



CHAPTER II

SHOLAPUR ZILLA PARISHAD

(A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND)



CHAPTER - IISHOLAPUR ZILLA PARISHAD: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In this chapter an effort is made to know the historical background of Sholapur Zilla Parishad. There has been lack of material in this context. This chapter is heavily drawn from the - (1) Gasetter of India, Maharashtra State, Sholapur District Gasetter (2) The Socio-Economic Review and District Statistical Abstract of Sholapur District 1961-62 and 1963-64, and a very important work done by Dr. R.K. Paralkar. It is essential to acquaint with this historical background which is a bit narrative in nature.

HISTORY:Historical Back Ground And Territorial Changes:

Philologically the name of district as read " Sholapur " suggests that it is constituted of sixteen villages. The history of this city cannot be traced earlier than perhaps third or fourth century i.e. when it belonged to Andhrabhritya dynasty. History of Sholapur city and its region is not clear until the fourteenth century; when it came under the Muslims control. It appears that in subsequent centuries, the region underwent occasional change overs of control between Afghans, Bahamani and Adilshahi, Moughuls. Territorially, it became a constituent part of Bijapur and Ahmednagar districts till.



After eighteenth century, it came under control of Maratha Empire, (i.e. after defeat of Nizam at Kharda); (Until the battle of Ashti in 1818 A.D., the region was under Maratha Empire. Thereafter it became a part of Ahmednagar district as a " sub-Collectorate " in 1830 A.D. The district of Sholapur was formed in the year 1838 and consisted of Sholapur, Barshi, Mohol, Madha, Karmala, Indinipargi and Muddebihal sub-divisions. This district was abolished in 1864 and reconstituted in year 1869 with the sub-divisions of Barshi, Sholapur, Mohol, Madha and Karmala together with Pandharpur and Sangola from Satara district. Malsiras was transferred to Sholapur district from Satara district during the year 1875. There were no major changes in district or taluka boundaries during years the 1891 to 1941. Consequent upon the merger of former Indian States, two villages of Jamkhandi, 21 villages of Jath State, 13 villages and one town from Kurundwed State, 13 villages from Miraj (Sr.) State, three villages from Miraj (Jr.) State, 28 villages and one town from Sangli State and a part of Akkalkot and Mangalwedha were formed in 1949, Sholapur taluka was split into two talukas, viz. Sholapur South and Sholapur North.

In 1950, 1953 enclave villages were transferred from Hyderabad State and included in Sholapur district. In exchange of twelve enclave villages belonging to this

district were transferred to Osmanabad and Gulbarga districts. During the year 1950, one village from Indi taluka of Bijapur district was also added to Mangalwedha taluka of Sholapur district. With the reorganisation of States in 1956, Sholapur district was a part of Bombay State. Since 1960, it forms a part of Maharashtra State and of Indian Union. The present constitution of the district is unchanged since the year 1956.

SHOLAPUR DURING POST 1818 PERIOD:

Transfer of Power:

On the plains of Ashtel the devoted Maratha general Bapu Gokhale fought a battle with General Smith on 19th February, 1818 and died a hero's death for his master Peshwa Bajirao II, who in his anxiety to escape had no patience to look after his fallen hero and his associates. Young Pratapsinh, the Chhatrapati and his party who were similarly left helpless on the camping ground with all Bajirao's treasure valued at about one crore, fell into British hands. The Chhatrapati, was soon handed over to General Smith to Elphinstone, the Commissioner of the Deccan. The Marathas still put up a last ditch fight at the Sholapur fort under the direction of Ganpatrao Panse, who used his ammunitions with effect, but he also fell wounded and the resistance was over when Bajirao left

Maharashtra for good in 1818. Bhagwantrao became the first Mamlatdar of Sholapur under the British, Venkatappa, Shrinivasrao and Bhagwantrao were also acting as Administrators. In the course of the arrangements that followed subsequently, the western part of the present Sholapur district including Pandharpur fell within the jurisdiction of the Raja of Satara and the southern part including Mangalwedha remained with the Patwardhan Sardars. As it appears from an unpublished paper of 1818 a liquor shop at Pandharpur was closed by the orders of the Peshwa, but from another paper of 7th December, 1837, it was the Satara Raja, who settled a dispute between the Badves and the Pujaris of Pandharpur (I.G.H.Khare: 3rd Edition, pp.28-29).

