

CHAPTER V

***THE SADHAKAS OF
NIMBARGI SAMPRADAYA***

CHAPTER V

THE SADHAKAS OF NIMBARGI SAMPRADAYA

The preceding chapter ('The centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya'), and the current chapter ('The Sadhakas of Nimbargi Sampradaya') are complimentary to each other to a great extent in the sense that nature, working of the centres, and their future plans influence their Sadhakas (respondents) and Sadhakas' behaviour and views in turn shape the nature, working and destiny of the centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya. The present chapter has two main parts : (i) the personal information of the respondents with respect to sex, age, region, community (rural/urban), religion, caste and subcaste, marital status, education, languages that they know, class (based on occupation, approximate income and other such criteria), food habits, political connection, details about mode of initiation and incentive for it, initiation of close relatives, visits to the centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya; (ii) Comments on organisations (centres), spiritual leaders, rituals, philosophy and other such aspects and finally whether they want to stick to Nimbargi Sampradaya and if so why do they want to stick?

Interview of 110 respondents (including 14 mailed and 5 closely associated with Nimbargi Sampradaya) is held from 04-10-1990 to 30-04-1992 in different places like Solapur, Bijapur, Nimbargi, Jamkhadi, Yallatti, Belgaum, Sangli, Udupi. No strict sampling method is followed as the respondents are scattered over a long area and to trace them in one place (except the centres where they are busy in activities of the centres) is an extremely difficult task. On account of certain reasons (financial and time constraints) it has not become possible to give equal weightage to the followers and closely associated ones of all the important centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya. Following is the number of the followers and closely associated ones of different lines of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

1) Chimmad Sampradaya 14 2) Inchageri Sampradaya 96

(Amburao Maharaj 2, Girimalleswar Maharaj line 6, Narasihmeswar Maharaj line 5, Gurudev Ranade line 51 [28 initiated by Gurudev Ranade, 20 Gurudev Ranade Samadhi,

Peculiar cases-dream 1, Gurudev's photo 1, closely associated with Nimbali centre 1] Limaye line 1, Prabhakar Maharaj line 6, Anjuti Maharaj line 6, Horti Ramarao Maharaj line 1, Sri Dattopant Maharaj line 1, Sri Pandurang Maharaj line 1, Sri Siddhalingayya Swami line 6, Sri Siddharameswar Maharaj line 10).

The number of the disciples (and closely associates) of Chimmad Sampradaya is quite limited as compared to Inchageri Sampradaya. The respondents representing Nimbali ashram of Inchageri Sampradaya are more for the following reasons.

Nimbali Ashram has been founded by late Prof. R.D. Ranade who is the prime exponent of Philosophy of Nimbargi Sampradaya and it is mainly through his works the academic world has come to know about Nimbargi Sampradaya to a certain extent.

Prof. R.D. Ranade is having a few Christian disciples (including two French disciples) apart from Muslims, Jains, Hindus.

Besides, Prof. R.D. Ranade was in close touch with the original seat and original centre of Nimbargi Sampradaya and some spiritual leaders of Chimmad Sampradaya like Kotnis Maharaj and a few important centres and leaders of Inchageri Sampradaya. Sri Amburao Maharaj, Sri Shivalingavva and some other leaders were in close touch with Prof. R. D. Ranade. Narasappa Shapeti - the disciple of the saint of Nimbargi used to pay visits to Nimbali Ashram.

A systematic record of the number of the initiated by Prof. R.D. Ranade, and to a certain extent a systematic record the number of initiated on Samadhi are kept in the Ashram.

Nimbali Ashram is situated between Solapur and Bijapur railway line and the Ashram is by the side of Nimbali Railway station. It has become possible for me therefore, to travel from Bijapur (my native place) to Nimbali frequently. My close association with that centre has enabled me to stay there sometime and to conduct the interviews of the disciples during leisure hours and to obtain addresses of some disciples who were in places like New Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore, Nasik. Probably only in this main centre of Inchageri Sampradaya the indirect method of initiating through the messengers was followed during life time of Gurudev Ranade and on his demise

the novel method of initiating on Samadhi was started. It has become possible for me to trace a few peculiar cases of initiation belonging to this Ashram as mentioned earlier. To this extent my research on respondents' views leans towards the followers and a close associate of Nimbali centre.

The data collected on the respondents' views and to a certain extent of the centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya is processed with the help of a computer at Belgaum from 15/5/1992 to 19/5/1992. Some details about personal information of the respondents/the Sadhakas are tabled in the following manner.

Table No. 13

MALE AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
70	40	110

The above table clearly reveals that the number of the male respondents of Nimbargi Sampradaya is more than that of females. Female respondents were not that easily available in several centres as they have to carry out their household duties. Some females declined to give interviews on the ground that their husbands and senior male members of the family know better than they themselves. Some female respondents were to be approached through their husbands, relatives and friends.

Table No. 14

AGE RANGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100	TOTAL
05	10	13	23	35	18	05	01	110

The above table indicates clearly that most of the respondents belong to 60-70 age group. This table suggests that most of the respondents come under the age group of 40 to 80. Memory of some respondents above 80 was fading. Nevertheless they could provide first hand information and notice

significant changes that have taken place in Nimbargi sampradaya. Most of the respondents from 20-40 age range are the new comers to Nimbargi sampradaya.

Table No. 15

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Karnataka	Maharashtra	Goa	Total
69	40	1	110

Most of the followers and close associates of Nimbargi Sampradaya (One can guess from the Table No. -15) are from Karnataka and Maharashtra. Quite a few followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya are there in Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), Rajasthan, Goa.

Table No. 16

**DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS
IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.**

Rural	Urban	Total
16	94	110

From the above table it can be noticed that out of 110 respondents, only 16 are from rural areas while 94 are from urban areas. In centres like Nimbargi very few localites are attracted by Nimbargi Sampradaya. Nimbargi Ashram is visited, for instance, by the localites but many of them have not made up their mind to get initiated and to take part in daily Bhajan and meditation and other such programmes. One localite from Nimbargi village said "Who would recognise me there (Nimbargi Ashram) which is full of urban educated Brahmins from Maharashtra?" Another localite but initiated into the Sampradaya said, "Localites are more attracted by religion which is full of miracles and Nimbargi Sampradaya does not give undue importance to miracles in spiritual life". The abstract philosophy and its stress on Nirguna bhakti (meditation) may be the other reasons for not joining Nimbargi Sampradaya by rural folk on a large scale.

Table No. 17

RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Hindus	Muslims	Jains	Tribes	Total
106	2	1	1	110

It is obvious from Table No. -17 that a vast majority of the followers/respondents are Hindus than non-Hindus although the doors of Nimbargi Sampradaya are open to one and all. Though the representation of Non-Hindus and tribal community is thin in Nimbargi sampradaya the followers take pride in stating that within the fold of Nimbargi Sampradaya there are non-Hindus too.

In the Table No. -18 of caste and sub-caste distribution of respondents Non-Hindus like Jains and Muslims and tribal community-Lambanis (Banjaras) find the place for the simple reason that several sociologists like J. H. Hutton, R.A. Schermerhorn take the stand that a few tribals¹, Jains², Muslims³ function like castes in Indian Society. The Table No -18, however, reveals that Brahmins, Lingayats and Marathas have joined this Sampradaya more than the rest of the castes. Among the sub-castes of Brahmins Deshasthas(36) are most attracted followed by Chitpawans (21), Karhadi (05), Vaishnavas (03), Saraswats (02), Kerala (01), most of the followers among Lingayats are Banajigers (07) followed by Panchamsalis (03), Jangamas (02), and Koshti, Hoogar (Guru), Ghanigar, Gowli one each. One reason for the more attraction of Brahmins and Lingayats is that most of the spiritual leaders of Nimbargi Sampradaya are Lingayats and Brahmins. The saint of Nimbargi (Lingayat) was initiated by Kadasiddha (Lingayat) and the founders of Chimmad and Inchageri Sampradaya were Deshastha Brahmins.

A vast majority of spiritual leaders of Nimbargi Sampradaya were married. Nimbargi Sampradaya lays stress upon both Prapancha (worldly life) and Paramartha (spiritual life). One need not lead an unmarried life to attain God-hood. There is no bar on remarriage too. Accordingly the Table No.-19 clearly indicates that a vast majority of the respondents are

Table 18
Caste and Sub-caste distribution of the respondents

1	Total	2	Total	3	Total	4	Total	5	Total	6	Total	7	Total	8	Total	9	Total	10	Total	11	Total	12	Total	13	Total	14	Total	Grand Total
No. Brah sub mins castes	68	Ling- ayats	16	Mara- thas	12	Mara- wadis	01	Shimpis -pis	01	Gold Smiths	03	Kshat triyas	01	Vaishy- -vanis	01	Talwars (Kolis)	01	Ambiges	01	Guravs (Poojaris)	01	Jains	01	Muslims	02	Lambanis	01	110
Desha stha	36	Banaj- eger	07	Tellis	01	Vaish -nava	01	Namdev	01	Hindu Panchal	01	Sahasra Jana	01	Kudale	01													
2	Chit- pawan	21	Pancham -sali	03	Others	11	Others	00	Others	00	Others	02	Others	00	Others	00												
3	Karhadi	05	Jangam	02												00												
4	Vaishn- ava	03	Koshti	01												00												
5	Sara- swat	02	Hoogar (Guru)	01												00												
6	Kerala	01	Ghaniga	01												00												
7	--	--	Gowli	01												00												

married (90); 8 respondents are unmarried. Three respondents are remarried (only men and not women) and 9 are widowed.

Table No. 19

MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Married	Unmarried	Remarried	Widowed	Total
90	08	03	09	110

In the following Table No.-20 Primary education is from 1st standard to 7th Standard and high school education has been defined as the education from 8th standard to Matriculation. Any education after Matriculation (for sake of convenience) has been defined as graduation. Table No. -20 clearly indicates that graduates (48) are more in number than non-graduates. 30 respondents have received high school education, 26 primary education and only 6 are illiterates. On the whole it appears that educated (literate) are more attracted by Nimbargi Sampradaya than the illiterates.

*Table No. 20

LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Primary	High School	Graduation	Illiterate	Total
26	30	48	06	110

Table No. 21

MOTHER TONGUE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Hindi	Marathi	Kannada	Konkani	Marawadi	Total
02	62	44	01	01	110

The Table No.-21 suggests that most of the respondents of Nimbargi Sampradaya have their mother tongue either Marathi (62) or Kannada (44) as most of the important centres are situated in Karnataka and Maharashtra. It must also be noted

that nearly 64 out of 110 respondents know both Kannada and Marathi and 29 respondents know Marathi but not Kannada and hardly 5 respondents know Kannada and not Marathi. There is thin representation as per Table No.-21 of the respondents whose mother tongue is Hindi(2), or Konkani(1), or Marawadi(1).

Table No. 22

CLASS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Upper-	Lower-	Upper-	Lower-	Upper-	Lower-	Total
Upper	Upper	Middle	Middle	Lower	Lower	
04	12	39	42	07	06	110

I have no hesitation in stating that several respondents were frightened in giving appropriate income inspite of assurance about anonymity of the respondents and academic interest. I have judged their classes in my own way not only on the basis of their stated income but also, style of life, property and such other matters. Table No.-22 reveals that upper-middle class and lower-middle class people are more attracted than upper-upper (4), Lower-upper (12), upper-lower (7), Lower-lower (6) class respondents.

Table No. 23

OCCUPATIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Household	Agriculture	Service	Business	Total
25	05	66	14	110

The above table reveals that more number of respondents are /were in service (66). The number of householders (in an exclusive sense of the term) among the respondents is 25. Business persons are 14 and those respondents who are engaged in agriculture are only 5. For the purpose of convenience in the service category even the retired people are included. Doctors, Engineers, Advocates, Artists/Film Stars, clerks, Gowndis and those who take up some menial jobs, servants are included in the category of service.

Table No. 24

FOOD HABITS OF THE RESPONDENTS

1	2	3A	3B	Total
96	06	05	03	110

- In the above Table
- 1 - Stands for Vegetarians
 - 2 - Stands for non-Vegetarians
 - 3A - Stands for former non-Vegetarians who have become Vegetarians on joining Nimbargi Sampradaya.
 - 3B - Stands for former non-Vegetarians who have reduced non-Vegetarian food on joining Nimbargi Sampradaya.

From the above table it is clear that a vast majority of the respondents are vegetarians i.e., 96 out of 110 respondents and only 6 are non-vegetarians. Five persons who were once non-vegetarians have become vegetarians on joining Nimbargi Sampradaya. Three respondents have reduced non-vegetarian food but not given up non-vegetarian food completely on joining Nimbargi Sampradaya.

The main reason for the above facts seems to be the leaning of Nimbargi Sampradaya towards vegetarian food. The non-vegetarian respondent told me that he was not instructed to abandon non-vegetarian food and he has not given it up. This respondent is a Talwar/Koli by caste and people of his caste by tradition do take non-vegetarian food occasionally. One Muslim respondent was instructed to give up non-vegetarian food at the time of his initiation into Nimbargi Sampradaya and then onwards he has not taken non-vegetarian food. A Lambani (Banjara) respondent who was formerly non-vegetarian has given up completely non-vegetarian food on initiation. One Saraswat Brahmin respondent informed me that he has abandoned totally non-vegetarian food after initiation but he does not mind consuming eggs. A Kshatriya (non-vegetarian caste) has given up non-vegetarian food after initiation.

Interestingly three Brahmin respondents (vegetarians by caste) do take non-vegetarian food. A wife of Military Officer

takes non-vegetarian food as a change. One military officer and another working in a Bank do take non-vegetarian food.

One Maratha male respondent informed me that he gave up both non-vegetarian food and intoxicated drinks and drugs soon after initiation. An advocate (Brahmin by caste) before joining Nimbargi Sampradaya was a chain smoker and heavy drunkard and used to take non-vegetarian food frequently. This advocate's spiritual teacher instructed him not to take drinks, non-vegetarian food etc. The advocate disciple said to his spiritual teacher, 'One is required to take alcohol, non-vegetarian food etc., in the bar for the sake of company'. To this the spiritual teacher replied "Don't be after them (non-vegetarian food and drinks etc;). Never mind the consequences". The advocate has completely abandoned non-vegetarian food, drinks and smoking.

A Muslim disciple of Nimbargi Sampradaya from Maharashtra stated that though he is a Muslim he does not have liking for non-vegetarian food since childhood but he does take non-vegetarian food occasionally.

One Maratha respondent coming under the age group of 70-80 informed me that he has become a vegetarian on joining Nimbargi Sampradaya but before joining Nimbargi Sampradaya he was a non-vegetarian.

One female Maratha respondent from Karnataka has reduced non-vegetarian food on joining Nimbargi Sampradaya. This female respondent's husband who is a follower of Nimbargi Sampradaya does not like non-vegetarian food, which he has given up completely after joining Nimbargi Sampradaya. But the female Maratha respondent does not mind taking non-vegetarian food whenever her husband goes out of station.

On the whole, it appears that most of the respondents are vegetarians as per caste tradition and also by practice or habit and not necessarily because of their joining in Nimbargi Sampradaya. A few respondents have not given up non-vegetarian food for they are not instructed by their spiritual teachers or messengers at the time of initiation or afterwards. A few Brahmin respondents who are vegetarians as per caste traditions have not given up non-vegetarian food completely and at the most they have reduced the non-vegetarian food. On their own accord a few non-vegetarians by caste and practice have given

up non-vegetarian food even though they were not instructed anything about it. According to them Nimbargi Sampradaya lays stress upon spiritual life and in the interest of spiritual life it is necessary to be away from non-vegetarian food. One retired professor with some Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh background has categorically stated that he is a strict vegetarian because vegetarian food is conducive to spiritual life.

Table No. 25

MODE OF INITIATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Direct	Indirect	Samadhi	Dream	Photo	Nil	Total
54	29	20	01	01	05	110

The above table indicates different modes of initiation in Nimbargi Sampradaya. (out of 110 respondents, 5 closely associated with Nimbargi Sampradaya are not initiated). In direct mode of initiation the spiritual teacher himself imparts divine Nam and gives information about the method of meditation and vows to be followed without the help of the messenger. In indirect mode of initiation the spiritual teacher imparts the 'divine nam' through the messengers appointed by the spiritual teacher himself who would convey 'Divine Nam' and provide information regarding method of meditation and vows to be followed.

On Samadhi the aspirants who want to get initiated place the chit of their 'Ishta Devata' and take the same Nam. There are also cases in which the spiritual teacher is said to have initiated the aspirants in their dream or in their divine vision. One respondent has got initiated by keeping the chit of her 'Ishta Devata' before the photo of a spiritual teacher.

In a vast majority of the centres/sub-centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya the direct mode of initiation is being followed. The above table indicates that 54 respondents are initiated by the direct method and 29 respondents are initiated by indirect method, 20 are on 'Samadhi', one in dream by the spiritual teacher (Gurudev Ranade), and one is in front of the Photo of her spiritual teacher.

The direct method of initiation is more popular than the indirect method of initiation. The indirect method of initiation, was followed by Sri Gurudev Ranade. Sri Gurudev Ranade appointed two messengers who were his Gurubandhus (spiritual brothers) Viz., Param Poojya Kakasaheb Karkhanis, and Param Poojya Kakasaheb Tulpule.

Soon after the demise of Sri Gurudev Ranade the method of initiation on Samadhi was started. The same method is said to have been started at Kubakaddi after the demise of Sri Rangarao Maharaj - the disciple of Sri Horti Ramarao Maharaj.

At Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir, the Priest hands over beads of rosary by touching the finger of the idol of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj and conveys the Nam.

One unmarried blind girl is said to have been initiated by Gurudev Ranade in her dream in 1966 when she was 19 years old. According to the girl Gurudev Ranade appeared in her dream and patted on her back and asked her whether she had the genuine desire to get initiated and when she expressed her willingness to get initiated she was blessed with 'Divine Nam'.

A widow coming under the age-group of 60-70 got initiated herself by placing the chit by writing her 'Ishta Nam' before the photo of Sri Gurudev Ranade in 1982 when she was 60. This respondent does not find any difference between the method of initiation on Samadhi and in front of Gurudev's photo.

One present spiritual leader of Chimmad Sampradaya has criticized the mode of initiation on Samadhi on the ground that it is not 'Divine Nam' and in the whole Nimbargi Sampradaya he is the only authorised person according to him to initiate. The authority to initiate others has come to him through the son of Chimmad Maharaj and the authority to initiate others has come to Chimmad Maharaj through the saint of Nimbargi. The saint of Nimbargi has entrusted the work of initiation to him (Chimmad Maharaj) at the time of the demise. This present leader says that 'Sabij Nam' is only one. But in some centres different Namas are given and hence they cannot be called 'Sabij Nam'. No change or modification is introduced in 'Sabij Nam'.

Another version about the authority to initiate is that the only person who has seen 'Divine Nam' or heard 'Divine

Namas' becomes capable of initiating the aspirants. Nevertheless, the permission of Guru is needed to initiate others. Those who are not blessed with Divine Namas in audio or visual spiritual experiences cannot impart 'Divine Nam'.

It has been observed that some of those who are initiated by the spiritual teachers consider themselves to be more fortunate than those who were initiated on the Samadhi. While some others do not find any difference between the two Viz; the 'Divine Mantra' imparted by Guru and on the Samadhi of Guru as both of them sometimes are blessed with spiritual experiences.

One widow from Karnataka has prior to her initiation into Nimbargi Sampradaya was initiated by Sri Jagadguru Shankaracharya - Kudalgi.

I have come across some respondents who are initiated by different spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

1. One respondent of Chimmad Sampradaya is said to have been initiated by Sri Kotnis Maharaj when he was hardly 14 days old. This respondent in his old age still remembers the touch of Sri Kotnis Maharaj and the Nam that was imparted by Sri Kotnis Maharaj has been confirmed by Dada Kotnis Maharaj alias Raghunath Maharaj in 1935.

