

From the Rise of MNS to the MNS-Shivsena UBT Alliance

Sandip Bhaguji Bhabad

Research Scholar, Dept. of Political Science
K.V.N.Naik Arts, Commerce and Science College, Nashik
Email Id- bhabadsandip@gmail.com



Prof.Dr.Sanjay Ankush Kale

Research Guide & Head, Dept. of Political Science
K.V.N.Naik Arts, Commerce and Science College, Nashik

Abstract:

India is a country with unity in diversity and has the world's largest parliamentary democratic system of governance. In a democratic system, political parties hold special importance. It is almost impossible to imagine a democratic system of governance without political parties. Currently, there are 2,593 political parties in India. Of these, 6 are national parties, 67 are regional parties, and 2,520 are registered political parties. In a democratic system, majority holds special significance. Since the 1990s, no political party in India has secured a clear majority. As a result, the formation of front or alliance governments by multiple parties at the national level has become a very common occurrence. For Indians, it is no longer unusual to see national and regional parties forming pre-election alliances or fronts to work out the arithmetic of power. Often, national parties are seen allying with regional parties. This has increased the importance of regional parties in national politics. In the case of Maharashtra, the Election Commission of India has primarily recognized two political parties as regional parties: Shivsena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena. Among these, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena is the significant party. After Raj Thackeray left Shivsena, he founded the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena. This party, which emerged in Maharashtra, was granted the status of a regional party by the Election Commission of India in 2010 under the 1968 Act. As a result, it received the permanent symbol of a railway engine. Maharashtra Navnirman Sena has given importance to regional identity and the state language in its ideology and policies. It is a party that struggles to advance politically in line with its ideology and policies. MNS President Raj Thackeray considers Maharashtra far greater than any dispute or quarrel. Therefore, setting aside all past events, Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray have reconciled for the sake of the existence of the Marathi people and have announced the MNS-Shivsena (UBT) alliance. These developments are likely to have far-reaching effects on Maharashtra's politics in the future.

Keywords: *Regional Political Party, Ideology, Policies, Political Journey, Marathi identity*

Introduction:

In India, the formation of regional parties began after India attained independence. These regional parties have emerged primarily due to various reasons such as regional imbalances within states, local issues, regional identity, the Centre's

unbalanced policies towards states, religion, caste, and internal splits within political parties. Regional parties play a significant role in the development of a state because their political sphere is limited to a specific state. However, in recent times, regional parties have also been

playing an important role in national politics. The main reason for this is that national parties have not been securing a clear majority in elections, making it inevitable for them to form alliances or fronts with regional parties to gain power. Due to this reason, the importance of regional parties in Indian politics has increased. There is no doubt that with the formation of the regional party Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, Marathi voters in Maharashtra have gained an alternative option for voting in elections. Since the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) is a political party limited only to the state of Maharashtra, its role is focused on the Marathi sons of the soil, the Marathi language, Marathi identity, and the overall development of the state of Maharashtra. Since Raj Thackeray provides aggressive leadership to the MNS, the party has a large presence of Marathi youth. From the time of its formation, the MNS has consistently taken a firm stand to ensure that no injustice is done to the Marathi people. Among political parties in India, the MNS is the only political party that has presented a development plan for the state of Maharashtra before the public. In Maharashtra's politics, the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena is seen assertively putting forth its stance. Since the establishment of his party, Raj Thackeray has never attempted to gain power through split-and-rule politics. He is seen adhering to political propriety in politics. In Maharashtra's politics, the rebellion within Eknath Shinde's Shivsena and the rebellion within Ajit Pawar's NCP have brought Maharashtra's politics to an unexpected turn. Therefore, this research paper reviews the period from the formation of the 'Maharashtra Navnirman Sena' up to its alliance with Uddhav Thackeray's Shivsena (UBT).

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the emergence of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena as a political party.
2. To study the Ideology and policies of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena.
3. To study the changes in Maharashtra's politics due to the split within the Shivsena.
4. To study the reasons behind the MNS-Shivsena UBT alliance.