Sholapur district was formed in 1838 and although it was abolished in 1864, it was revived in 1869. As a result of the merger of the States in 1949, two new talukas - Akkalkot and Malshiras were formed and added to Sholapur district. The present Sholapur district now consists of eleven talukas with a population of (about) 22,53,840 according to the census of 1971.

Although the four States of martyrs of the Martial Law Administration of Sholapur in 1930, standing on the highway in Sholapur town arrest the attention of a passer by who respectfully pays a tribute to them it must be said that Sholapur has not been largely influenced by the

political events in Maharashtra. There is no palpable trace of any attempt of wild tribes to challenge the British power in post - 1818 period. The historical unrest of 1857 is not known to have left the area as affected as many other parts of Maharashtra. Vasudeo Balwant Phadke, the first revolutionary product of the famine riots, is said to have paid a visit to Akkalkot with a desire to receive the blessings of the Sage (Swami), who then stayed there sometime in 1879 and is said to have returned dis-appointed. Sholapur was never a political capital of any mediaeval power. It remained for a long time educationally backward. Sholapur of course, could not escape the nation wide awakening brought about by the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and headed consecutively by the two stalwarts Tilak and Gandhi but that was late in the 20th Century. Similarly the vicinity of Nizam's dominions and Nizam's attitude towards his non-Muslim population had its repercussions.

REVENUE OF POLITICAL EVENTS IN SHOLAPUR:

During the last quarter of the 19th Century signs of political discontent became manifest among the English educated awakened middle class people. This was also the product of frequent recurrence of famines and the distress caused to the peasants there by. Sholapur has always be affected by famines. Vasudeo Balwant Phadke, who might be

said to be the first revolutionary product of these conditions had a few associates in Sholapur, but they did not make any palpable head way towards the close of the 19th Century, Ranade and Tilak represented two lines of thinking over political issues in Maharashtra and Ranade's role in that field was subsequently taken over by Gokhale. Except for the single-handed revolutionary attempt by Limaye, who had collected a few weapons in 1908, but who soon escaped the police search after him right upto 1920. The educated class of Sholapur usually adopted a middle of the road policy and followed it without fear or favour, some inclining more towards Gokhale than towards Tilak. Mallappa Warad, Rao Bahadur Sathe, Rao Bahadur Mule, Dr. Kirloskar and Rambhau Sane, a pleader of Barshi, were some of the leaders of the political thinking in Sholapur during that period, Sathe and Kirloskar inclining towards the moderates and Warad in his heart of hearts towards Tilak. In 1920 the session of the Provincial Conference of Bombay was held at Sholapur with N.C. Kelkar, Presiding and Samant, a Local Pleader, worked as the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Among the leaders of public life in those days must be counted also the names of Hirachand Nemchand and Kakade, Editor of the oldest Marathi news paper of Sholapur " Kalpataru ". Warad and Hirachand distinguished themselves as the prominent participants in the civic life of the city. There are so many hospitals

and other charitable institutions of which they have been the Principal donors. The present monumental palatial building of Sholapur Corporation, ~~being~~ stands tribute to the memory of Mallappa Warad. After 1920, the mill labour began to be organised and occasionally went on strike. The early leadership was provided by the communist leaders in the country and communal riots began to erupt periodically when Khan Bahadur Imamsaheb led the Muslims and Khadkikar, Gulbachand and Rajwade the Hindus.

After 1920, Gandhiji came on the scene and the political atmosphere of the whole country, with Sholapur of course as its part, became surcharged with the Gandhian spirit. But it was not till Gandhi launched his Salt Satyagraha Movement in 1930 that Sholapur came to be prominently marked on the political map of India. Young workers like Dr. Antrolikar, Tulsidas Jadhav and Jajuji came on the scene and became staunch followers of the Gandhian thought. Gulabchand and Rajwade differed from Gandhi's Programme and policy. On 8th May, Nariman and Bajaji, the two national leaders were arrested by Government. The people of Sholapur, as in other cities in the country, started processions in streets and launched upon a programme of Satyagraha when a few cases of violence also took place. Police party arrived and arrested nine of participants. Knight the Collector, arrived on the scene and stood with a pistol in the hand. The Collector gave a warning to the

