



CHAPTER - II

Solapur City : A Historical Review

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The historical and social background of the city is discussed in this chapter.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CITY:-

Any reliable history of Solapur of first millennium is not available except few references. Solapur was a small village during the reign of Satvahanas, early Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas etc. In the 15th century Solapur suffered from a severe famine, known as 'Durga Devi famine'. The political history of Solapur till 1818 is nothing but the history of its fort. The fort of Solapur was originally built at the time of the Adil Shahi Sultans of Bijapur and rebuilt during the reign of Ali-Adil-Shah-1 in 1578, according to the inscriptions on its walls. After 1818, Solapur was included in the Poona collectorate¹. The municipality came into being on August 1st 1852.

2. THE NEW DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY:-

The Solapur district was formed in the year 1838 and in 1949 a few talukas were included in the Solapur map. During the

freedom movement Solapur remain little affected by the political events in Maharashtra. When the martial law was imposed in Solapur on 19th May 1930, four brave and young patriots named Mallapa Dhanashetti, Kurban Hussain, Jagannath Shinde and Kisan Sarda were hanged ² on 12th January 1931. The four statues of the martyrs on the highway entering the city of Solapur arrest the attention of passerby who respectfully pays a tribute to them even today.

Solapur was never a political capital of any medieval power. It remained educationally backward for a long time. There is a controversy regarding the original name of the town itself. The legend goes that the word Solapur denotes sixteen (Sola) villages (Pur). Interestingly, one of those is known as Solapur. It is however ,convinced that Sonnalige, a village became important on account of Siddharama which later became Sonapur from which the present name "Solapur" is derived. The sixteen villages are. Ahmedpur, Adillapur, Chamaladev, Tahenpur, Jamdarwadi, Kaljapur, Khaderpur, Khanderaowadi,

Mohammedpur, Ranapur, Sandhalpur, Shaikhpur, Solapur, Sonnalgi, Sonapur and Vaidyawadi.

Another reference says that solapur was derived from Sonnalgi. However the above mentioned meaning of Solapur shows no historical fact, because the word Solapur is among the sixteen villages.

3. GEOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY:-

1) AREA OF THE CITY:-

Solapur which lies between $17^{\circ}10'$ and $18^{\circ}32'$ north latitudes and $74^{\circ}42'$ and $76^{\circ}15'$ east longitude, has an area of 179.69 Sq. Kms⁴. The district has a length of about 100 miles from the north of Karmala to the south of Sangola and a breadth of 100 miles from the West of Malshiras to the east of Solapur. For the administrative purpose the lands of the district are distributed over eleven sub-divisions and one among them is Solapur which lies to the south-east.

The rock on which the city is built is a hard mürum almost approaching a trap. During the rainy seasons the surroundings of the city are green and pleasant. The city is enclosed by 125 years

old and two and a half miles round wall. Solapur had originally eight gates namely Degaon-Nava, Bala, Tuljapur, Kumbkhari, Dari, Bijapur, Pani and killa or Revni.

The city is the head-quarters of the district, a municipal corporation was established at Solapur on May 1st 1964, the courts of the district and sessions judge are located in the city.

II) CLIMATE:-

The climate of Solapur is healthy except the hot months of March, April and May. The hot season is marked by a dry scorching heat. The rainy months are pleasant. The rainfall is scanty and in winter bitter cold is almost unknown in the city. The humidity is high during the south-west monsoon. It is about 20 to 25% in the afternoon.

During the south-west monsoon the skies are heavily clouded. Winds are light to moderate during May to August. The heat during summer is intense and the maximum temperature sometimes goes up to about 47⁰ C.

4. POPULATION:-

Solapur city is densely populated and most important in the district. The population of Solapur city in 1871 has increased by 429.12 percent over 1901. According to the 1971 census the city alone has more than half of the urban population of the district. As compare to 1971 population there is tremendous increase. The 1991 census gives the population of the city as 6,20,843⁵. The males exceed the females by 94, 039. The mother-tongue of 71.5% of the total population of the city, is Marathi, Marathi is the principal language followed by Kannada.