2. A Lingayat disciple was initiated first by Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj. As he was not much benefited in the spiritual world by the Nam imparted by Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj he got initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya by Sri Avaji Maharaj - the disciple of Sri Giri Malleshwar Maharaj at Surpali near Jamkhandi. The previous initiation of this respondent was in 1940 when he was 20 at Jamkhandi by Sri Narasihmeswar Maharaj and the later initiation was by Sri Avaji Maharaj at Surpali. He says that he is more benefited by the second initiation than the previous initiation.

3. One scholar disciple of Sri Gurudev Ranade was formerly initiated by Sri Anjutgi Maharaj when the respondent was too young due to influence of his friends at Bijapur. Later he came in contact with Sri Gurudev Ranade as a student. This respondent requested Sri Gurudev Ranade to initiate him. Sri Gurudev Ranade initiated this disciple when this respondent's age was 30 in 1955.

4. Another retired Head-Master was initiated in 1946 by Sri Anjutgi Maharaj when the respondent's age was 20. Gurudev Ranade imparted 'Sabija Nam' when he was 21. He did not give any reason for the change.

5. One matriculate lady disciple was initiated by Sri Ganapatrao Kannur Maharaj when she was 15 in 1951 at Bijapur. Later due to her father's influence she got initiated by Gurudev Ranade although she was reluctant to have second initiation. This respondent is said to have been relieved when she was blessed with the same divine Nam as imparted by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj - Kannur.

6. One Marawadi widow was initiated twice: i) In 1940 she was initiated by Sri Anjutgi Maharaj; and ii) second time in 1980 she was initiated by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj. There is no difference between previous Nam and later Nam.

7. Sri Amburao Maharaj initiated one girl who was hardly 8 years old. She forgot the Nam that was imparted by Sri Amburao Maharaj in her childhood at Kannur. The second initiation was in the year 1973 when the respondent's age was 51 by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj.

Thus out of 110 cases nearly 7 cases of second time initiation are reported.

The incentives to get initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya, or to come under the influence of it vary.

In Chimmad Sampradaya nearly six respondents were initiated on account of family members' influence who belonged to the Sampradaya. One high school teacher was initiated due to scientific outlook of Chimmad Sampradaya. One spiritual teacher of Chimmad Sampradaya in Kirtana narrated that if convinced about spiritual significance of sampradaya you might continue in it. A retired vice-principal of a famous college was attracted by Chimmad Sampradaya on account of his inclination towards spiritual life since childhood and he was directed by his friends to approach Das Ram of Chimmad Sampradaya and also due to the influence of some of his family members who embraced Nimbargi Sampradaya. kirtana of Kotnis Maharaj impressed one respondent and therefore he was initiated.

A Marathi film star -cum-Artist is in close touch with Kaivalya Dham - Sangli because his grand-mother was a follower of Kotnis Maharaj and he had listened to Kirtana of Kotnis Maharaj and some other spiritual teachers of Chimmad Sampradaya.

Gurunathaji's Kirtana has impressed a Koshti Lingayat and he attends Kirtana almost everyday. But he says that time is yet not ripe for his initiation. He would meet automatically his Guru when the time for initiation is ripe.

A young person working in a Jewellery shop participates in the rituals of Saguna type of Chimmad Sampradaya but he has not yet made up his mind to get initiated.

Hereafter, cases of Inchageri Sampradaya would be taken up.

On account of the influence of family members who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya the two respondents (one male retired professor, and another female retired teacher) were initiated by Sri Amburao Maharaj.

Four persons out of six of Sri Giri Malleshwar Maharaj line were initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya due to the influence of family members who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya. When Giri Malleshwar Maharaj put up in a house of one Brahmin, the boy of 8 years of age started weeping to get initiated. Family members threatened the boy not to get initiated at this very young age. Sri Giri Malleshwar Maharaj showed the sympathy to the boy and initiated him. One Kirani merchant used to supply things to Inchageri and hence he came in close contact with Sri Giri Malleshwar Maharaj over a long period of time. The very next day of the initiation of the merchant Sri Giri Malleshwar Maharaj left his mortal coil. Another male respondent got initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya because of its emphasis on God-realization. God-realization being his aim of life he got initiated.

Four out of five respondents were initiated by Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj because they were impressed by his spiritual discourses. A retired Maratha teacher criticized Narasimheshwar Maharaj's spiritual leadership as an ostentation. This Maratha respondent was then very much under the influence of Jyotiba Phule who fought for the down-trodden

in Maharashtra. Narasimheshwar Maharaj (Vaishnava Brahmin by birth) informed a Maratha respondent to listen to his discourse for 3 days on Dasbodha of Sri Samarth Ram Das. In Dasbodha it has been stated that one who has realized Brahman (ultimate reality) is a true Brahmin. Immediately on listening to this interpretation of Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj a Maratha respondent surrendered to Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj and was blessed with Divine Nam by him. Another respondent was initiated by Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj because of influence of some members of family who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya.

About 28 respondents were initiated by Sri Gurudev Ranade through the messengers - Kaka Saheb Karkhanis and Tulpule Kaka. One respondent was initiated by Gurudev Ranade as he was impressed by Sri Tulpule Kaka's Pravachana and another on account of his spiritual inclination. Nearly 6 respondents were initiated by Gurudev Ranade because they came in close contact with him for some or other reason. Among them two were his servants and one was a Kirani Merchant who used to supply things to Nimbai Ashram.

An unmarried respondent who has worked in the educational department, was in search of a spiritual teacher. She wrote a letter to Pondicherry. Even before receiving the reply from Pondicherry she had to go to Nimbai Ashram as somebody told her that a great saintly scholar from Allahabad had come there and she got initiated there although she went there by way of curiosity to see Sri Gurudev Ranade.

Three respondents were reluctant to get initiated as they had some apprehension in following two vows - not to be after another person's spouse and wealth. But a high school teacher who was a follower of Sri Gurudev Ranade convinced about the spiritual greatness of Sri Gurudev Ranade and one respondent was persuaded to get initiated. The other two respondents were also persuaded to get initiated by others.

A localite from Nimbai belonging to the caste of goldsmith was asked by Gurudev Ranade himself twice as to whether he was willing to have initiation. But the respondent was reluctant to get initiated. Some people told him that to have initiation is an extremely difficult thing. Some would not be initiated even though they wanted to have initiation. Sri Gurudev Ranade himself had come forward to initiate you. On knowing all this the respondent was initiated.

Three respondents were initiated by Sri Gurudev Ranade because of their friends' influence. These were the followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya. An archaeologist came in close contact with late Dr. Christian who was a disciple of Sri Gurudev Ranade and hence the archaeologist was initiated by Sri Gurudev Ranade.

A photographer begged Vitthal of Pandharpur to grant him difficulties in worldly life and a spiritual teacher who could drag the respondent to spiritual life. He came soon in contact with Haridas - the disciple of Sri Gurudev Ranade and the photographer was initiated by Sri Gurudev Ranade.

Nearly 8 respondents were initiated by Gurudev Ranade due to their relatives ('Kins') influence who were the followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya. Two of them were having liking for spiritual life and impressed by the simplicity, scholarship and saintly life of Gurudev Ranade.

One Brahmin respondent was attracted towards spiritual life because of his illness, and death of his newly married sister. He therefore, made up his mind to go to Mantralaya of Sri Raghavendra Swami. (The respondent was admitted in the hospital. There a patient who became his friend directed the respondent to go to Mantralaya). He was about to go to Mantralaya but got into a different train at Hotgi railway station which stood like a signal showing way to Nimbargi. (Mantralaya is in Andhra Pradesh now. There was communal tension in that region in those days. Hence, the respondent changed his mind not to go to Mantralaya and got into a different train).

Hereafter, a few cases of respondents who were initiated on Samadhi of Gurudev Ranade would be taken into account.

A person working in bank got initiated after his marriage because of the influence of his wife and parent-in-law who were the followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

A graduate householder went through the works of Gurudev Ranade borrowing them from her neighbour who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya. As she was impressed by the works of Sri Gurudev Ranade she got initiated on Samadhi of Gurudev Ranade.

A Maratha householder was initiated on Samadhi as she wanted to have a well educated person as her Guru.

A Kshatriya tailor got initiated on Gurudev's Samadhi for two reasons : i) Tulpule Kaka's Pravachana at Vitthal Mandir - Bijapur, (ii) Contact with a friend in whose house Sri Amburao Maharaj breathed his last.

Sri Tulpule Kaka's Pravachanas, and a dedicated life of Kakasaheb Karkhanis for the cause have made a lasting impression upon a dentist's wife. Besides, her husband was a follower of Nimbargi Sampradaya. These factors proved instrumental to have initiation of the person on Gurudev's Samadhi.

Impressed by the works of Gurudev Ranade and influence of a gathering of devotees for Bhajan and meditation at the house of his friend on every Sunday morning who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya made an Ayurvedic doctor to get initiated on Samadhi of Gurudev Ranade.

A widow got initiated for two reasons : i) Participation in Bhajan at Paramartha Mandir - Jamkhandi ii) The influence of a neighbour who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya.

A retired agricultural officer was impressed by the personality of Kakasaheb Karkhanis - a Gurubandhu of Sri Gurudev Ranade. Hence he got initiated on Gurudev Ranade's Samadhi.

An unmarried lady doctor from Bombay got initiated because some of her relatives belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya and she was impressed by Tulpule Kaka's pravachanas and his soft spoken personality.

A retired officer who has worked in Kirloskar Company got initiated due to meditation and influence of Tulpule Kaka.

A Jain disciple from Maharashtra got initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya. His father was an ardent disciple of Gurudev Ranade. Saptahas were held in the undivided family till the death of his father in which 200-300 Sadhakas used to participate every year from 1st to 3rd July. This has motivated him to get initiated on the Samadhi of Gurudev Ranade.

A graduate householder from Bangalore underwent Eucopic Pregnancy operation and it was a matter of life and death to her. Before operation Chita Bhasma (holy ash) of Gurudev Ranade was applied to her by her father-in-law who was a follower of Gurudev Ranade. Later she got initiated on the Samadhi of Gurudev Ranade.

One graduate married lady teacher from Maharashtra got initiated on the Samadhi because of her friend's influence who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya and also due to the influence of Pravachana of Kaka Saheb Tulpule and the need for spiritual support to bear the illness of her brother.

Another graduate (married) lady got initiated for four reasons : (i) Liking for Paramartha since childhood in the form of devotional songs, stories, pictures; ii) Meditation without Guru is not going to yield much spiritual benefits; iii) Influence of her neighbour who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya; iv) Pravachanas of Kakasaheb Karkhanis.

A highly educated teacher from Goa got initiated for two reasons: i) Inclination for spiritual life since childhood; ii) Impact of Tulpule Kaka's pravachanas.

One married lady associate professor from Marathawada got initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya because of influence of her parents who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya and mediation of Tulpule Kaka.

A graduate married lady from Bombay got initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya for some reasons : i) This respondent's father has taken her to various centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya ii) This respondent feels that spiritual life is more important than the worldly life. The worldly life has its limitations.

One Maratha widow from urban Karnataka got initiated as she came in contact with the followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

A Vaishyawani Kudale graduate householder from Pune got initiated because she was impressed by the works of Sri Gurudev Ranade handed over to her by a librarian.

A blind unmarried lady from urban Maharashtra got initiated in dream by Gurudev Ranade. A widow from urban Karnataka got initiated herself in front of Sri Gurudev Ranade's

photo in 1982 although she came in contact with Nimbali Ashram in 1954.

A retired Engineering college Principal has come in close contact with the followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya and is influenced by the speeches of Gurudev Ranade (taped), the pravachanas of Tulpule Kaka and hence he is closely associated with Nimbargi Sampradaya.

At Nimbali centre some do make a discrimination between Namdharakas initiated by Gurudev Ranade and Namdharakas initiated on Samadhi while others do not make any such discrimination between the two. Some say that the method of initiating on Samadhi is misused by a few because they derive some benefits at Nimbali Ashram in the form of food etc.,.

An unmarried person was initiated by Radhabai Limaye - the lady disciple of the saint of Umadi, at Devachi Alandi in 1927 when his age was hardly 10 because of his liking for paramartha.

Having come in casual contact with Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj one Maratha person got initiated by him through the meditation of Sri Inamdar Guruji - the disciple of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj at Solapur when the respondent's age was 13.

One Muslim unmarried drawing teacher coming under the age group of 50-60 got initiated by Sri Inamdar Guruji; when he was 37 in 1957 at Solapur because of the following incidence. This Muslim respondent used to stand outside Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir when some of his Hindu friends used to go inside. On one occasion Muslim respondent went inside the Mandir almost without his awareness and heard the discourse on Tukaram Maharaj there and felt that there was something in it. Besides, he was fond of music and was impressed by Bhajan at Mandir. For these reasons he got initiated by Sri Inamdar Guruji.

One householder got initiated by Sri Inamdar Guruji as she had the Drishtant of Sri Akkalkot Maharaj in which she was directed to go to Prabhakar Maharaj Mandir and hence she got initiated there.

One nurse used to pay visits to Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir and observed there the practice of counting of

the beads and was impressed by it. She requested Sri Inamdar Guruji to initiate her and she was blessed with 'Divine Nam'.

A Junior Engineer coming under the age group of 20-30 once distributed the photos of Sri Akkalkot Maharaj near Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir and then he went inside the Mandir and was very much impressed when he looked at the idol of Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj. This unmarried Junior Engineer offered his (gold) ring there. Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj appeared in his dream and inserted the ring to his finger. Then onwards he stopped going to Akkalkot and accepted Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj as his Guru and got initiated before the idol of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj when he was 25 in 1990.

A highly educated householder from Maharashtra is not yet initiated into any Sampradaya but she does not find any difference between the spiritual greatness of Digekaka of Shiradi Sai Baba line and Sri Prabhakar Maharaj of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Because of influence of her father who was a disciple of Sri Amburao Maharaj, a Lingayat householder got initiated by Sri Anjutgi Maharaj - the disciple of the saint of Umadi.

A Lingayat person working in the hospital as a clerk got initiated by Sri Anjutgi Maharaj because of the following reasons. This clerk respondent heard in the dream the voice that without Guru (spiritual teacher) there would be no liberation (moksha). Thereafter, his friend directed him to go to Sri Anjutgi Maharaj. This respondent was initiated by Sri Anjutgi Maharaj in 1947 when he was 18 at Bijapur.

A goldsmith (by profession) coming under the age group of 70-80 was initiated by Sri Anjutgi Maharaj when he was 13 years old in 1936 at Bijapur because of influence of some of his relatives from mother's side who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya.

One friend told a Talwar (Koli) respondent that one derives benefits both in the worldly and spiritual life by taking Nam. Hence this Talwar respondent was initiated by Sri Anjutgi Maharaj.

One goldsmith (both by profession and caste) used to go to Sri Ram Mandir and Sri Bhausahab Maharajar Muth for darashan

and at Bhausahab Maharajar Muth Shri Anjutgi Maharaj called and initiated him when he was 19 at Bijapur.

Sri Bheemanappa Ingalgi the disciple of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj initiated one inspector working in P.W.D. department in 1966 when the respondent's age was 42 at Ballolli village (Zalki Head quarter Taluk Indi). The respondent used to take an active part in the fund collection for saptaha and hence he came in contact with his spiritual teacher and was blessed by him (the Spritual leader).

A matriculate working as F.D.C. in Agricultural Department got initiated by Sri Rangarao Maharaj - the disciple of Horti Ramrao Maharaj at Kubakaddi in 1954 when his age was 14 due to influence of some family members and close relatives who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya.

One retired Engineer was not initiated by Sri Dattopant Maharaj on the ground that the time was not yet ripe for initiation although the Engineer expressed his desire to get initiated by Sri Dattopant Maharaj - the disciple of the saint of Umadi.

One married Maratha got initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya when his age was 20 in 1947 at Bijapur by Sri Pandurang Maharaj - the disciple of the saint of Umadi, because his friend explained to him the spiritual significance of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

A Gowndi (Ambige by caste) once went to the field for grazing of the cattle at Antal badagi (Tq. Athani Dist. Belgaum) and there he was initiated by Siddhalingayya Swami - Lingayat disciple of the saint of Umadi.

A Maratha person working in Telephone Exchange was initiated by Sri Chidanand Swami - the son and the disciple of Sri Siddhalingayya Swami at Bhausahab Maharajar Paduka Muth - Bijapur. He was taken there by his grand-mother as he was a heavy drunkard. He was 30 at the time of initiation in 1940.

A Lingayat person working in Telephone Exchange was initiated by Chidanand Swami at Siddapur (Raibag Tq. Belgaum District) as most of the villagers of his native place were initiated by him.

Because of the influence of some family members who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya a Maratha married woman was initiated at Bijapur in 1950 by Chidanand Swami. Her age at the time of initiation was 20.

A retired cashier was initiated by Sri Chidanand Swami in 1944 at Kannur when he was 45, as he was naturally attracted towards Sri Chidanand Swami. It was just like the natural attraction of a person towards the spouse or 'Pedhe' (a kind of sweet).

Due to the influence of some relatives from her mother's side who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya in 1979 at Bagalkot a married Maratha woman was initiated by Sri Chidanand Swami.

Inspired by the spiritual attempts made by some of his friends of Nimbargi Sampradaya, an eye and E.N.T. specialist too wanted to make spiritual attempts. Some of his friends persuaded him to get initiated on the Samadhi of Gurudev Ranade but he wanted to have initiation from a living Guru who could guide him from time to time and clarify his doubts on pathway to God and hence he got initiated by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj Kannur - the disciple of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj.

A professor working in the Engineering College and a close relative of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj was initiated by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj because of his influence in 1960 at Belgaum when he was 17 years old.

An advocate cum-writer was initiated by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj in 1988 at Kannur for the following reasons :

1. Since childhood the respondent had inclination towards Paramartha,

2. Divine personality and the works of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj had a great impact on the respondent.

A Marawadi widow was initiated twice. (i) Anjutgi Maharaj initiated her because of the influence of the respondent's late husband who was a great devotee of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj. (ii) She felt like getting initiated by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj too and hence got initiated a second time. The 'Divine Mantra' imparted by both spiritual teachers, however, was the same.

An unmarried electrician got initiated in 1992 by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj because of family influence which belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya. The age of the respondent was 24 at the time of initiation.

One married woman was initiated by Sri Amburao Maharaj when she was 8 years old at Inchageri in 1930 as she used to visit by walk along with her villagemates from Kannur (native place). Having forgotten 'Divine Nam' imparted by Sri Amburao Maharaj she got initiated by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj, in 1973 when her age was about 55.

Because of the influence of son-in-law's family which belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya a matriculate householder got initiated in 1989 when she was 45 by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj.

A Hindu Vaishnava Brahmin nurse got initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj when she was 25 in 1987 on account of her husband's influence who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya.

On Datta Jayanti day in 1971 Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj invited Lingayat Hoogar (Guru) the priest in one of the temples of Devar Nimbargi and initiated him.

One Lingayat (Gowli) was initiated by Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj when he was 52 in 1970 at Kannur because of the influence of his grand mother - the disciple of the saint of Umadi.

