to the ideology of salvation. The

relevance of moksha is clearly reflected in Govindbhai's encounter

with a Mandal leader and his subsequent defiance of Motabhai in his

unwillingness to make a tithe contribution. His final meeting with

the sect leader himself and his acceptance of moksha-based authority

affirm the opposition of moksha to forces which cause self-assertive

man to arise. The ideological tension between the opposites stem from the demand for conformity and compliance on the one hand and sect members' concern for their day-to-day material interests. It is the dialectic between moksha and self-assertive personal interests expressed through man which forms the basis of social action within the Mandal.

## 5. MOKSHA AND SECULAR ACTIVITIES OF THE MANDAL

Though it is the core organisation of the Mandal that concerns most members of the sect, they do not hesitate from defining apparently secular activities such as sports in terms of ideology of the sect. Since from the beginning of the 1970s, the younger sect members, especially those between seventeen and eighteen, have organised a club which is appropriately named Muktajivan Cricket Club. The formation and naming of the club has involved consulting the spiritual leader in India, as it were, to receive his moksha approval. Further, when the younger members arrange to play matches with non-Mandal clubs, they suggest that the others who come into contact with the devoted members may even have the additional benefit - though they themselves may not necessarily become fully conscious of it. That is, through their contact with members of the Mandal, they may ultimately receive the bounty of salvation.

During the summer of 1971, the Muktajivan Cricket Club was active and used the Mandal facilities to play eleven matches in all. These matches provide the younger Mandal members with an opportunity to meet players from all over London. Many of these meetings provide a potential for social contact, especially as the members of Muktajivan Cricket Club accept the responsibility of providing refreshment to

outside players. But during the fieldwork period, the observations
confirmed that the potential for social contact between clubs tended
to remain unrealised. Whenever the players from the two sides found
themselves together during their lunch and tea breaks, interaction
between them was minimal.

In theory, the Muktajivan Cricket Club is open to Mandal members
only. Some younger club members often feel that the Mandal should not
maintain an exclusively sectarian cricket club. Several of them
emphasise a distinction between sect and sports. Though they mildly
disapprove of defining cricket in relation to moksha, at least in
theory they accept the overriding importance of their sectarian ethos
in their relation to the outsiders. In practice, however, a somewhat
different set of evaluations prevail. First of all, the Mandal does
not have enough adults interested in cricket to form proper teams.
Secondly, those who lead the Mandal team often feel that interest
and skill in playing the game are more important in making a good
team rather than anything else. Keeping this non-sect evaluation in
regard, the Muktajivan Cricket Club has enrolled a few outsiders as
members, one of whom is a Hindu from Kashmir. On the basis of his
good performance in the game, he has been promoted to the captaincy
of the club.

The secular activity which has received most attention in the
Mandal is education as it is seen to determine the employment prospects
of boys and girls. When the fieldwork commenced, many of these were
making a transition from either East African or Indian schools to
British comprehensives in North London. The youngsters in this
category often encounter linguistic difficulties if they come to

Britain with a limited knowledge of English and inadequate command over spoken and printed words. The Mandal leaders recognised this difficulty sufficiently well to organise additional English classes for their sons and daughters outside school hours. Initially the classes were arranged on Saturday mornings so that they did not clash with temple attendance in the evening. Hence the introduction of these classes did not present many special problems. Later during the year, an East African Mandal member with a professional background visited the congregation for a brief period. He urged the Mandal organisers to reconsider the whole issue of education of their children and stressed the particular importance of teaching Mandal boys and girls enough English for them to find work without difficulties at the end of their school career. According to his proposal and arguments, an English class once a week was hopelessly inadequate and it ought to be complemented by daily evening classes so that regular additional instruction would benefit the children. As soon as it was proposed that the younger ones could substitute their evening class for the evening prayers, the clash between the need for regular temple attendance and the need to provide English language instructions to boys and girls became clearly defined. At first, the senior members expressed their deep concern about this measure and opposed it. A compromise solution reached was to organise English classes in such a way so that the younger members could attend the prayer meetings with some consistent regularity. Though the Mandal parents were prepared to recognise the importance of English classes, once they realised that the children would go to the classes instead of attending the temple, their immediate response was to affirm the importance of sect's practices. Once the rationale for holding English classes was

accepted, the running of the classes was subsequently redefined as being complementary to the activities of the Mandal. In other words, what the members asserted was the relevance of a secular activity as an additional stimulus for sustaining interest in the congregation. In advancing this view point some Mandal organisers recognise that in Britain it will be essential for them to include some secular activities in the temple so that young boys and girls remain interested in the affairs of the sect.

In order to develop activities of a secular nature for the younger ones the Mandal has established a Students' Association led by several young persons. The object of the association is to stimulate interest in educational activities, to encourage young boys and girls to read more English, and to use their spare time constructively to improve their performance at school. In consultation with a teacher at a local primary school,[27] the Assocation set up a small Mandal library which was to supplement evening teaching work. In the process of formation of this Association, the Mandal leaders continued to interpret both the relevance of language classes as well as the activities of Students' Association as being consistent with the Mandal policy. With the acceptance of this educational measure, earlier feeling about a clash between sectarian needs and non-sectarian needs was diluted and the importance of educational activities was defined as something positively strengthening the Mandal. Further, along with the institutional routine of the temple, extra activities were also seen to have some restraining influence on the young, who it was feared, were most susceptible to 'bad' influences from the wider social milieu. It was held that the sum total of all the activities would tend to

diminish interest in areas such as outside recreation and entertainment which could seriously affect sect members' commitment to the temple and the sect in general.

In contrast to English classes arranged to improve the employment prospects of one set of youngsters within the Mandal, the sect organisers have been deeply concerned about teaching Gujarati to those boys and girls who learn English from early years of their nursery and primary education. In general, they tend to use English as their dominant medium of communication even when they are outside school. At the level of local social structure, increasing currency of English is a desirable development, whereas, in contrast, at the level of sectarian organisation, diminishing use of Gujarati as a medium of communication, and especially as a means to comprehend complex ideas of moksha, presents the Mandal organisers a problem concerning the relationship between the language and ideology. It is this relationship between the ideology and language and the crucial issue of transmission of ideology to the very young that arouses deepest concern for the sect members of some seniority. At present, in the absence of suitable sectarian literature in English,[28] Gujarati as a medium of communication is by far the most important carrier of ideology of moksha. In other words, in order to socialise the young boys and girls into accepting moksha as a central normative pattern, it is crucial for the leader to convey the message of moksha to all, and especially to young ones to preserve Mandal's heritage. As younger members become less and less articulate in the use of Gujarati language, at least potentially, if not in actual practice, they may come to accept moksha with limited and restricted degrees of understanding.

During my visit to Bolton, after an evening prayer, I was talking to a nine year old girl about the temple and what it was that appealed to her most about the Mandal. Our conversation which began in Gujarati was rather bitty as the girl could barely articulate herself in the vernacular. Once we began talking in English, her expression became flowing, articulate and specific. In talking about the shrine, she referred to 'our god' and pointing to the prasad offering, spoke of 'his dinner'. Subsequently she began to show me some colour photographs taken during Muktajivandasji's visit to Bolton. As her perception began to seem different to me, I wondered what it was that she thought about the sect leader's identity. Showing her a photograph of Muktajivandasji, I asked her who he was. Without any hesitation whatever, she replied, 'He is our Jesus Christ' - an observation which illuminates the impact of British society and culture on the development of consciousness of Asians entirely educated and socialised in the United Kingdom.[29] The degree to which the British institutional processes influence their commitment to the Mandal would depend upon their willingness to accept alternative ideologies and values, a topic which is explored further in the concuding chapter. As far as the Mandal leaders are concerned, they recognise the necessity of maintaining the crucial link between ideology and its linguistic expression in Gujarati and the need to socialise the younger members into appropriate norms of moksha.

In order to achieve this objective, the Mandal has arranged Gujarati classes for the children. The classes are held once a week on Saturday morning. In order to combine sectarian ideology with language teaching, the Mandal teacher uses a scriptural text such as Shree Abji Bapa Shreeni Vato or Shashtipurti. The degree of success

the Mandal can achieve in imparting a reasonable knowledge of Gujarati
is constrained by a number of important factors. First of all, those
who offer to teach the language are unfamiliar with teaching which can
be applied with some effectiveness. Asking young boys and girls to
read a passage and to copy words and sentences can develop linguistic
skills in a limited way. As many children appear to possess only a
rudimentary knowledge of Gujarati, the choice of teaching material
unrelated to the language ability of children can make teaching less
successful. Passages from texts such as Shashtipurti or Abji Bapa
Shreeni Vato use words and concepts which are less familiar in day to
day use of the language. And at least for these youngsters, with their
limited use of Gujarati as a means of communication, exposure to more
complex language from the scriptural sources for learning Gujarati may
prove to be unproductive.

On the basis of available evidence, unless the Mandal had a well-
worked out plan to retain the use of language, a relatively reasonable
degree of fluency in spoken and written Gujarati would be maintained
only by adult sect members with social experience of life in India and
East Africa. Both the fluency and articulation decrease for those who
have lived in Britain either from early years of their childhood or
from their infancy. Once the diminishing use of Gujarati is superseded
by an increasing currency of English, loss of the vernacular that
carries all the intricacies of sectarian ideology would have implications
for the Mandal as a Swaminarayan sect. As for the future of sectarian
organisation and activities, though it is difficult to predict any
precise course of development, it is doubtless that the context of
social life in Britain will continue to influence both the ideology of
moksha as well as its organisational importance for the Mandal.

6. A BRIEF SUMMARY

The opposition between moksha and mān is a dialectical expression
of the Mandal's sectarian ideology. Related to the sectarian organisation,
the polarity between moksha and mān defines and legitimates sectarian
authority. As a manifestation of Swaminarayan in human form, the sect
leader Muktajivandasji is the highest holder of this authority. A
horizontal extension of this authority occurs as each congregation in
India, East Africa and Britain implements moksha based Mandal directives.
A vertical delegation of this authority occurs through Motabhai as a
coordinator and director of sectarian activities in India, East Africa
and Britain and also through the President, Secretary, Treasurer and
other officials of the Mandal in London and Bolton. The relationship
between the opposites of moksha and mān and the sectarian authority is
concretely expressed in social corollaries of conformity and compliant
obedience on the one hand and patterns of defiance on the other. At
the practical level of sectarian social relations, the opposed
ideological poles of moksha and mān are directly related to the
organisational expression of authority in a dynamic interplay between
compliance and defiance. If the sect members approach moksha with an
appropriate state of self-surrender, they have the promise of an
instantaneous salvation inducing spiritual bliss as a part of their
living experience. But the need for an unfettered moksha commitment
and devotion to the sect are countered by a temporal human condition -
self-assertion and its expression as mān in social relations within the
sect. Opposed to moksha, assertive properties of mān generate tension
and stress as those possessing mān endeavour to focus on their personal
interests conflicting with the sectarian objectives. Pervasive quality
of mān and its capacity to threaten both one's own state of salvation

as well as one's sectarian social relations dependent on an institutional acceptance of moksha and rejection of man gives the Mandal much of its own dynamism as an organisation. For the Mandal members, apart from conformity to temple rituals, the social test of acceptance of moksha occurs when special occasions demand a performance of seva, service in the sense of making khedo tithe contribution as a critical expression of one's devotion and commitment to the sect. And it is in relation to this seva performance that the opposites of moksha and man find their acute manifestation in the Mandal. The duality of moksha and man socially defined as compliance and defiance and a pattern of dialectical interplay between the two is central to the Mandal as a sectarian social organisation.

The ideology of moksha and its manifestation through the present sect leader as a living embodiment of Swaminarayan is a distinctive feature of the Mandal within the Swaminarayan movement. The movement as a whole embraces socially diverse elements amongst Gujaratis in India and abroad. The primary sect based on the administrative division between Ahmedabad and Vadtal and the schismatic Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal have both evolved a special relationship to the caste of Leva Kanbi Patels. The sectarian segmentation and the rise of the Mandal as a Swaminarayan sect separate from and often opposed to the primary Swaminarayan sect has generated a cleavage among the Leva Kanbi Patels. The effect of this sectarian schism in the caste of Leva Kanbi Patels is known to the Mandal members as a cleavage between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha and contrasting and often conflicting loyalties of members of a caste group to two separate Swaminarayan sectarian organisations. To put it differently, separate Swaminarayan sects cut across the caste

and often impinge upon the structure of social relations assumed to be primarily cohesive and enduring. The following chapter focusses on the social significance of this cleavage between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha in Britain and the relevance of this potentially divisive feature for the Leva Kanbi Patels who distinguish themselves as the Mandal members apart from the non-Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels.

NOTES - Chapter 6.

1. Sadguru Shree Ishwercharandasji Swami, Shree Abji Bapashreeni Vato, 1955, Ahmedabad (Maninagar), Swaminarayan Mandir, pp.24-25.

2. Ibid., p.25.

3. At one level, moksha and sectarian authority along with implied conformity and compliance appear to be synonymous in practice. However, the difference between the two is important in that the exercise of authority can be such as to be contrary to moksha ideology. The Mandal members often point to such abuses of authority in relation to the Moto Paksha in the context of primary Swaminarayan sect.

4. When social, political or cultural differences evolve between the parent body and its overseas extension, separation between the two is a most likely outcome. For instance, among the Daudi Bohras of Kampala, in late 1970s, the sect members began to resist ownership of sectarian property of their leader Dai based in India and his demand for a regular share of income from the contribution accumulated locally.

5. Exclusion of the untouchables from the primary Swaminarayan sect is documented in J.N. Bhattacharya's study, Hindu Castes and Sects: An Exposition of the Origin of the Hindu Caste system and the Bearing of the Sects towards each other and towards Religious Systems, 1896 (1973 reprint), pp.373-377. In a more contemporary study, J. Duncan Derrett cites an instance of the case of Yagnapurushadasji known as the Satsang case in which the Swaminarayan sect (the particular Swaminarayan sect is not identified) disputed the application of Temple Entry Legislation to the sect, arguing that the Satsangis, the members of the sect were not Hindus. Though the court did not accept the validity of this argument, what is remarkable is that the sect was prepared to assert formally its detachment from the Hindus to practice a particular form of exclusion. See J. Duncan, M. Derrett, Religion Law and State in India, London 1968, Faber and Faber, pp.46-51, focussed on this discussion and p.470 for a specific reference to this case. As for the Mandal in Britain, coterminous character of nat and sampradaya excludes both the Hindus and others from becoming fully participating members of the sect.

6. Though the sectarian differences divide Leva Kanbi Patels between two separate pakshas, not all Kanbi Patels necessarily belong to one or the other Swaminarayan sects. There are many Leva Kanbi Patels who belong to other religious sects, and some according to the understanding of the Mandal members, perhaps a minority, have a relatively weakly defined religious affiliation.

7. Even though the Mandal leaders focus on paksha divisions as a basis for mutual exclusion between those who belong to the Mandal and those who do not, in practice the degree of exclusion often tends to be minimum, and in some specific instances, the members

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may not necessarily see the separation between sects in terms of any incompatibility. During my stay in Hendon, Acharya Tejendraparasadji who is the spiritual and the administrative leader of the Admedabad sector of the primary Swaminarayan sect, visited his devotees in London. In an instance, where he was invited to the house of a Leva Kanbi Patel loyal to the Moto Paksha, several persons from the Mandal were present to show their reverence to him. The fact that initially they were members of the primary Swaminarayan sect - and therefore in Moto Paksha - may explain this partly. But from the field observations, it was obvious that their devotional fervour for the Mandal leader was not any less intense.

8. Sarth Gujarati Jodni Kosh, 1967, Ahmedabad, Gujarat Vidhyapith, p.513.

9. Pandurang Vaman Kane, History of Dharmasastra, Volume 2, Part 2, Second Edition, 1974 Poona, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, p. 841.

10. Ibid., p.837.

11. Ibid., see Chapter 25, pp.837-888 for a discussion on dāna.

12. Klass W. Van Der Veen, I Give thee My Daughter : A Study of Marriage and Hierarchy among the Anavil Brahmans of Gujarat, 1972 Assen, Van Gorcum & Co., N.V.

13. Melford E. Spiro, Buddhism and Society : Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes, 1971 London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., see Chapter 4 Kammatic Buddhism : II. The Central Concept of Merit, pp.92-113.

14. Ibid., p.103.

15. Ibid., p.107.

16. Sir Monier M. Williams, 'Sanskrit Text of the Sikshapatri of the Swaminarayan Sect; Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1882a, New Series, Volume XIV, pp.289-316, and 'Translation of the Foregoing Sikshapatri, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1882b, New Series, Volume XIV, pp.750-772. See p.765 for the specific reference.

17. Ibid., p.765.

18. Sadguru Shree Ishwercharandasji Swami, op.cit., p.54.

19. The Mandal elites interpret Krishna as not referring to Krishna in Mahabharata and regarded as a god of devotional adoration in India, but as a category primarily expressing the essence of Swaminarayan. According to this interpretation the sect members can regard Swaminarayan as the supreme divine manifestation.

20. Sir Monier M. Williams, 1882b, op.cit., p.766.

21. Adrian C. Mayer, Public Service and Individual Merit in a Town of Central India, in Adrian C. Mayer's Culture and Morality, Delhi, Oxford University Press (in Press).

22. Ibid., p.5.

23. The sect leader also asked questions concerning attendance at the temple, wearing tilak mark in public, teaching children Gujarati so that they comprehend and accept the ideology of salvation and asking younger Mandal members not to grow long hair or sideburns. On each of these issues, as the questions were read, Motabhai stimulated discussion by further probing. How far did the members comply with these precepts was the central theme of his concern. His own exhortations combined with reprimands for specific members for their deviations were essentially intended to reinforce and strengthen Mandal practices directed towards the moksha state.

24. It was at this point that Mandal's collective attention was drawn to those who had as yet made no contributions. After the last unemployed Hindu subscribed £5.00, I was the only person who had made no contribution. The sense of intense discomfort that I experienced as an odd man out brought home to me the effect of non-verbal social pressure the Mandal members ought to experience during the proceeding of a khedo meeting. It seemed to me that unspoken sanction of other members merely noticing that you were not making a contribution was sufficient to compel most members to subscribe a sum commensurate with their social status in the sect.

25. Indebtness as an aspect of social relations in rural areas in Gujarat is insufficiently appreciated as a contributory factor in stimulating migration. The fieldwork experiences in East Africa and Britain and scores of conversations related to overseas movement and settlement suggest that rural indebtness and social stigma attached to being in debt as a disgrace for the family name have been important dimensions in Gujarati overseas migration.

26. An assembly such as this is an informal phenomenon and rarely constitutes a single gathering explicitly defined to settle disputes between members. In practice, a series of meetings take place involving informal discussions which bring about understanding and/or conciliation.

27. The English teachers, in particular a teacher trained to teach English as a foreign language, had responded to the Mandal request for assistance with understanding and sympathy. She set aside some of her leisure time to assist the Mandal with the purchase of relevant books to set up a small library. Unfortunately, the Mandal was not successful in attracting qualified teachers to teach the Mandal classes in the evenings. Those who taught voluntarily usually left after a short spell. As a result, in

27 Cont/...

the absence of regularity and consistency of teaching, students received inadequate instruction. Some Mandal members who attempted to teach had no teaching experience and their efforts often tended to be unproductive.

28. The only text sect members have available in English is Shikshapatri. As for producing texts in English, familiar problems of translation from one linguistic cultural context to another arises. In his 'Preservation of Religious Life: Hindu Immigrants in Britain', Contributions to Indian Sociology, (NS) Volume 10, No.2 (1976) pp.341-365, David Pocock discusses difficulties which members of Shree Akshar Purshottam Sanstha face in translating their Gujarati texts into English. Even if the problem of maintaining original meaning of ideological categories in English can be overcome, use of English as an institutional medium of communication can remove the sect from having a viable and meaningful link with the culture in the Indian subcontinent. What repurcussions this may have for the relationship between the British-based sect and its headquarters in India is an important issue in the development of sects based in Britain.

29. In his chapter on religious attitudes among the young Asians in Newcastle, J.H. Taylor also notes that his informants who are largely brought up in Britain, have highly nebulous conception of their religious belief and its practices. In response to a question about Diwali festival, his Hindu respondent Ram says, "Yes. Diwali. Well, it's practically the same as yours, but I don't really know the theme behind it. And other things like that. You know our Christmas. It's just after Diwali, I think". For a brief comment on the ambiguity in this statement, see J.H. Taylor, The Half-Way Generation, 1976 Windsor, The NFER Publishing Company Ltd., p.79 et seq.