crowd to disperse and fired a few shots in the air. The confused crowd held its ground; a few stones were thrown in the direction of the police, some of whom were hit. The crowd clamoured for the release of the arrested. Police again fired shots at the crowd. Mallappa Dhanshetti, a youth boldly rushed forth from the crowd and requested the police officer in command to release the nine and to appease the crowd. The officer refused and continued his firing and mortally wounded one Shankar Shivdare. The crowd now became desperate and Knight was frightened, as by that time the ammunition was exhausted. Mallappa again requested for the release of the arrested but the prestige of the rulers was at stake and the Collector refused. The lives of the Collector and the Police Officer were at that time in danger and Mallappa thought it a matter of principle to save the two high placed officers and allow them to find their way out of the dangerous situation. The officers made their way by the backdoor and the police ran from their posts. People were now enraged against Mallappa's behaviour. Mallappa dispersed the crowd by whirling his (Lathi) desperately in all directions. The Collector, now adopting a still more revengeful policy, carried on firing out the people retaliated by becoming intensely desperate, uprooted telegraph posts, broke open the Government compound, attacked the police, killing one police named Ala-ud-din.

The Court building was set on fire and the European population took shelter in the railway station compound for consideration of personal safety. The military was called in and the machinegun carrying lorries ran through the streets of Sholapur, firing widely all round killing one innocent boy Rajaram Ranade. On 10th May, Rambhau Rajwade came out with his special issue of the 'Karmayogi', giving detailed and picturesque account of the happenings on 8th May. For three days, 8th, 9th and 10th of May, Jajuji as the Congress leader provided volunteers to watch the city at night as the police had run away. In the mean while Knight argued that there was no firing at all and compelled people out of fear to confess that there had been none. But some boldly asserted the fact. Wearing of the Gandhi cap was an anathema to the soldiers who ordered stray passers by to take off the caps. On the 9th May section 144-A was clamped on the city. Knight went on leave and saw Mr. Hotson the Home Member, at Bombay. On the 11th March, the Sikh regiment was called and ordered to fire at the unarmed crowd but the regiment refused.

Politics more than violence and local party squabbles more than politics led to the clamping of the Martial Law on Sholapur on the 12th of May. The military arrived on the scene and took charge of the town, as it were to teach a lesson with a demonstration of its strength to the nationalist

forces in the whole country. Colonel Page was incharge. The military arrested any suspect and placed him before the military tribunal. No defence could be offered. Wearing of the Gandhi cap and flying the national flag on private and public buildings were regarded as crimes and passers by were ordered to take off their Gandhi caps, Tulsidas Jadhav refused to do so, inspite of the pistol pointed at his chest. He was fortunately allowed to go. Vasant Shinde, Kisan Sarda were arrested and then Mallappa, who was looked upon as the leader of the crowd and Abdul Rasul, Kurban Hussain. In the course of an inquiry before the tribunal, Mallappa pleaded that he was not on the scene when the mob had practised acts of violence and also pointed out that had he not been on the scene on the 8th, the Collector's life would have been in danger. But his defence was rejected and not recorded. Kurban Hussain pointed out that he was looked upon as a suspect in sheer revenge for his pro-Hindu views and his leadership of the mill labour but that plea also went unrecorded. In the mean while the Governor of Bombay congratulated the Martial Law administrators for having restored law and order in Sholapur. In the course of the trial before the Court, Justice Wadia sentenced them all for being hanged to death. Rajwade was already sentenced to ten years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs.10,000. All appeals over the

death sentences to the four victims right up to the privy council and a prayer for mercy signed by one lakh of Bombay citizens went unheeded. The four victims refused to sign their own application for mercy and faced the inevitable calmly on 12th January, 1931, in Yerwada jail. Rajawade was released by the mediation of Mahatma Gandhi, who refused to sign the famous Gandhi Irwin Pact until the punishment was quashed aside. During the Martial Law period, Satyagraha for upholding the national flag; (Zenda) Satyagraha as it was called, was led by V.V.Sathe and others. On the 30th June, Martial Law was lifted. This brief account of the Martial Law in Sholapur should be concluded by another incident ideologically connected with it. On 22nd of July, 1931, Hotson, the Home Member, was fired at by V.B.Gogate in the Fergusson College Library, Pune. When asked as to why he had done so he quiteely ansered as a protest against your tyrannical administration. As he was being arrested, up came the shouts from the students round about ' Gogate Zinda Bad !, !Vande Mataram ! . It is needless to follow the subsequent political events in Sholapur as they mostly follow the lines of similar events in Maharashtra.