5. SLUMS IN SOLAPUR CITY:-

Solapur is^a textile city, which has a large number of small scale labour industries. As mentioned earlier, Solapur is educationally backward. Illiteracy is high. These illiterate people live as labor^uers in slums, who are generally poor and economically backward.

In Solapur alone there are 153 Slums (ZopadPatti) recognized by the corporation of the city. There are non-recognized slums also. These slums were developed between the

year 1980 to 1996. They are established on the government, municipality and private lands. Out of these 153 slums, 30 slums are under-developed, no proper facilities are available. The municipal corporation says the slums development work is under progress. Among the 153 slums recognized by the corporation, The biggest slum is known as “Bharat Ratna Indiranagar Slum”. The slum is having a population of 6393 and established on private land. Setting up the slum was done in 1978 and today it is a well developed slum . The smallest slum is known as ‘Chavan Vasti’ which is also established on private land having a very small population of just 21. It was established during 1986. The slum’s small population may be due to its undeveloped condition even after a long period of its establishment.

6. RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE IN SOLAPUR CITY:-

In the beginning of the 19th century the religion influenced and regulated daily life of the people. The proportion of muslims has increased over the last 70 years, while the proportion of the jains had decreased but recently increased. The proportion of the Hindus was decreasing in the beginning of the century, but again

increased during the year 1971. In Solapur city we find five major religions and some minor religions.

Hindus are the largest religious majority followed by Muslims. The Hindus are divided into numerous socially-differentiated groups known as castes like the Brahmans, Mudliars, Telangs, Konkanasths, Lingayats, Marathas, Malis, Chambhars, Dhors, Gavandis, Kumbhars, Sonars, Shimpis, Dhangars, Mahars, Mangs, Vadars and others.

The second largest religious population found in Solapur city is of the Muslims. The muslim religion consists of two different sects known as the Ismaili Shias and the Sunnis. Ismaili Shias of the Daudi Sect have a separate Mosque and never. Pray in the regular Sunni mosque. The other four main classes are the Syeds, the Moghals, the shaikhs, and the Pathans. The Moghals are small in number in Solapur City as compared to the other sects. The Moghals add Mirza or Beg to their names, the Pathans add the word Khan to their names while Shaikhs write Shaikh or Mohammed after their names. The Syeds are found in large

proportion in the city.⁷ Marriages take place among these four classes.

The other major religions found in Solapur are the Christians, the Buddhists, the jains, the Parsis and the Sikhs.

7. INDUSTRIALISATION:-

Solapur is one of the most labourised industrial city in Maharashtra. It is fourth largest industrialised district in the state. The city gained commercial bias with the growth of British rule. The development of the textile industry has changed as compared to the last century . It now ranks as the fifth leading city of western India.

Cotton textile is the most important organised industry at Solapur which was established in 1877. At present there are many cotton mills and number of small factories manufacturing bed-sheets. Solapur is famous for bed-sheets not only in Maharashtra but also in India. Besides these modern cotton textile mills, there are numerous powerlooms and handlooms. Cotton turkish towels are exported in a very large number. So the city is becoming a large yarn market. There are many large scale and

small scale industries in Solapur. Among the large scale Cotton-textile industries are: The Laxmi-Vishnu Mill, The Jam Ranjit-Singhiji Mill, The Solapur Spinning and Weaving Co. Ltd., The Khatare Spinning Mill, The SIMCO Spinning mill. The small scale industries in the city are : the dyeing industry. Dal mills, Oil mills, Handloom weaving industry, Tanning industry, Leather works industry, Rope making industry and Bamboo making industry etc.