CHAPTER 7

SECT AND SCHISM : SECTARIAN CLEAVAGE IN A CASTE COMMUNITY.

It is important to examine the development of the Moto Paksha and

Nano-Paksha in Britain in relation to the concept of community.  At

a more popular level, for instance in the mass media, Asians and

West Indians are often thought to form "communities" whereever they

live.  It is obvious that this popular use of the word is misleading

and deceptive as these populations are made of a number of different

groups. As specific groups in each population exhibit certain

corporate characteristics, it is useful to apply the concept of

community to the pattern of their settlement in Britain. As I show

below, available studies of Indians and Pakistanis do refer to the

usefulness of this approach.  However, there are certain limitations

in this perspective which should be noted so that cohesion and

solidarity traditionally attributed to community is not unduly reified.

The history of the Mandal presented in Chapter 4 shows that the notion

of community among the Leva Kanbi Patels would have to be used with

some qualifications.  In other words, one would have to take into

account that conflict and divisiveness do occur even in the context

of what is regarded as a traditional community. The emergence of Moto

Paksha and Nano Paksha in Britain, as it is described and analysed in

this chapter, focuses on conflict and division rooted in the history

of the Mandal as a separate Swaminarayan sect. At one level, the

opposition between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha shows that the attributes

of Indian social and cultural life do have significance for the South

Asians in Britain.  On the other hand, it is also evident there is an

extent to which the British influences penetrate expression of these

attributes in new circumstances though the actors themselves may not be fully aware of this process. The case study given below, which describes the significance of the paksha cleavage, concentrates on its India-based dimension as well as its British aspect in so far as it articulates aspirations and tensions which arise from the settlement in Hendon and Bolton. The focus on these twin aspects is important as it indicates the kind of change that is likely to occur both among the Mandal members as well as non-Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels.

As for the use of community, a set of related assumptions appear to distinguish the concept as it is applied to the subcontinental population resident in Britain. These assumptions usually focus on caste, kinship and affinity in a defined territory in India and their contemporary significance for the settlers in Britain. According to this paradigm, social relationships imply kinship defined by agnatic descent and affinity. These basic social ties are set within a teritorial locus - usually a community such as a village or a cluster of villages within an area in which the pattern of marriages and kinship develops. Anthropologists have comprehensively studied these themes in the study of villages in India. When anthropologists study the settlement of Indian and Pakistani groups in Britain, they often argue that Indians and Pakistanis not only reproduce these territorially-based relations in Britain, but also use them to consolidate their settlement. An organisation such as the Mandal shows the significance of this theme. The social feature which is emphasised in this consolidation is the close multiplex nature of these ties and a high degree of social solidarity reinforced by cultural values. The process of successful migratory settlement demands that the migrants maintain close ties and reciprocal obligations as a necessity to settle in Britain.

Studies of South Asians in Britain underline the importance of
village kin group associated with the conception of a community. In
an earlier account of India migrants in Britain, Rashmi Desai defines
the primary social unit among the Gujaratis as a village kinship
group - which forms the basis of Gujarati social organisation.[1] Even
though Desai does not assume any total solidarity among the Gujaratis,
village kinship ties remain crucially important during settlement.
The overall cohesiveness of these social relations provide the migrant
settlers a social support they can depend upon for reducing stress
which post migration adaptation may entail. With reference to Pakistani
migrants and their relationship to persons who sponsor them, E.J.B.
Rose similarly emphasises multiplex social relations. As he says,
"In short, reciprocal obligations, consensus in decision making and
cohesion when threatened from outside characterise their social and
economic relations in Britain as they do in Pakistan". This, however,
takes place within a clearly defined patrilineage group known as
baradari[2] or brotherhood.[3] Similarly, in her study of Pakistani
migrants and refugees in Bristol, Patricia Jeffrey emphasises the
importance of biraderi in that it provides a basis for social control
amongst those who are cognatically related.[4] She also emphasises the
mutual help aspect of biraderi within which socially supportive
relationship evolves. In his study of the Punjabi community, De Witt
John refers to how, through village and kinship ties, earlier migrants
were absorbed "into a tightly knit Punjabi community".[5] However,
John's analysis also takes into account the significance of the
struggles for personal power as a dimension of social life of Punjabis
and their participation in the Indian Workers' Associations. Michael
Lyon makes similar assumptions about solidarity and unity amongst

Gujaratis in regard to their homogeneity and corporate resilience.[6]
The fact that cohesiveness and solidarity defined by kinship,
affinity and common culture are crucial to an understanding of choices
Indians and Pakistani migrants make is obvious from the available
studies of South Asians in Britain.

From an overview of these and similar accounts of South Asians
in Britain, it is obvious that caste, kinship and affinity play an
important part in determining one aspect of their social life. There-
fore an account of premigration social and cultural life is an
essential element in gaining an understanding of their group formation
and organisation. However, it must be emphasised that this is only
one side of the coin. To explain the pattern of South Asian social
life in terms of home culture only could give an incomplete picture
of their current situation in Britain. There are two issues which
ought to be brought into focus in examining the culture of South
Asian minorities in Britain. One of these is the conflict which
cuts across some of these groups. The conflict may develop from
diverse sources including some of the contrasting social conditions
prevailing in Britain. If it is found to cut across social relation-
ships of kinship and affinity, then its significance should be assessed
carefully. The second issue concerns the meaning of traditional
cultural categories. For most South Asians the Indian subcontinent
is the origin of much of their cultural values and behaviour. There-
fore it is obvious that these categories carry the meaning which
derives from the context of life in India or from East Africa. It
is useful to point out that these meanings are not fixed and permanent
although the settlers themselves may believe this to be the case.
Being away from home in a predominantly industrial society in Britain

entails adaptation to new situations and surroundings. As soon as
the process of adaptation commences, novelty of circumstances
requires modification or reinterpretation of certain traditional
cultural categories. The use of <u>varna</u> to describe race relations
in Gujarati, as explained in Chapter 3, shows one instance in which a
traditional category is applied to identify and describe a new situation.

Briefly, besides the enduring dimensions of caste, kinship and
affinity, the conflict, cleavage and opposition at various levels and
the possibilities of changes in the meaning of traditional culture,
however minute these may be, constitutes a productive area of
discussion of social change among the South Asians.  If significance
is attached to these two components, then to assume any fuller
autonomy of caste and kin-based organisations among the Indians and
Pakistanis and to overemphasise their significance can be a misleading
reification if it centers on unity and cohesiveness of a particular
group.  It is useful to elaborate this argument by taking two
concrete examples of Sikhs and Rastafarians in Britain. These examples
illuminate the thesis that cultural behaviour in a new social milieu
could acquire a symbolic significance closely related to the immediate
surround of the society.

In the Sikh communities in Britain, it is often said that an
individual member may break away from the group and then return to
the fold. The phase of estrangement from the culture and community
often culminates into abandonment of visible symbols of identity,
namely long hair, turban and beard.  If the individual hopes to
achieve any meaningful incorporation in the category British, it is
well-known that shedding away traditional identity does not carry one
too far.  If the individual becomes aware of lack of affiliation and

full acceptance among the British, one possible response is to refashion the traditional identity. In other words, the person concerned grows his beard and hair and wears the turban to reclaim his place as a proper Sikh in the community as opposed to the one who has either modified his self-image or lost it entirely. Although it is a part of tradition of a Sikh to wear a turban and beard, and to maintain all the prescribed symbols, the significance of these symbols in Britain is not interchangeable with the traditional meaning in Punjab. In Britain, peculiarities of the local conditions add a dynamic element to the cultural symbols which are treasured as a mark of dignity and self-respect vis-a-vis the British. Therefore although being a Sikh in Britain is similar to being one in Punjab, differences in ideological and structural position of the Sikhs in Britain give their cultural heritage a special distinctiveness. The concern with distinctiveness is often expressed in campaigns such as the ones concerned with resistance to prohibition on wearing turbans. David Beetham provides a stimulating and a systematic account of campaigns Sikhs waged in Manchester and Wolverhampton in the 1960s and succeeded in winning their right to wear turban and beard as drivers and bus conductors.[7] More recently the Sikhs have also won their right to wear a turban instead of a crash helmet when riding a motorcycle.

Amongst the settlers from the Caribbean, a somewhat similar argument can be applied to Rastafarians who constitute a distinct sub-category among the West Indians. On the one hand they share continuities with the source of Rastafarianism in Jamaica. On this basis, to argue that the movement in Britain is best explained as an extension of its basis in Jamaica can be only partially accurate an

argument. The meaning West Indians attach to Rastafarianism in their

responses to the British conditions would appear to be a crucial

aspect for attaining its better understanding.[8] Similar examples of

distinctive cultural behaviour can also be found among the Muslims

from Pakistan. Such examples clearly suggest that it is the interplay

between home-based cultural background and the British influences

which the South Asians and West Indians are subject to that can provide

a stimulating focus for sociological and anthropological inquiry.

According to the argument outlined above, to describe and

analyse the rise of paksha cleavage among the Leva Kanbi Patels in

Britain, besides the significance of Indian background and British

conditions, it is also important to keep in focus the theme of

conflict and change as it occurs at the level of meaning of cultural

categories. The home-based definitions of paksha were fully developed

in the account of the genesis of the Mandal in Chapter 4. The case

study in this account explores continuities in the formation of

paksha in Britain and possibilities of evolution of new meaning in

the consciousness of the actors involved in both sides of the paksha

boundary.[9]

The historical account of the Swaminarayan sect in Chapter 4

focused on the struggle for power and property that ensued between

components of leadership in the Ahmedabad-based primary Swaminarayan

sect, namely between its administrative head acharya and dissident

renouncers who disputed the former's claim to private ownership of

sect's property. The most important consequence of this struggle was

the genesis and establishment of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan

Mandal in opposition to Ahmedabad-based Swaminarayan sect. Since the

development of the Mandal, Moto and Nano Paksha demarcation is the

basis of social distinctions between the two sides. It is, according

to these distinctions, that members of the Mandal see themselves as

the followers of Muktajivandasji who are apart from those members of

their nāt affiliated to the primary Swaminarayan sect. The following

case study shows that members of the Moto Paksha opposed the Mandal,

the Nano Paksha according to the sect members. The events of the

case are described fully to show the significance they have for sect

members' commitment to the Mandal and its effect on those multiplex

ties of kinship and affinity cutting across affiliation to separate

sects. The concluding analysis focuses on the changing meaning of

paksha divisiveness in Britain as it expresses the concerns Leva

Kanbi Patels and members :of the Mandal have in Britain.

Even though the traditional opposition between pakshas has

remained a clearly defined social feature among the Leva Kanbi Patels

in India and East Africa, during their settlement in Britain the

opposition had remained latent and unexpressed until the autumn of

1970. However, this latent opposition became manifest when the

Mandal decided to invite its leader Swami Muktajivandasji to visit

Hendon and Bolton congregations. During his two months stay in

Britain,[10] apart from spending much of his time in the London area,.

the spiritual leader also visited Loughborough, Bolton, Oldham,

Bradford and Brighton.[11] As his international journey included a

party of 49 including 25 renouncer disciples, to meet all the expenses,

members of the sect in Britain and East Africa made generous khedo

contributions along the line discussed in Chapter 5. However, as

soon as the plans for his visit to Britain were conceived, this

information was available to non-Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels related by

kinship and affinity to the Mandal members. And once the members of

Moto Paksha became aware of the Mandal decision, they planned to

oppose Muktajivandasji's visit to Britain. There is no doubt that

at the outset the Moto Paksha opposition appears to have been an

extension of the sect-based cleavage from India and East Africa to

Britain. However, the planning and execution of the protest against

the Mandal reveals the degree to which some British influences also

impinge on the expression of paksha as I hope to show in the analysis

to follow. The case study highlights this dimension as well as the

traditional significance of the cleavage. Manifestation of the

cleavage and opposition between the two sides is best described in

phases which are divided between the commencement, confrontation and

counteraction to outline the succession of events. The concluding

section of the chapter focuses on the sociological analysis of the

cleavage.


1.    PHASE 1 : THE COMMENCEMENT

As the arrival of Muktajivandasji in Britain became imminent,

the Leva Kanbi Patel opponents of the Mandal began to coordinate

their efforts to organise a protest against the Mandal and its leader.

First of all, the adversaries formed themselves into what they called

the Cutch Brotherhood Society. Although most of the opponents came

from the nāt of Leva Kanbi Patels, their Society did not form a group

in the usual sociological sense. A leading and fiercely articulate man,

to be known by his psuedonym Kanji in this account, with a number of

his supporters,constituted what the Mandal members identified as the

Moto Paksha opposition to the sect. In other words, a leader had

mobilised informal support for a specific occasion. Notwithstanding

the label 'Society', the situation was the one in which the opponents
did not form a group with a definable corporate character. In
examining a collection of people who do not form an enduring group,
social anthropologists use the concept of network to describe and
analyse their specific activities and circumstances. As Adrian Mayer
has explained in his exposition on the topic, the network could be
bounded or it could constitute a finite set of linkages initiated
by the ego.[12] Whenever an ego builds up interaction linkages around
himself for a specific purpose, one can talk about what Adrian Mayer
identifies as "...people involved in a series of purposive action-
sets in specific contexts".[13] Accordingly, action-sets appear and
disappear after an aim has been achieved in particular circumstances.
As Cutch Brotherhood Society came into existence around the leader-
ship of a single individual, with the sole aim of mounting opposition
to the Mandal Leader, it is best characterised as an action-set. In
recruiting support for an action-set, the leader utilises the links
he has to a finite set of individuals. These linkages depend on a
number of social fields such as kinship, political party or a religious
sect.[14] Though structural features such as kinship may provide a
basis for the formation of an action-set, as Adrian Mayer emphasises,
it is not a permanent entity.[15] Therefore it is not reducible to the
character of a group as its existence primarily concerns fulfilment
of a specific short-term goal. As a relatively transient social
phenomenon, it is ego-centered in that it is the leader who defines
the course of action to be pursued in relation to the goal. As soon
as the goal has been achieved, action-set dissolves unless of course
the leader and his temporarily recruited followers decide to transform

it into an enduring association. It is in this sense that Cutch

Brotherhood Society is identified as an action-set which its

recruitment limited to the members of Leva Kanbi Patel nāt. In

contrast, members of the Mandal did not form an action-set distinct

from the corporate organisation of the sect. As the following account

shows, they responded to the Cutch Brotherhood Society as members of

the Mandal. Though some of the opponents belonged to the primary

Swaminarayan sect, there was no evidence to suggest that they had

any formalised backing from the primary sect in their opposition to

the Mandal.

The nature of divisiveness between Cutch Brotherhood Society

and the Mandal imposed certain practical limitations on the research

process. When I commenced fieldwork in London, the feeling of opposition

between the two sides was intense. I had already committed myself to

living with the Mandal members when I began to understand the nature

of this opposition. This essentially meant that I could look at the

conflict from the perspective of the Mandal members as it was they

who provided me with the initial information. This proved to be a

sensible decision. Had I established simultaneous contact with the

opponents of the sect, I would have probably alienated the Mandal

members.[16.] However, this meant that during the actual evolution of

the paksha-based animosity, I had no contact with Kanji or his

supporters so as to find out in detail the composition of Kanji's

action-set and the basis on which he recruited support among the Leva

Kanbi Patels outside the sect. Later, when the events leading to the

opposition between the two sides culminated in an Old Bailey case, I

attended the trial which provided specific details of the case as well

as the views held by opponents of the Mandal. It was only towards the end of the fieldwork period that it became possible for me to interview Kanji. This provided much of the non-Mandal focus to the case. Despite this additional information, it ought to be said that the case material used for showing the rise of paksha cleavage in Britain would have been richer had it been possible to have contact with Kanji and his supporters from the point when they were coordinating their opposition to the Mandal.

Kanji assembled the members of his action-set to plan their opposition to the Mandal immediately after the formation of the Cutch Brotherhood Society. The meeting that he organised occured in a Church Hall in West Hendon, not far from where the Mandal members live. When some Mandal members learned about this meeting through informal channels of communication among the Leva Kanbi Patels, they attempted to monitor the gathering by what was described as 'spying'. Before the meeting Kanji and his supporters had sent a petition to the Indian High Commissioner in London, expressing their strong opposition to Muktajivandasji's visit to London, arguing that his presence in Britain would convey an unfavourable image of the Indians resident here. It is likely that the petition raised other issues which were not publicised outside the circle of Kanji's immediate supporters. Apparently the High Commission official responded by saying that neither they nor the Government of India could restrain overseas movement of an Indian citizen. Though Kanji and his supporters met to consider this reply, they did not discuss any proposals for further action. However, this apparent indecision did not mean that they were inactive; indeed, they had decided to express their opposition to Muktajivandasji with results that will be soon described.

## 2.   PHASE II : THE CONFRONTATION

Even though the Mandal members were aware of the opposition
building up, they expected no major confrontation with the Moto Paksha
opponents. As they had arranged, Muktajivandasji and his entourage
arrived in London in early October in 1970. For the sect members,
their leader's visit to Britain was an occasion of great joy and
they had put in considerable effort to make it possible. An event
they had planned in advance was a precession which would carry
Muktajivandasji to Trafalgar Square from Hyde Park through Central
London.[17] It was thought most appropriate to have an elephant for
this special occasion. However, it was found that the City authorities
were less than enthusiastic about a procession involving an elephant
ride as it could become a public hazard. Finally, the sect organisers
opted for a motor vehicle which was to be decorated as a float in the
shape of a boat. On the appointed day, which was the 17th October
1970, all the Mandal members, their wives and children, both from
Bolton and London, assembled at Hyde Park Corner in the early after-
noon. In their saffron robes and turbans, the sect renouncers
accompanying Muktajivandasji arrived in a coach and formed one column
of the procession. As soon as Muktajivandasji arrived with the other
leaders, the members greeted them with a collective chorus of 'Swami
Shri Ni Jai', namely victory to Swamiji. Then Muktajivandasji was
invited to climb onto the boat-shaped float. First the sect leaders
garlanded him and performed an arti ritual before him in his honour.
The procession was to be led by a Scottish pipe-band, followed in
turn by all the male members of the congregation, the renouncers,
Muktajivandasji on a float, and the female members of the Mandal

walking behind it in accordance with a traditional pattern. From
Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park the procession moved into Park Lane,
Piccadilly, Haymarket and towards Trafalgar Swuare. On the way the
members repeatedly shouted 'Swami Shri ni Jai' and other sectarian
slogans in the honour of their leader. This mingled with the recorded
sound of the Mandal hymns played through amplifying equipment in a
motor car, drowning the singing voices of the female members at the
back of the float. Despite the touch of autumn chill in the air, the
procession was carried out with a sense of euphoric enthusiasm before
it terminated in a rally at Trafalgar Square. There the sect members
had constructed a platform where Muktajivandasji was seated with his
renouncers. The Square was not only packed with the Mandal members
but also with onlookers and tourists. First a man from Juktajivandasji's
party gave a brief introduction to the Swaminarayan sect (which was
essentially an introduction to the Mandal) and then to Muktajivandasji
who eventually read out a prepared speech in English emphasising the
spiritual values of Swaminarayan sect as a contrast to Western
materialism. After his speech, young renouncer members performed
several Gujarati - ras - folk dances for entertainment. Towards the
end the sect leader was generously photographed. When Muktajivandasji
was about to leave the stage, an egg was thrown from behind and landed
a few feet from where the sect leader was standing. As the event had
nearly ended, the audience had already begun dispersing and therefore
the missile thrown at Muktajivandasji distracted attention only
momentarily. The party hurriedly moved to a waiting coach which soon
sped away from the scene. The Mandal members were sure that the egg
had been thrown by one of Kanji's group but there was no further trouble
and the Mandal leaders preoccupied themselves with organising their sect
leader's visits to Loughborough, Bolton and Oldham.

A development within the Mandal which the sect members often contrast with other Swaminarayan sects is the way Muktajivandasji has attempted to modernise some practices - in contrast to more traditional adherance of the Ahmedabad and Vadtal based primary Swaminarayan sect. The kind of active and progressive part which the renouncers play in the sectarian affairs is regarded as a distinctively modern element along with the Gujarati folk dances, such as ras, and the plays and tunes from Indian films which the renouncers use to compose devotional hymns to reinforce the message of moksha.[18] Though these modern forms have now become established, their introduction in a sect based on a traditional and puritanical movement was not free from the criticism of the traditionalists who saw new ways as adulteration of the sacred tradition. The Mandal party from India had made some substantial preparation to present modern didactic entertainment to the Mandal members as well as to other Indians interested in the sect. Apart from the entertainment programmes presented to predominantly Mandal and Hindu audiences, the Mandal renouncers from India also prepared a special play which involved some participation by the sect members living in London. The play entitled 'Sadguru Proudh Pratap' [19] was scheduled for staging in late November in Brent Town Hall in Wembley and the Mandal members were keenly looking forward to this occasion.