Hypotheses:

1. The rise of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena has primarily occurred due to internal conflict within Shivsena.
2. The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena holds a firm stance on regional identity and the Marathi language.
3. The alliance between the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and Shivsena (UBT) has been formed due to the issue of Marathi identity as well as political compulsion.

Research Methodology:

For this research paper, secondary sources have been used. For this purpose, newspaper articles, reference books, relevant videos on Youtube, and information from various websites accessed via the internet have been utilized. The collected information has been presented using a descriptive analytical method. Additionally, the researcher has employed the observation method to present various events that have occurred in society.

The Rise of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena:

To give voice to the injustice faced by Marathi people in Mumbai, Balasaheb Thackeray founded Shivsena in Mumbai on 19 June 1966. Raj Thackeray spent his childhood under the guidance of his uncle Balasaheb Thackeray, and after becoming active in Shivsena, he worked under Balasaheb Thackeray's mentorship. Raj Thackeray closely observed Balasaheb

Thackeray's political style and assertiveness. Since Raj Thackeray was close to Balasaheb Thackeray, he was deeply influenced by Balasaheb Thackeray's political values. As a result, Raj Thackeray's influence within Shivsena grew significantly until 1995. Balasaheb Thackeray's son, Uddhav Thackeray, became actively involved in Shivsena after 1995. After the Shivsena-BJP alliance came to power in Maharashtra, both Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray attempted to appoint their loyalists to government corporations, and it was Uddhav Thackeray's loyalists who got appointed. An internal conflict for dominance began between Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray within Shivsena. Some Shivsena workers openly sided with Raj Thackeray, while others supported Uddhav Thackeray. Uddhav Thackeray's calm and composed nature gradually increased his influence in Shivsena, as a result of which Raj Thackeray's authority within the party was curtailed. Due to Balasaheb Thackeray's advancing age, the post of Working President was created in Shivsena. Raj Thackeray initially opposed the creation of this post, but later his opposition subsided. Uddhav Thackeray became the Working President of Shivsena in 2003. Over time, Raj Thackeray's role was reduced to merely campaigning for the party during elections. His opponents within Shivsena deliberately diminished his importance; he was not even given the authority to appoint a simple branch chief. Some senior leaders like Narayan Rane had also left Shivsena. The ideological differences between Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray became a topic of discussion within Shivsena. Therefore, on 17 August 2005, Balasaheb Thackeray called both of them for a meeting, which was also attended by Sanjay Raut and Manohar Joshi. A photograph of this meeting was published on the front page of

Dainik Samana. Afterward, Balasaheb Thackeray issued a statement clarifying that the misunderstandings between Raj and Uddhav had been resolved. In an interview with Samana newspaper in January 2006, Balasaheb Thackeray said, "Raj Thackeray wanted fundamental changes in the Shivsena organization, and some of Raj Thackeray's adversaries had poisoned his ears." Balasaheb Thackeray did not approve of Raj Thackeray's behavior. Due to the internal factionalism in Shivsena, Raj Thackeray had been considering leaving the party for several years. Finally, after explaining everything to Balasaheb Thackeray, he announced on 27 November 2005 that he was leaving Shivsena. Due to Raj Thackeray's political ambitions and the demand of his supporters, he announced on 18 December 2005 that he would form a new party. On 9 March 2006, Raj Thackeray announced the formation of the political party Maharashtra Navnirman Sena. He held the first meeting of his newly formed party at Shivaji Park on 19 March 2006. In his speech at this meeting, Raj Thackeray stated, "At this moment, I dedicate myself to Maharashtra." He also clarified his stance on various developmental issues such as infrastructure, employment, education, agriculture, and tourism. He announced that the party would undertake the task of preparing a development plan for Maharashtra. Raj Thackeray also clarified at this meeting that if Hindutva meant nationalism, he accepted it, but he could not adopt a hypocritical stance. It became clear at this meeting that Maharashtra Navnirman Sena would remain limited to the state of Maharashtra only. Since the party's inception, Raj Thackeray has been the founding president of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and has built the party's organizational structure at various levels. The party has expanded more in urban areas, while its presence in rural areas remains limited. Thus, the

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) emerged as a political party in Maharashtra's politics.