On the whole it appears from the foregoing description that no single common incentive is there to get initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya and at times one respondent is initiated for more than one reason. The influence of family members, close relatives, friends, neighbours, inmates of the same village who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya is one important incentive. Inclination towards Paramartha is another reason. Having come in casual or close contact with the spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya some respondents are initiated. Some respondents who were reluctant to get initiated were initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya as they were persuaded to do so by some followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya. One respondent was not initiated because the time according to the spiritual teacher was not ripe for the initiation. Kirtans, Pravachanas and Bhajanas were some main incentives for the respondents to

get initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya. The works, saintly life, scholarship, simplicity of some spiritual leaders of Nimbargi Sampradaya made an impact on some respondents to get initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya. There are also incidences such as illness, death of close relatives, Drishtanta in dream, to have initiation into Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Table No. 26

PLACE OF INITIATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Initiation of the respondents in the places/Centres of their Spiritual Teachers		Initiation of the respondents in some Places/Centres other than those of their spiritual teachers		Total
80	76.2 %	25	23.8 %	105

It is clear from the above table that most of the respondents are initiated at the centres or places of their spiritual teachers. Out of 105 respondents (5 closely associates of Nimbargi Sampradaya are not initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya and hence only 105 respondents are taken into account) 80 respondents are initiated in the places or centres founded by their spiritual teachers. For instance, a vast majority of respondents of Nimbargi centre are initiated at Nimbargi Ashram founded by Sri Gurudev Ranade. Only 25 out of 105 respondents are initiated in places or centres other than those of respondents' spiritual teachers. For example, Sri Gurudev Ranade has initiated some persons at Nasik and other places. The percentage of the respondents initiated in the places/centres of their spiritual teachers is 76.2% and the percentage of the respondents initiated in places/centres other than their spiritual teachers is 23.8%.

The next two tables are about (i) Age at the time of initiation of the respondents. (ii) The year in which the respondents are initiated.

Table No. 27

AGE AT THE TIME OF INITIATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60	60-65	65-70	Total
01	06	17	19	15	13	07	06	09	05	02	03	01	01	105

In the above table the age at the time of initiation of only those respondents who are initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya is taken into consideration. In Table No.-26 and Table No.-27 the place of initiation and age at the time of initiation into Nimbargi Sampradaya for the first time and not second time are taken into account. The question of 5 closely associates does not arise at all as they are not initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Table No.-27 clearly indicates that a vast majority of the respondents are initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya who come under the age group of 10-30. The number of the respondents coming under the age-group of 30-70 is quite limited. No single respondent is initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya after 70. On rare occasions, the respondents are initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya when they are less than 11 years of age. The above analysis shows that respondents who come under the age group of 10-30 are more attracted than those who come under the age group of 30-70 and young children below 11 years of age.

The following table provides information with respect to the number of male and female respondents before 1951 and after 1950.

Table No. 28

**NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE INITIATED RESPONDENTS
BEFORE 1951 AND AFTER 1950.**

Sex	Number of initiated respondents before 1951 (< 1951)	Number of initiated respondents after 1950 (> 1950)	Total
Male	31	35	66
Female	11	28	39
		Grand Total	105

From the above table it can be observed that the number of initiated male respondents is more than the number of initiated female respondents before 1951 (< 1951) and after 1950 (> 1950). The total number of male initiated respondents is 66 and the total number of initiated female respondents is 39. However after 1950 (> 1950) there has been considerable rise in the number of female initiated respondents as compared to the rise in number of male initiated respondents. There has been addition of only 4 male initiated respondents (35-31) after 1950, and there has been addition of 17 initiated female respondents (28-11). This table too does not take into consideration the number of 5 closely associated.

The table that follows is about the number of centres visited by the respondents. The term 'After initiation' is applicable only to the initiated respondents and not to the closely associated with Nimbargi Sampradaya. But the number of centres visited by closely associated with Nimbargi Sampradaya has been considered.

Table No. 29

**INITIATION OF CLOSE RELATIVES OF THE
RESPONDENTS OF NIMBARGI SAMPRADAYA**

Nil	Little	More	Most	Total
16	33	15	46	110
14.6%	30%	13.6%	41.8%	

In the above table the term 'Close relatives' has been defined by the respondents themselves and connotation of the same varies from one respondent to the other. The term 'close relatives' includes both the living and dead ones. In the table the terms 'Nil', 'Little', 'More' and 'Most' stand for 0, 1-2, 3-4, 5 and above number of close relatives respectively. 16 respondents' close relatives are not initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya and they come under 'Nil' category with 14.60%. 33 respondents come under the category of 'Little' with 30% and 15 respondents come under category 'More' with 13.6% and '46' under 'Most' with 41.8%. Hence, the impact of Nimbargi

Sampradaya on the close relatives of the respondents is quite significant.

Table No. 30

**THE NUMBER OF THE CENTRES OF NIMBARGI SAMPRADAYA
VISITED BY THE RESPONDENTS**

'A' Category	'B' Category	'C' Category	Total
75	29	06	110
68.2%	26.4%	05.4%	

Those respondents who have visited the centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya 1-5, 6-10, 11 and above the centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya are brought under for sake of convenience 'A', 'B' and 'C' categories respectively in Table No. -30. There is not a single respondent who has not visited even a single centre (which includes sub-centre and academic Centre, main centre, original Centre, Original seat) of Nimbargi Sampradaya. The Table No. 30 clearly reflects that out of 110 respondents, 75 come under 'A' category, and 29 come under 'B' category, 6 come under 'C' category.

Hereafter, respondents' comments on various aspects of organizations (centres) of Nimbargi Sampradaya will be analysed.

Out of 14 respondents of Chimmad Sampradaya three of them have visited Renavi. About 10 respondents have paid a visit to Devar Nimbargi. Two of the respondents have said that they put up at Devar Nimbargi in the house of great-grand-son of the Saint of Nimbargi. A retired vice Principal says that there is no good transportation to Devar Nimbargi. One lady respondent had paid a casual visit to Devar Nimbargi. She had gone there to attend a marriage and it was late in the night when she visited the Rama Ashram-Mulakshetra of Nimbargi Sampradaya. Four respondents of Chimmad Sampradaya have paid their visits to Siddhagiri-Original seat of Nimbargi Sampradaya. Except three respondents all other respondents of Chimmad Sampradaya have visited Chimmad-Original centre of Chimmad Sampradaya. Many of them have expressed their satisfaction over the arrangements at Chimmad Kshetra and the attitude in the

organization is not commercial. A person who pays Rs. 10,000 and the other only paise 10 are given equal treatment and no discrimination is being made at Chimmad Kshetra according to one lady respondent of Chimmad Sampradaya. One male respondent (resident and close relative of the present leader of Chimmad Kshetra) told me that it is impossible for anyone to sleep in the midnight at Chimmad Kshetra near Tulsi Katta except for relatives of Chimmad muth as the spirit of Sadhubua walks there in the midnight. There is not a single incidence of Apamrityu (death by accident etc.,) at Tapanashi of Chimmad Kshetra according to two respondents. One young unmarried respondent takes part in Deepavali Utsava at Chimmad every year.

There is no commercial attitude at Kaivalya Dham according to a Koshti Lingayat respondent. This respondent listens to Kirtana of Gurunathji almost everyday. Kaivalya Dham is visited by most of the respondents of Chimmad Sampradaya. A film star-cum-artist receives invitation from Kaivalya Dham every year and he does visit it every year along with his wife and has expressed his satisfaction. Mind becomes peaceful at Kaivalya Dham according to this respondent.

A few respondents of Chimmad Sampradaya have visited Inchageri, Umadi, Nimbal. One married lady had some apprehension in the mind to visit the Inchageri centre as some people told her about the fearful atmosphere prevailing there. But when she visited Inchageri the number of participants was limited and no untoward incidence took place. She, however, feels that Inchageri Kshetra is not that big as she imagined it to be.

Among the respondents of Inchageri Sampradaya the comments passed by the followers of Sri Amburao Maharaj are considered. One retired lady University teacher has expressed her satisfaction over liberal and disciplined atmosphere prevailing at Nimbal Ashram. Without specifying the names of the centres she writes that factions in the organizations of Nimbargi Sampradaya hurt her feelings. Another male professor - the disciple of Sri Amburao Maharaj has not passed any comment on the organizations of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Six respondents of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj's line have expressed their views and impressions about the centres that they have visited. The original seat and original centre of Nimbargi Sampradaya, the original centres of Inchageri

Sampradaya and the original centre of Chimmad Sampradaya and a few main and sub-centres of Inchageri Sampradaya like Jat, Nimbal, Belgaum are visited by an old merchant disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj and has expressed his satisfaction over these centres. An old lady disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj has visited Inchageri long ago and has expressed her regret that these days the atmosphere at Inchageri has become fearful on account of robbery, thefts etc., One Vaishnava Brahmin disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj has visited number of centres and sub-centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya and he says that at Umadi and Aigal arrangements are yet to be provided. One disciple of Avaji Maharaj - the disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj who has visited several centres and sub-centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya says that at Devar Nimbargi amenities for followers are yet to be provided while in sub-centres like Kubakaddi the atmosphere and amenities are excellent. He finds solace at Nimbal Ashram. He has only Darashan at Chimmad Kshetra.

Shivaprabhu Maharaj's disciple states that it is not possible to visit all the centres and sub-centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya in a year's time as the number of them is over 465. This is also the opinion of Devru. (Devru and Shivaprabhu were the disciples of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj).

Among the five respondents of Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj line almost all of them have expressed that the amenities are yet to be provided to the Sadhakas at Adhyatma Ashram, Yallatti and the construction of Adhyatma Ashram is still going on. Those who have visited Siddhagiri, Nimbal Ashram, Inchageri both the centres at Kannur, Jamkhandi, Belgaum (Academy of Comparative Philosophy & religion), Karwar (Ranchod Maharaj has established an Ashram at Karwar - who is the disciple of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj), Basavan Bagewadi centre of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj, Nandeshwar sub-centre of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj line, Sitimani of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj line, have expressed their satisfaction over the amenities provided in the centres/sub-centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya. One disciple of Narasimheshwar Maharaj frequently visits Chimmad Kshetra and performs Abhisheka there. A Maratha retired Head Master too has paid a visit to Chimmad Kshetra but has declined to pass comment on the centre. A retired record keeper at Municipality says that efforts ought to be made to provide facilities at Umadi and he visits Yallatti for social rather than spiritual reasons. A Lingayat Panchamsali

illiterate disciple of Sri Narasimheshwar intends to visit Devar Nimbargi. According to one despondent a newly formed trust at Devar Nimbargi has started making arrangements for Sadhakas and when he visited Chimmad long ago he met there Kabir - a Muslim disciple of the Saint of Umadi.

Several respondents who were initiated by Sri Gurudev Ranade have expressed their feelings about organizational aspects of the centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya in the following manner. These respondents are in a much better position to pass their comments on the changes that have taken place through the time than those who are initiated on Samadhi of Gurudev Ranade.

When Sri Gurudev Ranade lived and for a few years after the demise of Sri Gurudev Ranade the toilet facilities were almost lacking and one servant called Gaddya used to bring water in a bullock cart for Sadhakas. Simple food was served to Sadhakas and in the evenings mostly with 'Usal' and butter milk. There was no definite time for food and tea. 'Sitting' was called by Sri Gurudev Ranade at any time. Sitting might take place for a few minutes or for hours together.

After the formation of the trust toilet, water and a number of other facilities are provided to the Sadhakas. Food and tea timings are fixed. All the spiritual and other related activities do take place on scheduled time.

Nevertheless, the respondents have stated that the spiritual atmosphere was more when Sri Gurudev lived. 'Sittings' were lively. One old merchant has expressed the desire to revive the institution of 'Sitting'. Sri Gurudev Ranade's presence was more than anything else. One lady respondent had told me that she did not mind even fasting when Sri Gurudev Ranade was alive at Nimbargi Ashram but inspite of many facilities now she carries with her a biscuit packet to Nimbargi Ashram. Some have criticized that sweets are given in excess and devotion has become less during festive days (Saptaha) i.e., Pakvan is more and Paramartha is less. A few respondents have expressed their fear that people may take undue advantage of the facilities prevailing in the Ashram now and for the sake of facilities some do take Nam at Samadhi of Sri Gurudev Ranade and such people have made Sri Gurudev Ranade Ashram a picnic spot. Quite a few respondents have expressed their full satisfaction over the punctuality and amenities that

are provided by the trust to sadhakas. The facilities should not become excess, for some people begin to take undue advantage of them. One servant of Sri Gurudev Ranade has said that it won't be proper to say that there were no facilities at all when Sri Gurudev Ranade lived. An unmarried lady disciple of Sri Gurudev Ranade has stated that one should not look for facilities but for 'Paramartha'. A few respondents have said that the similar facilities must be extended to the centres like Devar Nimbargi and Umadi as they are more or less neglected centres. A retired Engineer from Bangalore writes that Sadhakas are well looked after in Belgaum and Nimbai centres.

'Sittings' which were lively must be revived according to a few respondents. Dahan Bhoomi of Sri Gurudev Ranade must be kept clean and arrangements should be made for meditation there. A library may be opened at Nimbai Ashram during leisure hours for spiritual aspirants to read the holy books. Publication of the works of Sri Gurudev Ranade must be undertaken by Academy of Comparative Philosophy & Religion. One archaeologist is not happy of raising 'Shikhar' over Ashram as it gives the look of a temple and not of Ashram. The high School at Nimbai could have been run by the trust instead of handing over to Vishva Hindu Parishad according to one respondent. Instead of expanding the work of construction of the buildings it is necessary to maintain the existing buildings in good conditions. Members of organizations should work on honorary basis and every year new blood must be inducted in the trust.

An old merchant from Karnataka has expressed his unhappiness over the misconduct of some Sadhakas who have come in contact with Sri Gurudev Ranade. A photographer from Maharashtra has criticised the commercial attitude of some persons who run the spiritual centres and their differential treatment for Sadhakas i.e., he/she/who pays more is treated better than those who pay less.

A local respondent of Nimbai Ashram told me what some inmates of Nimbai village informed him about Nimbai Ashram. The local people are not attracted much to Nimbai Ashram because most of the Sadhakas who are urban educated Brahmins from Maharashtra do not talk to them. The localites feel alienated in the Ashram. A Lingayat merchant from urban

Karnataka has stopped visiting Nimbai Ashram as he has no contact with ever increasing new Sadhakas there.

A military officer who visited Inchageri long ago has expressed his happiness over equal treatment rendered to Sadhakas. A few years ago when he revisited he noticed some development of caste spirit (especially of Lingayat and Brahmin type). He has expressed his regret over the negligence of Sri Amburao Maharaj's muth, Samadhi, and Dahan Bhoomi. A water tank has been built over Dahan Bhoomi of Sri Amburao Maharaj. Several respondents, however, have expressed their happiness over the adequate facilities prevailing at Inchageri Kshetra. Discrimination between the followers of one centre and the other had begun.

The above said military officer has stated that some relatives of the Saint of Nimbargi render their help to Sadhakas with some expectations in terms of cash and kind but not at Umadi. A photographer from Maharashtra had seen in his dream Deshpande Wada in a fallen condition even before his first visit to Umadi.

A graduate married lady has expressed her happiness over regular Trikal (Three times) Bhajan, Dasbodha reading, Trikal Nam (Three times Meditation) at Nimbai Ashram. She visits the places of Saints as they are sanctified by their presence. An old muslim disciple pays respects to Ashram from his field at Hanjgi. A Lambani disciple of Gurudev has said that until Gurudev lived there was 'Anand' (bliss) and now facilities are more and people are after publicity. Simple food kept the Sadhakas alert according to a photographer. According to a military officer when Gurudev lived his word was final and now dry self prestige has grown among some sadhakas and differences of opinion, worry over income and expenses, different interpretations of rituals prevail. But those who do not want to poke their nose into such matters, there is absolutely no problem for them in carrying out their spiritual activities.

Some have expressed their happiness over the adequate facilities prevailing at Jamkhandi (Paramartha Mandir), Siddhagiri (the original seat).

A householder from urban (Maharashtra) has expressed her happiness over the spiritual atmosphere prevailing at Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir - Solapur . One unmarried

disciple of Sri Gurudev Ranade was not that happy because of keeping the photos of the Saints of Nimbargi and Umadi outside the Sanctorium in Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir.

Almost all respondents who are initiated on Sri Gurudev Ranade's Samadhi including a widow who has got initiated infront of Sri Gurudev's photo, a blind lady initiated in a dream and one closely associated with Nimbargi have expressed their satisfaction over adequate facilities prevailing in the Nimbargi Ashram and also the spiritual activities that are carried from time to time. Some, however, say that the facilities should not grow more than the present. A few people may misuse them. The same facilities also should be extended to the centres of Devar Nimbargi, and Umadi, and other such places especially for lady disciples. Sweet during Saptaha must not be given in excess according to a lady disciple from Marathawada. One Jain respondent told me that even his friends (not followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya) who visited Nimbargi have expressed their happiness over the amenities prevailing at Nimbargi Ashram. A blind lady has said that probably due to the rush and construction of the buildings Nimbargi Ashram has not remained that calm.

One Lingayat disciple from urban Karnataka has stopped visiting Nimbargi Ashram to avoid the publicity about his visit to Nimbargi Ashram. A retired engineering college principal who is closely associated with Nimbargi Ashram has said that for new Sadhakas pre-requisites must be kept at minimum and special arrangements must be made to give instructions about the spiritual activities for them. One realizes at Nimbargi Ashram the existence of 'One God, One World, One Humanity'. There is no caste restriction at Nimbargi Ashram and discipline is neither too strict nor too liberal according to another respondent. A female respondent from Bangalore feels that at least one discourse during Saptaha must be in Kannada as almost all activities conducted in the Ashram are in Marathi.

Several respondents have visited some other centres and sub-centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya but have not passed comments on them except Devar Nimbargi and Umadi. A lady disciple from urban Maharashtra has expressed her regret over the negligence of Sri Amburao Maharaj's muth and Samadhi and the construction of the tank over the Dahan Bhoomi of Sri Amburao Maharaj. Many respondents of this category have paid a short visit to places like Jamkhandi (Paramartha Mandir), Jat (Jangam muth), and

Chimmad by hiring a special bus along with Sadhakas but have not passed their comments on them. One respondent has stated that Gurudev Ranade Mandir at Belgaum is of academic type. At Belgaum (Gurudev Ranade Mandir) the arrangements are excellent according to a Maratha widow disciple from Karnataka.

Radhabai Limaye's disciple has not passed any comment on the organizations of Nimbargi Sampradaya although he has been closely associated with Nimbargi centre and sub-centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya including 'Pawas' where there is Samadhi of his spiritual teacher.

All five respondents (including one close associate) of Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj centre have paid visits apart from their centre to Devar Nimbargi and Nimbargi. At Devar Nimbargi there is Samadhi of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj. They have not, however, passed comments on their centre but on sub-centres. They say that sub-centres of Prabhakar Maharaj line are yet to be developed. Nimbargi is fine and mind becomes 'Prasanna' there. Umadi according to one female disciple is in decaying stage. A Muslim disciple has not visited centres and sub-centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya to see the facilities there. He was impressed by serene atmosphere prevailing in the centres and sub-centres.

Comments passed by six respondents who belong to Sri Anjuti Maharaj line are analysed. A goldsmith by profession and not by caste says that caste spirit and fearful atmosphere could be experienced still at Inchageri Kshetra. A person working in P.W.D. says, however, that at Inchageri Kshetra the arrangements are excellent and hot water is provided during Saptaha for the Sadhakas.

Those respondents of Sri Anjuti Maharaj line who visited Nimbargi Ashram have expressed their satisfaction over amenities prevailing there. One goldsmith both by caste and profession recalled to his mind the occasion on which foreigners and Rajasaheb Chintamani came to Nimbargi Ashram to see Sri Gurudev Ranade long ago.

According to another respondent a significant number of rich Marwadis come forward during Saptaha at Basavan Bagewadi centre of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj to lift Palaki.

A P.W.D. worker has visited long ago Devar Nimbargi in his own bullock cart and by making his own arrangements for food etc;. The same respondent told me that nearly 4-5 thousand followers take part in Rathotsava (cart festival) of Sadhubua at Chimmad. He has observed equanimity at Shanti Kutir of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj.

Two respondents of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj line have recalled to their mind the days when 125-150 Sadhakas (ladies and gents in almost equal number) gathered daily at Sri Bhausaheb Maharajar Muth - Bijapur in the presence of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj and some other spiritual teachers. Now the programmes are not properly held and there is deterioration both in quantity (number) and quality (devotion) of the Sadhakas.