While the preparation for staging the play was under way, Kanji and his action-set were busy making plans to hold a demonstration against Muktajivandasji at the Brent Town Hall with the intention of disrupting the musical play. The action-set met in West Hendon to detail the plans for their demonstration and protest. Once again, what was remarkable was that the Mandal leaders received information about Kanji's

plans almost as soon as he and his action-set had met to discuss their strategies. The sect members hold that a well-wisher, suspected to be a Leva Kanbi Patel not unsympathetic to the Mandal, made an anonymous phone call to a leader in order to forewarn the latter about some mischief to be expected at Brent Town Hall. In the short time the sect leaders had, first of all, they tightened security arrangements at Brent Town Hall. Though the occasion was meant to be a public performance, and therefore open to all Indians, the Mandal organisers decided to guard the entrance with a band of sect volunteers who would carefully let in people to ensure that none of Kanji's supporters they knew would enter the hall.

On the appointed evening, I joined a Mandal family to see the play. At the hall there was a well-organised force of Mandal volunteers both outside as well as inside the hall. The hall was fully packed with the Mandal families and other Gujaratis who had responded well to the publicity the play and the sect leader had received. When Muktajivandasji entered the hall, a rousing cheer greeted him. Thereafter he occupied a seat on the right-hand side of the stage facing the audience. As soon as the evening commenced formally it was he who introduced the musical play, its story and characters. He primarily focussed on deviation from moksha norms, its ill effects and the realisation of salvation through an enlightened spiritual master, which at least implicitly meant the sect leader himself. As the play proceeded, he also impressed upon the audience the value of compliance as expressed in the most intimate relationships such as the one between father and son, an ideal model to illustrate the obedience of sect members to their spiritual masters for the highest attainment of moksha. Even though, as a commentator, the

sect leader was clearly apart from the play, the boundary between the events of the play and the sect leader often became blurred so that the reality and drama became a single entity. This occurred on all those instances where the characters became aware of the primacy of the moksha. They invariably walked up to Muktajivandasji and prostrated before him, thus uniting the play to the cultural and social reality of the sect leader's divine supremacy within the sect. At the end, with the projection of colour slides of Swaminarayan and Muktajivandasji as a concluding part of the play, the fusion between audio-visual and dramatic elements witn the actual presence of the sect leader on the stage was acutely highlighted. The Mandal members who responded to the play with ecstatic applause continued to watch it uninterrupted.

While the sect leader was immersed in his commentary on the play, from time to time inviting the audience participation in the form of compliant responses to his questions, from behind the hall, a young man in flared trousers and neck length hair (cultural attributes not shared by the younger adherents of the Mandal) walked upto the stage with a resolute and determined pace. He got onto the stage and addressed himself to Muktajivandasji. "I want to ask you some questions", he said. Before the sect leader could make any discernible response, the young man continued his questioning. "Why have you come here and why are you conducting these useless activities?" All I heard the sect leader say was, "I will give answer to your questions afterwards". Before any further dialogue could develop between the two, the Mandal volunteers standing nearby, pulled the young man down with some force. Then with the assistance of additional men led him to an exit and into a corridor outside the hall. It was doubtless that the volunteers thrashed the young man, for his loud screams filled the hall. Between

three to four hundred members of the audience, many of them members of the Mandal and some of them non-Mandal Gujarati spectators, and a number of invited guests, rose to their feet to see what was going on. I feared the audience would become disorderly, but from his seat on the stage, the leader urged everyone to sit down and asked the actors to continue their perfromance. The play diverted the audience's attention from the huffing and puffing that was going on outside the hall.

Kanji and his supporters had appeared in a well-organised fashion. With them they had brought banners and placards abusive to the sect leader. The banners and placards both in Gujarati and English, accused Muktajivandasji of collecting substantial cash from his followers and engaging in illegal monetary transactions and not doing much for economic development in Cutch. The accusations ranged from attribution of criminality and malice to allegations to the effect that young boys of Mandal parents were, in fact, forced into renunciation without any regard to their personal wishes or those of their parents. Some accusations related to conditions in India. A banner suggested that Harijans were forbidden from entering the temples of Swaminarayan sect. As I consulted the Mandal members after the event, some of them alleged that Kanji and his supporters had prepared themselves well implying that violence could not have been avoided altogether. It was also asserted that the opponents had armed themselves with bricks, bottles and eggs which were apparently found in an old perambulator at Brent Town Hall. To express the intensity of their displeasure, Kanji's supporters had slashed tyres of motor cars belonging to the Mandal members and thus caused them considerable damage. Further, at the end of the play, supporters of Kanji had also intended to boo Muktajivandasji.

Some of the opponents had in fact anticipated that the sect leader would be let out of the hall from the back entrance.

As the party came out they scuffled with several persons and hit a Mandal visitor from India on his head with a bottle. The police intervened again and assisted the sect leader and his party to a coach which then left for Hendon with adequate police support. Having been shocked by the hostility and misbehaviour of what they saw as Moto Paksha, the Mandal members expected more acts of antagonism from their adversaries. Prior to confrontation between the Moto Paksha and the Mandal at Brent Town Hall, it was planned that the entire congregation should assemble at Heathrow airport to bid farewell to the sect leader. This congregational farewell was changed to a more modest gathering of male members as it was rumoured that Kanji and the members of his action set were planning to hold another protest demonstration at the airport. This necessitated planning Muktajivandasji's departure to East Africa with caution. As expected, the opponents did not appear at the airport to confront Muktajivandasji.

3. PHASE III : THE COUNTERACTION

As emphasised before, the central Mandal theme is the belief among the sect members that Swaminarayan as the supreme being, manifests himself through his representative the anadi mukta, as embodied in the person of their sect leader Muktajivandasji. Therefore any overt expression of ill-behaviour towards him can constitute a source of deep feeling of anxiety at a personal level, especially for the more zealously devoted sect members. And if the spiritual master himself is threatened, it can also be tantamount to a threat to one's own spiritual well-being and a sense of personal security. At a social and

organisational level an act of opposition towards the sect is a challenge to the legitimacy of the Mandal as a sect. In view of the intense commitment of the sect members to their leader, this dramatic protest made by their adversaries deeply shocked and affected the sect members, particularly as their beloved leader had been debased and abused in public. It also brought home to them the reality of continuing hostility between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha in Britain.

In all probability, it was immediately after the Muktajivandasji's departure to East Africa that some form of counteraction against Kanji and his supporters was contemplated and planned. Though it can be inferred that counteraction was considered by the sect members as a serious proposition, it was almost impossible to collect any specific information about it at the time. What had actually happened in the execution of counteraction became clear from the court proceedings and conversations concerning the topic recorded during the fieldwork and thereafter.

Since Kanji had become the central figure in organising opposition to Muktajivandasji and to the Mandal in Britain, it was he who was defined as the main culprit by the sect members. Therefore some individual members decided that he should be penalised for the part he had played in bringing disgrace to the sect leader and the Mandal. During December 1970, a strike by the electricity workers in London had regularly blacked out parts of North London. It was one of the unlighted late evenings which was chosen to carry out punitive action against Kanji. It can be assumed from the events which followed that information concerning Kanji's whereabouts and his movements were available to persons in the Mandal.

According to the facts which came to light in the High Court
Case stemming from the Mandal counteraction, on the blacked out
evening of the day in question, some members from the sect had
arrived outside Kanji's house in two motor cars waiting for the
the latter to return home. When Kanji arrived home before midnight,
he did not step out of his car without some suspicion about the cars
parked near his home. As he was walking towards his house, one of the
cars started and moved towards him, nearly knocking him down. Before
he could make a dash for his front door, not without some bewilderment,
two masked men leapt at him, and dragged him up to the next car and
forced him onto the floor in the back seat. While he was being held
down in the dark, one of the men squirted some liquid on his face. As
Kanji himself subsequently said, he thought it was acid intended to
disfigure his face. However, in fact it turned out to be some harmless
substance used for domestic cleaning. When he was gagged and punched
in his stomach, Kanji put up some resistance to free himself from the
grip that was holding him down. Then his captors showed him a knife
(which Kanji alleged, not without a touch of humour, would be normally
used for killing men), and threatened to injure him if he caused any
trouble. After his captivity on the floor of the back seat for about
forty-five minutes, his attackers stopped and dragged him out.
Before leaving him by the roadside, Kanji alleged that his captors
stole his money, wristwatch and his keys. After his attackers had
driven away, with bruises and cuts on his face and a black eye, Kanji
crawled up to a nearby house and asked a startled occupier to call the
police. Soon after the police had interviewed Kanji, they found out-
side his house a wallet containing some personal documents which were
finally traced to two brothers in the Mandal.

In Hendon, after this incident and just at the beginning of my
fieldwork, there was a great deal of tension which I felt without
understanding its basis. As the sect members were so uncommunicative
I assumed there was a categorical rejection of my presence as an out-
side inquirer. As I found out in due course, Mandal members had
apprehension on two separate counts. First there was a widespread
fear of arrests of all those who were suspected of involvement in this
attack upon Kanji. Secondly, the members also expected retaliation
from the opposing side. Some men were apparently so frightened that
they left their homes at five in the morning to avoid arrest. Some
reported 'spies' around in Hendon, checking movements of sect members
as a possibility of an attack from the other side was an imminent
threat. These fears reduced the daily temple attendance to a few
members, though the expected retailiation did not take place. Finally,
the detectives who had loomed large in members' minds, arrested the two
brothers identified by the contents of the wallet. Kanji also
asserted that he had recognised one of them when they had assaulted
him. The arrests had a profoundly stunning effect on the congregation
and a resolution was made to obtain the earliest legal release of the
arrested brothers.

While the two accused were remanded in custody for several months,
the Mandal leaders tried unsuccessfully to obtain their release on bail.
Even though the arrest of these two men had a restraining effect on
the course of hostilities, the High Court case revealed that several
unsuccessful attempts were made to bring counter charges against Kanji.
However, finally, the accused brothers were brought before an Old Bailey
criminal court charged with causing grevious bodily harm to Kanji and
with having robbed him of his personal belongings.

The trial was sociologically interesting in that not only did it bring out the diametric opposition between the two sides but also defined it primarily in relation to pre-migration opposition between the two pakshas. As soon as he started his cross-examination, the defence counsel established that the genesis of the present conflict had roots in traditional polarity between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha. He explicitly referred Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha and translated these categories as 'majority' and 'minority', to focus on the cleavage. He asserted categorically that the 'minority' as represented by the Mandal, had always been persecuted by the majority, and then suggested that Kanji and his supporters' opposition to the Mandal was an extension of this premigration persecution. In developing this particular argument, he attempted to relate the case against the two Mandal brothers as a deliberate attempt on the part of Kanji to denigrate the Mandal and its spiritual leader.

Apart from bringing out the paksha cleavage as a crucial aspect of sectarian organisation, the course of the trial also highlighted the pivotal nature of the Mandal members' commitment to the efficacy of moksha in their daily life. In many conversations concerning the final outcome of the trial, the members maintained their absolute faith in the sect leader and also believed that his divine grace would influence the course of the trial in the final acquittal of the accused brothers. Indeed, for them, the trial itself was an affirmation of their faith and expression of their loyalty to the Mandal.

However, the evidence against the two men was overwhelmingly strong. At the end, the jury reached an unanimous verdict against the brothers. They were found guilty of causing grevious bodily harm to Kanji and sentenced to two years imprisonment. The leading Mandal members initially

resolved to appeal against the decision, but in the end did not do so.

Though tension declined after the trial, the sect leaders did not

consider the conflict had been resolved. Their postscript assessment

was marked by a distinct feeling that the cleavage had the potential

of regenerating the conflict.


4.   NANO PAKSHA AND MOTO PAKHA - THE CLEAVAGE AND COMMUNITY.

According to the Mandal  embers, what is manifest in the ill-will

Kanji and his supporters expl ssed towards the sect and its leader, is

the emergence of opposition l tween Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha in

Britain. As the court case i. ustrated, Kanji and his supporters were

categorically identified witl the Moto Paksha.  In explaining the

differences between the two  ides, the Mandal members see divisive

factional politics as an age old phenomenon among the Hindus.  In

conversational contexts, the  refer to Mahabharata, the epic focus on

political rivalries and stri e within a lineage as an instance of the

endemic pervasiveness of con lict.  In extending this view in a

philosophical vein, they see social division and conflict living through

history and finding manifest tion in ideological differences, where

like the contradictory and i icompatible relationship between moksha and

man, they are viewed in mutu lly exclusive categories of good and evil.

Referring to the Mahabharata, the members argue that as Krishna had

his enemies so had Sahjananda and his spiritual successors such as

Abji Bapa and presently Muktajivandasji.  Opposition is a feature of

the tradition. Even though the sect members also refer to harmony and

cohesion as a desirable objective for Leva Kanbi Patels and the Indian

population at large, they are also aware that the differences which

pakshas engender can divide the Leva Kanbi Patels into opposed camps.

And even though the divisiveness is inconsistent with harmony and
cohesiveness, it is an inevitable and an essential aspect of being
a Mandal member. In other words, the adherence to one's own paksha
conflicts with the wider ideology of unity. The problematic nature of
this conflict does not escape the sect members. They fully recognise
that factionalism and divisiveness mean disunity and that this under-
mines socially and politically desirable alignment and solidarity.
But for the Mandal members their paksha as expressed in the totality
of sectarian reality and organisation, is much more than a social and
political unit. Being related to the ideology of salvation as a
potentially manifest experience, paksha, its social and political
significance apart, becomes a sacred principle and something to be
maintained and defended whatever the cost. A personal sense of
commitment to moksha and its emotional and spiritual meaningfulness
becomes such an important factor that the unity of the Mandal over-
rides social and political unity of Leva Kanbi Patels. Hence any
potential or real threat to the paksha-based congregational collectivity
equals a threat to the member's own spiritual well-being.

At the outset, a discussion of paksha differences among the Leva
Kanbi Patels conveys the impression that the rise of paksha cleavage
in Britain is nothing more than the conflict non-Mandal and Mandal
Leva Kanbi Patels had known in Cutch and East Africa before they came
to Britain. Even though this apparent similarity between paksha before
and after the migration may seem to suggest continuity between home-
based culture and its reproduction abroad, a closer inquiry and analysis
not only reveal some fluidity in the use of paksha categories, but also
several changes in attitudes and ideas which accompany migration and

the process of settlement abroad, especially in a society with an
advanced and complex division of labour.

A closer acquaintance with all the parties to paksha dispute and
differences show that although the Mandal members and to a lesser
extent their opponents use the paksha categorisation, the category
expresses much else besides what it meant either in East Africa or
India. The significance this apparently traditional cleavage acquires
in Britain is not entirely reducible to the pattern of homeland culture.
It is this distinction focusing on cultural continuity and cultural
change in response to migratory settlement in Britain that provides
a sound basis for an understanding of change among the Leva Kanbi
Patels and others. It improves upon the rather simplistic proposition
that the migrants replicate and reproduce their traditional homeland
social life in Britain.

The fact that paksha in Britain and paksha in India or East Africa
are not simply identical categories is reflected in what is said about
the emergence of cleavage-based conflict. Although the Mandal members
related expression of conflict centered on Brent Town Hall to the
paksha cleavage, in more detailed explanation of specific events, some
of them said that the Mandal's opponents really did not belong to the
Moto Paksha ᴛ although their link to Moto Paksha was never fully
denied and always emphasised at the general level. Nevertheless, as
this partial denial of the link between Moto Paksha and the opponents
recurred as a theme, this somewhat inconsistent response needed further
probing and explanation. In discussing the history of paksha divisions,
it was obvious that the description of conflict between the two sides
in Cutch and East Africa had one specific element in common, that is

the discontinuities between them were always expressed through the
exclusive affiliation either to the Mandal or to the primary
Swaminarayan sect.  A marginal degree of inconsistency in applying
the paksha dichotomy to differences in Britain is gradually beginning
to reveal the significance of an alternative, and especially of a
secular perspective, which may acquire more importance among the non-
Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels and possibly among some of the younger members
of the Mandal.

As far as the Mandal opponents were concerned, it was notable that
their leader Kanji, whom the Mandal members had essentially seen and
defined in terms of paksha affiliation, not only denied any such
affiliation, but generally denounced religious and sectarian practices
as blindfolding the ignorant. Even though it cannot be assumed that
his more secular outlook was a result of his experiences in Britain,
there was no doubt that these experiences categorically influenced his
opposition to the Mandal. This was most clearly evident in the form
that the expression of his opposition took.  It was doubtless that the
British tradition of protest demonstration had influenced Kanji and
his supporters.  In addition to a possibility of such British-based
influences, it was also apparent that there was some disjunction between
the two sides in the way in which they evaluated their responses and
action.  It was obvious that Kanji and his supporters formulated their
opposition to the Mandal in secular rather than sectarian terms. The
fact that the Mandal members were at least partly prepared to deny the
paksha affiliation of Kanji and his supporters reveals that some of
them did see the difference between the two sides in non-sectarian
terms, although not totally and separately from the dominant influence
of sectarian ideology.  On the other hand, most Mandal members defined

the conflict with reference to the historical paksha cleavages. Though
in India or East Africa both the sides might have shared greater common
understanding about the nature of conflict and its mutually and
reciprocally understood causes, the understanding about the nature of
differences manifest in the United Kingdom is not sufficiently fully
shared any longer. It is in view of this evolving disjunction that
the two sides saw the Brent Town Hall conflict differently. The Mandal
members were largely unanimous in attributing the opposition they faced
to the historical paksha cleavage whereas Kanji and his supporters,
though no doubt aware of the sectarian cleavage, largely expressed
their opposition to the Mandal in secular terms. Further, an important
element of difference was revealed in the mode and manner of protest.
The fact that Kanji and his supporters used banners and placards with
a discernible secular flair, highlighted the nature of this difference.
In their responses, the Mandal members continued to use the paksha
categories to identify this difference, though some members clearly
set the opponents apart from the paksha divisions always regarded as
having religious and sectarian relevance. When the opponents were
viewed separately from the context of the cleavage, the Mandal members
invariably described them as atheists, nastika the non-believers. They
also used the expression such as adharmi irreligious, papi sinners,
kusangis, those not seeking the truth, a combination of qualities and
attributes regarded as being antithetical to the Mandal. In using
religious categories such as nastika, adharmi, papi and kusangi, the
Mandal members assert the validity of their own perspective against
that of their opponents. It is significant that though they see their
opponents in Britain partly outside the paksha context, they do not
conceptualise the nature of difference between themselves and their

opponents in terms of any secular attributes. All they affirm is that some opponents do not seem to fit their traditional categorisation of paksha.

In applying a more secular view point to the paksha cleavage, Kanji and his supporters are fairly categorical in their criticism of religion and in particular of the Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels who display what they regard as faith untempered by reason ('blind faith' as some of them would assert). Though Kanji himself would claim to have been critical of 'religion' (using the English word) before his arrival in Britain, his criticism of the Mandal and his opposition to it in Britain contain elements which appear to have greater significance for the circumstances Indians face as a minority population in Britain. Even though Kanji does not express his thoughts about settlement of Indians in Britain or their accommodation and adaptation according to the local conditions, his statements do articulate the differences he sees between himself and the Mandal, and at a more general level, the relevance of such differences for Indians as a whole.