MNS Ideology and Policies:

After the establishment of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena party, the party declared its ideology and policies before the people of Maharashtra. They are as follows:

1. To bestow cultural and material prosperity upon the Marathi language, Marathi identity, and the state of Maharashtra.
2. To bring together all Marathi people in Maharashtra, including all castes, religions, and sects who consider Maharashtra their own, in order to achieve Maharashtra's development, and to foster in them a sense of Maharashtra Dharma. The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena considers this essential.
3. Those born to Marathi parents are certainly Marathi. But the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena also considers as Marathi those born to non-Marathi parents in Maharashtra who speak Marathi well, love the Marathi land, and reside in Maharashtra.
4. To struggle at various levels against all factors that obstruct the development of Maharashtra and the Marathi people, and to resolve all such problems appropriately. For this, to build both constructive and agitational efforts with full strength. MNS believes that constructive and agitational work complement each other.
5. To strive for classical language status for Marathi. To establish a Marathi Language Academy for the promotion and propagation of the Marathi language.
6. To resolve all issues in the sectors of industry, roads, electricity, trade, water, agriculture, education, students, health, tourism, tribal, women, labour, Centre-state relations, finance, law and order, sports, railways, home department, and cooperation in Maharashtra, and to establish the dominance of Marathi people in these areas. MNS considers this essential for Maharashtra's social, economic, and infrastructural development.
7. To completely uproot the attempts by outsiders to establish their dominance in Maharashtra's politics and society. To take to the streets and confront those outsiders hostile to Maharashtra. Being unwavering and uncompromising on the principle "Maharashtra for Marathi people" is a core tenet of MNS ideology.
8. Marathi natives in Maharashtra should get 80% reservation in jobs. MNS believes that Marathi youth should be given quality education and training to secure good employment, and that job fairs should be organized to create diverse employment opportunities for them.
9. MNS has prepared a development blueprint for Maharashtra to ensure all-round development across sectors. If MNS attains power in the state, its goal is to achieve comprehensive development of Maharashtra as per this blueprint.
10. To create a Maharashtra and a Marathi identity that reach the pinnacle of material and cultural prosperity, which would be envied by the world. This is the main goal of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, and the party was formed solely to make every possible effort to realize this goal.

Political Journey of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena:

Since its establishment, the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) has carved out a distinct place for itself in Maharashtra's politics. In major metropolitan cities like Mumbai and Thane, the growing influx of migrants began to put pressure on local resources. Among these migrants, North Indians formed a significant portion. The MNS adopted an aggressive stance against this from the outset and stood firmly on the side of the Marathi people. As a result, the North Indian electorate drifted away from the MNS. In 2008 and 2009, due to Raj Thackeray's stance in favor of Marathi sons of the soil, Marathi youth began gravitating toward the MNS. When Jet Airways laid off 1,900 employees, the MNS took up their cause, forcing Jet Airways to reinstate them. This led the Marathi people in Mumbai to see the MNS as their savior. In his speeches, Raj Thackeray aggressively puts forth views on preserving the Marathi people, Marathi identity, Marathi culture, and Maharashtra's historical heritage. His rallies also draw massive crowds. By taking a stand for the sons of the soil, the MNS wrested the Marathi issue away from Shivsena. This put Shivsena in a dilemma over whether to raise the issue of Marathi identity or Hindutva. Noting the support for his aggressive political positions, Raj Thackeray took up several emotive issues. These included the July 2008 agitation for Marathi signboards, the Marathi language, Marathi culture, and Marathi identity; the railway recruitment issue; the demand for 80% jobs in the private sector for local sons of the soil; opposition to tolls; protests against loudspeakers on mosques; agitations against migrants; protests for farmers' issues; agitations against Pakistani artists; protests against illegal rickshaw and taxi drivers; marches against hawkers; a march supporting the Citizenship Amendment Act; a protest march against Raza Academy; and, along with other opposition parties in Maharashtra, the Satya