Sugar and jaggery industries also have a very important role in the industrial development. One of the important feature of the sugar industry is the organisation of Sugar factories in the Co-operative sectors. Shri Siddheshwar Sakhar Karkhana Ltd., a Co-operative Sugar factory is developing to a large extent. Co-operative movement is also spread to other industries. The Solapur District Weavers Co-operative Federation Ltd., was established in 1950.⁶ Another organization "The western Maharashtra Weavers Central Co-operative Mandal Ltd., is working since 1961. Due to its large laborer population the city is

known as labourised industrial city. Hence a labour court is having a very important position in the city.

8. EDUCATION:-

The educational system in early times more or less co-existed with the religious institutions of the respective religions. The first educational ceremony was Vidyarambha to be performed by the pupil at the age of 5, by learning the alphabets and offering worship. But during the British time the educational system was given a change. Marathi was taught in 101 Schools, English and Marathi, in only 4 government schools. There has been a steady growth in the number of primary and High Schools in the city during the last 20 years. The secondary education is also expanding rapidly. At present the number of schools are increasing very fast. There are 120 private primary schools and 96 Corporation Schools of different mediums like Marathi, Urdu and Kannada 9 in the city.

We find 120 High Schools in city corporation area and one agriculture school which was established in the year 1959. The number of the higher education institutes and colleges have

risen to a big number. Among which five are Arts degree colleges, 3 Arts and Science Degree Colleges, 7 Commerce Degree Colleges, 2 Medical Colleges of which one is Allopathic and the other One is Ayurvedic, 2 Engineering Colleges, 3 B.Ed. colleges, 3 M.S.W. colleges, 4 Polytechnics, One B. Pharmacy College and One Physical Education College.

During the year 1971-72, the number of higher educational institutes was only 19 and in 1998 the number has risen to 37. The number of institutes doubled in just 27 years, shows the progress made in the field of higher education.

Though Solapur city is known for its backwardness in education, it may be observed that the literacy rate is increasing day by day. During the year 1951 the literacy rate was 14.74 and during the year 1981 the literacy rate was 46.06 which means that there is a fast development in education which is due to the various drives taken by the government and private agencies.

Social Education : Another aspect of education is Social education. The activities under this head are mainly concerned with promoting literacy in adults and children who go out for

earning. The government has started special night schools meant for those children.

9. SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN GENERAL :-

In fact there are more Social problems in Solapur. The main problems are poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, labour exploitation Child marriage, Women's problems, caste problems, dowry problems and so on.

The number of slums clearly indicate the poverty of the city. People live in small houses having no proper ventilation and due to shortage of space there is bad impact on the health of the children. Due to poverty the whole family go out to earn their bread. At work places these people are exploited which is due to their illiteracy. They are not aware of the labour law and rights of the labour. In small hotels, canteens and factories Childrens are forced to do hard work for less pay and thus they are exploited. On the other hand School dropouts are increasing in large number. For their education and upliftment government is running evening schools.

On the basis of caste the majority of the population of the city are the Lingayats and the Padmashali's who are engaged in business. Although the Padmashali's are economically advanced they are educationally backward. In these two castes child marriages are prevalent which in turn create many social problems. The practice of dowry is increasing. The global problem of AIDS is also affecting the life of city. The Aids survey was carried out by Tata Institute of Social Sciences with the collaboration of Social work institutes in the city.

10. SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN PARTICULAR :-

The particular social problems of the city are related to the textile industries. Heavylooms located in the residential areas create sound and air pollution. These textile industries use dye mixture for their yarn. After the use the water is carelessly allowed to mix with other water bodies, which leads to water pollution. Another major social problem related with textile industry is that of the child labour. Hundreds of children are appointed as child labourers with low wages.

Though the city has grown in its area and population, the corporation facilities are provided on a very slow basis. The population of Solapur city is more than 6 lakhs. Many steps have been taken to improve the educational level of the city but the efforts are futile due to absence of the university. Many youth organizations are agitating for a university from a long time. Most of the higher grade competitive examinations are not conducted in Solapur. It proves difficult and expensive for the job seekers.