During the course of the Old Bailey trial, Kanji highlighted this difference in the way in which he distinguished the Mandal members. First of all, in response to a question concerning the Mandal, he referred to the sect members as "ignorant peasants" implying that the members had not altered their customary allegiance to the sect. Secondly, he also asserted that he regarded the sectarian congregation and its associated activities as an embarrassment to the Indian community in Britain. In this significant observation, Kanji referred to an important dimension of social change, affecting Indians in general and Leva Kanbi Patels in particular, an aspect of change about which groups and individuals are likely to have divergent and deeply held views. In

using the expression "ignorant peasant" as a term of uncomplimentary

reference for the Mandal members, at least implicitly Kanji set apart

Leva Kanbi Patels into those free from custom and tradition from those

still bound to tradition, like the Mandal members. Even though Kanji

did not elaborate on the characteristics of more progressive Leva Kanbi

Patels, he singled out uncritical and faith determined commitment to

the Mandal as a symptom of ignorance and backwardness. In arguing that

any manifestation of traditional practices in Britain was an embarrassment

to the other Indians Kanji implicitly alluded to the kind of concern

some migrants express to achieve accommodation and adaptation in Britain,

a mode which often presupposes playing down Indian norms and practices

for a more progressive conformity to behaviour which is deemed to be

British and often, therefore, ipso facto modern and superior to anything

that is distinctly Indian in origin. In contrast to the Mandal members

who are constrained by the ideology of moksha requiring non-assertion

of man and submissive devotion to the sect, the Moto Paksha opponents

are self-assertive men of the world. According to them, as one of them

said to me, "These people (pointing to the Mandal members), do not

think for themselves as they have blind faith in their leader". Seeing

themselves as individuals and free from traditional ideological

constraints of a sectarian organisation, Kanji and his supporters are

more inclined to self-assertion at individual, social and political

levels which is what they see as giving substance to life. Kanji him-

self goes further in expressing his views on social change which he

defines as a more radical social transformation. In his discussion,

he uses the word kranti, revolution, in the sense of more fundamental

change envisaged as freedom from the rigidity of customary ideas,

institutions and practices for the Indians as a whole but specially for

the Indians like his Leva Kanbi Patel compatriots living in Britain.

In view of their personal and ideological commitment to the Mandal,
for the sect members a purely secular perspective on life amounts to a
lowering of one's spiritual worth which can engender a state binding
one to an endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth.  In so far as the
Mandal members set their opponents apart from the context of traditional
sectarian cleavage, they certainly do recognise the loss of religious
and sectarian dimension among the opponents whom they characterise as
non-believers, nāstika and adharmi,  those who had fallen from the
bounds of dharma.  As explained earlier 'in this chapter, this
affirmation recognises non-sectarian and non-religious aspects of their
opponents' behaviour but does not toally separate them from the overall
conception of the opposition between the pakshas.  Though there is some
clear perception of their opponents as deriving their ideological
posture from their migratory settlement in Britain, the Mandal members
seldom seem to think that the action of their opponents could be
considerably influenced by what they see, hear and experience in
Britain.  Given that the Mandal members are only partially aware of
the way their opponents have developed a difference which is to a degree
a consequence of their living experience in Britain, they often maintain
limited consistency in categorising their adversaries.  Sometimes the
adversaries are.envisaged as having fallen below the level of Moto
Paksha behaviour but never conceived totally separately from the Moto
Paksha category.  Be that as it may, what is manifestly clear in the
development of Moto Nano distinction is that in addition to the fact
that these divisions derive from the nature of cultural patterns to
be found among the Leva Kanbi Patels in India and East Africa, these
patterns acquire a new significance and meaning in Britain, even though
not everyone fully comprehends the dimension of transition and change

which some of these traditional categories increasingly come to signify. If this process does mark the pattern of settlement after migration, then it needs to be analysed critically to avoid its interpretation in terms of apparently traditional categories. For a better and clearer understanding of social and cultural organisation of a migrant population, it is crucially important to examine their social and cultural identity in relation to their living experiences in Britain.

## 5.   SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PAKSHA BOUNDARIES

In the preceding part of this chapter, the account of the paksha cleavage is focussed on its reproduction among the Leva Kanbi Patels in Britain and its social significance in relation not only to the home culture but also in relation to the immediate social experience in Britain. The following section is concerned with a discussion of variations and differences which arise in specific empirical instances in which paksha cleavage has a bearing on social relations which do cut across the paksha boundaries. The fact that the separateness of sectarian affiliations does not coincide with any similar separateness in social relations among the Leva Kanbi Patels clearly demonstrates that the pakshas have not become separate structural entities by enforcing endogamy to develop total mutual exclusion. Even though the sect members often affirm that they prefer to arrange marriages within, the sectarian fold, in practice official ties cut across the cleavage between the Mandal and Moto Paksha.  The question then arises as to how do the Mandal members apply the logic of sectarian separateness and exclusion to social bonds which relate them to non-Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels?

Whenever the Mandal discuss paksha cleavage, their account invariably contains a historical perspective in the sense that they

refer to the events which initially led to the split among the Leva

Kanbi Patels. As outlined in the historical analysis of the schism

within the Swaminarayan movement (Chapter 4), the Mandal members

invariably emphasise the discontinuity which the cleavage engendered

between the closest kin and affines and the way in which the sectarian,

social, ritual and political boundaries were drawn between the two

sides over the question of differences arising out of affiliation to

two separate sects regarded as being incompatible. As for the dis-

continuity and subsequent estrangement reflected in the maintenance of

hard and sharp boundaries, many stories of separation between close

relatives such as sons, brothers and sisters, or estrangement between

in-laws and strong sanctions applied to interaction and social relation-

ship across the paksha line is much more than the Mandal folklore,

especially for a leading member like Motabhai, whose understanding of

the paksha conflict is based on personal experiences of bitter estrangement.

Even though the primary genesis of the cleavage is related to the memory

and awareness of divisions cutting caste and village communities into

unequal halves, the Mandal members also affirm that the paksha conflict

has never generated anything approaching complete and permanent fission

among the Leva Kanbi Patels even when the sectarian opposition is felt

with great intensity. Some members refer to the occasions when the sect

leader himself is believed to have alluded to possibilities of forming

a separate caste of the sect members. A highly articulate Mandal member

once used expressions sajatiya and vijatiya as clearly meaning those

within the jati and those without to distinguish the Mandal Leva Kanbi

Patels from those outside the Mandal. The older and senior sect members

who had witnessed much intense strife in the gradual evolution of the

Mandal as a distinct sectarian entity continue to refer to differences

in sectarian affiliation corelated to distinct cues such as differences in dressing, speech and a style of living. On each of these attributes they always regard the Mandal as more advanced and sophisticated and therefore superior to the Moto Paksha. Though some of these minute differences might have been crucial for the status of Mandal members vis-a-vis the Moto Paksha in Cutch, these features no longer appear to be relevant in post-migration conditions. Though divisiveness and cleavage might stimulate incipient categorisation of the sectarian division into caste groups, it is abundantly clear from all the field material collected that the paksha cleavage has not as yet developed into a well-defined nat category or group. What the sect members convey clearly and emphatically is that though paksha cleavage as generally signified by differential sectarian affiliation has become an enduring feature of social life among the Leva Kanbi Patels of Cutch, both the nature of social discontinuity and boundary maintenance have considerably changed. Especially with the consolidation of the Mandal and establishment of its separate temples, unless one's kinsmen or affines were directly involved in any sectarian conflict (or presumably involved in a conflict expressed in sectarian categories), a tolerable state of social coe-existence rather than idealised harmony has developed across the line of cleavage.

As the extended case study has illustrated clearly, it was the temporary organisation of protest against Muktajivandasji's visit to Britain that became the focal point of traditional cleavage in Britain. During the course of events leading up to an open confrontation between the Mandal and its opponents, dichotomisation between 'us' and 'them' as if the two sides were totally set apart, became an important topic of personal concern and conversation among the sect members. As

emphasised in this account, most Mandal members who were deeply

perturbed to see the paksha conflict, its expression in violent

incidents followed by an unfavourable Old Bailey outcome for two sect

members, essentially applied the logic of their sectarian perspective

to assess and evaluate the events they were passing through.

In applying this perspective to the behaviour of their opponents

whom they see in the light of differences expressed through the paksha

cleavage, the Mandal members use sect-based criteria, not only to

evaluate behaviour which deviates from their values but also to assess

non-sectarian attributes which they believe would threaten and under-

mine their own practices and identity. In keeping with this viewpoint,

they refer to the ritual and spiritual degeneration of their opponents.

In particular, they express their feeling of dissatisfaction with those

who eat meat, onion and garlic and drink alcoholic beverages as these

dietary deviations are totally unacceptable to the Mandal members. In

so far as the Mandal members distinguish the Moto Paksha opponents as

having given up their traditional loyalties to the primary Swaminarayan

sect, they see this as further evidence of their degeneration. Non-

sectarian attributes such as long hair and side burns[20] arouse suspicion

and resentment as the sect members often relate these features to a

pattern of deviations and increasing non-conformity. What is significant

is that the Mandal members lump together both sectarian and non-

sectarian behaviour under the rubric of religion, arguing that their

opponents have given up their religion, using the general word dharma

rather than sampradaya to characterise this change. Though the sect

members claim to maintain distance between themselves and those Leva

Kanbi Patels whom they regard as ritually and spiritually unequal to

them, they elaborate on the boundary which is usually, if not invariably,

subsumed under the paksha differences. Despite their insistence upon

boundaries of mutual exclusion along paksha lines, there is some

discrepancy between their ideas of boundary maintenance and the actual

boundary maintenance which varies considerably from one situation to

the other. Before looking at any concrete illustration of these

differences in empirical instances, first of all it is important to

relate the spectrum of these differences to the degrees of hardness

or softness brought to bear on the boundary maintaining process. A

sharply defined hard boundary creates mutual exclusion in interaction

and social relationships. In contrast, it is the absence of rigidity

and inflexibility which is more clearly reflected in a soft boundary,

allowing the participants concerned to develop reciprocal interaction

marked by consensus and shared understanding. Since the creation of a

hard or a soft boundary is essentially processual, it is probably

best to conceptualise the difference between the two in terms of

evolving degrees of exclusion and inclusion rather than in terms of

two separate types. For the difference between the two is not necessarily

clear-cut and the two are not mutually exclusive in practice, especially

when exclusion in one sphere is accompanied by inclusion in the other

as in relationships exhibiting greater complexity. It is with this

aspect of boundary maintaining process that the following account is

concerned to illustrate the way the Mandal members circumscribe their

interaction to mark different degrees of exclusion and inclusion as

believed to reflect paksha-bound cleavage and differences.[21]

Whenever a Leva Kanbi Patel who is related to a Mandal member

overtly opposes the Mandal, the sect members see the opposition as

directed against the Mandal as an organisation. In such an instance,

as manifest in the events leading to a paksha confrontation at Brent

Town Hall in Wembley, a Mandal member is required to draw a hard

boundary with a very high degree of rigidity to exclude the closest

agnate or an affine from the network of interpersonal relation.

Rigidly empirical exclusion often amounts to an affirmation of severance

of social ties.[22]  Related to the manifestation of cleavage in Britain,

the following case illustrates the creation of a hard boundary between

the Mandal members and their opponents who the former have close affinal

links with.

## Figure 1

### Dhanji and Paksha Cleavage

(1) Nano Paksha

  (The Mandal)

(2) Moto Paksha



KANJI

DEVBA

DHANJI
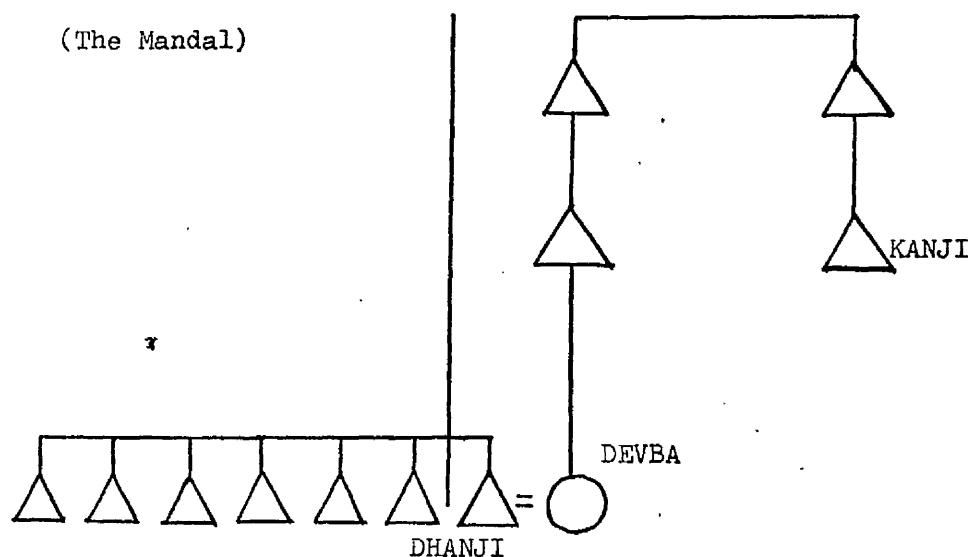
### The hard Paksha boundary

This particular empirical instance concerns Kanji who was

instrumental in organising the militant opposition to Muktajivandasji's

visit to Britain in 1970. Despite his strong opposition to the sect

leader and his organisation, it is clear that he has a fairly close

affinal link to a Mandal family of five brothers through his father's

brother's son's daughter who is, as the figure indicates, married to one of the brothers Dhanji. It is the relationship between Kanji and Dhanji and his four brothers as indicated by the line symbolising the paksha cleavage and separation.

In Figure 1, the most significant dimension is the nature of rigid exclusion between Dhanji and his brothers. The Mandal members, Leva Kanbi Patels and Indians in general expect a degree of solidarity and cooperation between brothers. Although the degree of solidarity varies from one instance to the other, what is remarkable about Dhanji's brothers is that they have, through their construction work, which they do on the basis of an informal partnership, given the belief in cooperation a more concrete expression. As an integral part of close relationship between the siblings, Dhanji also worked as a carpenter with the team of his brothers. According to his Mandal based brothers, Dhanji himself was a sect member at first though he did not show keen interest in the affairs of the Mandal. In contrast, his brothers, through their devotion and hard work they do for the sect, play a leading part in the sectarian affairs. One of them holds the important Mandal office of the treasurer.

Though Dhanji's brothers were aware of Kanji's unfavourable attitude towards the Mandal, they did not expect the latter to have any influence on their brother Dhanji. When it was announced among the Leva Kanbi Patels that Kanji was likely to organise a protest against Muktajivandasji, one of Dhanji's brothers questioned him to ascertain if he was involved with his wife's uncle in any way. Dhanji not only denied knowing anything, but also asserted that he did not have anything to do with whatever it was that Kanji was planning to do. Despite his emphatic denial, when the Mandal's opponents met outside

Brent Town Hall to heckle the sect leader, Dhanji was also found mingling

with them in a manner which indicated nothing less than his full support

for the opponents. As his involvement with the opponents became known, it

was also found that he had passed detailed information about Mandal sect

activities to Kanji and those who were to form his action-set. Once his

brothers discovered that Dhanji had in fact collaborated with the Moto

Paksha members, in bringing shame and disgrace to the Mandal, they were

distressed and at first attempted to wean Dhanji away from the opposing

camp. When they failed in this endeavour, they asked Dhanji to leave

home, and as they explained to me, they had in fact settled their 'account'

with Dhanji and marked his exclusion by asking him never to return home.

It was during the trial of the two Mandal brothers that Dhanji's

opposition to Muktajivandasji and the Mandal became more apparent. To

lend his support to Kanji, he testified against the two sect brothers

so that their identity was more unambiguously established in regard to

the assault charge against them. During the period of the trial I saw

Dhanji and his brothers. I watched them carefully to see if they would

communicate to each other. As the brothers turned their heads away in

an obvious avoidance gesture, Dhanji walked up to them and had a brief

exchange with them. Though it was not possible to know what it was that

they had said to each other, it was obvious from their gestures of

apartness that the encounter was much more an affirmation of separation

rather than any expression of reconciliation. Dhanji's elder brother

reiterated the only choice open to them: that is, that a brother who

had expressed contempt for the spiritual leader was no brother at all.

In view of the relatively rigid exclusion of Dhanji from the Mandal

fold and therefore from his immediate kinsmen, any possibility of

contact between the brothers across the paksha boundary is ruled out unless Dhanji renounces his support for the opponents of the Mandal and returns to the sect leaders to ask for their forgiveness for his errors and deviations. In essence, this instance highlights how the context of institutional opposition as expressed in terms of paksha cleavage results in the creation of a hard boundary between the sect members and their nearest kinsmen and affines.

However, the rigidity with which exclusion is enforced in regard to Dhanji's involvement in supporting Mandal's opponents is not identically applied to the instances of other individuals who might have strong feelings of disapproval for the Mandal. The account of the following instances focuses on patterns of exclusion which are not as rigid as the ones applied to Dhanji. The first instance concerns a Mandal member who is related to an opponent through marriage. Though his membership to the Mandal necessitates that he should sever his ties with the affine in question, instead of a more enduring hard boundary, there is a transition from the rigidity of mutual exclusion to gradual dissolution of barriers and a pattern of interaction across the paksha boundaries.

## Figure 2.

### Ramji and Paksha Cleavage



(1) Nano Paksha
(The Mandal)

(2) Moto Paksha
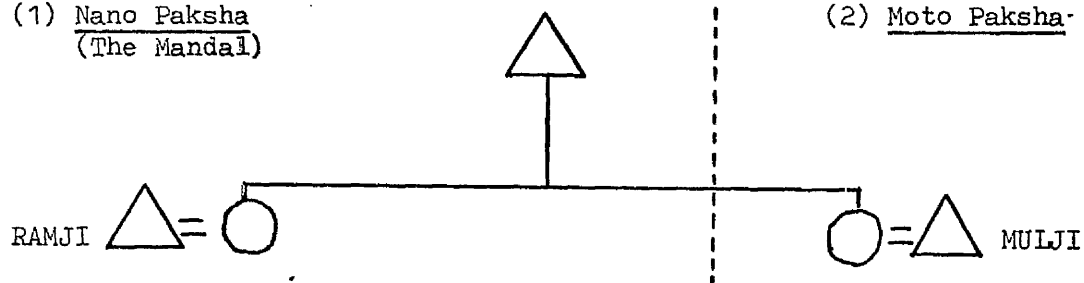
RAMJI

MULJI

The soft Paksha boundary.

As Figure 2 illustrates, both Ramji and Mulji are married to two
sisters whose father, a sect member resident in Nairobi, is a devoted
follower of Muktajivandasji. While one of his sons-in-law Ramji is a
staunch supporter of the Mandal, Mulji is not. But the two men are, as
it were, 'brothers in marriage' - a relationship expressed by the
Gujarati word sadhubhai. Further, a friendly social relationship
between the two is mediated by the fact that they are married to sisters
who have maintained close and intimate contact. As the Mandal members
are expected to draw their non-Mandal relatives into the sectarian fold,
Mulji's father-in-law had encouraged him to develop a regular acquaintance
with the sect members. He had also recommended his name to more senior
members of the Mandal  Committee in London so that they too would
stimulate Mulji's interest in the sectarian affairs. However, the
suspicion the Mandal leaders had concerning Mulji's potential for loyalty
to the Mandal was, according to them, confirmed when Mulji's involvement
with the Moto Paksha opponents became manifest. First the sect members
had found him standing outside the Brent Town Hall with their adversaries.
Secondly, he was alleged to have conveyed information about the Mandal
to Kanji and nis supporters. Thirdly, during the Old Bailey trial, as
a witness for the prosecution, he gave evidence to support Kanji which
revealed his own involvement in the institutional aspect of the paksha
conflict. To the Mandal members, and especially to Ramji, Mulji's
paksha oriented conduct was such that he and his wife could no longer
legitimately relate to Mulji. As the paksha differences transcended
their social relationship, their previously warm and friendly relation-
ship changed into strictly observed mutual avoidance, which affected
both the 'brothers in marriage' as well as their wives. Though the
paksha differences should have created a hard boundary, the character

of this exclusion proved to be less enduring than in the previous case. According to a Mandal respondent who would have preferred to see a stricter maintenance of the boundary, first the sisters were drawn into reviving their normal relationship through which they were then successful in persuading their husbands to re-establish their social contact. In this instance, the transition from paksha estrangement to a restoration of more amicable contact was distinct although gradual and developed with a degree of cautiousness. In other words, the hard boundary which was created as a response of loyalty to the relevance of paksha differences was subsequently superseded by a softer boundary which made the paksha differences more diffuse than before.

In contrast to instances in which one's kinsmen and affines might be involved in opposing the Mandal at the institutional level, a Mandal member may have kin, who though claiming allegiance to the Moto Paksha, may not be involved in the institutional aspect of the paksha cleavage. Even in instances such as this, though the Mandal members refer to paksha categorisation to distinguish their relations across the boundary of cleavage, the categorisation is seldom translated into a hard boundary and definable pattern of mutual exclusion. The fact that there is an absence of link to the institutional focus for drawing an actual boundary on the basis of cleavage does not necessarily mean that the idea of cleavage-based boundary becomes irrelevant however. Even when the sect members do not attach actual social significance to the paksha distinctions, they do retain a categorisation which remains latent in social practice. If the members do decide to create a boundary, then they can, if they so choose, transform the latent category of paksha differences into a manifest one. The following illustration shows how a Mandal member who has ties across the paksha line uses this categorisation

without actually drawing a boundary in real life, but retaining the

choice of doing so.