A P.W.D. worker has paid visit to Siddhagiri - the original seat of Nimbargi Sampradaya. He says that the general impression of people that one lakh people gather there on one important festival is a matter of exaggeration. According to this respondent nearly 20,000 Sadhakas participate in an important Saptaha and most of them come from Maharashtra and as Junior Swami is from Karnataka, people from Karnataka have also started coming there for Saptaha these days.

Two important sub-centres of Anjutgi Maharaj line are Anjutgi and Ballolli. Ballolli is a 'Jagrat Sthan' and at Anjutgi Mutt has been constructed according to a P.W.D. worker.

A disciple of Sri Rangarao Maharaj - the disciple of Sri Horti Ramrao Maharaj has visited Devar Nimbargi. Devar Nimbargi is a calm and quiet place according to the respondent. This respondent had put up in the house of great-grand-son of the Saint of Nimbargi. He has paid only a casual visit to Inchageri, Chimmad Kshetras and Basavan Bagewadi centre of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj line. According to the respondent at Jamkhandi, Nimbali and Kubakaddi centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya the facilities are excellent. The method of initiating on the Samadhi by placing the chit of 'Ishta Nam' has begun at Kubakaddi which is similar to the method practised at Sri Gurudev Ranade - Nimbali Ashram recently.

A close associate of Nimbargi Sampradaya and a relative of Sri Dattopant Maharaj - the disciple of the Saint of Umadi has paid visits to Inchageri Kshetra, Devar Nimbargi, Belgaum, Koodagi and intends to visit Nimbali to have some books on the

Saint of Umadi. As some people have told this person about the prevailing fearful atmosphere he went to Inchageri Kshetra during day time and returned to his place before sun set. At Devar Nimbargi Bheemaraya's temple is huge according to this respondent. He is impressed by the working of 'Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion' - Belgaum. At Koodagi there is a sub-centre of Dattopant Maharaj line. In this sub-centre there is Samadhi of Channabasappa Maharaj - a Lingayat disciple of Brahmin spiritual teacher (Sri Dattopant Maharaj). Sri Channabasappa Maharaj was cremated there (at Koodagi) violating Lingayat tradition and though at the time of cremation it was raining, the fire was not extinguished.

One respondent of Sri Pandurang Maharaj (the disciple of the Saint of Umadi) line has visited both Hire Muth of Sri Siddhalingayya Swami line, and Shanti Kuteer of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj, Anjutgi of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj line, Shikharkhane of Sri Horti Ramrao Maharaj line. He manages various kinds of people gathering at Bhausahab Maharaj Muth, Bijapur.

All 6 respondents of Siddhalingayya Swami line have expressed their happiness over the amenities that are provided in the open field at Hire Muth - Kannur on EllaAmavasya and other Saptahas. One respondent has given some description about Saptahas at Hire Muth. Nearly 50% of the participants in the Saptaha are rich. These rich disciples, however, behave in the most simple manner. The number of participants is around 2000. One special feature during Saptaha is that 3-4 Muslims come there with some of their friends and relatives and take an active part in Bhajan and other spiritual programmes. All six respondents have visited Kannur and some of them visit frequently.

The above said respondent paid once a visit to Inchageri Kshetra along with his friends. They were served there with a spoilt food as 'Prasad'. All of them threw the so called 'Prasad' and later they were served there with 'Good Prasad' (food). They wanted to meet the present spiritual leader. But the door keeper did not allow them to enter on the false ground that the present spiritual leader had gone to bed. Later, these persons opened the doors themselves and went inside. When the present spiritual leader asked them to give their opinion about the centre, these people brought to his kind notice the above mentioned incidences. The present

spiritual leader is said to have listened to these incidences sympathetically, and promised them to set the things right.

One lady disciple has given some description about the festivals that are conducted at Inchageri Kshetra. A large number of devotees gather there who are served with food, tea etc., Some cut vegetables, others cook food. Dramas on Sri Kadasiddheshwar, the Saint of Nimbargi etc., are enacted on tractors and on stages.

Those respondents who visit Bhausahab Maharaj Muth have expressed their satisfaction over the amenities prevailing there. Another respondent has taken up the renovation work of Sri Bhausahab Maharajar Paduka Muth - Bijapur and wants to install there idols of some saints of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Ten respondents - the disciples of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj line have visited Shanti Kutir and most of the main centres and original seat, centre of Nimbargi Sampradaya when they went on tour along with their spiritual teacher.

All the above said disciples have considered 'Shanti Kutir' fine and have expressed their satisfaction over the basic amenities, calm and quiet atmosphere prevailing there. One Advocate respondent has stated the real spiritual preaching (Atmabodha) is at Shanti Kuteer. People of different castes partake the food. Most of them visit at least once in a year 'Shanti Kutir'. One Vaishnava lady Brahmin respondent, however, finds it difficult to sit along with people of other castes and hence tries to select the place for food with her relatives. The same lady finds it difficult to go to Bhausahab Maharaj Muth on account of heavy domestic work. There are excellent facilities for the sadhakas at Kaneri Muth in the opinion of those respondents who have visited it. One respondent who has visited Devar Nimbargi recently says that a newly formed trust has been making good arrangements for the Sadhakas. The same respondent says that the road to Umadi from Chadachan is not in good condition. At chimmad the atmosphere is calm and quiet. Some have only 'Darashan' at Inchageri and at Nimbargi Ashram all programmes are held from time to time. One young respondent felt lonely at Nimbargi Ashram. At Hippargi and Kubakaddi the arrangements are good and Koodagi is developing according to those respondents who have visited

spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya and the same words are uttered by another householder with particular reference to Sadhubua. A film Star-cum-artist states that Gurunathji has laid the moral foundation and Gurunathji and some other teachers, asked him to be aloof from others' women, wealth. He has been able to overcome from the life of glamour of the film world on account of the guidance of persons like Gurunathji. Some respondents have told me that they had gone through the biographies of many spiritual teachers and were convinced about spiritual greatness of them. On the whole it appears that the respondents of Chimmad Sampradaya are convinced about the simplicity, spirituality, non-commercial attitude of the spiritual teachers about whom they have heard or read or with whom they have come in contact.

A highly educated widow from urban Maharashtra is impressed by childlike simplicity of Sri. Amburao Maharaj and his ideal routine, parental affectation. But she has reverence for Gurudev Ranade only from a distance and she is having high regard for Gurudev Ranade's rational Mysticism and his spiritual attainments.

Another scholar disciple of Sri. Amburao Maharaj regards Sri. Gurudev Ranade as Panini of Mysticism (Panini is a great sanakrit grammarian).

An old merchant disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj has come in contact with his spiritual teacher and several other contemporary spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya and he has read biographies of some of them and visited Samadhis of many of them. Another respondent came in close contact with Sri. Narasimheshwar Maharaj after the demise of Sri. Girimalleshwar Maharaj. One Lingayat Banajeger disciple has not come in close contact with Sri. Girimalleshwar Maharaj but has seen from a distance Shivaprabhu Maharaj and Devru- the two great spiritual leaders in the line of Sri. Girimalleshwar Maharaj line. One relative of Sri Girimalleshwar has been initiated by Sri Avaji Maharaj of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj line and he has seen Gurudev Ranade and Narasimheshwar Maharaj. Reverence for all of them is growing.

A disciple of Shivaprabhu Maharaj who is Gurava is having high regards for his spiritual teacher and Devru. Shivaprabhu Maharaj was all the while absorbed in meditation and had no awareness of the world according to this respondent while Devru

them. One Marawadi widow respondent is said to have seen the place where Sri Anjutgi Maharaj lived and meditated at Anjutgi.

Comments passed by the respondents on leaders of Nimbargi Sampradaya would be considered hereafter. Leadership is often described as a process of social control in so far as it makes members of a group accept certain goals and values and the means of achieving them⁴.... But leadership is not one way process. Leaders influence their followers and followers too influence their leaders. In running the centres the relationship between leaders and followers is of utmost importance. Most of the respondents have expressed their views on their spiritual teachers.

Out of 14 respondents of Chimmad Sampradaya two have not passed any comment on the spiritual leaders of Nimbargi Sampradaya. Names of Kotnis Maharaj, Baburao Maharaj, Gurunathji, Narayanarao Maharaj, Nagappanna Maharaj, Gurudev Ranade, Nisaraga Datta Maharaj, Ganapat Maharaj and Nimbargi Maharaj, Das Ram figure in the talk of the remaining 12 respondents. One respondent who is said to have been initiated by Kotnis Maharaj when he was hardly 14 days old still remembers touch of Kotnis Maharaj. Another respondent is impressed by the biography of Kotnis Maharaj. A film star-cum-artist recalls to his mind Kirtanas performed by Kotnis Maharaj. He drew the picture of Kotnis Maharaj which has been kept near the Samadhi of Kotnis Maharaj. Baburao Maharaj has been compared by one Maratha respondent to a modern Ekanath. Gurunathji, Kotnis Maharaj, and Baburao Maharaj, Das Ram have not performed Kirtanas for sake of fame and money according to several respondents. Baburao Maharaj wept when Maratha's wife expired as he was very kind hearted.

Another respondent has simply told me that he has come in contact with Nagappanna Maharaj and Sri Baburao Kotnis Maharaj. One widow respondent has simply told me that in her case there is no question of changing the Spiritual teacher. Let him (spiritual teacher) beat her or protect her (Maro Ya Taro in Hindi). Another respondent has come in close contact with Kotnis Maharaj, Gurunathji, Nagappanna Maharaj, Mamasahab Kelkar, Gurudev Ranade, Ganapatrao Maharaj, Nisrgadatt Maharaj. At Chimmad he is said to have divine Darashan of Nimbargi Maharaj. A teacher respondent is very much influenced by Gurunathaji's Kirtan, and Tulpulekaka's Pravachan. An unmarried young person is having reverential regard for the

successfully performed several inter-caste marriages more successfully than the founder of Veerasaivism - Basaweswar.

One respondent (the disciple of Narasimheshwar Maharaj) observed that Girimalleshwar Maharaj and Narasimheshwar Maharaj were outstanding in the spiritual world and other spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya like Gurudev Ranade and Sri. Siddharameshwar Maharaj were great but not as great as Sri. Girimalleshwar and Narasimheshwar Maharaj's.

A Maratha respondent (the disciple of Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj) is having reverential regards for all spiritual teachers and is having a large collection of photos of the spiritual leaders of Nimbargi Sampradaya. Other respondents of Narasimheshwar Maharaj line have expressed their high regards for the spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya and according to them they were all great God - realizers. One respondent out of five respondents belonging to Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj line has not passed any comment on the spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Almost all the respondents (two have not passed their comments on leadership) initiated by Gurudev Ranade have informed me that the reverence for the saints of Nimbargi, Umadi, Nimbali and Amburao Maharaj is growing. A few respondents initiated by Gurudev Ranade have expressed similar sentiments regarding the poetess saint of Jat, Parama Pujya Sharakka (1905-1986). Names of Laxman Bhadaji (the disciple of Sri. Bhausaheb Maharaj) and Narasappa Shapeti (the disciple of the saint of Nimbargi) figure in the talk of one or two respondents coming under this category.

One military officer says that he had first hand knowledge about Gurudev Ranade. But he was too young to understand Gurudev Ranade's greatness at that time. He has acquired knowledge regarding the saints of Nimbargi and Umadi, Amburao Maharaj. Reverence for all these spiritual leaders is growing. He, however, does not believe in the concept of 'Avatar' (incarnation) of the spiritual teachers.

A Military officer's wife could not understand the greatness of Sri Gurudev Ranade when he lived. But now the reverence for Sri Gurudev Ranade and other such spiritual teachers is growing.

One householder says that she is having highest regard for Gurudev Ranade. But she has not heard much and read about other saints of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

To a retired Brahmin peon Gurudev Ranade was more than his parents, he (Gurudev Ranade) was 'Sakshat Paramartha' (God in flesh and blood). If there is any difference between God and Gurudev, it was simply a thin hair line. He recalled to his mind the sense of humour adopted by Gurudev Ranade. Gurudev once told in the 'sitting' that this person would do (Doctorate in Literature) D. Lit; in next life, through not in this life and the whole audience burst into laughter. Gurudev Ranade used to direct him to observe and report as to what the other Sadhakas in their respective rooms were doing.

One scholar respondent told me that Gurudev Ranade treated Raj (King) and Rank (pauper) alike. An illiterate Muslim respondent who was the servant of Gurudev Ranade informed me that Gurudev Ranade had spent money over his marriage and a share of merit of Gurudev Ranade's meditation would go to him. Sri. Amburao Maharaj when he visited Nimbargi Ashram in 1928 made an inquiry about this servant's welfare and narrated meaning of Dasbodha.

One retired head clerk (Railway Dept.) had the desire to read Dasbodha in the programme and that was fulfilled by Gurudev Ranade even though he did not tell anything about it to Gurudev. He is having the highest regard for Gurudev and has not passed any comment on the other spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

A Lingayat Kirani (Grocery Shop) Merchant from urban Karnataka has told me that Gurudev Ranade was not at all communal. He imparted Ishta Nam of the Lingayat (Veerasaivism) religion to him. He has not come across a single Swamiji in his caste who has attained the spiritual height of Gurudev Ranade. When Gurudev Ranade left his mortal coil at Nimbargi Ashram this respondent was present there. He would not understand how Gurudev left his mortal coil. There was silence everywhere when Gurudev left his mortal coil. This respondent too is having the highest regard for Gurudev but he has not passed his comments on other spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

"There was 'Chaitanya' at Nimbai Ashram when Gurudev lived" said a female retired teacher. Another respondent observed, "I had met Gurudev Ranade on 3-4 occasions. On reading the works of Gurudev Ranade my attachment towards spirituality is increased".

One householder has informed me that Gurudev Ranade was rational and not superstitious. According to Gurudev one need not undergo fasting at the time of eclipse and explained the phenomenon of eclipse symbolically as the release of Jivatma from the shadow of Maya. Gurudev Ranade preached those things which he practised.

A photographer from Urban Maharashtra is having the highest regard for Gurudev Ranade as he had the experience of horripilation when Gurudev Ranade touched him and when he sat for meditation he heard the voice of Gurudev Ranade.

One respondent from Urban Karnataka feels that he is incompetent to pass comments on spiritual leaders of Nimbargi Sampradaya. Nevertheless, he says that Gurudev Ranade was God incarnate. It was grand sight to see him. The same respondent recalled to his mind the singing voice of Laxman Bhadaji. This respondent has seen Amburao Maharaj. Amburao Maharaj used to come to his former house at Rabkavi for Saptaha. Amburao Maharaj used to dance in circular fashion at the time of Bhajan and used to give discourses on 'Dasbodha. Amburao Maharaj patted him on his back.

A Lambani respondent says that his mind is not attached towards the so-called 'Gurus' of his caste. Reverence for Gurudev Ranade is growing and in his presence he felt secured. In his home he has hung the photos of Samadhi of Nimbargi Maharaj, Bhausaheb Maharaj, Amburao Maharaj, and Gurudev Ranade. He recalls to his mind the utterance of Narasappa Shapeti at Nimbai Ashram, 'Guru Mahima Agadh Ho' (Great is the grace of a spiritual teacher).

A child in the home of one respondent was crying most of the time loudly and when Gurudev Ranade presented that child a silver vessel (bowl) and a spoon the child reduced its crying to considerable degree.

One retired teacher from Urban Maharashtra told me that his reverence for spiritual teachers like Gurudev Ranade,

Amburao Maharaj and the saints of Umadi and Nimbargi is growing. He has expressed his gratefulness to the present spiritual head of Inchageri Kshetra who had undertaken the work of renovation of Sri. Amburao Maharaj's Muth and arranged for the regular pooja and cleanliness of Sri. Amburao Maharaj's samadhi at Inchageri Kshetra.

One local respondent of Nimbai told me that the old villagers still recall to their mind Gurudev Ranade with reverence and the visit of two French disciples of Gurudev to Nimbai.

Sayings of Gurudev Ranade must be written on black board in different spiritual centres according to an archaeologist and another respondent feels that the present leaders of Nimbargi Sampradaya should undertake the work of propagating the teachings of the spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Among the respondents who were initiated on the samadhi of Gurudev Ranade including the blind lady initiated by Gurudev Ranade and one who got initiated herself in front of the photo of Gurudev Ranade and one closely associated with Nimbai centre have expressed high regards for Gurudev Ranade and his spiritual teacher (Guru) and Param Guru (Guru's Guru) and at times they have expressed similar sentiments for P.P. Sharakka, Shivalingavva and others. Two respondents coming under this category have not passed their comments on leadership and a very few respondents coming under this category have seen Sri Gurudev Ranade.

One householder from urban Karnataka considers herself fortunate for having seen Gurudev Ranade at least once at Dharwad in 1950. Another lady respondent has seen Sri Gurudev Ranade twice. Reverence of these two respondents for Sri Gurudev Ranade is growing and so for the Saint of Nimbargi, Umadi, Amburao Maharaj, Shivalingavva, Sharakka.

One respondent has not seen Gurudev Ranade. But his reverence for Sri Gurudev Ranade is growing. Some have expressed their highest spiritual sentiments for Sri Gurudev Ranade on reading his works. One male respondent states that though he has not seen any spiritual leaders of yester years of Nimbargi Sampradaya the reverence for them is on the increase. He takes pride in stating that he is a relative of the Saint of Umadi.

A graduate householder informed me that we hear about God-realized persons in puranas. But she has seen persons who have seen Sri Gurudev Ranade (God-realized person).

Some have treated Sri Gurudev Ranade, the Saint of Umadi, Nimbargi etc., on par with God or persons of great spiritual attainments and therefore regard for them is growing. One householder has told me that she is having highest regard for the Saint of Umadi and next to the Saint of Nimbargi.

A closely associated person with Nimbargi centre says that the spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya have honest exposition with modest claims in their writings and sayings.

The disciple of Radhabai Limaye though he came in close contact with Sri Gurudev Ranade, Sharakka has not passed any comment on the leadership of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

One respondent of Sri. Prabhakar Swami Maharaj line has not passed any comment on the leadership of Nimbargi Sampradaya. All other respondents of this line have highest regard for not only spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya but also for the Saints of any other Sampradaya. A muslim respondent does not make any discrimination between saints and spiritual centres of one religion and the other. He recalled to his mind the grace showered by his spiritual teacher Inamdar Guruji. Due to domestic problems he resigned his teaching post and stopped coming to 'Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir. Sri Inamdar Guruji persuaded him to come to the Mandir. His resignation was not accepted by the management. On the contrary, the principal asked him to sit-in one room and offered a cup of coffee and directed him to take classes only when he (the teacher) made up his mind to engage the classes. Inamdar Guruji once narrated on spiritual matters to his devotees by sitting comfortably on the stone but the devotees (including the respondent) were not in a convenient place. When this Muslim respondent came next time the arrangement was made for him to sit comfortably on the stone.

A nurse respondent was appointed to take a statement of the guardians of the child who died on account of polio. It was a tough job for her. She, however, went inside the house of that child and on seeing the photo of the Saint of Nimbargi she bowed down. The heart of the guardian melted and he called her Guru Bhagini (spiritual sister). All her colleagues

expressed their astonishment for completing this delicate work successfully.

Most of the spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya were great God-realizes according to one respondent of Prabhakar Maharaj line. Another respondent explained to me how Sri Gurudev Ranade carried out his spiritual life inspite of illness and how Amburao Maharaj surrendered to his spiritual teacher in the midst of great worldly difficulties.

One highly educated person closely associated with Sri Prabhakar Maharaj line/centre does not make discrimination between one Saint and the other Saint. All Saints are great irrespective of their Sampradaya.

One respondent of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj line is having highest regard for spiritual teachers like Anjutgi Maharaj, the Saint of Nimbargi, Umadi, and Nimbali. Anjutgi Maharaj visited his house the day on which he left his mortal coil. He had heard Gurudev Ranade's lecture on Karnataka Mysticism in one of the high schools at Bijapur. He heard 'Sphota' explosion in the sky probably at the time of the demise of Gurudev Ranade and later in the news paper he read about the sad demise of Gurudev Ranade. Somebody had told this respondent that the saint of Umadi was an incarnation of Lord Hanuman, Ramadas Swami.