11. SOCIAL SET-UP :-

In Solapur city we come across many different religions, among them Hindu's are in majority. Major section of Hindu population is constituted by Lingayat and Padmashalis. The Padmashali's have dominated because they are the owners of textile industry. The second prominent caste is Lingayats who are dominated in trade and commerce. The Lingayats and the Padmashali's represent the city in state legislature and the parliament which shows their advancement in politics. The Jains, whose population first decreased and then increased, but still they

are in minority as compared to Hindu and Muslims. Most of the Jains are businessmen, traders, industrialist etc. They have made some progress in the field of education by starting Ashrams and Schools.

The muslims are found through out the city. The muslims are somewhat idle and proved as persons of luxury living.¹⁰ The muslims here occupy a high position in business like fruit sellers, vegetable vendors, garage owners and scrap buyers and contractors. But the muslims have shown no improvement in education. Some institutes are engaged in upliftment of muslims in Education. The muslims are very strict about their Islamic culture and religion.

The Buddhist are not numerous but they have shown great enthusiasm for education. They participate in large number during the cultural activities.

12. CULTURAL SET-UP :-

Solapur is considered as a religious place in Maharashtra due to the famous pilgrimage places like Pandharpur and Tuljapur.

The Gadda fair of January is a very important cultural activity of the city. People from all over the district gather for the local God Lord Siddeshwar's marriage which is performed for three days. This fair is organised for about 25 days. In this fair various activities are conducted for the benefit of the masses. The activities include the exhibition on agricultural progress, new technology, a small essel world, plays against social evils and superstitions.

Apart from these the fair organises blood bank programmes, literacy awareness programmes, plays showing awareness regarding dangerous diseases like AIDS, cancer, leprosy etc. These activities are organised by the government as well as private organizations. Participation of people of all religions make Gadda fair a great success. Gadda fair is not just a fair it is the combination of religious customs and modern science.

In Solapur city we find two most famous Auditoriums namely Hutatma Smriti Mandir and Damani Sabha Ghruha. One more auditorium came into existence recently is known as Sushil

Rasik Sabha. Solapur has 20 cinema halls which give no proper facilities and are ill equipped.¹¹ The feature films played are mostly Hindi but films in Marathi, English and Telugu are also played. Despite the majority Marathi population Marathi films are not given much importance.

13. TELEVISION IN SOLAPUR CITY:-

Television made a beginning in India on 15th September 1959, when a pilot television center was established at Delhi, with the assistance of UNESCO, for carrying out studies in the use of the medium for imparting social education.

The second television center of India came up at Bombay in 1972. Though the growth of television in India was slow in beginning it became rapid after the SITE. Bombay has 25HPTS/LPTS under which the Solapur city is one.

Solapur city transmitter is linked with the Bombay and Pune Relay Centre. Television in solapur was inaugurated in 1984 with a amplifier transmission. The transmitter power is of 100 ward covering 25-30 kms area. The Solapur transmitter centre is located at Kumthe Naka, consisting of a transmitter hall,

Service room, equipment repair room, control room and a reception room. At this center entry is restricted under tight security. The centre consists of an assistant engineer who is incharge of the centre, 4 other engineers, 3 technicians, 3 helpers, all work on shift basis round the clock.¹²

The relay timings are connected to the relay centres. The centre relays what is received from the main centres and relay centres. No technical work is done independently. The technical work is carried out with the help of Bombay and Pune relay centres. Though Solapur City has no HPT relay centre the transmission is made through the low power transmitters.

Though the population of the city is 6,20,846, only 60% own a television set. Only 25% of the television set owners have colour television sets. In Solapur we find about 60 to 70 shops dealing with television sets. There are about 150 cable operators having 45,000 cable connections. The number of cable connections are few as compared to the population.

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