## Figure 3.

### Premji and Paksha Cleavage

(1) <u>Nano Paksha</u>                                                    (2) <u>Moto Paksha</u>

    (The Mandal)

Premji△=○

The soft Paksha boundary.
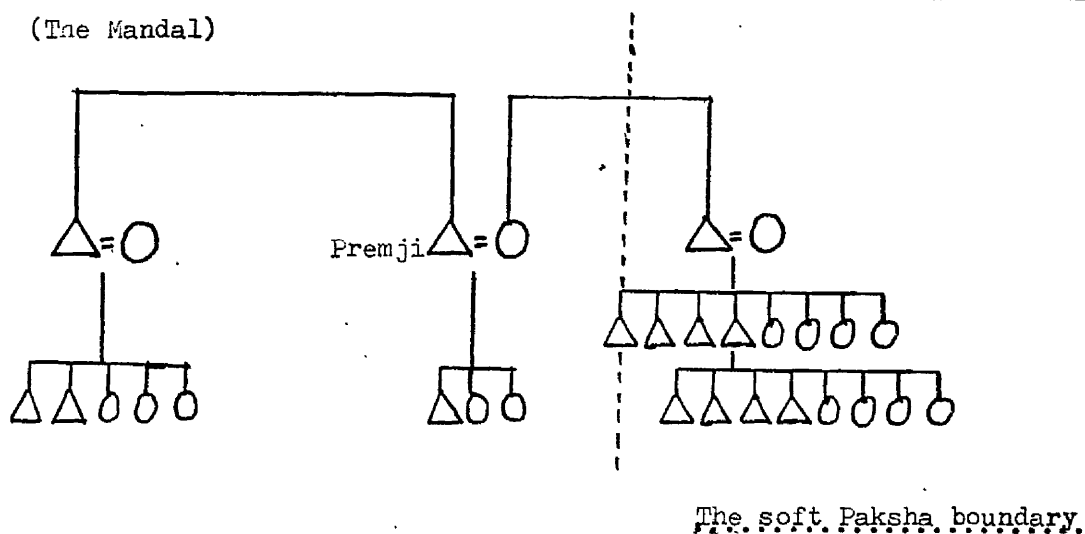
Premji's membership to the Mandal is distinguished by his total

commitment and loyalty to the sect leader and enhanced by an awareness

of importance of <u>moksha</u>. His elder brother, his wife and children

having a premigration affiliation to <u>Moto Paksha</u> have joined the

Mandal in Britain. The fact that Premji offered them accommodation

which helped them to find their feet in Britain has been a crucial

factor in their growing regard for the Mandal. Premji has also played

an important part in assisting his wife's brother and his family to

settle in Hendon though this assistance has not induced them to become

Mandal members.

When the <u>paksha</u> cleavage came to the surface with the arrival of

the sect leader in Britain in 1970, Premji described the opponents in

antithetical terms, categorising them as 'communists' and 'Muslims'.
In using these words, he apparently associated opponents' disregard
for the sectarian devotion with the lack of belief in God stereotypically
associated with the word 'communists'. The derogatory connotation
attributed to the word Muslim stemmed from stereotypical polarity
assumed to exist between the Hindus and Muslims. It was with these
strong feelings and an unfavourable categorisation of the opposing
side that Premji had expressed his desire to see the opponents punished.
During the course of events related to the manifestation of paksha
cleavage in Britain, he tended to generalise his paksha bound resentment
towards his non-Mandal relations and in particular towards his wife's
brother living in close proximity to him.

In this process, Premji, not only categorised his wife's brother
and his family as either samavala 'of the opposing side' or motapakshvala
as 'those of the Moto Paksha', but also criticised them for their
indifference to values and for behaviour more devoted members of the
Mandal would regard as unacceptable. Premji also supplemented his
disapproval by describing his 'in-laws' as manis who belonged to the
opposite side. Though Premji criticised his wife's brother on the
basis of paksha differences, this criticism was usually confined to
invoking the ideological significance of the cleavage. During the
course of events leading to confrontation between Moto Paksha and the
Mandal, although there were discernible traces of tension whenever
Premji met his wife's brother, it did not appear to constrain them
towards any degree of mutual avoidance. On the contrary, in some of
their meetings which I witnessed, an element of joking about the
differences between the Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels and Non-Mandal Leva
Kanbis tended to reduce tension stemming from the paksha-based conflict.

In his discussions with me although Premji assumed a degree of
collusion between the opponents and all those Leva Kanbi Patels
who did not belong to the Mandal, he knew that his wife's brother
and his family were not in any way in the organisation of opposition
to Muktajivandasji.  If they had been thus involved, there is no doubt
that this would have posed a more serious prob? .m of differences and
generated estrangement between Premji and his brother-in-law.  Premji
often brought the paksha dimension to bear ( , events which were largely
if not totally unrelated to the cleavage.  ollowing Muktajivandasji's
visit to Britain Premji was involved in  )taining an entry certificate
for his wife so that she could come to  ,ritain to join him with their
children. When Premji learned that th  British High Commission in
Bombay had some doubts about the aut .enticity of his marriage, he
attributed this mishap to paksha d /iousness of his father-in-law
resident in Cutch. When it was e> )alined to him that his wife's father
was highly unlikely to act agai' st the interests of his own daughter,
in his experience of personal anxiety, Premji ignored this alternative
explanation and reasserted t'.e importance of paksha as being crucial
in his social relationships .

In view of this difference between ideological assertion of paksha
and its limited relevan,e at a practical level, it is evident that the
paksha split between Premji and his wife's brother does not generate
the avoidance and es.rangement evident in the first two cases.  In
other words, in view of the confrontation between the Mandal and its
opponents, Premji is acutely conscious of the differences which divide
the Leva Kanbi Patels along the paksha line.  He does refer to these
differences and the dichotomy which symbolises the exclusiveness of

the Mandal as a separate Swaminarayan organisation. However, consciousness of differences and division does not set him totally apart from those who are conceptually thought of as having allegiance inimical to the Mandal. In essence there is theoretical interest in the significance of boundaries. But in practice, the boundaries are not created to establish mutual exclusion. In the process of boundary formation at a practical level, as discussed earlier, the nature and degree of exclusion of non-Mandal kins and affines depends upon the character of their involvement in the activities directed against the values and interests of the congregation taken as a whole.

The three cases outlined in this chapter illustrate that if non-Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels are involved in organising institutional opposition to the Mandal, exclusion can take a more complete form as in the first case or a lesser degree as in the second instance. The second episode illustrates the transition from initial exclusion to a gradual restoration of social relationships. Whereas in the third instance, the ideological consciousness of the paksha conflict is referred to as an important element in social ties across the cleavage, but since it lacks the element of institutional opposition, reference to the paksha does not engender a parallel response at the level of practical social relations.

The account of the paksha cleavage and its significance has so far focussed on the way this particular mode of categorisation comes into play between sect members and non-Mandal Kanbi Patels. Apart from its importance in the inter-relationship between the two sides, there is also an additional use of pakaha which is internal to the Mandal. This internal use of paksha illustrates the way application of a

dominant categorisation is generalised to include situations, events and attributes unrelated to the social processes explicitly connected with this categorisation. This is to say that the sect members often label those within the Mandal as belonging to Moto Paksha. When they do this labelling, it is not that they misapprehend in any way internal relations for external divisions. In so far as a Mandal member acts or behaves in a manner contrary to sectarian patterns, apart from identifying him as māni, some members extend the Moto Paksha label to him. When they say that a particular member in question is in Moto Paksha, the suggestion is more allegorical rather than literal. The suggestion in no way implies actual affiliation to the other side while one is a member of the Mandal. The connotation clearly refers to tendencies which are defiantly contrary to compliance and conformity required within the Mandal - an attribute often highlighted by the application of Moto Paksha categorisation within the Mandal.

## 6. A BRIEF SUMMARY

In sum, the regeneration of paksha cleavage among the Leva Kanbi Patels finds manifest expression through institutional organisation of opposition to the Mandal. The manifest dimension of paksha-based differences as articulated in inter-relationship between sect members and non-sect members Leva Kanbi Patels constitutes a basis for the creation of boundaries along the paksha lines. The cleavage crystallises distinctly and rigidly if the participants concerned are involved in any institutional opposition to the sect. If the institutional opposition does not relate to nāt based social relations, then the Mandal members are likely to maintain ideological consciousness of paksha divisions without actually drawing boundaries in practice. Although in its

historical context, the cleavage has a distinctly religious and
sectarian definition, in the overseas settlement of the Mandal
members and Leva Kanbi Patels, traditional divisions acquire new
meanings which is based on their experience of living in Britain.
Of these meanings, Leva Kanbi Patels appear to have varying awareness.
It is the specific link between the traditional cleavage and its post
migration expression in Britain which is important for any discussion
about the relationship between caste and sect in Britain.

There are two dimensions which appear to have a bearing on the
discussion of relationship between caste and sect in the context of
the present chapter. First, there is the Indian subcontinental context
which, both culturally and historically provides the base line for
the identity of nāt and sampradāya. Secondly, both nāt and sampradāya
have a British basis which is a function of migratory settlement
historically determined by colonial rule and the labour migration to
East Africa and Britain. In order to elaborate on the relationship
between nāt and sampradāya, it is best to refer to the Indian context
and then to situate caste and sect within the framework of social life
in Britain.

As for the development of sect in India, it is fruitful to examine
tne evolution of the Mandal in relation to Louis Dumont's brief
theoretical comments on the relationship between caste and sect.
Characterising renunciation as an important attribute of the Hindu
sects, Dumont has suggested that "One may observe analogous phenomenon,
so far as social groups are concerned, between sect and caste".[23]
According to this statement sect and caste are similar phenomena.
Dumont recognises the separation between the two at an abstract

theoretical level when he says, "One can see that in theory caste

membership and sect membership operate at different levels".[24] After

suggesting a possibility of conflict between the two in the situation

where a sect makes itself exclusive vis-a-vis caste values, Dumont

tends to emphasise the argument according to which there is "... a

tendency for sect to resemble caste".[25] If anything, sect is simply

a sign of division that occurs in a caste. In other words, according

to this proposition, development of sects is in fact a facet of the

caste system. Although it is not my intention to examine the theoretical

merits of this argument, it ought to be noted that the evolution of

the Mandal indicates that membership to sampradaya and nat among the

Leva Kanbi Patels are two separate phenomena which are not consistently

related to each other. As both sampradaya and nat appear to possess

distinctive autonomy of their own, it follows that conceptually caste

and sect form units which are not reducible to each other, notwith-

standing the overlap between the two. As a sectarian organisation, the

Mandal is only partly coterminous with the nat of Leva Kanbi Patels.

Nor does the Mandal in turn exhaust the entire social context of the

nat. The essence of the argument which stems from an account and

analysis of the Mandal suggests that caste and sect are separate

entities and that they are phenomenally perceived as such by the actors

involved in defining their identity vis-a-vis caste and sect. Though

Dumont suggests that conflict between exclusiveness of sects and caste

values is contrary to the spirit of the whole,[26] development of the

Mandal among the Leva Kanbi Patels and the genesis of paksha-based

cleavage illustrates the complexity of interrelationship between caste

and sect and the degree of incompatibility between the two at the level

of practical social relations. The fact that the paksha cleavage has

become an important feature of social life of Leva Kanbi Patels appears
to suggest that in the context of present development of the Mandal,
it is less valid to identify sampradāya as if it was the nāt. Contrary
to Dumont's general contention, sampradāya has certainly not degenerated
into a caste. From the account of the paksha cleavage which developed
in Cutch, it is evident that pressures towards increasing social
exclusiveness have been often experienced in the sect and the nāt
norms were utilised to create a hard boundary between sect members
and non-sect members within the caste. Though there has been some
preference for Mandal based endogamy, there is little evidence to
support the thesis that the Mandal is in fact evolving into a separate
endogamous sect-based caste. There are specific instances of sect
members who have created hard boundaries between themselves and the
non-Mandal nāt fellows. However, on the whole social relations continue
to cut across the paksha line even if the Mandal members maintain
ideological consciousness of separation based on their membership to
a particular Swaminarayan sect. As social ties cut across the cleavage,
there is always a potential possibility of conflict between sectarian
exclusiveness on the one hand and caste values and interest on the other.

In his analysis of relationship between caste and sect, Dumont
appears to be essentially concerned with an explanation of traditional
social relations as defined in the framework of the caste system. There
is no doubt that the traditional social forms are important to an under-
standing of linkages between caste and sect. However, it is equally
important to emphasise the importance of modern history and its effects
on traditional groups which are now fully incorporated in the inter-
national division of labour. This definitely applies to members of the
Mandal and Leva Kanbi Patels who have experienced two related phases of

migration from India to East Africa and then to Britain. In these

phases and settlements associated with them, they have reproduced the

important dimensions of their traditional social and cultural

organisations. The establishment of the Mandal centered on the temple

and its activities and the manifestation of paksha cleavage in Britain

clearly illustrates this particular process. Further, as the account

in this chapter shows recreation of social and cultural organisation is

not a simple act of transference of home-based social and cultural

attributes to Britain. Apart from the change which is in a sense

inherant in choices related to migration, the recreation of socio-

cultural patterns is both an assurance of cultural continuity to be

maintained with the home society as well as a specific response to

living in Britain. The discussion focused on the rise of paksha

cleavage in Britain highlights the fact that apparently traditional

behaviour can and does embody those elements which the settlers absorb

in their consciousness as their lives begin to change with the consolidation

of their settlement in Britain. In the action and behaviour of those

whom the Mandal members see in the light of their past experience of

Moto Paksha, this aspect of change is clearly reflected. However, the

Mandal members are less fully aware of the fact that their opponents

have disengaged themselves from their more traditional links to the

primary Swaminarayan sect. As far as the opponents are concerned, they

do affirm the importance of nat in so far as they organise their

opposition to the Mandal from among the Leva Kanbi Patels. Their

secular criticism of the Mandal is categorical and this does impinge

on the Mandal to an extent. However, the Mandal members, being rooted

in their commitment to Moksha see it as a lapse from values of the

Swaminarayan movement rather than defining it as a gradual development

of secular viewpoint among the Leva Kanbi Patels. It is with the imminent possibilities of change stimulated by the incorporation of Mandal members and Leva Kanbi Patels into the class structure of metropolitan Britain that I now turn to the concluding chapter focused on the prospect of social change members of the Mandal face in their continued residence in Britain.

NOTES : Chapter 7.

1.  Rashmi Desai, <u>Indian Immigrants in Britain</u>, 1963 London, Oxford University Press, p.16.

2.  The word for brotherhood is <u>biraderi</u> and not <u>baraderi</u> as spelt here.

3.  E.J.B. Rose (ed.), <u>Colour and Citizenship: A Report on British Race Relations</u>, 1969 Oxford University Press/Institute of Race Relations, p.442.

4.  Patricia Jeffrey, <u>Migrants and Refugees: Muslim and Christian Pakistani Families in Bristol</u>, 1976 Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.33.

5.  De Witt John Jr., <u>Indian Workers' Associations in Britain,</u> 1969 London, Oxford University Press/Institute of Race Relations, p.30.

6.  Michael Lyon, Ethnicity in Britain, the Gujarati Tradition, <u>New Community</u>, Volume 2, No.1, Winter 1972-73, pp.1-11.

7.  David Beetham, <u>Transport and Turbans: A Comparative Study in Local Politics</u>, 1970 London, Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations.

8.  For a systematic exposition of this argument, see Robert Miles' <u>Between two Cultures? The Case of Rastafarianism</u>, 1978 Bristol, SSRC Research Unit on Ethnic Relations.  Ernest Cashmore also explores a similar theme in his <u>Rastaman: the Rastafarian Movement in England</u>, 1979, London, George Allen and Unwin.

9.  The extent to which the East African conditions influenced the social organisation of the sect and the nature of cleavage as expressed in the opposition between <u>Moto Paksha</u> and <u>Nano Paksha</u> is difficult to determine without actual fieldwork data.  However, there is no ambiguity about the rise of <u>paksha</u> divisions in Nairobi. The divisions were rather starkly symbolised, not only in contrasting sectarian allegiances but also in the construction of two separate temples facing each other on Grogan Road in Nairobi.

10. The second short visit occured in the summer months of 1974.

11. An account of this international journey is compiled in a volume titled <u>Shreeji Sankalpa Sadgurushree Muktajivandasji Swamishree Antarrashtirya Sanskaryatra Grantha</u>, 1972 Ahmedabad (Maninagar), Shree Swaminarayan Mandir.

12. Adrian C. Mayer,'The Significance of Quasi-Groups in the Study of Complex Societies' in Michael Banton's (ed.), <u>The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies</u>, 1966, London, Tavistock Publications, pp.97-122, see p.102.

13. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.102.

14. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.108. Phillip Gulliver provides a concrete example of kinship-based action-sets in his study of Ndendeuli of Southern Tanzania. See his 'Dispute Settlement Without Courts: The Ndendeuli of Southern Tanzania' in Laura Nader's (ed.), <u>Law in Culture and Society</u>, 1969 Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company, pp.24-68. For an account of action-sets among the South Asians in Britain, see De Witt John's <u>Indian Workers' Associations in Britain</u>, 1969 London, Oxford University Press and Institute of Race Relations, pp.55-56, <u>et</u> <u>seq</u>.

15. Adrian C. Mayer, <u>op</u>.<u>cit</u>., p.110.

16. Once the Mandal members knew that I was interested in knowing something about their opponents, one leader suggested that I should contact Kanji, meet him and his supporters to discuss the nature of their opposition to the Mandal and then provide the Mandal members with such information as they might find useful in undermining their adversaries. In this particular situation, it seemed to me that it was best to remain uninvolved in a potentially difficult confrontation between the two sides.

17. <u>Nagaryatra</u> or procession through a town or a city is usually a festive occasion which can bring prestige and legitimation to a sect such as the Mandal. It has been a customary practice for the sect members to honour their leader by organising impressive processions. At the sect headquarters in Maninagar such processions have been organised on occasions of sectarian importance. Prior to the Mandal procession the Shri Akshar Purshattam Sanstha had carried out a similar procession to honour their sect leader on his visit to London. During Muktajivandsji's third visit to Britain in the summer of 1979, the Mandal members had organised a local procession in Hendon. Photographs showing the procession and its termination in the Hendon Temple of the sect are included in Appendix 2.

18. In discussions of traditional practices, contradiction between traditional and modern is often an implicit assumption. The fact that the actors concerned can reinterpret and revitalise the content of traditional beliefs and practices in their 'modern' urban environment is highlighted in Milton Singer's article 'The Great Tradition in a Metropolitan Centre: Madras'in Singer's (ed.) <u>Traditional India: Structure and Change</u>, 1959 Philadelphia, The American Folklore Society.

19. 'Sadguru Proudh Pratāp' was conceived to emphasise the overriding importance of sect leader in providing salvation. <u>Proudha pratap</u> meaning 'profound relevation' is defined as being available from a good spiritual teacher.

20. See discussion of Muktajivandasji's letter (Chapter 5) in which he explicitly asked the members if anyone was growing sideburns.

21. In the three short cases presented here to show the variation in hardness and softness of the boundary between the pakshas, it ought to be pointed out that information available in each instance was limited and skeletal in character. As the relationships between kin and affines were strained after what had happened at Brent Town Hall in Wembley, there was no way in which full details could be obtained from the opponents about their views on the social ties they had withdrawn from. However, in the form in which they are, the cases do illustrate the differences with which rigidity is brought to bear on the boundaries created by the paksha cleavage.

22. The Mandal related Leva Patels refer to more intense phases of paksha cleavage in which, within the context of institutional opposition, individual sect members are known to have regarded their close agnates and affines in the opposing camp as being 'dead' to them. In relation to the rise of cleavage in Britain, some members also made similar assertion of total discontinuity in social relations, although total mutual exclusion and complete estrangement were known to endure only in a few extreme cases and often for a short period in regard to a specific instance of actual opposition.