Sholapur Municipality was established in 1852, which has now become a Corporation. Neither the communal, nor the regional differences and not even the differences between the liberals and the nationalist parties of the early 20th

century affected the discussions over civic affairs. Two other institutions of Sholapur deserve notice the first Patients Relief Association founded in 1932, by Shri D.R.Bhave. This was brought within the reach of the commonman, the appliances so urgently required to attend the sick. Second, the Hirachand Nemchand Vachanalaya established in 1926 which is a well organised library with over 26,000 books. It is very helpful to a student studying the history of Sholapur district. Besides the oldest ' Kalpatary ' there are two dailies in Sholapur ' Sanchar ' edited by Ranga Vaidya and ' Visva Samachar ' edited by Baburao Jakkal. Sholapur has good theatres where the mill labour is more attracted by pictures. Arvind Gajendragadkar, the famous flute player and Jabbar Patel, the well-known film director, originally belonged to Sholapur. Unlike Ahmadnagar there is no serious Christian influence in Sholapur. Although the Anglican church and the American Marathi Mission have been doing their religious and social work in Kurduwadi and Sholapur since the early 19th Century. Men like Rao Bahadur Sathe and Kirloskar have been known for their liberal views over social questions. Recently during the post-independence period, there has been a District Harijan Sevak Sangh working for the Harijans and others with a view to bring about their allround social uplift and Keshavlal Virchand Shah has

been working independently in the same field. Laxman Abusingh and Ranashringare are some of the leaders belonging to the Harijan Castes.

In conclusion, it must be said that commerce is writ large, in the daily activities of Sholapur district; prayers and religious practices make up their outlook and in business they find their means of living. Politics and social reforms are as it were superimposed on the people that are otherwise engrossed in their religious routine and economic pursuits.

In the beginning of 19th Century even though there was the British Rule, the political affairs of the whole city of Sholapur were handled by a few renowned and noted persons. In those days the political warfare was influenced by Mr. Appasaheb Varad and his associates. This is why the British buttered these people and took advantage and ruled. The British did not care for the poor, they totally neglected these people.

After Mr. Appasaheb Varad the reins of political affairs of Sholapur were held by the late Dr. Vinayak Vaman Mule and some of his obedient colleagues. They enjoyed power every where in Municipality, Local Board etc. He was the President of Sholapur Municipality for a long duration. After Mahatma Gandhi's movement the Congress

party became dominant amongst the educated and middle class. After 1920, the Congress party enjoyed full power in Sholapur District. Especially late Mr. Bhahusaheb Khadilkar, Late Mr. Rambhau Rajawade and Mr. Gulabchand Hirachand Doshi, started the weekly ' Karmyogi ' after this political affairs of Congress were run by them. In 1932, Mr. Baburao Jakkal got elected in Presidential election of Nagarpalika.

From 1930 onwards the domination of the Mule party started to decline in Sholapur Nagarpalika but still in District Local Board, the opposition enjoyed power for six years. Mr. Abdul Rashid Haji Hajarat Khan, friend of R.B.Mule governed the Local Board. But from 1936-37 the Congress became powerful, Mr. D.B. Tulshidas Jadhav luckily got elected on the local board. By consideration of his loyal service he was elected the President of the District Local Board. Mr. D.B. Tulshidasji was young to achieve such a post at tender age. Later on he achieved tremendous success in different fields but his success was deeply rooted in District Local Board. Mr. Tulashidas Jadhav and Mr. Baburao Jakkal became Presidents of District Local Board and Nagarpalika in 1936-37 respectively. The opposition for us got almost nullified and the Congress became dominant. After 1927-28 the Congress became dominant in other places. When Gandhi was arrested in 1930, Sholapur

became violent. In order to stop all these things the police started to use its power. In this riot a young man named Mr. Shivdare was shot dead. Immediately the Martial Law was imposed and was continued for some days. In these critical condition Mr. Tulashidasji Jadhav was the Secretary, of Local Congress Committee and was arrested.

The policy of Mule party copposition was just to please the British Government, and was interested in capturing the lost power because of which the domination of Congress party started to decline in Sholapur city. Mr. Manikchand Ramchand Shah of the Congress party was elected the President of the Sholapur Nagarpalika. Afterwards when Martial Law was imposed, he was punished, because of which Mule Party again enjoyed power in the Nagarpalika.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ZILLA PARISHAD:

In Sholapur during the British administration some efforts were made to revive the local self governing institutions in India with a view to train the people in the administration of such institutions by giving them representations in such local bodies. As a result, Municipalities, District School Boards and Janpadsabhas came to be established. Subsequently, Village Panchayats also came to be founded and as a result of this it was possible for the British Government to regenerate confidence among the masses in habiting the rural areas.

