

Chapter I: Introduction

• Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Solapur has a rich historical background and it has its own cultural and socio-economic structure. Solapur is next to Mumbai as one of the major textile center in Western Maharashtra. The main production is Chadders, Towels and Napkins and these industries are either household medium or large size and are spread throughout Solapur City. The developments of the handloom weaving industry in Solapur seem to have commenced in the regime of the Pashawas. The Padmshalis maintain that they come to Solapur at the invitation of Pashawas. In the development of textile industry's major contribution goes to Padmshali community. The industry is now mostly in the hands of Padmshalis weavers.

1.2 Solapur city

Solapur City is an important district head quarters in western Maharashtra and is famous for its Bed sheet weaving industry (Chadder), Handloom, powerloom and Beedi making industries. The textile products, especially the chadders and handlooms, manufactured in Solapur have a great demand in countries abroad and therefore those are exported to several countries. This district is also a connecting link between Maharashtra and Karnataka State.

Solapur is located about 433 km from Mumbai and 244 km from Pune. It is basically found on the south-eastern border of Maharashtra state and touches the border of Karnataka state. This is a well-connected city with connectivity to the metro-cities of India like Delhi, Bangalore and Hyderabad through rail and roads.

Solapur is located between 17.10 to 18.32 degrees to the north latitude while it is about 74.42 to 76.15 degrees to the east longitude. Solapur lies in the Seena and Bhima basins where the entire district is drained either by the river Bhima or by its tributaries.

Osmanabad and Gulbarga districts bound Solapur to the north by Ahmednagar and Osmanabad districts and on the east. On the south of Solapur, there are cities of Bijapur of Karnataka state and Sangli of Karnataka State and on its west, lies Satara and Pune districts.

1.3 Economy of Solapur City

The inhabitant of Solapur is basically a person with a very high level of degree of tolerance and endurance to the challenges of day to day life. This is a person who has great capacity in working as an entrepreneur and also works professionally as a worker who faces odds of life in a bid of producing high and good results.

The economic development of Solapur can be traced by the study of the growth of the Handloom industry, Textile industry, Bidi making industry and labor movement, The availability of traditional skilled labor, dry weather, sufficient water and the improved means of communication like road, railways were the main factors, which led to growth of textile industry of Solapur.¹ This sector which accounts for large employment of which the participation of woman and children in both weaving and related activities is quite significant.

The opening of the railway raised it to be one of the chief markets of the deccan salt, kirana seeds, grains, oil sugar and other goods from Humanabad and Gulbarga come to the market of Solapur.

The year 1860 marked the laying of a railway line which facilitated the establishment of cotton textile mill at Solapur. While the new railway line provided a convenient means of transport.² To other commercial centers link to after start railway line like, Gulbarga, Bijapur Bagalkot, Barshi, Latur, Nanded, Parbhani and Jalna, Solapur was an important center of trade and exchange raw cotton began to come to Solapur market.

The economy of Solapur was entirely dominant in the mid 19th century by handloom industry. It was varying prosperous and glorious industry because thousand of people have got employment in Solapur.

1.4 Development of Textile Industry

The growth of modern industry in the district started as far back as in nineteenth century. However, Solapur achieved the fame as a business Centre before the nineteenth century. The extension of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway was done to Solapur in 1860 and to Raichur in 1870.³

The development of handloom industry in Solapur seems to have commenced in the regime of Peshwas. The settlement of the Madhavrao Peth (the present Mangalwar Peth) in Solapur in the quarter of the eighteenth century provided an attraction to many trading and artisan families of the Nizam territory. They include some trading and artisan of castes weavers such as Khatri, Momin.⁴

The first organized industry to be started in the district was the cotton textile mill, which was established in 1877 namely, Solapur Spinning and Weaving Ltd. (Old mill), then Narsing Girji Manufacturing Ltd., Solapur 1898., Laxmi Cotton Mill Limited Solapur 1898, Vishnu Cotton Mill Ltd., 1908, Shri Jam Ranjitsingji Mill Solapur., 1909 Lokmanya Mills Ltd. Barshi 1928., Jayshankar Mill Ltd, Barshi 1928.,

and Tikakar Textiles Mills Tikakarwadi, north Solapur 1940.⁵ These composite mills provided employment to thousand of the people of Solapur.

Late Kisan master Kshirsagar, Late Vyanktesh Guntala and Late Ramchandra Marda are the pioneers of the powerloom industry in Solapur. Mr. Kishan Kshirsagar was a mill worker so he started powerloom producing Jaquard chhaders in Solapur the year 1954. In the year 1961-62 there were 200 Powerlooms in Solapur the powerloom rapidly increased in the year 1963 the number of powerloom stood at 2000 during 1956 to 1962. This is referred as golden period for powerloom industry. I.e. Chadder industries there were excellent performance of towel industry during 1968-78. The manufacture was repaid lot of profit during these periods. Then in 1980-81 the number of Powerlooms still further increased up to 16000.⁶ there are approximately more than 25000 Powerlooms in Solapur.

1.5 Padmshali Weaving community

The Padmshalis maintain that they come to Solapur at the invitation of Pashawas. They were followed by some Togati families. But the industry was not concentrated in Solapur to significant extent, owing to the unsettled political and civil condition. Similarly a number of Khatri families migrated to Solapur during the period of Peshawas. Many families of these early Hindu and Muslim immigrants made their name in the local industry. Then came Padmshali and Togati weavers from the Nizam's territories. The number of Hindu weavers began to rise rapidly due to steady influx of the Padmshalis weavers. Ancestors of a number of Padmshali Karkhandars now prominent in the local industry might be found to have settled at Solapur in the fifties and sixties of the last century, then onwards the population of Padmshalis, Jyandrg and

Kurhinshtti castes went on increasing, while the number of Nirali and Lingayat, Koshti families declined. The industry is now mostly in the hands of Padmshalis weavers.⁷

The Padmshalis with their inherited skill and craftsmanship in weaving have created a variety of design and colures to give an attractive look to the Chaddars, Bedsheets and napkin today the name of Solapur has been shining on international map due to prestige products of powerloom viz. Chaddars and terry towels.

1.6 Research by R.G.Kakade

Dr. Kakade's work forms part of the Socio-Economic Survey of Solapur City undertaken by the Institution at the invitation of the Solapur Municipality. The work of the survey was begun at Solapur in June 1938 and the collection of data was completed by December 1939 and the Report of both these surveys was originally submitted as a thesis for the Ph.D. degree of the University of Bombay.