March against the Election Commission's functioning and irregularities in voter lists. These are some of the varied agitations and marches undertaken by the MNS. Raj Thackeray's clear view is that there is nothing wrong if the MNS advocates for the interests of Marathi people in Maharashtra. On 24 January 2008, Uddhav Thackeray attended Uttar Pradesh Foundation Day and referred to Mangaleshwar Tripathi, who had filed a case against Bálasaheb Thackeray, as a "brother" at the event. Raj Thackeray attacked Shivsena, saying it had abandoned the interests of Marathi people; he asked why Uttar Pradesh Day, which is not even celebrated in that state, was being celebrated in Maharashtra. This sparked clashes between the two groups and led to Raj Thackeray's arrest, triggering protests across Maharashtra. He was later released on bail by the police. In 2020, the MNS changed its party flag to saffron and embraced the issue of Hindutva. In its very first contest, the 2009 Maharashtra Assembly elections, the MNS won 13 seats. This enabled it to meet the criteria for regional party status in 2010, and all political parties in Maharashtra had to take note of MNS's political strength. In the 2009 Loksabha elections, none of the MNS candidates won, but the votes they secured were significant and cost Shivsena and BJP seats. In the 2014 Assembly elections, only one MNS candidate was elected. In the 2014 Loksabha elections, the MNS supported Narendra Modi, but none of its candidates won. In the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly elections, only one MNS candidate won. In the 2019 Loksabha elections, the MNS campaigned against the BJP but did not field any candidates. The MNS has not yet achieved the desired success in local body elections. However, in the 2012 Nashik Municipal Corporation elections, 40 MNS candidates were elected as corporators, and Maharashtra saw its first MNS mayor. Although the MNS carried out

various development works in Nashik, it could not regain control of the Nashik Municipal Corporation. The influence of the MNS is most visible in Mumbai, Thane, Pune, and Nashik. It has not been able to establish a strong presence in rural Maharashtra. Overall, the MNS has not achieved the electoral success it aimed for in Maharashtra, but the party continues to articulate its stance effectively on every major issue in the state. Due to Raj Thackeray's effective and charismatic leadership, enthusiasm remains high among party workers. Raj Thackeray instills in his workers the belief that one day the MNS will be in power in Maharashtra.

Maharashtra Politics Changed Due to the Split Within Shivsena in June 2022:

In the 2019 Assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party and Shivsena contested the elections in alliance, and 105 seats were won by the BJP. However, a dispute arose between Shivsena and BJP over the Chief Minister's post. According to Uddhav Thackeray, he and Amit Shah had agreed in a closed room at Matoshree bungalow to share the Chief Minister's post for 2.5 years each. Devendra Fadnavis did not agree to Uddhav Thackeray's claim. As a result, although the elections were held before Diwali, an alliance government was not formed even after Diwali. Amid this, on 23rd November 2019, early in the morning, Devendra Fadnavis took oath as Chief Minister and NCP's Ajit Pawar as Deputy Chief Minister. However, due to Sharad Pawar's stance, NCP MLAs did not support Ajit Pawar's government. Consequently, this government collapsed within 2.5 days. Following this, a Mahavikas Aghadi government comprising Shivsena, NCP, and Congress was formed on 28th November 2019. After 2.5 years, this MVA government split when Eknath Shinde led a rebellion within Shivsena on 21st June 2022. This was the biggest rebellion in Shivsena's 59-year history. After voting for