One respondent coming under Anjutgi Maharaj line explained to me how Sri Anjutgi Maharaj used to narrate meanings of certain terms. For instance 'Hanuman' means 'Hanan (destruction) of 'Kam' (lust)'. Anjutgi Maharaj was a straight forward person according to this respondent.

According to one goldsmith by profession the faces of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj, Amburao Maharaj, Dattopant Maharaj, Pandurang Maharaj, Rangappa Maharaj shined with spiritual brightness and there was pindrop silence when they sat for meditation. He regretted, however, that correspondence between Sri Gurudev Ranade and Sri Anjutgi Maharaj was not preserved. Sri Gurudev Ranade used to get his doubts clarified from Sri Anjutgi Maharaj according to this respondent.

The disciple of Bheemanappa Maharaj (the disciple of Anjutgi Maharaj) told me that his spiritual teacher though poor did not accept anything from his disciples. To meet his Guru

Bheemanappa Maharaj used to go by walk to Anjutgi from Basavan Bagewadi Via Bijapur. Near Bellary his Samadhi has been constructed and on Vaishakh Shuddha Ashtami Saptaha is held there. This respondent has seen Girimalleshwar Maharaj, Devru, Kallappa Maharaj, and Siddhalingayya Swami.

The disciple of Rangarao Maharaj (the disciple of Horti Ramarao Maharaj) described Horti Ramarao Maharaj as the king of meditation. Even Sri Gurudev Ranade is said to have directed some 100 aspirants to get initiated by Sri Horti Ramarao Maharaj after the demise of the saint of Umadi. Sri Horti Ramarao Maharaj took initiative in persuading the disciples of Nimbargi Sampradaya to sit for meditation.

One close associate of Dattopant Maharaj informed me that there was no feeling of jealousy among Dattopant Maharaj, Sri Anjutgi Maharaj, Sri Pandurang Maharaj, Horti Ramarao Maharaj and other such spiritual leaders. According to this respondent Dattapont Maharaj is said to have attended Philosophical conference held at Hyderabad.

The disciple of Pandurang Maharaj (the disciple of the saint of Umadi) is said to have seen not only his spiritual teacher - Sri Pandurang Maharaj, but also Girimalleshwar Maharaj, Anjutgi Maharaj, Gurudev Ranade, Ganapatrao Maharaj and is having highest regards for them. He, however, murmured that some of the present spiritual teachers would not give proper instructions to their disciples while initiating with respect to vows, method of meditation.

All six respondents of Siddhalingayya Swami line have passed their comments on leadership of Nimbargi Sampradaya. A Gowndi is having high regards for Siddhalingayya Swami, Girimalleshwar Maharaj, Ganapatrao Maharaj Kannur. Another respondent described Ganapatrao Maharaj as an embodiment of calmness. One disciple of this line informed that Pravachanas of Sri Chidanand Swami (the disciple and son of Siddhalingayya Swami) were excellent.

A Maratha disciple has a project of installing the idols of most of the spiritual leaders of Nimbargi Sampradaya and reverence for all of them is growing.

A Lingayat disciple of Chidanand Swami is having the highest regards for Nutan Siddhalingayya Swami (son of the of

Chidanand Swami) because he partakes the same food served to his disciples. This respondent is impressed by simplicity of Nutan Siddhalingayya Swami. But he is not happy over one thing i.e., he was told repeatedly by the present spiritual leader of Hire Muth that this respondent would be blessed with male issues. This has, however, not come true. This respondent has received blessings of Ganapatrao Maharaj. But the sacrifice offered by Nutan Chidanand Swami (Householder) is having greater significance than the sacrifice offered by Ganapatrao Maharaj (unmarried).

One woman disciple of Siddhalingayya Swami is having regards for some spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya including the saint of Umadi and Devru. A boy once came on bicycle to remind her to throw flowers on the photo of the Saint of Umadi (that day was a Punyatithi of Bhausaheb Maharaj) and the boy suddenly disappeared. She described the greatness of Devru who appeared at the time of Saptaha in different places like Inchageri. It is for this reason some people started recognizing Sri Madhavananda Maharaj as Devru (in Kannada Devru means God).

Turning to the respondents of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj line it may be stated that one respondent out of 10 has passed no comments on leadership of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

One doctor respondent has reverential regards for the spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya but also for other saints. He is, however, impressed by the soft spoken personality of Ganapatrao Maharaj who has showered parental affection on him.

One professor in Engineering college is having highest regards for Ganapatrao Maharaj and Sri Vilasanand Maharaj both are the disciples of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj.

All needs are fulfilled by Guru's grace as per the experience of an advocate respondent of Siddharameshwar Maharaj line.

To another respondent of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj line Anjutgi Maharaj and Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj have given him fullest satisfaction. He does not know about other spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya much.

Biographies on Kadasiddha, the Saints of Umadi and Ganapatrao Maharaj are read by one respondent and reverence for all of them is growing.

One household respondent has seen in her childhood the Phugadi (a kind of dance) played by Sri Amburao Maharaj at the time of Bhajan, heard Pravachanas of Girimalleshwar Maharaj. She recalls to her mind still how Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj used to give her fruits and Kallusakkare (sugarcandy) at Inchageri Kshetra. She has also seen Sri Siddhalingayya Swami and Ganapatrao Maharaj at Kannur. According to this respondent all of them were great God-realizers.

One Brahmin Vaishnava married woman has seen only Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj and is impressed by his divine personality and by his calm and quiet nature. Her son was once afflicted with jaundice and the disease of her son was cured by Ganapatrao Maharaj's grace within a very short period of time.

Gowli (milk man) respondent has seen Anjutgi Maharaj, Gurudev Ranade, Siddharameswar Maharaj and Ganapatrao Maharaj, the present head of Siddhagiri, Girimalleshwar Maharaj. Girimalleshwar Maharaj miraculously created best quality ghee at Inchageri Kshetra when the ghee did not arrive there at the time of Prasad. Later 'ghee' was brought and when it was thrown it turned out to be water. Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj is calm and quiet by nature.

Rituals :- Before analysing the respondents' views on the rituals which form the active side of religion, it is essential to classify rituals for sake of convenience into two major categories:

1) General rituals embodied in the family, caste and such other traditions are worshipping of family deities (Kula Devata), Satyanaryana pooja, Ganesh Chaturthi, worshipping of dead ancestors etc;

2) Specific rituals are the rituals of Nimbargi Sampradaya. Specific rituals of Nimbargi Sampradaya may further be subdivided into a) Saguna Bhakti b) Nirguna Bhakti. According to Sri Amburao Maharaj Saguna Bhakti stands for Pothi, Bhajan⁵ etc.; and Nirguna Bhakti refers to Namasmarana (meditation on Divine Nam)⁶.

The above classification of rituals into General and Specific are, however, overlapping to a certain extent. For instance, Palanquin festival, distribution of 'Prasad' etc; are found both in General and Specific rituals. Some of the traditional (general) rituals, at times, are modified by some followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya. Instead of performing house opening ceremony (griha pravesham) in a traditional form by inviting the priest to officiate at the ritual of 'Homa', some followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya invite followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya (especially of the centres to which they subscribe) for Bhajan,⁷ Meditation, and prasad of Nimbargi Sampradaya type. It has also been observed that some followers of Nimbargi sampradaya visit some or the other centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya of their convenience and liking and offer 'Prasad' to the sadhakas gathered there on the occasions of the annverseries of their dead ancestors.

Most of the specific rituals are introduced and interpreted by the spiritual teachers/leaders of Nimbargi Sampradaya. The following table reflects the views of the respondents (both males and females) of Nimbargi Sampradaya with respect to the link of 'Nirguna Bhakti' with 'Saguna Bhakti' of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Table No. 31

**RESPONDENTS' STAND ON THE
RELATIONSHIP OF 'NIRGUNA BHAKTI' TO 'SAGUNA BHAKTI'**

Sex	No Comments	Yes	Total
Female	8	32	40
Male	12	58	70
Total	20	90	110

A vast majority of the respondents have categorically stated that 'Nirguna Bhakti' is linked with 'Saguna Bhakti'. Twenty out of 110 respondents have not passed any comment regarding the link of 'Nirguna Bhakti' with 'Saguna Bhakti'.

90 out of 110 respondents have no hesitation in stating that there is link of 'Nirguna bhakti' with 'Saguna Bhakti'. However, these respondents differ in the degree of their emphasis. Some view that 'Saguna' and 'Nirguna' devotion are equally important. According to another category of respondents the attraction is more towards 'Saguna Bhakti' than 'Nirguna Bhakti'. While some others say that 'Nirguna' is more important than 'Saguna' Bhakti. A few respondents confess that 'Nirguna' Bhakti is more important and difficult than 'Saguna' Bhakti. All respondents who have passed their comments concerning the link between 'Saguna' and 'Nirguna' devotion admit that 'Saguna' devotion is needed to increase 'Nirguna' devotion but how much and what kind of 'Saguna' devotion is needed to increase 'Nirguna' Bhakti the respondents differ from each other a good deal.

Respondents of Chimmad Sampradaya express their views with respect to the link of 'Nirguna Bhakti' with 'Saguna Bhakti'.

Basis of 'Nirguna Bhakti' is 'Saguna Bhakti' according to one high school teacher. He opines that one should not count the beads of rosary while doing meditation (Nirguna Bhakti). Another respondent thinks that both 'Saguna', 'Nirguna' are needed for Spiritual life. However, he has more liking for 'Kirtana' than any other form of 'Saguna Bhakti'. Some respondents do not perform 'Nirguna' devotion as it is difficult and have liking for 'Kirtana' which is one important form of 'Saguna Bhakti'. Some respondents have told me that they find it extremely difficult to concentrate on Nam for about first twenty minutes after sitting for meditation. A retired head master cannot sit for meditation due to old age and he has developed more liking for 'Saguna' devotion. One has to move gradually from 'Saguna Bhakti' to 'Nirguna Bhakti' according a householder.

A retired university lady teacher who is a disciple of Amburao Maharaj says that too noisy Bhajana spoils the serenity of the centres (of Nimbargi Sampradaya). Constant reading of 'Pothi' disturbs meditation during meditation hours. Another scholar disciple of Sri Amburao Maharaj has not passed any comment with respect to the link of 'Nirguna Bhakti' to 'Saguna Bhakti'.

Two disciples (respondents) of Narasimheshwar Maharaj have not passed their comments on the relationship of 'Nirguna' with 'Saguna' Bhakti. A retired officer from Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation is a disciple of Narasimheshwar Maharaj. According to this respondent he has more attraction towards Bhajan and Pravachana forms of 'Saguna' Bhakti than any other form of 'Saguna' Bhakti. He, however, feels that he misses something in case he fails to sit for meditation. For the beginners in spiritual life 'Saguna' devotion is very essential according to another disciple of the same spiritual teacher. An illiterate respondent of the same spiritual teacher opines that 'Saguna' devotion is a preceding stage for 'Nirguna' devotion.

The views expressed by the respondents who belong to Gurudev Ranade line would be considered hereafter briefly.

'Saguna' Bhakti should not be stretched too far. It should be within limits. Both the kinds of meditation (group and individual) have their own advantages and disadvantages. Meditation in group stimulates the devotees to sit for more time. Indiscipline in the centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya while performing both 'Saguna' and 'Nirguna' rituals is growing these days. These are the views expressed by one scholar respondent of Gurudev Ranade line.

One lady disciple confesses that 'Nirguna' bhakti is more important than 'Saguna' bhakti. Among the forms of 'Saguna' bhakti she has the liking for reading spiritual books.

One retired person says that he has more liking for 'Nirguna' bhakti than 'Saguna' bhakti. Among the forms of 'Saguna' bhakti his mind is after music.

Once a retired high-school peon had developed the liking for 'sittings' - a kind of 'Saguna' Bhakti. But now he is more inclined towards 'Nirguna' than 'Saguna' kind of devotion. According to a retired cloth merchant 'Nirguna' is more important than 'Saguna' bhakti. However, this respondent feels that the institution of 'Sittings' must be revived.

'Saguna' is not final but complementary to 'Nirguna' devotion according to a retired teacher.

A wife of military officer feels that 'Saguna' devotion purifies mind although there is no substitution for 'Nirguna' devotion. Constant reading of Pothi during meditational hours is not desirable. A gap of 10-15 minutes is desirable for reading of Pothi during meditational hours.

A military officer feels that in spiritual life one should give 70% of importance to 'Nirguna' Bhakti and 30% to 'Saguna' bhakti. 'Saguna' bhakti should play a supporting role to 'Nirguna' bhakti.

Beginnings and endings of Saptahas are to a certain extent ritualistic type according to a graduate respondent from Bangalore. Rituals (Saptahas) provide opportunities to come in contact with spiritual minded people according to another graduate respondent. A teacher from Goa feels that indiscipline to a certain extent is inevitable on the part of devotees in the centres. Some rituals are there to carry on regular meditation. According to one widow disciple 'Saguna' comes to aid when 'Nirguna' is not possible.

Devotees of Prabhakar Maharaj line in Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir involve more in 'Saguna' form of bhakti than in 'Nirguna' form of Bhakti. But when Sri Prabhakar Maharaj lived sadhakas attached more importance to 'Nirguna' bhakti than 'Saguna' bhakti. This kind of change is noticed by an old Maratha disciple of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj with respect to 'Nirguna' and 'Saguna' bhakti.

Due to official work a disciple of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj cannot pay adequate attention to both 'Saguna' and 'Nirguna' forms of devotion. He, however, says that 'Nirguna' is more important than 'Saguna' devotion. A goldsmith (by profession and not by caste) disciple of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj developed headache when he started sitting for meditation. Sri Anjutgi Maharaj, therefore, directed this disciple to perform 'Saguna' bhakti. However, he, confesses that 'Nirguna' is more important than 'Saguna' bhakti.

A disciple of Sri Rangarao Maharaj opines that one should not remain in 'Saguna' bhakti only. It is necessary to spend more and more time in 'Nirguna' bhakti by taking the support of 'Saguna' bhakti.

A close relative of Sri Dattopant Maharaj who hails from urban Karnataka, feels the necessity of introducing more Kannada songs in the Bhajan of Inchageri Sampradaya as most part of the Bhajan is in Marathi.

A disciple of Sri Chidanand Swami feels that the 'Bhajan' of Inchageri Sampradaya must be translated into Kannada in the interest of Sadhakas who gather at Hire muth - Kannur because a vast majority of Sadhakas know Kannada and not Marathi. The same respondent does not like too noisy Bhajan. He has liking for 'Pravachana' rather than 'Bhajan'. He has brought to the kind notice of Nutan Siddhalingayya Swami about noisy Bhajan. Now-a-days Bhajan is not that noisy. A book on Bhajan of Inchageri Sampradaya is published in Kannada script. Due to official timings (Telephone Department) this respondent cannot pay adequate attention to 'Saguna' and 'Nirguna' Bhakti. However he admits that 'Nirguna' bhakti is more important than 'Saguna' bhakti. A lady disciple of Sri Chidanand Swami attaches equal importance to both 'Saguna' and 'Nirguna' bhakti. She sits for meditation when atmosphere is calm and quiet.

One medical practitioner who is a disciple of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj expresses his views in the following manner. The centres of spiritual importance should be kept clean. He does not like ostentation, harassment and excessiveness while performing rituals of any kind in the spiritual centres. A lady disciple of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj informed me that though 'Nirguna' is more important than 'Saguna', she spends more time in 'Saguna' forms of rituals of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

The above table suggests that female respondents are more reluctant to pass their comments regarding the relationship of 'Nirguna' bhakti to 'Saguna' bhakti of Nimbargi Sampradaya than the male respondents. Out of 40 female respondents 32 (i.e., 80%) have passed their comments on the relationship between 'Nirguna' and 'Saguna' bhakti. Out of 70 male respondents 58 (i.e. 82.8%) have expressed their opinion on the relationship of 'Nirguna' bhakti with 'Saguna' bhakti of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Table No. 32

**IMPACT OF NIMBARGI SAMPRADAYA ON GENERAL
RITUALS OF THE RESPONDENTS.**

Sex	Willingly Continued	Willingly Reduced	No Importance	No Comments	Total
Male	16	08	19	27	70
Female	09	11	07	13	40
Total	25	19	26	40	110
	22.7%	17.3%	23.6%	36.4%	

Out of 110 respondents, as indicated in the above table, 40 respondents (36.4%) have passed no comments regarding the impact of Nimbargi Sampradaya on the performance of their general rituals. 25 respondents (22.7%) have willingly continued their general rituals. General rituals are to be continued according to some respondents coming under this category. One Advocate respondent continues willingly the performance of general rituals as he regards them as the lower form of 'Saguna' bhakti. One tailor respondent informed me that he wants to continue with general rituals otherwise, his children would follow neither general rituals nor rituals of Nimbargi Sampradaya. A lady respondent has observed that she has continued the performance of general rituals as she likes them and also with a view not to hurt the religious sentiments of elders.

Out of 110 respondents, 19 (17.3%) have reduced willingly the performance of general rituals in varying degrees. A graduate lady has stated that in her house the members of family (including the respondent) do not follow any general rituals except Ganesh festival.

Out of 110, 26 (23.6%) respondents do not attach any importance to the performance of general rituals. They might have, however, continued unwillingly, or reduced unwillingly the performance of general rituals.

The above table indicates the impact of Nimbargi Sampradaya on the performance of general rituals of male and female respondents. Out of 43 male respondents who have passed their comments on the performance of general rituals 16 (37.2%) respondents have continued willingly performance of their general rituals. Out of 43 male respondents 8 (18.8%) have willingly reduced the performance of general rituals. Out of 43 male respondents 19 (44.1%) male respondents do not attach importance to the performance of general rituals.

Out of 27 female respondents who have passed their comments on the performance of general rituals 9 (33.3%) female respondents have willingly continued with the performance of their general rituals, whereas 11 (40.8%) have willingly reduced the performance of their general rituals and 7 (25.9%) have not given importance to the performance of their general rituals.

The table that follows reflects the impact of Nimbargi Sampradaya on the general performance of rituals of different occupational respondents.

Table No. 33

**IMPACT OF NIMBARGI SAMPRADAYA ON THE PERFORMANCE OF
GENERAL RITUALS OF DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL
CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS.**

Occupational Categories	Willingly Continued	Willingly Reduced	No Importance	No Comments	Total
House Holders	08	09	01	07	25
Agriculturists	00	00	02	03	05
Servicemen	13	10	16	27	66
Businessmen	04	00	07	03	14
Total	25	19	26	40	110

Out of twenty five house holders only 18 have passed their comments on the performance of their general rituals. Among the 18 respondents (householders) 8 (44.4%) have continued willingly performance of their general rituals. Nine house holders (50%) have willingly reduced performance of their general rituals. One householder (5.6%) does not attach any importance to the performance of their general rituals.

Out of 5 respondents whose occupation is agriculture only 2 have passed their comments and 3 have not passed their comments. Two respondents (100%) coming under this category do not attach importance to the performance of their general rituals.

Out of 66 respondents coming under the category of 'Servicemen' 27 have not passed the comments on performance of their general rituals. Out of 39 respondents who come under the category of 'Service' 13 (33.3%) have willingly continued, 10 (25.6%) have willingly reduced and 16 (41.1%) have given no importance to the performance of their general rituals.

Out of 14 respondents who come under the occupational category called 'Businessmen' 3 of them have not passed any comment on the impact of Nimbargi Sampradaya on performance of their general rituals. Four respondents (36.4%) coming under this category have willingly continued performance of their general rituals while seven respondents (63.6%) of this occupational category have not given importance to the performance of their general rituals.