The establishment of the Zilla Parishad could be regarded as the culminating point in the achievement of the goal of local self government. Prior to this, local autonomy was enjoyed in different degrees at the district, taluka and village levels. The local self government units were provided by District Local Boards and the Village Panchayats.

With the advent of Independence, the principle of planned economic development was adopted and the community project and national extension service schemes were introduced to realise that objective. However, the experience gained indicated that the progress of rural development was not commensurate with the expectation of the Government and it was attributed to the non-participation of the rural folk in the implementation of such development schemes. Under the circumstances the central government thought it necessary to investigate the causes behind such a state of affairs and appointed a committee called the I Balwantraj Mehta Committee'. The Balwantraj Mehta Committee undertook the study of the situation by visiting the developmental activities, by interviewing government officials and social workers. The committee pointed out mainly the failure of the government in appealing and attracting the leadership of masses in participating in the community and national development schemes. It also found that the institutions

of this type of the local self government had not taken any interest in participating in such developmental schemes. The Committee came to the conclusions that urgent necessity of the day to remedy the above state of affairs was the decentralisation of power and responsibility at the lower level.

The Committee, therefore, suggested that the responsibility for such regional local development should be assigned to such local institutions at the district level with the government accepting the role of guiding, supervising and planning from a higher level, making available the required finances, etc.

The Balwantraj Mehta Committee recommended the formation of local committees on par with the block development committees to be named as Panchayat Samitis and at the district level a district committee to be called Zilla Parishad instead of the earlier Local Self Governing Institutions in order to secure integration in the various developmental activities. Thus an Act, to provide for the establishment in rural areas of Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis, to assign to them Local Government function and to entrust the execution of certain works and development schemes to such bodies, was passed in 1961, known as the Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis Act, 1961.

Thus now the village Panchayats, the Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishad are the three responsible functionaries that are entrusted with implementation of the developmental schemes. The Sholapur Zilla Parishad started functioning on August 12, 1962. The Zilla Parishad consists of 54 elected Councillors, one women Councillor co-opted by elected members of the Parishad and eleven Chairman of the Panchayat Samities in the district.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS:

After 1920, Mahatma Gandhi's emergence on the national political scene surcharged Sholapur with the Gandhian spirit, But it was not till Gandhi initiated his salt Satyagraha movement in 1930 that Sholapur came to be permanently marked on the political map of India. Young workers like Dr. Antrolikar, Tulsidas Jadhav and Ramkrishna Jaju came on the scene and became staunch followers of the Gandhian movement.

The period 1918-1921 was an epoch making period in the history of the Indian labour movement. It was during this period that the industrial workers learnt to wage mass struggle over a large area and the general awakening of political consciousness also helped in the formation of Indian Trade Unions at the Juncture. The workers at that time were not in a position to lead themselves. But the political movement going on around them in the country

provided them the services of the educated intelligensia. The Indian Labour Movement since the establishment of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1920 remained very close to the national movement led by the Indian National Congress. This was very natural in the light of the fact that the builders of the Indian labour movement in the beginning were staunch nationalists. Indian labour movement was an integral part of the national movement. After 1920 the Mill Labour began to be organised in Sholapur also and occasionally they went on strike. In Sholapur, Shri Jagannath Shinde and Shri Kurban Hussain were the Secretaries of the ' Young League '. They took keen interest in organising the Mill workers of Sholapur. They were also actively participating in the civil disobedience movement. It was but natural that when Gandhi was arrested, the workers went on strike.

Sholapur has been a centre of Labour, as it has been reputed as Textile Centre. Perhaps the familas and drought conditions in this area has contributed historically for Sholapur to become as Textile Industrial Centre.

* Sources:

1. From Sholapur Under Martial Law, Dr. R.K. Paralkar, pp.14-18.
2. Gasetter of Indian, Maharashtra State, Sholapur District, Gasetter, Second Edition, 1977, p.284.
3. The Socio-Economic Review & District Statistical Abstract of Sholapur District, 1961-62 & 1963-64.