the vacant seats in the Maharashtra Legislative Council, Eknath Shinde reached Surat in Gujarat with 12 MLAs, and from there he went to Guwahati in Assam. By then, the number of Shivsena MLAs with Eknath Shinde had risen to 40. There were several reasons for this rebellion. Eknath Shinde, along with other Shivsena leaders, opposed forming a government with Congress and NCP because Shivsena's ideology was different from those two parties, and he believed Shivsena's vote bank would weaken. He also alleged that he was not given credit for the Samridhi Mahamarg project, and that the Deputy CM and Finance Minister in the MVA government were not providing sufficient funds to Shivsena MLAs. In an interview to a Hindi news channel, Devendra Fadnavis said about Eknath Shinde's rebellion: "Uddhav Thackeray undermined Eknath Shinde's authority to bring Aditya Thackeray forward, which made Eknath Shinde uneasy." Due to Eknath Shinde's rebellion, the Shivsena-NCP-Congress government collapsed. After this, Eknath Shinde appointed Bharat Gogavale as Shivsena's chief whip. When the time came to elect the Assembly Speaker on 3rd July 2022, Sunil Prabhu, the original Shivsena's chief whip, issued a whip for Rajan Salvi, while Bharat Gogavale issued a whip for Rahul Narwekar. This led to a dispute over whose whip was valid, and the matter reached the Supreme Court. Uddhav Thackeray amended Shivsena's constitution, dissolved the executive committee, announced a new one, and expelled Eknath Shinde and other rebel MLAs from Shivsena. Uddhav Thackeray resigned as Chief Minister on 29th June 2022. Surprising everyone, it was announced that Eknath Shinde would take oath as Chief Minister from the BJP side, and accordingly, on 30th June 2022, Eknath Shinde took oath as Chief Minister. On 3rd July 2022, the Shinde government proved

its majority in the Assembly with the support of 164 MLAs, while MVA got 99 votes. After the Presidential election was announced in November 2022, out of the original Shivsena's 18 MPs, 12 went with Eknath Shinde and 6 remained with Uddhav Thackeray. A by-election for Andheri was to be held on 3rd November 2022. At that time, the Election Commission barred both factions from using the name "Shivsena" and also froze the "bow and arrow" symbol. As a result, Uddhav Thackeray named his party "Shivsena Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray," and Eknath Shinde named his party "Balasahebanchi Shivsena." In the Andheri by-election, Rutuja Latke of Shivsena UBT was elected unopposed. Later, the Election Commission allotted the "bow and arrow" symbol to Eknath Shinde's Balasahebanchi Shivsena, while Uddhav Thackeray chose the "Mashaal" symbol. In July 2023, the NCP split, and Ajit Pawar joined the Shinde government with his supporting MLAs. The election of the Assembly Speaker, the petition for disqualification of MLAs, the allegation that the Shinde government was unconstitutional, and the dispute over who represents the original Shivsena Uddhav Thackeray or Eknath Shinde have gone to the Supreme Court, and the final verdict is still pending. In the Maharashtra State Assembly 2024 general elections, BJP, Shivsena, and NCP formed the Mahayuti alliance. Meanwhile, Indian National Congress, Shivsena UBT, and Sharadchandra Pawar's NCP formed the Mahavikas Aghadi. Maharashtra Navnirman Sena contested the election independently. In this election, Mahayuti won 235 out of 288 seats, and Devendra Fadnavis became Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Thus, Devendra Fadnavis, who had said they would never form a government with Ajit Pawar's NCP, is now in power with them for the second time. Also, Uddhav Thackeray's Shivsena

appears to be standing against the BJP in the political power struggle.

MNS–Shivsena (UBT) Alliance:

Uddhav Thackeray's party's original ideology is very different from that of the Indian National Congress and Sharadchandra Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party. However, as Uddhav Thackeray became politically isolated, it became a compulsion for him to join the Mahavikas Aghadi. In the 2024 Assembly general elections, Uddhav Thackeray's party won only 20 seats, which put the future political prospects of the party at risk. In the 2024 Assembly elections, Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena did not win a single seat. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, MNS supported the Mahayuti and did not field any candidate; yet in the Assembly elections, Mahayuti did not support Raj Thackeray's son Amit Thackeray in the Mahim constituency. Amit Thackeray lost that election. This defeat was a major setback for Raj Thackeray. Both Uddhav Thackeray's Shivsena and Raj Thackeray's MNS trace their ideology to Balasaheb Thackeray. For many years, there was a public sentiment that both brothers, Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray, should come together for the sake of Maharashtra's interests. The trigger for Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray coming together was the state government's policy making Hindi compulsory as a third language from Class one onwards. To oppose this policy, the parties of Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray were going to hold a joint march against the state government's decision. However, seeing the opposition from both parties, the state government revoked the government resolution. Nevertheless, both parties organized a "Vijayi Melava" on 5 July 2025 on the issue of Marathi. At this event, after the two Thackeray brothers came together after almost 20 years, MNS President Raj Thackeray said in his speech