Further analysis would reveal the views of the respondents of Nimbargi Sampradaya on various aspects of its Philosophy. For the sake of convenience the various aspects of Philosophy of Nimbargi Sampradaya are brought under four important headings : i) God realization as a process; ii) Relationship between spirituality and morality; iii) The place of miracles in Spiritual life; iv) Some other aspects of Philosophy.

Table No. 34

RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON
GOD REALIZATION AS A PROCESS

Sex	No Comments*		Yes		Total
Male	39	55.7%	31	44.3%	70
Female	30	75.00%	10	25.00 %	40
Total	69	62.7%	41	37.3%	110

No Comments* - This category indicates not only the initiated respondents but also closely associated respondents of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

From the above table it can be interpreted that 69 respondents out of 110 respondents have not passed their comments on 'God realization as a process', 41 respondents have, however, categorically stated that God-realization is a process.

The above table reflects that the female respondents are more reluctant in passing comments on 'God - realization as a process' as compared to male respondents. Out of 40 female respondents only 10 (25%) have passed their comments and 30 (75%) female respondents have not passed their comments on the issue of 'God - realization as a process. Among 70 male respondents 31 (44.3%) respondents have passed their comments on the above said issue while 39 (55.7%) male respondents have not passed their comments.

It is interesting, however, to note that those who have passed their comments on the above said issue have passed their comments in favour of that issue viz; 'God - realization is a process and not an event. Nobody has passed comment against the above said issue.

Table No. 35

GOD-REALIZATION AS A PROCESS. COMMENTS PASSED BY THE
RESPONDENTS* INITIATED BEFORE 1951 AND AFTER 1950.

Year	Yes	No Comments	Total
Before 1951	08 19.00 %	34 81.00%	42
After 1950	33 48.5%	35* 51.5%	68
Total	41 37.3%	69 62.7%	110

* Inclusive of the closely associated respondents.

Table No.-35 reflects that out of 42 respondents who were initiated before 1951, 8 respondents (19%), have passed their comments in favour of God - realization as a process and 34 respondents (81%) have not passed any comment i.e., neither in favour of nor against the philosophical issue "God realization as a process".

The above table indicates that out of 68 respondents, 33 respondents (48.5%) have passed their comments positively with respect to the philosophical issue that God realization is a process and not an event, while 35 respondents (including closely associates) 51.5% have not passed any comment on the same issue.

From the above table one can understand also that out of 110 respondents 41 respondents (37.3%) have passed their comments in favour of God realization as a process and 69 respondents (62.7%) have not passed any comment on the aforesaid issue. Nobody has of course passed comment against the aforementioned issue.

The preceding table suggests that those who are initiated after 1951 are in a much better position to pass their comments on the issue, "God-realization as a process" than those who are initiated before 1951. The same table also suggests that only 37.3% respondents are in a position to pass their comments on

the above mentioned issue and 62.7% of the respondents are not in a position to pass their comments on the same issue.

The table that follows is on the rural and urban respondents' views on 'God - realization as a process'.

Table No. 36

**RURAL AND URBAN RESPONDENTS' COMMENTS ON
GOD REALIZATION AS A PROCESS.**

Respondents	Yes		No Comments*		Total
Rural	06	37.5%	10	62.5%	16
Urban	35	37.2%	59	62.8%	94
Total	41		69		110

* No Comments - Inclusive of close associates.

Table No.-36 indicates that out of 16 rural respondents, 6 respondents (37.5%) have passed their comments in favour of 'God - realization as a process' and 10 rural respondents (62.5%) have not passed any comment on this issue.

Among 94 urban respondents 35 urban respondents (37.2%) have passed their comments in favour of 'God - realization as a process' while 59 urban respondents (62.8%) have not passed their any comment on this issue.

Interestingly the above table indicates that the percentage of rural and urban respondents in passing their comments in favour of 'God -realization as a process' is almost the same. This implies that the percentage of rural and urban respondents who have not passed their comments on this issue is also almost the same.

Table No. 37

**RESPONDENTS' STAND ON THE RELATIONSHIP
OF SPIRITUALITY TO MORALITY**

Yes	Doubtful	No Comments	Total
83	01	26	110
75.5%	0.9%	23.6%	

Table No.-37 suggests that out of 110 respondents 83 (75.5%) say that spirituality is linked with morality. One respondent (0.9%) has expressed his doubtfulness regarding the link of spirituality with morality. Twenty six respondents (23.6%) have not passed their comments on this matter. The views of those respondents who have passed their comments with respect to the link of spirituality with morality could be further elaborated in the following manner.

No spiritual life is possible without sound foundation of morality according to a vast majority of the respondents. One married female respondent observes that even to enter into spiritual life moral preparation is needed. Morality purifies mind and it is possible to concentrate on God when mind becomes pure. Another respondent says that one should be content with whatever that has been granted by God. A retired college teacher feels that morality and faith form the basis of spiritual life. A disciple of Sri Baburao Kotnis Maharaj says that morality grows automatically with the practice of meditation. Another benefit of meditation is intellectual clarification. According to a merchant disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj one should lead spiritual life with the support of moral qualities.

A retired engineer has full faith in the sayings of the Saint of Nimbargi. Egoism both in spiritual and worldly life leads to the downfall of the person. If one does not keep away from others' wealth and women (in case of men)/men (in case of women) there would be downfall in spiritual life. Spiritual experience is the crown of morality. A householder feels that spiritual experience will either disappear or become less if a person fails to follow moral conduct. Several

respondents have categorically stated that minimum two above mentioned vows ought to be followed by a spiritual aspirant. We cross over one most difficult step in spiritual world automatically if the two vows are followed. The disciples of Prabhakar Maharaj line lay stress upon one more vow i.e., not to give false promise to another.

One graduate householder informs that vices will go on diminishing as we go on making progress in spiritual life.

A widow follower of Nimbargi Sampradaya says that one should have mercy towards others. This is the first step in spiritual life. A retired agricultural officer does not like ostentation in spiritual life. The essence of Ahimsa is applicable to both Jainism and Nimbargi Sampradaya according to Jain disciple of Nimbargi Sampradaya. Two servant disciples of Gurudev Ranade (one Mohemmadan and one Lambani) are instructed at the time of their initiation that they should not steal belongings of others, and should not have lustful contact with others' women and should not tell lies in the interest of spiritual life. A few respondents have informed me, however, that there is nothing wrong if we tell lies on certain occasions if something turns out to be good. But one should not tell lies with selfish motive. An advocate respondent of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj line intimated to me that this world is illusory and if someone is going to be benefited there is nothing wrong in telling lies. God is supermoral.

The wife of a Military officer says that nobody is morally perfect. As we make spiritual progress morality in us grows. A disciple of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj line observes that one gets power to question his/her spiritual teacher while facing crises in life in case he/she does not violate morals. Another disciple of the same line (Anjutgi Maharaj) line says that morality should spring from within as in case of the Saints.

A lady associate professor thinks that morality is the basis of spiritual life but there are persons in the world who are moral without being spiritual.

One scholar respondent regards spirituality and morality as the two sides of the coin. He, however, points out that spiritual life should manifest itself in moral life.

According to a Military officer there is no noticeable progress in the moral conduct of some (the so called) spiritually advanced persons. Either such so called spiritually advanced persons are hypocrites or there is no link between spirituality and morality.

Table No. 38

**VIEWS OF RESPONDENTS ON THE
SIGNIFICANCE OF MIRACLES IN SPIRITUAL LIFE**

Community	Yes	No	Partly	N.C.	Total
Rural	01 (6.3 %)	07 (43.7 %)	04 (25 %)	04 (25 %)	16
Urban	01 (1.1 %)	33 (35.1 %)	17 (18.1 %)	43 (45.7%)	94
Total	02 (1.8 %)	40 (36.4 %)	21 (19.1 %)	47 (42.7%)	110

'Yes' - Complete significance to miracles in spiritual life.

'No'-No Significance to miracles in spiritual life.

Partly - Significance to miracles partly in spiritual life.

N.C.-No comments on significance of miracles in spiritual life.

From the Table No.-38 one can observe that out of 110 respondents 2 respondents (1.8%) have given complete significance to miracles, 40 respondents (36.4%) have not given miracles any importance in spiritual or mystical life, 21 respondents (19.1%) have given importance to miracles in spiritual life only partially and 47 respondents (42.7%) have not passed any comments on this issue.

Out of 16 rural respondents one respondent (6.3%) has given complete importance to miracles in spiritual life. There is no place for miracles in spiritual life according to 7 rural respondents (43.7%). Four rural respondents (25%) have given importance to miracles only in part. Four other rural respondents (25%) have not passed their comments on this issue.

Out of 94 urban respondents 1, (1.1%) respondent has given complete significance to miracles in spiritual life. 17 urban

respondents (18.1%) have not attached significance to miracles in spiritual life. 33 (35.1%) of urban respondents have given importance to miracles only in part and 43 (45.7%) urban respondents have not passed their comments with respect to the place of miracles in spiritual life.

Next two tables show the stand taken by (i) male and female respondents; (ii) Graduate and non-graduate (Primary, high school and illiterates) respondents; with respect to the place of miracles in spiritual life.

Table No. 39

**STAND TAKEN BY MALE AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS ON THE
PLACE OF MIRACLES IN SPIRITUAL LIFE**

Sex	Yes	No	Partly	N.C.	Total
Female	00 (0.0 %)	16 (40.0 %)	08 (20 %)	16 (40 %)	40
Male	02 (2.9 %)	24 (34.2 %)	13 (18.6 %)	31 (44.3%)	70
Total	02	40	21	47	110

Table No.-39 clearly suggests that out of 40 female respondents not a single female respondent has given complete importance to miracles in spiritual life i.e., the percentage of those female respondents who have given importance to miracles in spiritual life is 0.0%. 16 female respondents (40%) have not given any importance to miracles in spiritual life. 8 female respondents (20%) have given significance to miracles in spiritual life by part, 16 other female respondents (40%) have not passed their comments on this issue.

The above table obviously indicates that out of 70 male respondents (2.9%) do give complete importance to miracles in spiritual life, 24 male respondents (34.2%) do not give any

importance to miracles in spiritual life. 13 male respondents (18.6%) do give importance to miracles in spiritual life by part. 31 male respondents (44.3 %) have not passed any comment in regard to place of miracles in spiritual life.

Table No. 40

**STAND TAKEN BY GRADUATE AND NON-GRADUATE
RESPONDENTS ON SIGNIFICANCE OF MIRACLES IN SPIRITUAL LIFE.**

Education	Yes	No	Partly	N.C.	Total
Graduate	01 (2.1 %)	14 (29.2 %)	04 (8.3%)	29 (60.4%)	48
Non-Graduate	01 (1.6 %)	26 (41.9 %)	17 (27.4 %)	18 (29.1%)	62
Total	02	40	21	47	110

Table No.-40 clearly indicates that out of 48 graduate respondents one graduate respondent (2.1%) has given complete importance to miracles in spiritual life. 14 graduate respondents (29.2%) have not given any importance to miracles in spiritual life. 4 graduate respondents (8.3%) have attached importance to miracles in spiritual life in part. 29 graduate respondents (60.4%) have not passed their comments on this issue.

Out of 62 non-graduate respondents one non-graduate respondent (1.6%) gives complete importance to miracles in spiritual life. 26 non-graduate respondents (41.9%) do not give any importance to miracles in spiritual life. 17 non-graduate respondents (27.4%) have given importance to miracles in part in spiritual life. 18 non-graduate respondents (29.1%) have not passed their comments on this issue.

No special comment has been passed on Philosophical issues in course of interview by more than half of the respondents. Two respondents have confessed that they have not made the study of philosophy. One film-star-cum-artist says that he has no time to study Philosophy as he is engrossed in drawing the paintings. A few respondents have felt that there is no need

to study Philosophy. By doing meditation all philosophical puzzles (riddles) get themselves solved. Meditation leads to intellectual clarification. One graduate respondent is afraid of reading philosophical books.

Quite a few respondents are impressed by some Philosophical works of Gurudev Ranade-the prime exponent of Philosophy of Nimbargi Sampradaya. A non-graduate Maharashtrian has gone through almost all works of Gurudev Ranade. He is impressed by rational mysticism of Gurudev Ranade and he frequently quotes Philosophical passages fluently and freely without referring to Gurudev Ranade's books. An unmarried graduate old lady does not feel like reading Philosophical books except those of Gurudev Ranade in particular and of Nimbargi Sampradaya in general. A stenographer from Karnataka is impressed by 'Philosophy of God-realization' of Gurudev Ranade. He has gone through almost all works of Gurudev Ranade thoroughly. He says that Gurudev Ranade's Philosophical and other works are based on his (Gurudev Ranade's) own experiences.

A lady disciple of Sri Amburao Maharaj informs that one should study and follow 'Rational mysticism' for one's own spiritual and moral upliftment and mental peace. One Maratha respondent feels that mysticism is rational only upto a point and faith in spiritual life is essential. A scholar respondent loves Philosophy of Gurudev Ranade as Prof. Ranade does not discard any system of Philosophy totally. Synthetic and Rational Philosophy of Gurudev Ranade have immensely impressed this scholar respondent. A retired railway clerk is impressed by Rational Philosophy of Gurudev Ranade. A respondent who is remarried is immensely impressed by rational mysticism of Gurudev Ranade and the works of Gurudev Ranade have given him immense satisfaction. A retired professor and another respondent are impressed by rational mysticism, the doctrine of approximation of Gurudev Ranade. They too and one Jain disciple like a synthesis of worldly and material life as described in Nimbargi Sampradaya. One follower of Nimbargi Sampradaya points out that rational mysticism has impressed him because it does not attach importance to miracles and superstitions in spiritual life. Similar stand is taken by some other respondents. A respondent from Goa is moved by the Philosophy of beatificism, doctrine of approximation and rational mysticism of Gurudev Ranade. A doctor disciple of Siddharameshwar Maharaj line likes Rational Mysticism which

does not lay stress upon miracles and superstitions. He likes Philosophical works of other Sampradaya too. (For instance, Philosophy of Madhvacharya). An archacologist informs that 'Devotional Monism' of Nimbargi Sampradaya suits his temperament.

A military officer says that very few persons are attracted to the path of Nimbargi Sampradaya on account of rational mysticism. Several persons are followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya because of family influence and not because of its rational mysticism. Most of the followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya are not bothered about its Philosophy.

A retired principal of engineering college intimates that Gurudev Ranade's literature stands on a high pedestal of integration of head and heart. The stress on 'Sadhana' is absolutely clear and logical.

According to one retired vice principal mysticism cannot be rational. Mysticism is full of contradictions. Mystical experiences may be the outcome of self-hypnotism or illusion. Some Sadhakas are immediately blessed with mystical experiences while others who do mediation regularly over number of years (30-40) are not blessed with them. Why does Tukaram say that even scorpion is a God and yet one should salute it only from a distance. Is it desirable to dress like a woman in order to worship God on part of men? This has been practised by a great saint - Ramakrishna Paramhansa. On account of such examples set by the great Saints like Tukaram and Ramakrishna Paramahansa a common man is bewildered regarding spiritual path. Hence rational mysticism of Prof. R.D. Ranade appears to be a jargon of words. This respondent however, has not given clear answer as to whether he has studied thoroughly Prof. R.D. Ranade's rational mysticism.

One respondent informed me that Pathway to God that is shown in Nimbargi Sampradaya is absolutely correct. Both grace of the spiritual teacher and devoted efforts on the part of disciple are essential for spiritual growth according to a photographer. Another respondent feels that Pathway to God in Nimbargi Sampradaya stresses devoted Namasmarana (Meditation). Devotion and not superstition is important in spiritual life according to some respondents. God appears before devotees depending upon their devotion.

One respondent informed me that there is no rebirth for the initiated provided they follow two vows strictly and perform meditation regularly. Another respondent quoting the verses of Ramadas Swami narrated that there cannot be the trouble of disembodied spirits and black magic to those who take Nam. Remembrance of Nam is a merit and its forgetfulness is a sin. Spiritual realization should be the goal of human life and one can go nearer to it by devoted meditation and by following vows.

According to a spinster of Nimbargi Sampradaya there is a reciprocal connection between spirituality and morality.

One respondent thinks that meditation and not miracles are important. Some miracles, however, do take place due to spiritual power but great saints neither take credit to them, nor exhibit them. Miracles are not true signs of spirituality according to some respondents. In some books miracles are highlighted to attract the rural masses according to a respondent belonging to Siddhalingayya Swami line. Exhibition of miracles would bring spiritual downfall of the concerned person. A disciple of Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj makes the classification of miracles into two types: (i) Vaishnava Maye - which increases devotion; (ii) Tamasik Maye - which enhances ego and vices.

Mystical experience is Nishabda Jnana. That cannot be comprehended in terms of words and is more important than 'Shabda Jnana' (the bookish knowledge) according one respondent of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Thus, on Philosophical and other related aspects respondent of Nimbargi Sampradaya have expressed their views. I have not made an attempt to define terms like 'Morality', 'Miracles', 'Mysticism'. Many of the followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya have some insight into its rational mysticism and its stress upon moral conduct of a spiritual aspirant. In the third chapter 'Philosophy of Nimbargi Sampradaya' has been presented and in this chapter the views of the respondents on Philosophical issues are elaborated.

Finally, an attempt has been made in this chapter, to comprehend the views of the respondents of Nimbargi Sampradaya as to whether they intend to stick to Nimbargi Sampradaya or not. If so, on what spiritual and material grounds they

(respondents) intend to stick to Nimbargi Sampradaya. Obviously, an answer to this query depends upon the spiritual and material benefits that the respondents derive from Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Quite a few respondents though not all, are blessed with mystical experiences of one form or the other. Such respondents come from both Chimmad and Inchageri Sampradaya and in Inchageri Sampradaya from almost all lines. A few respondents have declined to narrate their spiritual /mystical experiences for various reasons. For instance, a disciple of Sri Rangarao Maharaj has informed me that he is blessed with certain spiritual experiences but he does not want to tell them because it might enhance his ego. Two lady disciples of Chimmad Sampradaya and one school teacher of the same Sampradaya have indicated that their spiritual experiences must be told to their spiritual teachers and not to any one else.

A Maratha disciple of Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj says that spiritual experiences are ineffable. A Lingayat and illiterate disciple of the same spiritual teacher conceived that some spiritual experiences cannot be expressed in terms of words. An Ambige illiterate disciple of Sri Siddhalingayya Swami quoting a devotional song composed by him initimated to me that spiritual experience is smaller than an ant and bigger than sky and a person who has penetrated into spiritual world would alone be able to comprehend its significance. Without narrating their spiritual experience, some respondents have only stated that they have derived some spiritual benefit or that they are blessed with only a few glimpses of spiritual experiences. A lady (retired university teacher) disciple of Sri Amburao Maharaj has written that she is not blessed with beatific experiences of any note worthy degree. A graduate household (the disciple of Gurudev Ranade) simply writes that she is blessed with a few glimpses of spiritual experiences.

Some respondents, however, have tried to explain their mystical experiences.

A high school teacher of Chimmad Sampradaya has stated that he is blessed with Audic (Divine music), Photic (Divine light) mystical experiences. A disciple of Sri Kotnis Maharaj has Photic and Audic mystical experiences. He listens to some devotional songs in a beatific state. Some songs are in those languages which he does not know. He has written down such

songs in Devanagari Script and has published the book 'Gurulinga Gita'. He claims that he has seen in spiritual visions 'Jnaneshwar' and 'Nimbargi Maharaj' at Devachi Alandi, and Chimmad respectively. He has drawn a picture of 'Jnaneshwar'.

An old lady disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj is said to have been blessed with Photic mystical experience. A brahmin disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj informed that in his childhood he was fortunate enough in having wonderful and rare spiritual experiences such as the visions of Lord Hanuman, Ram etc;. He further narrates that he used to sit in a state of 'Samadhi' (beatific state) for hours together and he had the experience of 'infinity'. His spiritual teacher instructed him not to get up from the bed without completing minimum half an hour meditation. On one occasion he did not follow this instruction and that day onwards he does not have even 1/10th of mystical experiences of what he had before that. He regrets very much over this state of affair and now his mind thirsts for those previous mystical experiences.