23. Louis Dumont, Homo Hierarchicus, 1970 London, George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd., p.187.

24. Ibid., p.188.

25. Ibid., p.188

26. Ibid., p.188.

CHAPTER 8

SOCIAL CHANGE IN A SECTARIAN COMMUNITY

1. PROCESSES OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

In their search for work and better material prospects, lives of
the Mandal members have changed in many ways. In the process of these
changes, as argued in this thesis, the British imperial rule has been a
vital factor as it has stimulated international movements of groups such
as the Mandal. As a consequence of the British rule and its aftermath, the
Mandal members have moved their homes across the continents from India to
East Africa and then to Britain in a short span of about 40 years. In
their changing circumstances, two related processes seem to have occurred
simultaneously. As the subject matter of this thesis shows, on the one
hand, the sect members have successfully maintained contact with the main
seat of their sect as well as their rural homes in Cutch. Regularity of
this contact has enabled them to preserve social and cultural continuity
with the country of their origin. It is through this link that they have
reproduced both ideology and organisation of their sect in London and
Bolton. On the other hand, as the Mandal members themselves recognise,
the process of change has already occurred in their move to Britain and
their attempt to organise their sampradaȳa in British surroundings. It
is obvious that preserving connections with sister congregations in India
and East Africa is related to changes which occur in the lives of sect
members in Britain. In concluding my discussion in this chapter, first
I wish to emphasise the significance of continuity in a degree of
ideological cohesiveness in the Mandal. Secondly, I will examine the
theme of social change as it has affected the sect members. In developing

this theme, I will argue that one major consequence of migratory

settlement of the Mandal members is widening of intergenerational

differences which become sharper for the young who are exposed to a process

of dual socialisation in Britain. The use of English and a particular

mode of thought associated with it could alter the meaning of ideology

and social relations between the Mandal members. To situate the potential

for such a change in a comparative context, I draw some parallels between

Mandal and Shia Imami Ismailia sect to indicate some of the changes

Mandal members are likely to face in their continued residence in Britain.

It must be emphasised that the concluding discussion in this chapter is

interpretative  rather than definitive in the sense of being able to

provide accurate predictions about future developments.


## 2.   CONTINUITY IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSFORMATION

In the migratory transformation of their lives and many insecurities

felt during settlement abroad, the Mandal members are keen to assert

that their belief in moksha and involvement in the Mandal through nāt

based relations, provide them with a firm basis in Britain and a link

to social and cultural institutions in India. The British Mandal already

resembles a well-established entity in possessing the main attributes

of an organised sect.  If we examine the Mandal membership, given that

it has roots in the corporate characters of the nāt, sampradāya  has a

relatively permanant body of followers since the leaders established it

as a separate sect within the Swaminarayan movement.  Now that the

Mandal has a clearly definable focus, there is a good chance that the

descendants of existing members would remain sect followers if there

were no radical changes in their circumstances. An essential feature of

a sect is that each and every member of the sect should commit himself

fully and unequivocally to its belief system and everything that is
entailed in it. The evolution of the Mandal clearly shows that a full
committment and a categorical allegiance are not axiomatic features of
a sectarian organisation. In this respect the history of the Mandal is
particularly instructive in showing the way followers of the primary
Swaminarayan sect have transferred their loyalty to a secondary Swaminarayan
sect and the way in which the secondary sect has established ideological
and organisational exclusiveness for all its recruits. As there are two
Swaminarayan sects involved in the Mandal membership, there is always a
theoretical possibility that an existing member could redefine his member-
ship vis-a-vis the primary Swaminarayan sect. Such redefinitions are
possible only if the ideological and organisational barriers between the
sects are less clear-cut. This does seem to have been the case when the
Mandal was still in its developmental stage. Now the Mandal has become
fairly firmly and institutionally established. The distinction between
primary sect and the secondary Mandal is not ambiguous any more. There-
fore it is anomalous and deviant for a sect member to claim that he is
devoted to the leaders of two Swaminarayan sects. However, it is not
uncommon to encounter examples where a member or two would defy the
criteria of exclusive membership in showing their devotion for the leaders
of separate Swaminarayan sects.

The principle of exclusive membership is dependent on the way sect
elites define an all-encompassing nature of their particular ideology.
It is the character of the ideology which makes exclusive definition of
the membership possible. The principle of exclusiveness raises two
important matters: one concerns the consequences the ideology has for
actual behaviour of the sect members. The second issue concerns the

relationship a sampradāya ideology has to the precepts of dharma.
Given that the Mandal leaders and their followers believe in the efficacy
of their particular kind of moksha, the question of relating it to dharma
regarded as being fundamental can present a difficulty if exclusiveness
were to compel a sampradāya leader to assert superiority of his particular
ideas over the basic dharma postulates. There is an extent to which the
tension between the two is reflected in the Mandal, for instance, in
relating the corpus of Hindu scriptures to the Mandal literature. How
far would the sect leaders go in asserting their autonomy and separateness
from dharma tradition is an issue which is likely to be controversial.
As for the Mandal, it is remarkable that its identity is defined as
separately as possible without arousing feelings of disquiet among the
followers. In this respect, all devoted members of the Mandal make claims
to the kind of exclusiveness which can vary from tolerance Hindus are
believed to show for different manifestations of the divine.

The kind of organisational solidarity that the Mandal has come to
possess over the years has depended on the historical institutionalisation
of its ideology as expressed in the Mandal-based supremacy of moksha.
Acceptance of moksha does not necessarily generate harmony which social
anthropologists often associate with traditional groups. For, as fully
explained in the thesis, moksha is seen to be antithetical to the human
condition mān which entails opposition between self-surrender and self-
assertion. The ideological polarity between the two is always a potential
or a real source of differences between the members. Although the leaders
attempt to control and manage these differences, their existence can not
be denied. Commitment to moksha is expressed in the necessity of a pure
state of mind attainable through regular performance of ritually prescribed
prayers. Organisation of rituals through the temple of the sect unites

seekers of salvation into a community of workshippers. However, believing

in the ultimate salvation entails more than a belief in the efficacy of

rituals. For in the organisational context of the Mandal, a distinctive

relationship betweek moksha and authority is institutionally regulated.

At the ideological level, as stated before, this institutionalisation

takes the form of opposition between moksha and man which defies any

notion of ideally envisaged consensus and harmony in the Mandal. However,

this does not mean that the ideal of harmony is not upheld by the sect

members. As explained in the thesis, opposition between surrender and

assertion is linked to social relations of compliance and defiance. The

interplay between obedience and disobedience as known to the Mandal

members in the dichotomy between moksha and man explains the relationship

ideology has to authority. Although the duality of moksha and man and

ideological and organisational opposition it comes to signify sustains

differences within the sect, the fact that most Mandal members are

socialised into acceptance of moksha and its ritual and social practice

provides the Mandal with a measure of unity and solidarity. Mandal

members express this cohesiveness in their submissive identification with

the highest salvational state and the link this presupposes between the

followers and the charismatic leader of the sect Swami Muktajivandasji.

Consciousness of social change is not at all alien to the Mandal

members. Change as a theme characterises the genesis and history of the

Mandal. In their views on progress their sect has made, Mandal members

assume opposition not only within the sect but also within the Swaminarayan

movement. As the subject matter of Chapter 6 has shown, as an organised

body, the Mandal derives its identity from the developments which occurred

in the primary Swaminarayan sect in Gujarat. It was from the process of

segmentation in the primary sect that the Mandal emerged as a schismatic

entity opposed to the parent body. The Mandal founders had opposed the hereditary leader of the primary sect for claiming that it was they who were the owners of sect's assets and properties. It was this opposition to the primary organisation which created a basis for the foundation of the Mandal as a separate Swaminarayan sect under Swami Muktajivandasji's leadership. An important feature of the primary Swaminarayan organisation was the fact that the Leva Kanbi Patels were members of the sect in Cutch. The nāt basis of Swaminarayan sect had created an overlap between sect and caste. Formation of the Mandal as a sect of secondary order under-mined this identity between sect and caste as two separate Swaminarayan sects recruited members from within one caste group. Separation between the sects created corresponding division among the Leva Kanbi Patels. This division, as it is identified in the distinctions made between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha, each associated with primary and secondary sects respectively, has created a persisting cleavage within the nāt which is now reproduced in Britain. A history of this cleavage, as outlined in Chapter 4, illustrates that the continuity which the sect members retain with their Indian background, far from being coterminous with harmony and stability, is full of changes. The rise of the Mandal as a sect apart from the parent body is explicable in terms of struggle for power and control within the Swaminarayan movement. Overseas reproduction of the Mandal, especially in Britain, gives a distinctive character to social change members of the Mandal face in their metropolitan habitat - a topic which is examined in the following section.

3.    THE MANDAL AND THE DIMENSICNS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

IN BRITAIN.

Migratory settlement produces inevitable social changes. The very

act of a migrant in uprooting himself from his own society to begin a

new life in a new social context produces many changes.  But when

members of a group from a less complex social and economic organisation

choose to work and live in an advanced industrial society such as

Britain, the processes of change are so sharp and drastic that they

generate deep feelings of anxiety and insecurity, especially if the

receiving society imposes a stigma on the new-comers. An important

adaptive response in the case of a cultural group such as the Mandal

is to recreate those social, cultural and organisational forms which can

provide a supportive baseline for starting social life in a new society.

Formation of the group such as the Mandal would appear to meet this

need in a new environment. While the newcomers find comfort and security

in reproducing and maintaining their own organisations, they also respond

to the new conditions they face in Britain. Therefore the process that

characterises their experience involves a commitment to their own way of

life and a simultaneous response to the new environment. Although the

first part of the process has a close link with the home culture as its

significance is brought to bear on new circumstances, the necessity to

come to terms with the everyday life in Britain produces changes which

begin to influence the settlers and their consciousness.

The complexity and subtlety of the process of change is reflected

in a remarkably significant way in the understanding of categories which

at the outset appear to conform to what members of the Mandal say is a

traditional form. The discussion in Chapter 7 devoted to the description

and analysis of the cleavage between Moto Paksha and Nano Paksha illustrates this most vividly. When members of the Mandal as they are associated to Nano Paksha describe the rise of the cleavage, they initially convey the impression that it is simply an extension to Britain of opposition and conflict which used to occur in their traditional habitat in India. Although the paksha categories do have their origins in the strife and separation between Swaminarayan sects in India, the proposition that they had identical functions–in Cutch and Britain cannot be regarded as an adequate explanation. Although members of the Mandal see the occurence of paksha in Britain as a repitition of what they knew in Cutch and East Africa, there is little doubt that the recurrence of paksha in Britain does not express the same meaning or have the same function. For a closer examination of the events to which these distinctions are applied reveals considerable discontinuity which has taken place between what the sect members see as Moto Paksha and what it is in reality in terms of its opposition to the sect in Britain. Although the Mandal members themselves give a less adequate account of the British influences to which the Leva Kanbi Patels are exposed, those supposedly in the Moto Paksha view things differently. They express their opposition to the Mandal in terms of their own critical evaluation of the sect and the part it plays in the lives of its members. Their critical outlook expresses a secular tendency opposed to the sect and its activities in Britain. The fact that the Mandal members do not necessarily see the detachment of Moto Paksha members from the base they are thought to have in the primary Swaminarayan sect goes to show the extent of disjunction between traditional conceptions and contemporary reality. Some members sense this disjunction; some of them seem to realise that those who are supposed to be in the Moto Paksha no longer

fit into the traditional categories signifying the cleavage. The fact
that the paksha has developed a somewhat different character in Britain
is asserted in the use of the word adharmi, irreligious, which is applied
to the opponents of the sect still categorised as being affiliated to
the Moto Paksha. The opponents, as the discussion in Chapter 7 shows,
openly proclaim their dissociation from Swaminarayan sects. They suggest
that the leaders use their followers' commitment to maintain a strict
degree of control over their lives. The essence of the argument presented
here is that the settlement of the sect members in Britain distinctively
influences the use of what are regarded as traditional categories although
the awareness of differences in meaning and function of these categories
may not be necessarily fully obvious to the people themselves. It is
not the burden of the present argument to suggest that all the cultural
categories Indians utilise in their settlement in Britain carry a meaning
other than the one it had either in India or East Africa. However, in
relation to the present study it is important to emphasise that the
culture of the minorities is vulnerable to changes in the social context
of their settlement in Britain. As the wider influences can penetrate
the traditional categories and alter their meaning, an investigator has
to examine the cultural attributes of the minorities with a measure of
caution so that no absolute parity is assumed between culture at home
in India and its reproduced version in Britain. For to make such an
assumption is to obscure some important dimensions of social change.

It is through paksha based categorisation that the Mandal members
distinguish kinsmen and close associates. There are those who belong to
the Moto Paksha in one of two senses. Either they are affiliated to the
primary Swaminarayan sect or they belong to no sect at all. Especially

if they are non-believers, then the Mandal members regard them as being

inferior, and even irreligious or adharmi. By contrast to those who

demonstrate a distinct lack or even loss of faith, most members of the

Mandal claim disciplined and devotional attachment to their belief and

organisation. However, the social institutions of British society

constantly influence members of the sect whatever their particular view

of their belief and its practice. If we take British society in its

essential totality as structurally divided into classes, then according

to the argument developed in this thesis, members of the Mandal as

sellers of their labour power, are a part of the British working class

population. If we take the relationship between class and sect as a

concrete instance of the link that work has to the Mandal, then any

degree of inconsistency between the two entails certain modification and

changes. Although these changes do not necessarily imply any significant

dilution of the belief in moksha, germination of some secular tendencies

can not be excluded as a possibility. As the earlier discussion in this

thesis has suggested, the transition Mandal members make from a less

complex economic organisation to an advanced industrial society radically

alters the relationship between work and residence. In their experiences

as workers, the Mandal members have made a fundamental shift from a close

association between work and residence in Cutch and East Africa to a

situation in Britain in which people do not always work where they have

to live, although marked separation between the two is less striking for

the sect members in Bolton than it is for those who live in Hendon. In

these circumstances where people have to work away from where they live,

some difficulties are bound to arise in balancing the need to work and to

undertake overtime with maintaining, for instance, a posture of commitment

to the Mandal through regular attendance at the temple. Although the

Mandal members attempt to minimise any imbalance between the two, it

is clear from the observations that in many situation the two can not

be accomodated satisfactorily. In a sharp contrast to work in Cutch

or East Africa, labouring in the metropolitan market is a highly

demanding experience which has the potential of superseding the consider-

ations of moksha. Long distance travelling, overtime, night shifts in

the factories and a constant feeling of being drained at the end of each

working day, have all influenced the temple activities of the sect.

Substitution of a single attendance in the evening for the tradition of

saying morning and evening prayers is the obvious indication of the

change that demands stemming from work has induced. The work has also

influenced the regularity of attendance at the sect's temples in Hendon

and Bolton. The fact that work is often more important than salvation is

demonstrated in absences which the necessity to remain at the place of

employment entails. In this respect, experience of the Mandal members

in Bolton is particularly illuminating. For their night shifts in textile

mills can often require absence from the temple meetings over a period.

The importance of working and earning can take precedance over temple

routines. To make work as remunerative as possible, and when feasible,

to supplement it with overtime, even if it means reduced attendances at

the temple, has become a tacitly approved and accepted norm. The Mandal

members themselves do not regard this adaptive response as any necessary

decline in their commitment to moksha. For they argue that what matters

is attachment and devotion and not the frequency of appearances at the

temple. However, the temple always remains packed on Sunday evenings

and special occasions and this indicates the intensity of interest in

rituals and prayers. Nonetheless, smaller attendance during the week is

a matter of concern especially as the effort to enforce attendance by

maintaining a roll-call register has not made any significant difference.

As an important factor in the lives of the sect members, work influences

a sect member's participation in the institutional activities of the

temple. The degree to which, as a facet of class structure, it can

influence belief in moksha depends on the effect wider class ideology

and culture has on the consciousness of the sect members.

If we take account of the interplay between moksha and dominant class

ideology in the consciousness of sect members, the message of moksha

leaders of the sect convey can appear less and less consistent with the

class-based perspective emphasising pursuit of individual interest and

advancement. As the main component of the sect's organisation, moksha

is directed towards progressive elimination of self-interest. The inter-

action between the wider importance of individual achievement and the

pursuit of salvation in the Mandal is clearly illustrated in the case

study outlined in Chapter 3. The case is particularly illuminating as

it focusses on two separate aspects simultaneously. First of all, the

member in question shows awareness of his individual interest as being

distinct from the compliance sect leaders require of him and other members.

Secondly, his concern for his self-interest is diametrically opposed to

the devotional loyalty and adherance of his wife to the sect. The

complexity of his situation, in his pendulam swings towards irreconcilable

viewpoints, does not reveal irrationality but rather a complicated

situational dynamic which often requires contradictory responses.

Although affiliation to the sect and expression of self-interest do not

evolve as mutually exclusive categories in this particular case, never-

theless, polarity between self-interest and salvation remains a potential

source of divisive differences. Manifest expression of these differences

is likely to generate a shift in the meaning of ideology of the sect and

its organisation with a greater emphasis on the temporal interest of
the sect members.

In discussing the process of social change in their Sparkbrook study,
Rex and Moore pay particular attention to the younger generation in order
to locate an institution, the school which plays a decisive part in
the process of socialisation and change. They argue that the children
of immigrants are subject to "a double socialisation process",[1] a phase
in their transition to settlement in Britain. The double socialisation
process consists of two separate elements;  first of all there is the
home and the community where the child learns a whole way of life which
is in keeping with the norms and values of the corporate group he
belongs to. Secondly there is the school which acts as an important
agency of socialisation for children who have limited contact with
English children in their neighbourhoods.  In other words, a child is
presented with two different models in different contexts. Behaviour in
terms of these models can create a situation for the child where he can
find himself in conflict between two sides.  Home and school expect
the child to follow a mode of thought and action which could be contra-
dictory.  As Rex and Moore put it, "One unintended consequence of this
dual process of socialisation is conflict of values for the child".[2]
Although the child is likely to be presented with more than two or
three alternative values and roles, at the most general level it can
be assumed that some conflict is likely to occur between what he learns
at school and what he is expected to be at home and in the community.
In the change that is likely to occur in such situations, what causes
deep concern to the Mandal members is the relationship double socialisation
has to their belief in moksha known, understood and assimilated through
the familiar medium of Gujarati language. As the contrast between

socialisation at school and home is expressed in separate set of values

embodied in two separate languages, the use of language becomes an

important concern for the Mandal members and their children. It is

obvious that the children of the sect members are simultaneously exposed

to their own belief and practices as well as British culture of their

particular area mediated through English in their schools. As the British

cultural influences are more dominant, for the children of Mandal

members, the process of socialisation is unlikely to be as uniform and

as homogeneous as it was either in India or in East Africa. If we

assume that the young Mandal boys and girls would spend more time at

school than either at home or at the temple, then it can be deduced that

the influences they absorb through the school in increasing use of

English, can play a decisive part in their personal development. Although

the effects of cultural differences in the process of socialisation

constitutes an area of research unto itself, some tentative discussion

can be attempted here to show the kind of change the Mandal members are

likely to face in Britain.

Learning a language to communicate effectively is probably one of

the most important dimensions of primary socialisation. It is evident

that Indian children in general and the Mandal children in particular,

face a situation where they are required to communicate in their mother

tongue, Gujarati, as well as in English. Although it was found that they

used Gujarati regularly to communicate to their parents and relatives

who could not speak English, on the whole they used English with their

friends as well as with siblings of similar age at home. The use of

two different languages in the home and the sectarian community does

not appear to be particularly problematic as, on the first set of

superficial observations, the children appear to switch from one language

to the other with relative ease and comfort. However, a closer

examination shows that those who learn English from an early age, use

it more expressively and efficiently than they use Gujarati and that

they seem less articulate in Gujarati. Differential command over the

use of two different languages appears to be a distinctive feature of

the young, not only within the Mandal but also among South Asians in

general. The dominant influence of English in the process of primary

socialisation, raises certain problems in the relationship between

language and ideology. In the particular case of the Mandal, less

efficient use of Gujarati amongst the young can impede their understanding

of ideology of moksha. Language, of course, plays a very important

part in the production, reproduction and transmission of ideology and

this is usually evident in the process of socialisation.

In the social context of an organisation, language is much more

than a mode of communication. If the language provides an important

basis for the expression of a sect's ideology, given the close relation-

ship between ideology, organisation and authority, it must be an

important component of the Mandal's social organisation. In other words,

at least theoretically, if younger ones in the Mandal learn better

English than Gujarati, their lesser understanding of the vernacular

could mean an increasingly less adequate understanding of the opposition

between moksha and man. If the polarity between the two is understood

less clearly, this could potentially mean less effective incorporation

of the young into the social organisation of the Mandal. A number of

changes are likely to occur in the Mandal as a consequence of duality

in the process of socialisation of the young. Unless the leaders of the

sect redefine their methods of social control, the difference between the

adult sect members and the generation of young boys and girls growing

up in Britain is likely to be marked by a sharp degree of conflict and

opposition. The conflict would reflect not only less effective training

of the young in the ways of the sect, but would reduce understanding

between sect members and their children. During the period of field

research, the senior members often referred to the unconventional

behaviour of the young. There were, however, no examples of actual

separation and division between the old and the young. In my regular

contact with the sect members since the completion of the fieldwork, a

degree of apprehension about the 'next generation' has been expressed

with much greater concern, particularly with respect to the conduct of

young males rather than females whose adherance to the traditional

compliance seems to be firmer than that of young men. As the sect is

composed of families, the changes which occur in the relationship between

members of the family could have implications for social relations in

the sect. The sons who disobey or defy the parental authority are likely

to express a measure of defiance against the leaders of the sect. In

one particular reported instance, where an authoritarian father resorted

to regular corporal punishment, division and alienation has become

firmly rooted. The separation between the parents and his son is marked

by bitterness and suffering and a formal intervention of the social

services to provide the local authority care to the young person. Although

this is not a common happening, it emphasises the way in which radical

differences in the process of socialisation can create discontinuity

and conflicts as the young gradually cease to share with the adults a

traditional universe of discourse.

