

National Labour Institute research project

Ref no. :

Cassette no.18

Person

Name	Asmita Ankush Gavde
Gender	Female
Age	40
Place of Birth	Warde village, Sindhudurg district
Educational qualification	SSC passed
Place of Education	
Professional Courses	
Religion	Hindu
Caste	
Profession	Housewife, Temporarily worked in a binding company. Now selling sarees door to door.
Marital status	Married in 1982. Husband Ankush Gawde, died 1990.
Type of work	
Address	6/24, Wadi chawl, in front of Poddar Mill, Lower Parel
Telephone	
Mother tongue	Marathi
Father's profession	
Mother's profession	

Parents

Father	
Profession	Mill Worker, Crown mill jobber in weaving

Spouse

Name	Ankush Gawde
Age	Died in 1990 in a car accident
Education	
Profession	Used to be a mill worker

Children

Name	Gender	Age	Education	Profession
1				
2				
3				
4				

Siblings:

Brothers	Age	Profession
Anant Atmaram Palav		Retired as mill worker
Ramesh Palav		Worked in New India Mills, took VRS, now unemployed.
Shridhar Palav		Died in 1992

Sisters		
Shalini Palav		Housewife
2		
3		

Interview:

What is your name?

My name is Asmita Ankush Gavde.

When were you married?

I was married on 15-5-1982.

Was the strike called then?

Yes the strike was going on then.

Where did you stay then, were you brought up in Mumbai? ?

Yes I stayed at Sayani road.

So your father was also a mill worker, and how did you get married?

I got married as we were related, no love marriage.

How did you keep yourself ready for the strike?

The strike would get over today or tomorrow, we thought. Then we were a joint family, later we were divided.

So did being in a joint family prove to be beneficial or not to you during the strike?

No as only one brother in law was earning, we were not in a good financial position, also my another brother in law was in Poddar Mills and was involved in the strike so we couldn't contribute anything and so he was the sole earner and we were a burden on him so we separated as there were disputes in the family.

What did you do resettle or did you wait for some days for the strike to get over?

We got out of the house on mere hope; I started working at a press as he (my husband) suffered from ill health. Later after treatments and operations he got in as a security guard opposite Sitaram Mills industries as a watchman the building opposite to the Central bank.

When did it happen?

In 1982 and we are working since 1986 after that only, he worked till 1996 but he used to keep on falling ill in between.

Was the sickness caused because of his prior work?

That I cannot tell you, but he had a lung disorder. His lungs were infected... Almost 20% of the lungs were operated, the doctors said as he played a lot of kabbadi in his early days... just might be one of the reasons. But even after the success of the operations he was working as a security guard.

What did he do after 1996?

After the strike he did not get his job in the mill back. The case was going on but we just received the provident fund, which was hardly Rs8000. That was spent in giving the lawyers only. Ultimately he just gave up. Whether he gave his resignation or not, we don't know. But with those papers, I feel, at least I should be able to get some work.

Your father was a mill worker too so what do you say about the situation then?

The conditions were far much better, the strikes would not be endless. Even though there were strikes, I was totally aloof from them. In Mumbai as an industry, the mill worker was so vital that we thought that the strike would get over soon, so we did not give up our hopes then.

What did your husband do? Took up other jobs or go back to his villages?

No my husband did not go anywhere.

Was he actively participating in any unions or did he attend any sabhas?

No he did not attend any *sabhas*, nor was he a part of any union. This is a quiet place and there were no *sabhas* nearby. But he might have gone to other areas to attend meetings, but I don't know much about it.

So did you go back to your village?

No we were brought up here only. We do have a house there but no farms or land so there was no point going there.

Did you undertake a follow up after your husband's death?

No, I did not know whom to meet or ask. That is why I told you that I had to talk to you. I kept on looking for the right moment to approach somebody with my problem. Somebody told me that if you are married, then perhaps even I could have got something. But I have no certificate of marriage only an album.

What did the other women do whose husbands lost jobs during the strike?

Some of them started working in factories. I was in a binding press, for three years. Later, I was operated on my heart. Then again operated so that I could conceive. I couldn't cope up with work that made me stand whole day.

How did you manage with your health and the house?

As I was in a joint family, it was not much.

So you were in a joint family once again?

At first we were, later we separated. Then once again after my husband's illness we lived together. Then after that again because of his illness, we moved out.

Do you observe any changes in the Girangaon? (Girangaon is the main mill workers locality in central Mumbai)

Yes earlier there were a lot of workers. When the mills shifts got over, there used to be a lot of crowd as if it was some kind of padyatra (rally) but now the number has reduced considerably. Not many men too on this road. Many workers have joined their family back in village. Businesses of the lunch homes (khanawali) have also stopped. There are a lot of ladies doing this business but even they stopped and went to their villages once the strike was called.

Any more changes, like what you told the number of workers reduced? And the number of Gujratis (People from Gujarat, mainly mercantile people) increased?

When were you born

I was born in the year 1960

What about the case?

I don't know what happened to the case but my brother in law can tell you. He also filed a case, and it is still going on. He kept on telling my husband to change the lawyer. We changed too, but what happened next I don't know. Almost 4 years went without any results. I did not take much interest but I have collected everything properly, the provident fund card, the photo, pass etc

Do you know anybody who has not been taken back ?

Yes, he was in our building. He went back to his village. He was in Poddar mills.

You were married after the strike was declared. For how long before the strike your marriage arranged?

I never thought about the strike, we assumed that it would be called off. The marriage was arranged almost 6 months before.

Do you have any children?

No, I was operated upon for not having children..

Have you seen any violence during the strike?

Yes once some people had come and thrown up a ruckus and my brother in law was unnecessarily involved in it. As he was standing nearby, some people were throwing stones from the opposite side and people who were standing here were throwing from this side. Now as he was known to be related to one of them he was also in trouble. My husband told him, "Don't throw stones or get involved and he didn't. But we had to wait for the results of the police case.

Did your brother in law participate in the strike? What was his opinion about the strike?

I do not know much about his opinion. Nobody wants strikes. We have (learnt) read it in the papers that for the worker, his wages are his sole source of livelihood. So a worker putting a stop to his income and sitting idle at home is not preferable.

What is your native place ?

In Sindhudurg district.

No the number of Gujratis did not increase very much, but the lunch home business was affected. People who were working, now my brother was working with Victoria mills, he resigned and now he sits idle at home. His name is Ramesh Palav and stays at Dadar. He resigned 2 years back

Was the mill working then? Did he get his compensations?

Yes he got. When the demands were put up for compensation every time they were stretched. But he could not wait, as he has three children, an old mother and a wife to look after the house. He had no other option.

Is hooliganism on a rise here?

No, not in our area.

After so many years and losses what do the workers think?

Now the owners have been selling mill land to other companies and the workers are losing their jobs. Their houses are facing acute financial crisis. Their conditions are poor. They actually faced a condition to commit a suicide.

What happened to the workers who took VRS?

They have to sit at home, my brother is one of them. Now it is 18 years since I am married, but it is the same at our place too. At least my brother in law does his business but he too lost the job.