An illiterate Lingayat disciple of Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj is said to have been blessed with Das Nad (10 types of divine music), shower of pearls, Shubhra Neela Varna (Bright blue colour), Spiriton (Parbindu) and many others. Some spiritual experiences of him have become stable and some other experiences are inexplicable.

The spiritual experience of blue light has been claimed by a retired head master (the disciple of Gurudev Ranade). A retired railway clerk (the disciple of Gurudev Ranade) is said to have been blessed with morphic, photic, audic spiritual experiences. He also informed me that he is having the mystical experience of Amrit (Ambrisual juice) and has seen in divine vision 'Shesha' (the serpent). A local disciple of Gurudev Ranade is said to have seen Gurudev Ranade in his spiritual vision in 1961.

A Lingayat doctor has been initiated on Gurudev Ranade Samadhi. He says that he is blessed with bright spot (spiriton) and Audic divine experiences. While attending on his patients, too, he at times listens to divine music. He cannot listen to divine music when he wants to listen to it.

A lady teacher who has been initiated on Gurudev Ranade Samadhi is also blessed with 'Spiriton'.

A householder of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj line had once the experience of floating in the air while reading a holy book. Her body became so light that it was about to touch the tube light on the wall of her house.

A disciple of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj has narrated some of his spiritual experiences in the following manner. This respondent is gold smith both by his profession and caste.

1. In an open space a big dog followed him ferociously barking and when it was about to pounce upon him he cried 'Bhausahab Maharaj' (the Saint of Umadi) and the dog suddenly disappeared. He saw all around but there was no trace of dog.

2. Once Shivalinga Pinda (the Phallic of Lord Shiva) appeared to him bigger than what it was.

3. On one evening he entered the temple at Bijapur even though there was current failure. He heard the words 'Shiv, Shiv' in the temple. Later on, he came to know that there was snake in that temple.

A Maratha disciple of Sri Pandurang Maharaj informed me that he is blessed with divine light (Jyoti) and he remains in that beatific state hours together.

A disciple of Sri Siddhalingayya Swami line is said to have divine visions of Kadasiddha and the Saint of Umadi.

A doctor disciple of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj of Siddharameshwar Maharaj line had the experience of the flood of light while sitting for meditation in his friend's house at Bijapur. The frustration remains still as he has made no much spiritual progress. A lady disciple of the same saint intimated to me that the various forms of deities that flash before her mind, would immediately appear in her spiritual visions.

Two months after initiation on Gurudev Ranade's Samadhi, a householder is blessed with spiritual experiences.

A retired lady teacher claims that she was blessed with mystical experience even before her initiation by Gurudev Ranade. According to a householder spiritual experiences of previous life come soon but to have even a little spiritual progress later persistent efforts ought to be made and grace is also needed.

Almost all respondents who are initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya claim that by doing meditation they derive Psychological satisfaction or peace of mind, joy, contentment or tranquillity. This category of initiated respondents consists of both (i) who claim that they are blessed with spiritual experiences; (ii) who do not claim spiritual experiences. A scholar disciple of Gurudev Ranade does not make any claim over spiritual experience but he categorically states that he gets peace of mind by doing meditation. Further, he asks what is the use of mere spiritual experience if that is not reflected in conduct.

A retired person from postal department of Chimmad Sampradaya says that his throat gets choked at the time of removing Padukas of Sri Kotnis Maharaj and at times while taking part in Kirtana. He plays upon musical instruments at the time of Kirtana.

A lady disciple of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj initimated to me that she experiences horripilation while doing Bhajan.

Some respondents have attained a few super-natural powers. Two lady respondents have clearly stated that they can forecast certain incidents. A lady disciple of Gurudev Ranade in her dream saw the air crash of French airline, and the dashing of Iran and Iraq ships well before the incidents took place. A nurse of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj line could forecast the deaths and accidents of those persons who come to Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir well in advance. But she prays her spiritual teacher not to grant such powers.

A lady disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj claims that she has 'Vacha Siddhi' i.e., whatever that she utters comes out to be true. A Brahmin disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj says that in his childhood he had the 'Vacha Siddhi' but not now. In his childhood once he openly told infront of some persons the name of a person who lived with concubine. His

spiritual teacher warned him not to do so. He has lost several spiritual experiences of his childhood and also of 'Vacha siddhi' as he did not follow that instruction of his spiritual teacher. The same respondent informed that he wants to stick to Nimbargi Sampradaya for two other important reasons (i) There is no trouble to the initiated by disembodied spirits (Bhuta Badha) and black magic etc., (ii) If the initiated follows two vows of Nimbargi Sampradaya viz; not to touch other's wealth, women, he can get human birth again and he cannot enter the hell.

A disciple of Sri Shiva Prabhu Maharaj says that Nimbargi Sampradaya is well spread out and it has produced number of great Saints. Several respondents have stated that the pathway to God as shown in Nimbargi Sampradaya is correct. A Brahmin respondent (the disciple of Gurudev Ranade) is fully convinced of the spiritual significance of 'Nam' granted by his spiritual teacher. He sat two-three times in a dark room for meditation. He started taking 'Nam' in breath of a different one. He heard the voice of invisible entity which uttered 'Nam' imparted to him by Gurudev Ranade. This was tried by him two-three times but he had the same experience. He started then taking 'Nam' imparted to him by his spiritual teacher. Another respondent says that path that is shown in Nimbargi Sampradaya is as pure as gold. A lady respondent from Karnataka conceives that the spiritual experiences are verifiable by the spiritual aspirants themselves. Nimbargi Sampradaya has rational base according to another respondent. No rigid rules with respect to dress, bathing, fasting etc; are there. No tough Yogic exercise is practised. Nam in breath can be woven at any time, anywhere without the knowledge of others. It best suits to modern living conditions.

A Muslim disciple of Prabhakar Maharaj line thinks that path that is shown in Nimbargi Sampradaya is very clear and there is no scope for confusion. He has equal regard for other Sampradaya and religions provided the essence of spirituality is the same. Two Lingayat disciples were given 'Namas' of their religion by a Brahmin spiritual teacher and hence they feel that there is no discrimination in the name of caste, religion in Nimbargi Sampradaya. A Muslim disciple of Gurudev Ranade was blessed with the Nam of Islam. A path that is shown in Nimbargi Sampradaya according to one close associate of Nimbargi Sampradaya is logical and easy. It lays stress

upon Nam and Guru. The Sampradaya in which he is initiated also lays stress upon 'Nam' and 'Guru'.

Another respondent (Gurudev Ranade's disciple) has told me that he is initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya on account of his previous merit (Purva Sukrit). Divine monism of Nimbargi Sampradaya suits to the temperament of an archaeologist, although he has come in contact with other Sampradaya also. A disciple of Ganapatrao Maharaj says that 'Shanti Kutir' has given him immense peace of mind and joy. It is just like his house. 'Where else can I go'?

A few respondents have stated that they intend to stick to Nimbargi Sampradaya till their last breath. An old disciple of Chidanand Swami prays his Guru not to put him into great difficulties which he cannot withstand. He also prays his Guru to shower his blessings in remembering Nam. His last breath must be woven with Nam. But he says that the fulfillment of this desire depends upon the grace of his spiritual teacher.

Two respondents did develop headache by doing meditation. Anjutgi Maharaja's disciple was directed to take up to 'Saguna' devotion as he developed headache by performing meditation. A person who has been initiated on Gurudev Ranade's Samadhi also developed headache. He prayed, therefore to his spiritual teacher and now he is free from headache. This respondent says that he has been able to overcome passions to a considerable degree by doing meditation.

A vast majority of the respondents point out that they derive on account of meditation and Arati, Guru's grace etc., support both in material world and spiritual world. While doing Prapancha, we should give our mind to Guru according to a few disciples. An illiterate disciple of Siddhalingayya Swami says that one should apply dung of Prapancha but mind ('Chit') should be given to the spiritual teacher. While milking she buffaloes, milkman (Gowli) takes Nam. His children are well settled, daughters are given away in marriages to good families, yet he has not given up his profession in the evening of his life. For it improves his health or at least his hands and legs remain in good condition and at the same time he takes Nam.

A graduate lady tells that when she is in need of material things God does not fulfill them and when she does not want

them God provides her with material comforts. God's ways are strange and He tests our devotion. She has, therefore, stopped praying to God for material comforts. A lady disciple of Sri Amburao Maharaj is of the opinion that nothing definite could be stated about worldly benefits. She also feels that our Bhakti should be Nishkam (not with expectation of material comforts). It is extremely difficult to pinpoint according to a follower of Chimmad Sampradaya that if any good thing happens it is due to God's grace and if any bad thing happens it is due to God's wrath.

A disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj says that worldly difficulties appear and disappear but we should take Nam in breath. Some persons told me that this respondent met with a heavy loss in the business. If somebody else was there in his position there could have been heart failure. Yet he attends Bhajan and has started operating on 'Xerox' machine. A professor in the engineering college once asked one spiritual teacher of Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj line in his student days regarding the choice between one kind of course and the other kind of course. The spiritual teacher asked him to take a coin of 25 paise and put the same question to an astrologer who sits by the side of the road. Worldly events take place as desired by God and one should not be after them. He therefore, does not do Paramartha for sake of 'Prapancha'.

A lady disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj says that she offers prayers to God and difficulties are solved automatically. A close associate of Chimmad Sampradaya forgets the material world when he is absorbed in listening to 'Kirtana' and reading 'Jnaneshwari'. A lady respondent of Chimmad Sampradaya is not yet successful much in forgetting the material world. An archaeologist says that after joining Nimbargi Sampradaya the gulf between material world and spiritual world is bridged. An engineer disciple of Gurudev Ranade stresses both spiritual and material benefits if we carry on 'Paramartha' sincerely. He refers to Janakraj who became 'Ubhaya MevSamrat' (king both in spiritual and material worlds) on account of his spiritual practice. A disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj line opines that ordinary devotees cannot attain success both in prapancha and paramartha. If we concentrate on 'Prapancha' Paramartha stands neglected. If we concentrate on 'Paramartha', 'Prapancha' stands neglected. Success in both material and spiritual worlds is possible only for persons like Janakaraj and not for ordinary devotees.

Thus, the respondents of Nimbargi Sampradaya give different versions with respect to the worldly benefits that they derive from joining Sampradaya. However, most of the respondents say that they have been able to withstand the shocks or have been able to overcome worldly difficulties, or their prosperity in worldly life could be attributed to the grace of their spiritual teachers or power of meditation, arati etc., or divine grace.

An old lady disciple was down with cancer about 18 years ago. She was operated upon to remove the cancer about 11 years ago. This lady respondent of Chimmad Sampradaya has surrendered to her spiritual teacher and it is upto him to protect her or not to protect her. Another lady disciple intimated to me that though her mother-in-law is afflicted with bone cancer she does not suffer from the pain.

On seeing disciples who suffer from diseases one respondent feels that there is no rebirth for them. They suffer for their deeds in previous life. In this life they suffer completely for nothing remains later. This is the stand taken by Gurudev Ranade's disciple. Another old disciple of Gurudev Ranade, however, feels that his eye operation has been successful because of the grace of his spiritual teacher. His Asthenic trouble has also been subsided to a great extent on account of the grace of his spiritual teacher. For a lady retired teacher 'Blood Pressure' shot up and there was nobody in her house at that time. She started performing meditation and Blood Pressure was brought under control without any help of a doctor. A widow who has been initiated on Gurudev Ranade Samadhi has developed a strong will power to withstand her knee pain and remains alone in her old age by the side of 'Paramartha Mandir'.

A lady disciple of Ganapatrao Maharaj was directed to join the tour to several centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya along with her husband. There was an aunt in their house who could not move about in the house over a long period of time. It was not possible for the couple to join the proposed tour and they explained their difficulties to their spiritual teacher. The spiritual teacher asked the couple to start giving medicine to the ailing aunt and she would be recovered at the time of tour. Surprisingly, she (aunt) was recovered and the couple could manage their trip without any problem. Of course, their

children took care of the aunt without any difficulty in the absence of their parents.

Sri Rangrao Maharaja's disciple was admitted at Hubli Hospital. When he offered prayers to his spiritual teacher, his spiritual teacher appeared before him. He was cured soon. The medical report which came next day stated that his condition was normal.

A Marawadi lady disciple's son was to undergo kidney operation at Bombay. Her spiritual teacher - Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj instructed not to leave the Hospital until the doctor's permission. All arrangements were made for his operation. Her son followed the instruction of the spiritual teacher and the operation was successful. He returned to his native place after the doctor permitted him to do so. The arrangements at Bombay and successful kidney operation were due to Guru's grace according to this respondent. The eldest son of a nurse was down with jaundice. She reported this matter to her spiritual teacher - Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj. The very next day, the child was almost completely recovered from the jaundice. She expresses her gratefulness to her Guru.

A close associate (lady) of Prabhakar Maharaj line prayed to God to cure the high fever of her son. Her husband went to Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir and shed the tears before the idol of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj. Sri Prabhakar Maharaj appeared before him and told him not to worry. In the dream of the lady, Sri Prabhakar Maharaj appeared and assured her that her son's fever would come down by 2 P.M. or so. To her surprise the fever of her son came down at the said time.

A nurse disciple of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj line was afflicted with severe electric shock in the hospital. She was in a state of coma on account of that shock. Doctor who attended on her, lost all hopes of her survival. In the mean time, she was taken away by a few strong men to 'Yamaloka'. 'Yama' (the Lord of death) and 'Chitragupta' were there. Yama asked the servant why they had brought this lady who has done Guru seva. She started returning through the dark cave and saw there her spiritual teacher - Sri Inamdar Gururji. Here, in the hospital she suddenly woke up and asked for rosary of beads. On the same evening she went to the Mandir of Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj and had darashan of the idol. She went near the idol of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj by crawling.

A graduate lady disciple who got initiated on Gurudev Ranade Samadhi fell seriously ill and it was a question of life and death to her. She rigorously practised meditation and got rid of her illness.

A stenographer feels energetic and not idle after performing meditation. One respondent (the disciple of Sri Narasimheshwar Maharaj) can sit for meditation in a steady position for hours together. He feels energetic both physically and mentally.

Some respondents have narrated how, they have been able to over come accidents and some other crises in life due to the grace of their spiritual teachers.

The husband of a lady disciple of Chidanand Swami is a truck driver. Her husband has been protected number of times from accidents. While driving the truck in a state of sleep he has been awakened by the spiritual teacher. A dentist's wife escaped unhurt in a car accident. Nothing was stolen and nobody was hurt in the accident. The husband of a lady disciple of Chimmad Sampradaya met with a serious accident and was in a state of coma. People gathered around the spot of the accident of her husband. But nobody came forward to admit him to hospital. A stranger, however, took her husband to the hospital and her husband was saved. This is all due to Sadhubua's grace. The same lady narrated another incidence in which her husband mistook hood of a cobra for mangoes on 'Narasihma Jayanti' day. When it came to the notice of this lady she cried. The husband threw away the cobra which he mistook for mangoes. Her husband was saved because of the grace showered by Sadhubua according to the respondent.

The son of a nurse near Thane was taken away in a state of hypnotism by a stranger to an unknown place. The stranger wanted to murder the boy and hence he started making all preparation for the murder. He took a knife and started sharpening it. The boy was tied. The boy cried taking the name of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj. In a divine Vision he (the boy) saw the pinnacle of Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir. Suddenly a few people came there in an auto and rescued the boy. The mother (nurse) grew anxious about the son. She started praying to God. Oh! Protector! come to my rescue! She received the telephone call from the hospital. As per the telephonic message her son was safe there and some persons left

him there by an auto. Later, she came to know about certain incidences of murders in nearby Thane.

A respondent from Goa is a good swimmer. But once he lost all his strength while swimming in a river. He prayed to Gurudev and got strength immediately and escaped from the incidence of drowning. This respondent narrates another event. The respondent slept in a room in which there was a cobra. Something fell in a neighbour's room and he got up. This is all due to Gurudev's grace according to this respondent. A lady doctor who has been initiated on Gurudev Ranade Samadhi reported to me a case of train accident in which she was travelling. She did forecast the train accident and the idea flashed to her how to escape from it by Gurudev's grace.

Once a lady disciple of Gurudev Ranade had gone to Prayag to perform funeral rites of her close relative along with her husband and some other relatives. The husband went to throw something in a river but he could not return immediately as he had the experience of mirage. She (the respondent) sat for meditation. She saw in a divine vision Gurudev's hand and her husband returned safely. On another occasion the same respondent's close relative was on the death bed. She had to travel a long distance to see the close relative. She had the desire to see him in a state of awareness. Throughout her journey she meditated and her desire to see her close relative in a state of awareness was fulfilled.

A lady disciple of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj escaped twice from the harassment of ticket collectors while travelling in the train. Strangers have helped her a lot. This is all due to Guru's grace according to the respondent.

A follower of Chimmad Sampradaya narrated the incidence that took place on 02/11/1983 (Guru Poornima day) in the postal department. This respondent was the target of insult by his colleagues in the postal department inspite of his honest work. On 02/11/1983 he could not bear the insult and almost without his knowledge he went inside the chamber of his boss and collapsed on the chair of his boss. The boss was sympathetic towards him and asked him to take premature retirement i.e., five years early. In his place, the respondent's son was appointed immediately. His son had passed Matriculation in the second attempt. He told me how difficult, in the days of reservation and unemployment to have a job in the postal

department for a Brahmin boy who has got through in matriculation in the second attempt. On Guru poornima day, after taking voluntary retirement he took part in the festival at Kaivalya Dham - Sangli.

A teacher respondent of Chimmad Sampradaya has informed me that people sometimes call him mad and harassed him but for no reason. They were much jealous of him as his sons are well settled. There was a plan to commit his murder. On account of this kind of fear, he started doing meditation and his enemies were defeated by divine grace.

Sri Rangarao Maharaj's disciple has told me how he commands respect not only from his colleagues in the office in which he works, but also from his superiors. This is due to his honest work and grace of his spiritual teacher. A respondent from Goa performs his job efficiently as he gets the energy to do so after doing meditation.

After a few days of initiation a young respondent secured his job in Karnataka Electricity Board. According to the respondent this was due to the grace of his spiritual teacher - Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj. The disciple of Chidanand Swami was worried over his appointment. Chidanand Swami appeared in his dream and showed his hand. Within a week's time this person secured the job in Telephone Exchange department. Gurudev Ranade's disciple who came from a poor family background held various important posts both in the academic and administrative fields. He held the post of an officer on special duties in the cabinet Secretary for some time and represented the world religious conference held at Kyoto-Japan. This was all in the opinion of the respondent due to the grace of his spiritual teacher.

A priest at Devar Nimbargi believes that he is respected by the people because he is a follower of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj.

A goldsmith disciple both by caste and profession of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj has intimated to me that he does not like feeling bad about others as he has joined Nimbargi Sampradaya. Another Goldsmith disciple of Sri Anjutgi Maharaj is impressed by equanimity that is practised in some centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya like 'Shanti Kutir'.

A Lambani disciple of Gurudev Ranade intends to stick to Nimbargi Sampradaya because Gurudev Ranade had treated him more than his parents and he (Gurudev Ranade) was not at all communal. He treated rich and poor alike. He pointed out the incidence that took place when he was at Allahabad along with Sri Gurudev Ranade. Gurudev Ranade called him twice but this Lambani servant mistook it for somebody else. - Gurudev was angry with him and he was beaten. This servant felt very bad and decided to go back to his native place but there was no sufficient money in his pocket. By borrowing some amount from the relatives of Gurudev Ranade he went to Allahabad station. A few disciples of Gurudev Ranade came in search of him and brought him to the residence of Gurudev Ranade at Allahabad. Gurudev Ranade had not taken even his tea. Gurudev Ranade instructed others to give him sufficient eatables. This servant was told by Gurudev Ranade that he had beaten him because he loved him. Gurudev Ranade asked him whether his parents had not beaten him? While describing this incidence the Lambani servant's eyes got welled up with tears. He had seen several Gurus of his caste and others also. To him, Gurudev Ranade was more than his parent. Hence, he wants to stick to Nimbargi Sampradaya. He also narrated a sense of humour of Gurudev Ranade. Gurudev Ranade used to give instructions to the driver to take car to the left, right, back to any direction of his choice. He had the fortune of going in his car and to sit for meditation in a lonely place on several occasions. In brief, this Lambani servant is impressed by the most loving personality of his spiritual teacher.