that Maharashtra is bigger than any quarrel, and what Balasaheb could not achieve, what many could not achieve, Devendra Fadnavis managed to achieve. Uddhav Thackeray said in his speech that we have come together to stay together. Since the Mahayuti has a large majority, Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray face a major challenge in preserving the political existence of their parties. According to them, about 56 trains arrive in Maharashtra daily from North India, so the influx of people from other states is constantly increasing. In Mumbai there is one municipal corporation, in Pune two, and in other districts, except a few, there is at most one municipal corporation. However, in the erstwhile Thane district there are around 8 municipal corporations. Due to this increased population, the number of municipal corporations in Thane district has risen so much. As a result, several civic and other problems have emerged in Thane and Mumbai cities. Raj Thackeray, Uddhav Thackeray, and the Marathi people of Mumbai fear that with the increase in voting by people from other states in Maharashtra, their constituencies might be created. It has become difficult for the common Marathi person to even get a house in Mumbai; consequently, Marathi people are being displaced from Mumbai. Because of this, the percentage of Marathi voters in Mumbai is declining day by day. Both parties allege that some political parties are quietly working to separate Mumbai from Maharashtra. Against this backdrop, to prevent the division of Marathi votes, Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray announced the MNS-Shivsena UBT alliance on 24 December 2025, ahead of the municipal corporation elections in Maharashtra. However, they did not specify in how many municipal corporations this alliance would apply. After this alliance, Raj Thackeray declared that Mumbai's

mayor would be Marathi. This political alliance has strengthened both parties.

Conclusion

After Uddhav Thackeray became politically active in the Shivsena, an internal conflict began within the party due to the rivalry between Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray to establish dominance over the Shivsena. Both leaders believed that the responsibility of heading the Shivsena after Balasaheb Thackeray would fall to them. Initially, Raj Thackeray was considered the frontrunner. However, later internal political developments within the Shivsena made Raj Thackeray feel that his future in the party was uncertain. Realizing that his political ambitions could not be fulfilled within the Shivsena, he eventually decided to leave the party. This decision was very painful for Raj Thackeray. Some Shivsena leaders tried to convince him at Balasaheb Thackeray's behest, but the attempt failed. To fulfill his political ambitions, Raj Thackeray founded his own political party. Raj Thackeray had already defined the ideology and policies of his party at the time of its formation. The party's ideology emphasizes Maharashtra's regional identity and the importance of the Marathi language, which is why MNS has made these issues central to Maharashtra's politics. For this, MNS has also organized several agitations. To preserve Maharashtra's culture and Marathi identity, MNS has been implementing various programs in Maharashtra in line with its ideology and policies. Demanding classical language status for Marathi, MNS supported Narendra Modi in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. On 3 October 2024, the Government of India granted classical language status to Marathi. Looking at the current situation in Maharashtra, unlike other political parties, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena has not abandoned its ideology or changed its political direction. However, in politics nothing is permanent;

today's enemies can become tomorrow's allies. Political parties that once accused each other are now seen forming governments and entering into alliances and fronts in Maharashtra's politics. The Bharatiya Janata Party and Eknath Shinde's Shivsena formed the Mahayuti government in alliance with Ajit Pawar's NCP. Meanwhile, Uddhav Thackeray's Shivsena formed the Mahavikas Aghadi with Sharad Pawar's NCP and the Indian National Congress. For political power, some parties set aside their ideology, criticize each other, and adjust political equations. As a result, voters' trust in political parties is also eroding. MNS had not formed an alliance or front with any political party until now. However, due to an unexpected turn in Maharashtra's politics, a favorable situation emerged for an alliance between Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and Uddhav Thackeray's Shivsena, and both parties entered into an alliance. For Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, Maharashtra Dharma is paramount. MNS does not compromise its ideology for electoral gains, which is why the party has not achieved the expected success in various levels of elections in Maharashtra. Therefore, it is necessary for Maharashtra Navnirman Sena to introduce some flexibility in its ideology, join hands with Uddhav Thackeray's Shivsena to safeguard the interests of Maharashtra and the Marathi people, strengthen party

organization, and adopt strategic measures for the party's growth.

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