Increasing use of English by the younger sect members means much

more than using an alternative mode of communication. For the knowledge

of English potentially provides an alternative way of thinking. Its

regular use in the school as well as outside, generates a particular

mode of thought which has its ultimate roots in the European tradition

of rational and scientific thought. Although it is beyond the scope of

this study to provide an unambiguously convincing demonstration of this

mode of thought among the young members of the Mandal, fieldwork

observation suggests that the secular effect of this mode as it is

learned in the schools is partly used by the young in the context of

the Mandal in Britain. Towards the end of my fieldwork in Hendon, in

the katha discourses in the temple, there was some evidence to suggest

that the young school boys were attempting to fit symbolic categories

of sect's practice into a rational explanation which would illuminate

the actual empirical relationship between phenomena. An instance which

indicated an awareness of such rational evaluation occurred one evening

in the Mandal temple during the fieldwork. Immediately after the kathā

discourse, the person leading the prayers began to ask the children to

recite a sentence they had remembered from their study of the text Shree

Abji Bapashreeni Vato. After a habitual response by the young, one of

them raised his hand and said, "Can I please ask you a question?",

addressing himself to the leader. His manner of raising the question

created a cautious pause but he was invited to put across what he had

in mind. He continued, pointing his finger at the shrine, "Why do we

place all this food and fruit before the shrine when we know that Lord

Swaminarayan really does not touch it?" The leader was taken aback by

this defiant question and a gentle murmur that broke out expressed

disapproval. It was clear to me that the young man was questioning the

relevance of a symbolic practice and demanding an empirical and rational

explanation. The leader responded by re-emphasising the central element

of faith in the belief and the necessity of appreciating symbols which were truly representative of the divinity assumed to link the shrine to Lord Swaminarayan. From what I saw of it, it was clear that the young lad was rather unconvinced but not prepared to push his probing questioning any further, presumably anticipating some resentment from his fellow worshippers. However, this one rare event indicated the extent to which one young man was prepared to apply his secular outlook to a sectarian practice. This tendency is not very widespread as most of the young accept traditional interpretation of their belief and practices and see the Mandal separately from those everyday occurences which demand empirical explanations. The sect leaders make every effort to teach the young that non-material knowledge of different levels of moksha is not any less real than the concrete experience of everyday reality. The questioning posture demonstrated in this instance as a result of socialisation outside the temple, has the potential of making the old less and less like the young. A transition from an understanding of symbols to questioning them could sharpen conflict between generations.

An important aspect of the sect's organisation is the rigidity with which the relationship of mutual exclusion is defined between the sexes. Although the limited resources of the sect have constrained the leaders from establishing separate temples for male and female members of the sect, social and cultural divisions between the sexes is very marked. There is minimal contact between men and women. Just as the process of socialisation is likely to influence the relationship within the Mandal, it is equally likely to alter the traditional separation of male and female, especially among the young. Their outside experience of relationships between men and women is unlikely to match with unequal traditional division between the two in the sect. In the formal and institutional

context of the sect, the distance between sexes is likely to be

maintained according to the established customary pattern. But in

informal meetings such as the ones which occur in the organisation of

English and other classes and mixed activities of the students, the

rigidity in the gender relationship between sexes becomes less and less

forceful. In the observations recorded during the fieldwork, I was

frequently struck by how much freer and easier contact between boys

and girls was, something which would have been strongly disapproved

and sanctioned either in Cutch or East Africa if it occurred at all in

the first place. The freer and easier interaction between boys and girls

seems to be a consequence of the ideological influences to which the

younger Mandal participants are exposed in Britain. It is reasonable

to suggest that to some extent the parents will reluctantly tolerate

this new behaviour so long as the young do not threaten the tradition

of endogamous caste marriages. During my fieldwork there was no

significant evidence to suggest that the young were willing or determined

to extend their relationsnip with the members of the opposite sex outside

the context of their sect and caste. On many occasions, I watched the

Mandal boys and girls returning home from the secondary schools in their

area. It was not uncommon to see a young English boy walking behind the

daughter of a sect member in order to draw her into a friendly conversation.

Though a young Mandal girl would usually refuse to communicate in such

a context, brief social exchanges, however fleeting these might be, are

not totally unknown. It is also obvious that such encounters will not

necessarily lead to the formation of new relationships. It is, however,

doubtless that the wider ideological context of relationship between

sexes does have some effect on the pattern of rigidity with which the

gender roles are usually defined in the sect. At the very least, in the

long run this influence is likely to create a lesser degree of mutual
avoidance between young men and women in the sect. In this process
of change patterns of socialisation outside the sect,as these are
mediated through the English language,are likely to play a decisive
part.

The process of change that occurs as a consequence of either primary
or secondary socialisation in Britain does not escape the critical
attention of the Mandal leaders. They explicitly recognise that increasing
use of English is often marked by a corresponding loss of knowledge of
Gujarati, and that this could mean that many young participants could
begin to lose meaningful contact with the cultural background of their
own group. The concluding section of Chapter 6 focusses on the attention
that the Mandal leaders have paid to providing instruction to the young
children so that they are simultaneously exposed both to their vernacular
and to the ideology which closely binds them to the Mandal. The teaching
of Gujarati as it occurs in the contemporary context of the sect, appears
to be much more a symbolic assertion that expresses a concern with the
preservation of knowledge of moksha in the mother tongue. As the discussion
in Chapter 6 attempts to explain, for an efficient and a creative teaching
of the vernacular much more is needed than a class which meets once a
week. The need to provide fruitful instruction in Gujarati would require
a more systematic planning of teaching, preferably under someone qualified
to teach the language with a sensitive and sympathetic understanding of
the Gujarati culture. In the circumstances prevailing during the
research period and immediately thereafter, there was no indication that
the leaders were tackling this problem systematically to provide vernacular
classes in a manner which would encourage and stimulate the knowledge of
languate and an appreciation of its connection to the history and ideology
of the sect and the wider Gujarati and Indian culture.

Besides the concern for the retention of the Gujarati language, an
alternative approach the sect leaders consider seriously to deal with
the loss of vernacular among the young, is the possibility of translating
literature of the sect in the English language so that it becomes available
to the British born members of the sect as well as others interested in
knowing about the belief system of the Mandal. While the British-based
leaders of the Mandal have expressed a theoretical interest in such a
possibility, another Swaminarayan sect, Shree Akshar Purshottam Sanstha,
has already commenced publication in English from its main base in India.
From an anthropological perspective, David Pocock provides an illuminating
account of some of the intricate difficulties which arise when an attempt
is made to translate a complex Gujarati theological text into English
without rendering translation less meaningful than the original.[3] Not-
withstanding these difficulties present in translating from 19th century
Gujarati into a European language, a lay theologian of Shree Akshar
Purshottam Sanstha, H.T. Dave has already translated <u>Vachnamrat</u>, the main
text of the Swaminarayan movement into English.[4] It is almost certain
that the followers of the Swaminarayan sects would find that the contextual
spirit of the text is not fully carried over in the English version. In
spite of whatever criticism the text invites, the fact that it has
become available to the followers of Shree Akshar Purshottam Sanstha and
others is an important development. In all probability, the elite leaders
of the sect would wish to refine the quality of translation so that the
English version of the text becomes as authentic as possible. The Shree
Akshar Purshottam Sanstha has also started publishing an English journal
appropriately titled <u>Swaminarayan</u>.[5] It is primarily designed to provide
an interpretation of textual material to those who use English as a mode
of reading and comprehension. It is probable that the progressive example

set by the Bochasan-based extension of Swaminarayan sect in London would
provide some stimulus to the leaders of the Mandal in India and Britain
to encourage translation of the sect's texts in English language.

One effort that the leaders of the Mandal in India have made to
produce some material in English consists of three or four children's
books which depict stories of the sect in simple English.[6] In addition
there are three little booklets titled Divine Speech, Ocean of Nectar
and Bestowal of Divine Happiness.[7] The translation is intended for the
readers in India as well as in England. However, reading and comprehension
of English in two separate cultural contexts raises problems which are
difficult to resolve unless separate English texts are prepared for the
readers in India as distinct from the readers in Britain. Expression of
a particular sentiment or a particular thought in English as used in the
context of sect in India may not necessarily prove to be the appropriate
medium for conveying aspects of sect's belief to children of the Mandal
members in Britain. This specific point can be illustrated with an
opening statement of the booklet Divine Speech, quoted here:-

> Shree Sankalpa Sadguru Shree Muktajivandasji Swami is
> adorned with a magnetic, majestic and miraculous
> personality. He always wears a graceful and gentle
> smile elevating everyone who comes into contact with
> him. The latitudes and altitudes of the sphere of
> his multifavious meditative activities are spread
> far and wide, within and without. His divine contacts
> descend to dreadful and devastated and at the same
> time they ascend to the highest peaks of the illumin-
> ated world.

The devotional use of Gujarati language, which enables the followers
of the sect to express their adoration for the leader in a particular way,
is distinctly reflected in the above quotation. When the context of
devotional expression is translated into English, the use of English is

likely to entail two separate responses. It is most probable that a young man living in Gujarat who reads an account such as the above in English can relate it much more closely to his immediate cultural and linguistic surround in India. Whereas for a Gujarati boy who has attended British schools, the whole process of linguistic categorisation is likely to be different. An account such as the above one is less likely to convey to him the same personal and emotional significance it has for his counterpart in India. Even if some of the difficulties in translation can be eliminated with carefully worked out refinements, the transition most young children of the Mandal have made to the dominant social and cultural institutions of the British society is most likely to influence their reaction to the traditional form of expression.

To recapitulate the essence of this argument, it is evident that the differences in learning and training the young are exposed to, coupled as they are to the greater use of English, indicate that the change is already on the way and will continue to influence the members of the Mandal as they come to terms with a whole range of British institutions. In the differences which begin to develop between the adult members of the sect and their younger sons and daughters, there is, in theory and to a certain extent in practice, a potential for the emergence of some opposition and even conflict between the generations. The extent to which the younger boys and girls are vulnerable to outside influences was evident during the Christmas period in 1971. The Mandal children in the local primary school in Hendon were involved in preparing for the Christmas celebrations in the school. The children of two brothers I lived with, were deeply engrossed in the event and bought Christmas cards

for their friends and teachers. From their observations in the neighbour-
hood, they also learned that the English children of their age went
around singing carols and collecting some cash in return from the
householders. Once the children of my host had noted the association
between carol singing and collecting cash for their effort, they began
to imitate their English counterparts. In other words, they walked
around Hendon singing carols and returning home with their pockets bulging
with small change. As soon as their parents discovered their source of
making money, they strongly reprimanded them and reminded them that it
was most inappropriate for them to sing Christian carols. A single
incident such as this, however, can not be used to argue that the young
ones would necessarily undergo any ideological change in any rational
and conscious sense. If anything, as they grow older, they are more
likely to perceive and understand the differences between the tradition
of their own sect and the Christian values imparted through the schools.
Nevertheless, an example such as this shows the extent of influence the
British cultural patterns have on school boys and girls.

In the bilingual context of their upbringing the English language
and values it carries would continue to remain an influential element
in the lives of the young sect participants now growing up in Britain.
Although the dominance of English would doubtlessly prove to be an
important factor in the process of change, there is every possibility
that the sect leaders would attempt to counter those influences which
might alienate the younger participants away from the sect and the caste
group n$\bar{a}$t to a mode of more individualised living. The discussion in
Chapter 6 shows that the antithesis between that which is sectarian and
that which is secular can be transformed into an acceptable complementarity.

The example in question concerns the initial opposition of the elders
of the sect to the introduction of the English classes at the time when
the children should be attending the temple assemblies in the evening.
As the account illustrates, the introduction of the classes is at first
regarded as depriving the children from their temple prayers in the
evening. Since the measure appears to weigh against the established
tradition, it is at first resented. Subsequently, however, the elders
not only accept the classes but also begin to argue that such secular
activities could prove to be an additional stimulus to sustain interest
of the young in the sect. The activities of the Mandal Students'
Association are regarded as making a very similar contribution, which
is not antithetical to moksha. In view of this particular response to
their new situation in England, any arguments which assume polarity
between sectarian and secular ends are less likely to be particularly
convincing. In the development of the Mandal in Britain, a move towards
progressive incorporation of secular tendencies is more likely to cocur
with the passage of time. The relationship between the secular activities
and the ideology of moksha would remain an important topic of interest
among the sect members. Once the activities which originate in the realm
of secular become regulated and institutionalised in the sect, then the
performance of secular obligations could constitute an important condition
for attaining the moksha state. However, the suggestion that is implicit
in this discussion is that the sect elites would not be necessarily
opposed to all secular activities. Those secular dimensions which improve
life chances and the class situation of the sect members in Britain, are
likely to be resented least if they are defined and seen to be compatible
with the quest    for moksha.

4.    THE MANDAL AND SHIA IMAMI ISMAILI SECT :

SOME COMPARATIVE OBSERVATIONS.

The process of change that has occurred among the Shia Imami Ismailis, the followers of the Aga Khan, illustrates that the development of a traditional sect in modern conditions can occur without opposition and conflict between sectarian and secular attributes. Although there are some striking historical and sociological differences between the Shia Imami Ismailis and the Mandal members living in Britain, these differences also provide a basis for examining certain ideological and organisational similarities between the two. To Gujarati groups in Britain, the Shia Imami Ismailis provide a dynamic model of a modern sect, which has, in responding to modern conditions, brought considerable material prosperity to its members. Therefore it is not at all unusual that members of various groups should evaluate their own development vis-a-vis the Shia Imami Ismailis. The process of evaluation invariably focusses on the extent to which a traditional sect should restructure its organisation so that the emphasis is placed on social and economic developments of the sect members.  In spite of important differences between the Ismailis and the Leva Kanbi Patels of the Mandal, there are certain striking similarities between the two.  An important ideological feature common to these contrasting sects is the divine legitimation of their leaders' temporal authority and unquestioning loyalty and obedience demanded from the sect followers.  However, there are certain fundamental differences between the leaders. Distinct from the ascetic leadership of the Mandal, the Aga Khan as a spiritual leader of the Ismailis, is essentially a man of this world. It is important to emphasise that his social and cultural background is moulded in the uppermost stratum of the European

society. It is in terms of his elitist Western European background that
the late Aga Khan and his contemporary successor have enabled the Ismailis
to utilise their collective resources so that they become successful
business men and entrepreneurs in the context of their sect and the wider
society. This process of transition has occurred at the ideological
level as well as at the organisational level at which the sect has a
specific relationship to the society in which it is found. At the
ideological level, in developing greater discontinuity with the Hindu
influences on Ismailism, the emphasis appears to have shifted from
preparation for salvation after death to the significance of salvation
within the existing context of the sect and in particular in expressing
devotion and obedience to the leader by commitment to work, accumulation
of capital through individual and community based economic enterprises.
As Peter Clarke emphasises in his study, "Ismailism envisages, indeed
implicitly commands and outlines as an article of faith, the pursuit of
economic gain".[8] The transition from a focus on salvation after death
to salvation as an aspect of sound financial investment, is one of the
most distinguishing features of the Shia Imami Ismaili sect in Britain.
It is in view of this ideological and social transformation that the
financial organisation of the sect consists of a series of limited
companies which operate both within and without the sect. In other words,
the Ismailis have successfully wedded their secular concern in the
political economy to the ideology and social organisation of their sect.
In the context of this change their deliberate and planned shift from
the use of Cutchi Gujarati to English has in fact supported the
accumulation of capital. Although the concern with the meaning of death
and salvation has not entirely disappeared among the Ismailis, the
emphasis has been clearly on the collective utilisation of capital and
labour power within the sect.[9]

The evolution of the Shia Imami Ismaili sect among the Gujaratis,
many of whom could trace their origins to Cutch, stands in sharp
contrast to the Mandal as a Swaminarayan sect. First of all, the majority
of the Mandal members come from a rural proletarian background and
largely maintain themselves by selling their labour power in the market
rather than by deploying property to earn their living. In this respect
they differ from those Ismailis who are entrepreneurial owners of
property. The different social positions members of two separate sects
have in the division of labour in the United Kingdom, is one of the
most important planes of difference between them. In general the
Ismailis are more likely to be found in middle class situations and
members of the Mandal in a working class milieu. The most important
difference between the two sects occurs at the level of divinely
legitimated leadership. Besides the fact that the leadership in both
the sects is divinely legitimated, there is little else that is common
between the man who heads the Ismailis in Britain from the one who heads
the Mandal. As a spiritual guide of the Ismailis, the position of the
Aga Khan is embeded in the most privileged stratum of the European
society in contrast to the Mandal leader whose origin can be traced
to a group aspiring to a mercantile position in Gujarat. The significance
of this difference is most crucial if we take account of the fact that
the main seat of the Ismaili sect has a European base as opposed to the
context of traditional groups in Western India where the Swaminarayan
sects have developed most widely. The leadership and organisations of
the two sects also differ in a fundamental way as far as the position
of the respective leaders is concerned. The leader of the Ismailis is
a man of the world and tne social organisation of the Ismaili sect has
evolved as a baseline for investment and economic expansion. The stimulus

that he provides to his followers is being in the world. In a diametric

contrast, leader of the Mandal is an ascetic renouncer. According to

the Hindu tradition, renunciation or sanyasa, as Louis Dumont succinctly

puts it, is a social state apart from the society proper.[10] The Mandal

leader and the body of his renouncers symbolise their relatively monastic

existence in the separation they maintain from the society. Though the

Shia Imami Ismailis were influenced by Hindu ideas, renunciation has

never developed as a dimension of their sectarian organisation. For the

Mandal leader, his renouncers and his lay followers, ascetic renunciation

constitutes an important aspect of sect's organisation. It is an

ideological state which relates to what members of the sect would define

as spiritual pursuit of moksha rather than moksha as an expression of

economic rationality oriented to collective utilisation of resources

within the sect. There is an extent to which differences in ideology,

leadership and organisation become significant in explaining the degree

to which the Mandal in some ways would parallel the Shia Imami Ismaili

sect in its own development. If we examine the financial organisation

of the Mandal, the methods which the sect leaders use for collecting

cash contributions from the lay members is similar to the ones which

the Ismailis apply in their sect. This resemblance is particularly

striking if we examine certain ceremonial occasions used for raising

substantial cash. The occasion in question common to the Mandal and

Shia Imami Ismailis is the ritual and ceremonial weighing of the leaders

in precious metals such as gold, diamond and platinum. It is important

to note that the fund that was collected after the late Aga Khan was

weighed was subsequently transformed into a number of sect-based economic

enterprises in the form of trusts and companies to exploit the investment

potential arising out of it. Although the Mandal leaders have utilised

the surplus created from the fund generated for buying precious metal
to provide certain social facilities to the members of the sect, no
part of the fund is converted into the kind of capital which could be
used for developing profitable economic enterprises as among the Ismailis.
Although the Mandal members have achieved a degree of material prosperity
in East Africa and Britain, their economic activities and resources have
not become formally and institutionally linked to the social organisation
of their sect. However, their material prosperity has consolidated the
Mandal in India, East Africa and Britain and given it a firm organisational
basis.