An associate professor could go abroad because of the grace of her spiritual teacher. A disciple of Anjutgi Maharaj told me that India has produced great Saints and this country has no fear inspite of great difficulties.

Spiritual life must manifest itself in moral conduct and should be extended to social welfare according to a few respondents. This stand is taken by the doctor disciple of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj, the retired university teacher (the disciple of Amburao Maharaj), a retired professor (the disciple of Gurudev Ranade). The last mentioned disciple is said to have been motivated to do some social service on account of spiritual strength. Kaka Saheb Karkhanis' personality has impressed several disciples of Nimbargi Sampradaya in this context. An archaeologist writes that he (Kakasaheb Karkhanis) was a symbol of dedication. Besides, Gurudev Ranade

never used to waste his time. He made best use of time to attain great height both in the academic and spiritual fields. To achieve something great in life one should not waste the time according to some respondents. A Lambani disciple narrated to me the incidence that took place at Nimbali Ashram. A minister got down once at Nimbali station to meet Gurudev Ranade. When the minister left Nimbali, Gurudev observed that it was a sheer waste of time. What was the outcome of his visit? Idleness is a great hurdle both in spiritual and material life according to the Saint of Nimbargi.

Some respondents have given the account of how they have been able to overcome both financial and family difficulties due to the grace of their spiritual teachers.

The goldsmith disciple of Sri Anjuti Maharaj talked to me how in his business he lost Rs. 5 lakhs in the yester years. He withstood this shock on account of the grace of his Guru. Once he promised a person to give him Rs. 5,000/- in the evening. There was no money at that time with him. In the afternoon one customer purchased the gold from his shop exactly worth of Rs. 5,000/-. In the evening he could hand over the same amount to the person whom he promised to give that much of cash. Gains and losses do not disturb the balance of mind of one merchant disciple of Sri Girimalleshwar Maharaj as has been observed elsewhere. A disciple of Narasimheshwar Maharaj shedding his tears narrated to me how he was able to buy land, construct the house, arranged his six daughters' marriage. He came to Yallatti without a single coin in his pocket. Offers for his daughters came from good families and the bride grooms' parties did bear the financial burden. Therefore, ascending to this respondent "Guru mahima is Agadh" ! ("The grace of the spiritual teacher is wonderful")! A lady respondent from Bangalore city told me the same story. In spite of financial difficulties she has been able to get constructed the house in Bangalore city. Help comes from some corner or the other if there is grace of Guru according to this respondent. A film star has dedicated his paintings and bungalow to the government. He quoted a verse from Bhagavadgita. The gist of the meaning of that verse is we have brought nothing to this world while coming here, while going we do not carry anything to the other world. He has drawn the portrait of Kotnis Maharaj and placed it nearby the Samadhi of Kotnis Maharaj as there was no place for it in Kaivalya Dham.

A disciple of Sri Chidanand Swami says that he has no problem in arranging the Saptaha at Bhausahab Maharaj Paduka muth inspite of minimum funds for the same purpose.

A disciple of Sri Pandurang Maharaj was on the verge of starvation. Somebody came and offered him food. When he faced financial crises in the life he was supported by the disciple of Ganapatrao Maharaj for nearly two and half years.

A lady disciple from urban Karnataka writes that minimum material welfare is assured to the initiated person and they cannot die out of starvation.

A muslim respondent's marriage expenses were borne by Gurudev Ranade. The trust has arranged for his eye operation and on his retirement gave him some financial help. When he was at Allahabad Gurudev asked him whether he would like to have job at the university. But this muslim servant declined the job and told him to serve him only. Even now from his field he salutes the Ashram. Gurudev Ranade has told him that the merit of his meditation would go to him also as he has served him. As we have noted elsewhere he was given Nam of Islam Dharma (religion).

A Maharashtrian post-graduate girl had some problem in selecting a life partner from Karnataka. In Kirtana at Sangli, she heard that the original centre (Mula Kshetra) of our Sampradaya is at Karnataka. Now she has been married to a Kannadiga and stays in Karnataka.

An old spinster has no problem in leading a life of loneliness in her old age as she has the support of Nam. A blind girl has no difficulty to travel alone because she is confident that her Guru protects her.

A close associate of Sri Prabhakar Maharaj line expresses her feelings in the following manner.

She has absolutely no problem in adjusting with her husband's family. All members of the family from husband's side treated her extremely well with affection. The house in which her father-in-law and some other family members stay has given her immense peace of mind (A disciple of Avaji Maharaj

told me that he took some mud from Paramartha Mandir and built his house. Those who visited his newly built house informed that it was peaceful).

Chidanand Swami's lady disciple explained an incidence of family quarrels and how it was settled by her Guru's grace. The husband of that lady gives some ash and other things to those who are afflicted with the trouble of disembodied spirits, diseases etc., Somebody told the mother of the respondent that her son-in-law is misusing his supernatural powers for the downfall of the family of mother-in-law. Mother of the respondent came to her daughter's house and charged her son-in-law for misusing his supernatural powers. The son-in-law sat in front of the photo of his Guru till the morning. Sri Chidanand Swami himself came to the house and settled the family quarrel.

At Kolhapur Corporation wanted to take the possession of the house of a photographer. The photographer was in an anxious state as he might not get good house. In a dream Gurudev Ranade appeared and walked to and fro in his house. The next day he received the message that the plan of Corporation to take the possession of that house was changed.

A Lambani disciple's house was about to be locked by the authorities as he could not repay the loan in time. He demanded some more time as his son was hospitalized in a serious condition at Bijapur. Nevertheless, the authorities did not show any mercy to him. The head of the village, came to the rescue of his house. This is due to Gurudev's grace according to the respondent.

An associate professor is having two daughters and no male issue. But she is quite happy with whatever has been granted to her by Guru. She never prays her Guru to bless with male issue.

A disciple of Chidanand Swami was assured of a male issue by Nutan Siddhalingayya Swami on 3-4 occasions. But he is having only daughters and not sons. He feels that the present spiritual teacher would not have given that kind of assurance. He, however, appreciates, as we have noted elsewhere, the simplicity of the present spiritual teacher.

A nurse disciple of Sri Ganapatrao Maharaj who was craving for the children was blessed by her spiritual teacher and she begot children.

Channabasappa Maharaj is a disciple of Sri Dattopant Maharaj. Tortoise had once fallen from the sky at the time of the wedding ceremony of the close relative of Sri Dattopant Maharaj. Sri Channabasappa stated that it was a good sign and the marriage went on smoothly. This incidence has been told to me by a close associate of Sri Dattopant Maharaj line. This close associate of Sri Dattopant Maharaj line also intimated to me as noted elsewhere that there was absolutely no jealousy among Sri Dattopant Maharaj, Sri Anjutgi Maharaj, Sri Pandurang Maharaj and other such spiritual teachers.⁸

A Vaishyawani Kudale lady disciple got initiated on Gurudev Ranade Samadhi. She has been given away in marriage to the family which belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya. She considers herself to be fortunate enough in having joined this Sampradaya. Her desire is that even her children should join this Sampradaya.

SUMMARY

This chapter deals with the analysis of personal information and views of 110 (105 initiated and 5 closely associated with Nimbargi Sampradaya) respondents. Of these respondents 63.6% and 36.4% are males and females respectively. Most of these respondents come under the age group of 40-80.

Almost all the respondents have spent most part of their life either in Maharashtra or in Karnataka. 64 out of 110 respondents know both Kannada and Marathi. 85.5% of the respondents have spent most part of their life in urban area and 14.5% in rural area.

Among 110 respondents 96.4% respondents are Hindus and 03.6% of the respondents are Non-Hindus. Brahmins, Lingayats and Marathas have embraced Nimbargi Sampradaya more than the rest of the castes.

The proportion of the married respondents (81.08%) is greater than unmarried (07.3%), Remarried (02.7%), Widowed (08.2) respondents.

The literate respondents (94.5%) are more attracted by Nimbargi Sampradaya than the illiterates (05.5%).

In Nimbargi Sampradaya the representation of upper-middle and Lower-middle classes is more than upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-, lower-lower classes. 60% of the respondents are servicemen. 22.7%, 12.7%, 04.6% of the respondents come under the 'household' (in exclusive sense of the term), 'Business', 'Agricultural' categories respectively.

A vast majority of the respondents (87.2%) are vegetarians and only 05.5% are non-vegetarians. Interestingly, 04.6% of respondents who were non-vegetarians have totally given up non-vegetarian food on joining Nimbargi Sampradaya, 2.7% of the respondents who were non-vegetarians have reduced non-vegetarian food after joining Nimbargi Sampradaya.

04.6% of the respondents are not initiated into Sampradaya but are closely associated with it. 20% of the respondents are initiated either on Samadhi of their spiritual teacher/s or in front of the photo of the spiritual teacher/s or in the dream by the spiritual teacher/s of Nimbargi Sampradaya. 26.4% of the respondents are initiated by their spiritual teacher/s indirectly i.e., through the messenger of the spiritual teacher/s. A vast majority of the respondents (49%) are however initiated by their spiritual teachers directly. Out of 105 initiated respondents 76.2% are initiated at the centres or places of their spiritual teachers and the remaining 23.8% of the respondents are initiated outside the centres/places of their spiritual teachers into Nimbargi Sampradaya. No respondent is initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya after the age of 70. A vast majority of the respondents (i.e. 64 out of 105) are initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya when they belonged to the age group of 10-30. 34 out of 105 respondents were initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya when they belonged to the age-group of 30-70. There is a thin representation of 7 respondents who were initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya when they belonged to the age-group of 0-10.

The number of initiated respondents before 1951 is 42 and after 1950 is 63. There has been sharp rise in the number of female initiated respondents after 1950. The impact of Nimbargi Sampradaya on close relatives is quite significant. Not a single close relative of 14.6% respondents is initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya.

There seems to be no single common incentive to get initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya. The influence of family members (including close relatives), friends, neighbours, inmates of the same village who belonged to Nimbargi Sampradaya is one important incentive in several respondents. Inclination towards paramartha is another reason. Having come in casual or close contact with the spiritual teachers of Nimbargi Sampradaya in the capacity of being servants, supplying Kirani materials, students etc., some respondents are initiated. Some respondents who were reluctant to get initiated were initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya as they were persuaded to do so by some followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya. One respondent was not initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya because the time was not ripe for the initiation. Kirtans, Pravachanas and Bhajanas were some main incentives for the respondents to get initiated into Nimbargi Sampradaya. The works, saintly life, scholarship, simplicity of some spiritual leaders of Nimbargi Sampradaya made an impact to get initiated on some respondents. There are also incidences such as illness, death of close relatives, Drishtanta in dream to have initiation into Nimbargi Sampradaya.

All 110 respondents have visited one or the other centre of Nimbargi Sampradaya. Hereafter, the opinions given by the respondents on the centres (organizations), the leadership, the rituals and the philosophy of Nimbargi Sampradaya will be presented succinctly.

Those respondents who have visited Kaneri Math have expressed their happiness over the facilities provided to them in the centre (although they put up in the field at the time of festivals).

The original centre of Nimbargi Sampradaya is calm and quiet according those respondents who have visited it. The amenities for the followers are yet to be provided in the centre.

Those respondents who have visited the original centre of Chimmad Sampradaya feel that there is no commercial attitude in the centre. The similar sentiments are expressed about Kaivalya Dham the main centre of chimmad Sampradaya by the respondents who have visited it.

Basic amenities are lacking at Dhyan Mandir-Umadi according to several respondents who have visited this centre. Many respondents who have visited Sri Kshetra Inchageri say that though there are excellent facilities for devotees, the fearful atmosphere is not yet completely rooted out.

Adhyatma Ashram - Yallatti is said to be peaceful. However the arrangements for the Sadhakas are yet to be made there according to some respondents who have visited this centre.

Daily and special activities connected with Sri Gurudev Ranade Ashram take place from time to time. The excellent arrangements are made for Sadhakas there. However, some (especially old respondents) insist on simple food and revival of 'sittings' and to inculcate non-commercial attitude.

The head of Jangam muth - Jat makes the arrangements for Sadhakas. This is the experience of the respondents who have visited Jangam muth-Jat.

Those respondents who have visited Sri Prabhakar Swami Maharaj Mandir - Solapur feel the atmosphere serene.

The number of devotees and quality of their devotion have gone down at Sri Bhausahab Maharajar muth - Bijapur in the opinion of those respondents who are closely associated with this main centre almost right from its inception.

Some respondents who have taken part in special activities connected with Hire Math - Kannur inform that the Sadhakas whether rich or poor stay together in the open field.

Those respondents who have taken part in special activities connected with Sri Siddharameshwar Maharajar muth - Basavan Bagewadi feel that even some rich Marawadi Sadhakas remain simple and take active part during festivals. In this centre, no discrimination is being made between rich and poor and people of different castes according to those respondents who have visited the main centre of Inchageri Sampradaya. Several respondents who have visited 'Shanti Kutir' have expressed their full satisfaction and feel that no discrimination is being made there among Sadhakas.

Without specifying the names of the centres of Nimbargi Sampradaya one educated respondent has written that factions hurt her feelings. Quite a few respondents say that one should not look for facilities but for their spiritual upliftment in the centres. A Muslim respondent does not mind visiting any centre whether of Nimbargi Sampradaya or of non-Nimbargi Sampradaya provided their essence is spiritual. Hereafter, the views expressed by the respondents on 'Leadership' of Nimbargi Sampradaya will be considered briefly.

Several respondents have given their opinions on their spiritual teachers and spiritual teachers of their line and spiritual teachers of their original centres. Many of them have expressed their high regards for the spiritual teachers of Nimbargi sampradaya. However they regard Gurus by whom they were initiated slightly superior to other Gurus. The concept of 'Avatara', the appearance of their spiritual teachers in the dream, vision figure in the talk of some respondents. Some respondents recall to their mind the important incidences that have taken place in their life as and when they came in contact with their spiritual teachers. Thus, they make an attempt to revive 'Charisma' of their spiritual leaders.

A brief account of respondents' views on rituals is given below.

A vast majority of respondents (81.8 %) have no hesitation in stating that 'Nirguna Bhakti' (meditation) is linked with 'Saguna Bhakti'. However, 18.2% of the respondents have reserved their opinions on this issue.

Concerning the impact of Nimbargi Sampradaya on the performance of their general rituals (rituals connected with the family, caste and other such traditions) 36.4% respondents have not passed their comments, 22.7% of respondents have willingly continued the performance of their general rituals, 17.3% of respondents have willingly reduced the performance of their general rituals in varying degrees. 23.6% of respondents do not attach any importance to the performance of general rituals. Among the respondents who have passed their comments on this issue, 05.6% of householders, 100% of agriculturists, 41.1% of servicemen, 63.6% of businessmen have not attached any significance to the performance of their general rituals.

The views expressed by the respondents on various philosophical issues will be taken into account in a nut shell.

'God-realization' is a process and not an event according to all the respondents who have passed their comments on this issue.

Spirituality is linked with morality according to 75.5% of the respondents. 23.6% of respondents have not passed their comments and 00.9% of the respondents have expressed their doubt on this issue.

Regarding the significance of miracles in spiritual life 42.7% of the respondents have not expressed their views. Hardly 01.8% of respondents emphasize significance of the miracles in spiritual life while 19.1% of the respondents partly attach importance to miracles in spiritual life. 36.4% of the respondents say that they do not give importance to miracles in spiritual life. But a thorough investigation in this respect is needed as there seems to be some gap between what they say and what they actually practise.

Several respondents (including literates), however, are not much bothered about philosophical intricacies of Nimbargi Sampradaya. A few literate respondents feel that Nimbargi Sampradaya is rational. An educated respondents however, has expressed that mysticism is a matter of faith and not of reason.

Finally, it must be noted that all 105 initiated respondents into Nimbargi Sampradaya have given their affirmative answer to the question whether they intend to stick to Nimbargi Sampradaya or not. It does not, however, mean that all 105 initiated respondents exclusively belong to Nimbargi Sampradaya. The initiated respondents of Nimbargi Sampradaya are sometimes influenced by the saints of other Sampradaya too. For instance, some initiated respondents of Prabhakar Maharaj line are influenced by Sri Akkalkot Maharaj, and Sri Gondhavalekar Maharaj. There are followers and admirers of Sri Raghavendra Swami too.

The remaining 5 close associates out of 110 respondents intend to keep in close touch with Nimbargi Sampradaya. Two of the close associates have their spiritual teachers from non-Nimbargi Sampradaya and three other close associates have not

yet any formal spiritual teacher both within or outside of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

All the respondents say that they are benefited by Nimbargi Sampradaya in one way or the other. Some respondents claim that they are benefited both in spiritual and worldly matters. Some other respondents are indifferent to worldly benefits. Those who have not yet benefited with mystical experiences point out that they derive peace of mind or psychological satisfaction by taking part in Bhajan, Pravachana, Kirtan, Namasmarana etc., of Nimbargi Sampradaya. A few initiated respondents have changed their spiritual teachers within the framework of Nimbargi Sampradaya but they have not defected from Nimbargi Sampradaya. An educated lady respondent would feel happy if her children embrace Nimbargi Sampradaya (This is an example of anticipatory socialization).

REFERENCES

1. "----- the Adivasis are originally completely outside the caste system; they do not sanskritize in the root meaning of the term, at least until they make the transition from tribe to caste".

Schermerhorn R.A, "Ethnic Plurality in India". (University of Arizona press, Tucson, Arizona 1978) p. 90.
2. "By the twentieth century..... there were traditionally eightyfour castes in the Jain community"

Op. Cit; p. 107.
3. Muslim castes are a familiar phenomenon, Momin or Jolaha, for instance, a caste of Muslim weavers; Lalkhani; a caste of Muslim Rajputs; Gaddi; a caste of muslim graziers; Mirasi; a caste of muslim minstrels closely akin to the Hindu caste of Dharhi, and so forth.
Hutton J. H., "Caste in India" (Oxford University Press, Bombay, Fourth edition, 1963) p. 121.
4. **Bhatia H. R.**, "Elements of Social Psychology" (Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd; Bombay, Third revised edition, 1974) p. 317.
5. The word (Bhajan) means "Prayer" or "Devotional song" and also carries the meaning of a gathering of devotees to sing and worship".

Mandelbaum David G. , "Society in India Vol. II" (Popular Prakashan, Bombay, First Indian edition, 1972) p. 528.
6. **Tulpule G.V.**, "Sri Amburao Maharaj Yancha Athavani"(Marathi) (K. D. Sangoram, second edition, Athani 1955) p. 59.

7. They (the bhajan groups) follow the ancient devotional pattern in a way that are adapted to the realities of modern city life. Professional colleagues, work groups, neighbourhood associations, have a new importance in the city (Madras).... The participants come together weekly in a private home; they also invite colleagues from their work or relatives who may live in another neighbourhood.

Mandelbaum David G., "Society in India (Vol. II)" (Popular Prakashan, Bomaby, First Indian edition, 1972) p. 580.

In cities like Belgaum, Bijapur, Bangalore, Solapur, Pune, some followers of Nimbargi Sampradaya come together daily, weekly, or for Saptah in a private home not only for Bhajan but also for meditation.

8. Fir instance, Gurudev Ranade regards Sri Horti Ramrao Maharaj, (the disicple of the Saint of Umadi) as his Spiritual brother.

Vide Ranade R. D., "Pathway to God in Kannada literature," (Published in Collaboration with the Karanataka University, Dharwad by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1960) p. 85.