Some of the lay leaders who are aware of the educational and economic
success of the Shia Imami Ismailis express envious ambivalence towards
the Ismailis.- On the one hand they would like to emulate the Ismailis
in their desire to see social and material transformation of the Mandal
so that the members of the sect can achieve a better competitive position
in the political economy in Britain. On the other hand, the dimension
of renunciation that is so much the part of sect's contemporary leader-
ship would generate some apprehension about developing any Mandal based
economic enterprises. Though there appears to be some incompatibility
between the ideal of ascetic renunciation and the processes of organisational
innovations to accommodate aspects of economic gain in the existing
framework of the sect, it is possible for a similar development to occur
in the Mandal if the meaning of moksha were closely related to the
temporal, social and material conditions of the sect members. However
it is less likely that this transition can occur as an independent
process in the present context of the Mandal. A self conscious creation
of such a novel meaning presupposes educational and occupational

development and an orientation to work which the Mandal has barely witnessed in the same way as have the Shia Imami Ismailis. However, as the context of institutions in Britain begins to influence the growing generation of the young in the Mandal, a pattern of change, in the ideology and organisation of the sect, can occur in such a way so that certain secular and contemporary concerns gain a greater prominence in the Mandal.

In the process of change and development, Shia Imami Ismailis have made a distinct ideological and organisational transition to a situation where the sect's ideology emphasises the importance of improving one's economic standing as an expression of commitment to the sect in the same way as does the dominant class ideology in the contemporary Western and non-Western societies. The Ismailis illustrate clearly that increasing importance of this particular orientation does not necessarily weaken one's affiliation to the sect. Besides the economic advantage that one has as a member of the sect, one is also bound to other sect members through the network of kinship and affinity. This network can and does reinforce one's affiliation to the sect. In this sense both the kin and affines play an important part in the social organisation of the Mandal. In this respect the principle of endogamy remains one of the most important features of the sect endogamy as neither the Ismailis nor the Hindus appear to have developed any institutional mechanism for converting and incorporating the outsiders into their sects. Through the institution of the sect endogamy Ismailis usually exclude non-Ismailis from their sect. Members of the Mandal belong to a nāt group in which they prefer to arrange marriages within the sect although these alliances across the paksha boundary are not uncommon at all. The principle of nāt endogamy and to a limited degree arrangement of marriages between the Mandal members,

remains one of the most important principles of the social organisation
of the sect. This particular feature of a group such as the Mandal has
important implications for the discussion of social change among the
groups within the Indian population in Britain. As the first and
second generation sect participants become both culturally and
generationally more and more unlike each other, those elders who can
continue to regulate the structure of sect and caste based endogamy
would be able to control the availability of women to other men in an
essentially male-dominated context of the Indian population in Britain.
As long as the young men find it necessary to obtain wives for them-
selves through a traditional or a modified system of arranged marriages
in their own nat, in spite of their anglophile socialisation and training
in English institutions, they are most likely to find that they are
socially confined to their particular group through many multiple
social relationships. In their earlier settlement, when the Ismailis
came to Britain as students rather than either as migrant settlers or
as members of families resident in the United Kingdom, many of them
tended to marry English and continental girls in their move to
individualised suburban life as reported in an excellent study Roger
Hallam carried out.[11] However, subsequently a substantial number of
Ismaili families have settled in Britain and have reproduced the orbit
of their community in re-establishing the jamatkhana, the Ismaili mosque
in all towns and cities where they have settled. In view of this
particular development, it is reasonable to assume that in the presence
of kin and affines, pressures to maintain endogamy are likely to be
felt more intensely. For the Mandal members, their nat continues to
remain the most important context for the arrangement of affinal relations,
the more committed members of the sect having a preference for brides

and grooms from within the Mandal. As the discussion in Chapter 3

pointed out, amongst the young there was no evidence to indicate that

they were, despite an expression of some scepticism about the Mandal,

in any way prepared to break the rules of endogamous marriages. An

instance of an intercaste marriage that had occurred in one of the

East African congregations in the late 1970s was one of the first

instances of a Mandal follower marrying out of the caste and the sect

fold. References to this incident were usually marked by strong

disapproval if not an outright condemnation. In view of the available

evidence, it would appear that non-endogamous marriages involving the

Mandal Leva Kanbi Patels are very rare and perhaps even non-existent

as yet. The extent to which generational and cultural discontinuity

and the consequent changes in the attitudes of the young influence the

organisation of caste and sect based marriages is an open question. In

this regard, the development of the Shia Imami Ismaili sect is instructive

in that it shows that the economic advancement, which is essentially

class-based, is not necessarily opposed to the social identity of

traditional groups. For such groups, as the Ismailis illustrate, can

incorporate new ideological and organisational elements into their

sect without altering its social character as a group. Although the

Mandal, with its distinctive ideology, organisation and history is

unlikely to reproduce the development of the Ismaili sect, it may well

maintain itself as a separate social group much like the Shia Imami

Ismailies. As some of the earlier discussion has suggested, the

incompatibilities between the ideology of the sect and the dominant

ideology of the wider society are likely to arise in the Mandal. In

view of these new social conditions in which the Mandal members find

themselves, it is almost inevitable that the change that occurs would

influence the development of the Mandal as the leaders begin to accept
certain secular characteristics and progressively define them as being
consistent with the belief in the moksha of the highest order. If such
a process develops as an important feature of the Mandal, it can not be
assumed that there would arise any necessary polarity between the Mandal
ideology and certain secular concerns and practices, although some clash
is bound to occur as the members respond to the new situations in terms
of their particular viewpoints. Although tne institutions of the British
society might create a greater importance of strategies which the sect
members need to employ socially and economically, these measures are
unlikely to alter the basic character of the Mandal as a caste based
sect. A more radical change can occur if the young members break away
from the organisation to lead their own independent life, especially by
choosing to marry outside the kin-determined context of caste and sect.
The prospect for such a change appears much less of a probability in
the present social life of the Mandal members.


5.    THE MANDAL IN THE WIDER BRITISH CONTEXT.

A predominant theme in the studies of Indian subcontinental minorities
is the extent to which distinctive groups in this population become
integrated and assimilated in a British society which is either explicitly
or implicitly assumed to be a relatively homogeneous entity. In other
words, in sociological and more populat views about what constitutes
society, the assumption is that the culture and society are coterminous
categories. The notion of separation between society and culture and
development of the idea that a given society could consist of groups
with different cultures does not appear to have gained much ground since
Roy Jenkins defined integration as "not a flattening process of assimilation

but as equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an

atmosphere of mutual tolerance".[12] The history of what has now become

institutionalised as 'race relations' indicates that the liberal spirit

of tolerance towards cultural diversity has considerably diminished.

In the wider context of the political economy, in terms of identity

assumed between society and culture, the presence of other cultures

has been perceived as something alien that is capable of swamping the

British society. When the assumptions about the homology between society

and culture is applied to the concept of nation, the complexities

surrounding the social and political debates concerning the minorities

become more evident. As David Pocock has recently suggested in his book

Understanding Social Anthropology, "the most potent 'we group' in the

modern world is the nation",[13] which is regarded as the largest social

and political unit.  In giving a short account of 'what is nation',

David Pocock says,

> The Oxford English Dictionary tells us that it is an
> extensive aggregate of persons, so clearly associated
> with each other by common descent, language or history,
> as to form a distinct race or people, usually organised
> as a separate political state and occupying a definite
> territory.

It adds, "In early examples the racial idea is usually stronger than

political".[14]  In giving a brief historical exposition of the word nation,

Pocock suggests,

> I think it would be correct to say that, despite
> the OED reference to a later emphasis on political
> rather than racial unity, popular usage still
> confuses the two. [15]

In this discussion, Pocock also indicates further that it is not uncommon

for the politicians to imply and manipulate racial and political components

of the word nation to suit their own particular ends. Given the underlying

association between culture, society and nation, with the possibilities

of strong racial component popularity related to all the three, it is

not at all uncommon that the words such as culture and nationalities

could and do imply race and often mask racism, which has become a

distinctive feature in definitions of minorities from the Indian sub-

continent and the Caribbean.   In his study of development of Indian

subcontinental groups in Britain, as David Pocock has cogently suggested,

> The social anthropologist has got to recognise this
> racialism both when it is for the most part latent,
> as in the debate on national regionalism within the
> United Kingdom, and when it is unconscious and
> unacknowledged, in the rhetoric of liberal assimilative
> policies, formally opposed to more blatently racialist
> and crudely anti-immigration postures. [16]

In their migratory settlement in the United Kingdom, social groups

such as Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal are subject to two

major forces.   On the one hand, the changing and declining character

of the British political economy is likely to affect them adversely in

terms of their prospects for better education, employment and life chances

in general.   On the other hand, related to the decline in the political

economy is the emergence of a racist ideology which has, since the 1960s,

become an important element of British politics through what is now a

deeply rooted association between race and immigration. And as Daniel

Lawrence has recently observed,

> The race issue is so deeply rooted a part of British
> history, culture and social and economic structure,
> that it will remain an important feature of our political
> life for the foreseeable future. [17]

To predict the effects of these macro-level forces on the ideology and

organisation of the Mandal is by no means a simple task.   If the Mandal

members face prospects of greater unemployment and racial hostility than

they did during the course of this study at the beginning of the 1970s,

then the perception and experience of these difficulties is likely to

strengthen their commitment to the Mandal and their belief in <u>moksha</u>.
There is also a theoretical possibility that the adverse effects of a
shrinking job market and racial hostility might make them more acutely
aware of their contemporary economic situation in the United Kingdom.
In my relatively regular contact with the Mandal for the past eight to
nine years, the pattern of change that has occurred among the young
provides a clue to tendencies which some members of the sect are likely
to develop. In the early 1970s, the informal meetings after the evening
prayers rarely, if ever,focussed on the nature of political parties in
Britain, the existence of marginal political parties being almost
unknown to the most Mandal members. My visits to Hendon in the late
1970s indicate much greater an interest in British political develop-
ments. In a visit to Hendon, immediately following one particular clash
between the National Front supporters and supporters of the Socialist
Workers' Party, the younger participants in the sect expressed a depth
of interest in the event and expressed a great concern about deteriorating
relationship between the white and non-white residents in parts of London.
The extent to which such developments are likely to generate politicisation
of organised groups such as the Mandal has important implications for
the aspects of British politics which influence the social life of the
subcontinental minorities living in Britain. Although the Mandal members
have not consciously related <u>moksha</u> to the context of their social life
outside the sect, those who are familiar with the histories of ideology
know that a traditional concept can acquire a new meaning in relation to
20th century politics. The extent to which the Mandal members will relate
their belief in the living experience of <u>moksha</u> to the social and political
context of their life in Britain remains to be seen.

NOTES : Chapter 8.

1.    John Rex and Robert Moore, Race, Community and Conflict : A
      Study of Sparkbrook, 1967, London, Oxford University Press,
      for the Institute of Race Relations, p.231.

2.    Ibid., p.231.

3.    David Pocock,'Preservation of Religious Life: Hindu Immigrants in
      England,'Contributions to Indian Sociology, (NS), Volume 10, No. 2,
      1976, pages 341-363.  Especially see the section on Language and
      Religious Instructions, pages 347-355.

4.    For a short account of this text, see K.S. Ramakrishna Rao's
      review titled'Shree Swaminarayan's Vachnamritam' in Bhavan's
      Journal, Volume XXIV, No.17, March 1978, pp.77-78.

5.    See, for instance, Swaminarayan, Volume 1, No.4, January 1979.

6.    Jagdish Keshavlal Pandya (ed.), Loaf of Love, Dacoit becomes
      Devotee, Lord's Boon, 1971 Ahmedabad (Maninagar) Swaminarayan Temple.

7.    Divine Speech, Ocean of Nectar, Bestowal of Divine Happiness, 1969
      Ahmedabad (Maninagar) Swaminarayan temple.

8.    Peter B. Clarke, 'The Ismaili Sect in London: Religious Institutions
      and Social Change', Religion, Volume 8, Part 1, Spring 1978,
      pp.68-84.

9.    Roger Hallam, 'The Ismailis in Britain', New Community, Volume 1,
      No.5, Autumn 1972, pp.383-392.

10.   Louis Dumont, Religion, Politics and History in India, 1970, The
      Hague, Mouton Publishers, p.43.

11.   Roger N.M. Hallam, The Shia Imami Ismailia Community in Britain,
      1971, London, School of Oriental and African Studies.  A M.Phil.
      thesis.

12.   E.J.B. Rose and Associates, Colour and Citizenship: A Report on
      British Race Relations, 1969, London, Oxford University.

13.   David Pocock, Understanding Social Anthropology, 1975 London,
      Hodder and Stoughton, p.221.

14.   Ibid., p.222.

15.   Ibid., p.223

16.   David Pocock, 1976, op.cit., p.364.

17.   Daniel Lawrence, 'Prejudice, Politics and Race', New Community,
      Vol. VII, No, 1, Winter, 1978/79, pp.44-55.

APPENDIX 1.

(A) : Gujarat State in India.
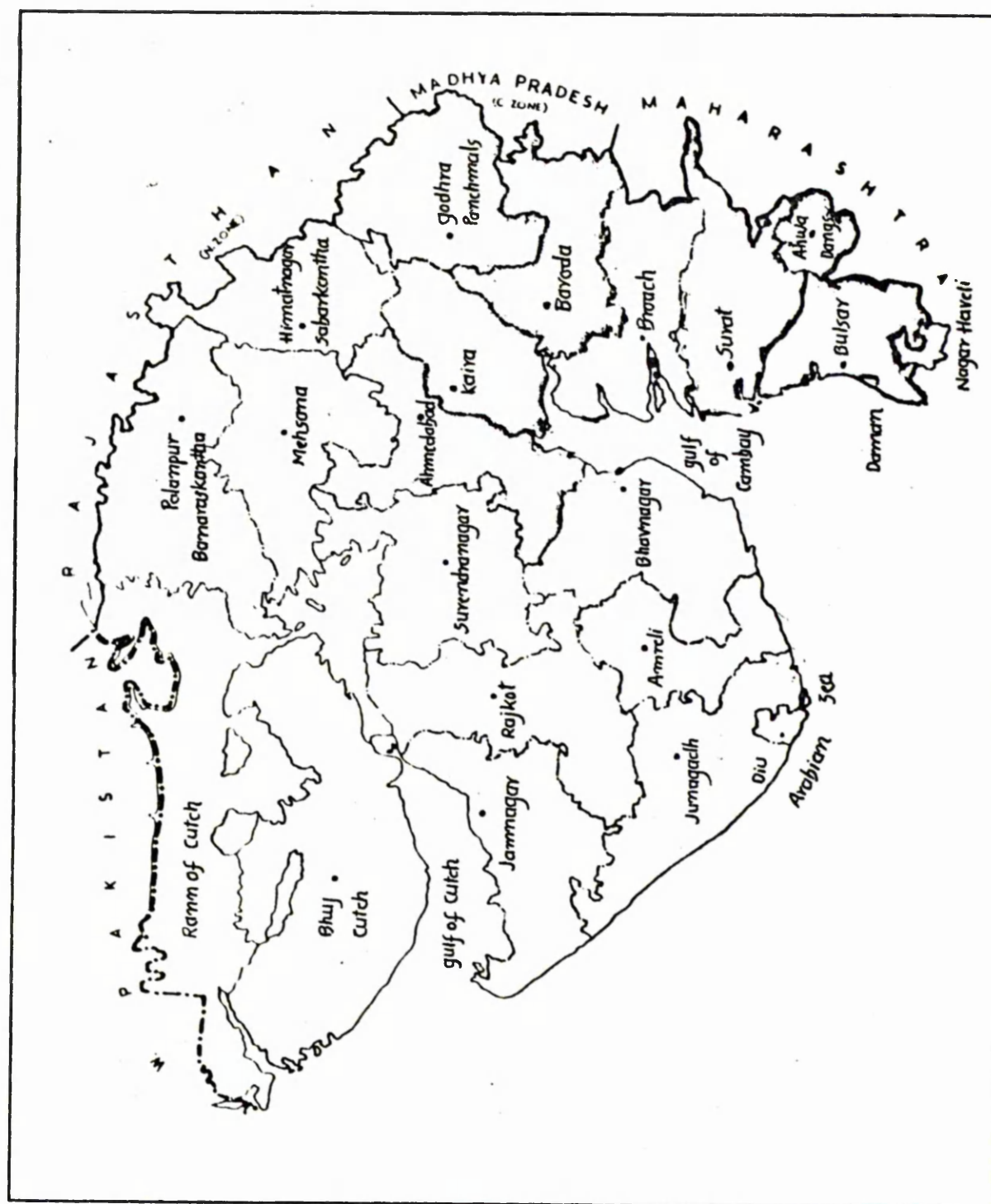
(B) : Cutch and other Districts in Gujarat.

(C) : Villages near Bhuj where the members of Shree
Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal come from.

(D) : The location of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan
Mandal in Hendon, North London.

(E) : The location of Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan
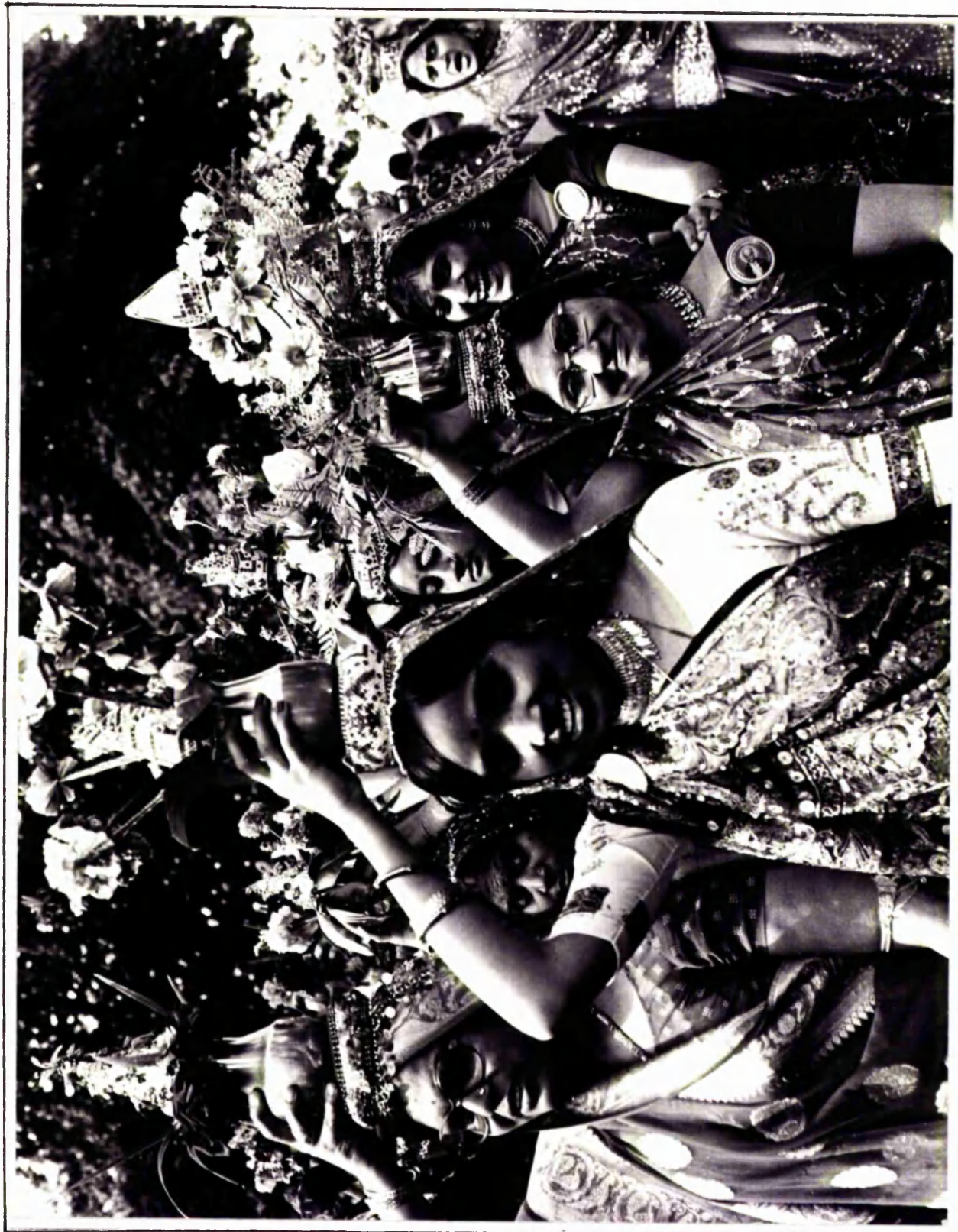Mandal in Bolton, Lancashire.

APPENDIX   2.

(A): Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal nagaryātra procession through Hendon.

(B) : Women in the nagaryātra procession.

(C) : Shree Muktajivandasji Swami blessing his joyful followers.

(D): The Sect's Temple in Hendon.

(E): Shree Muktajivandasji Swami with Hendon-based leaders of the Mandal and the Chief Inspector of the Police.

(F) : Shree Muktajivandasji Swami blessing a member of the Mandal Band.

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