

C H A P T E R - F O U RHISTORY AND PHYSICAL FEATURES OF MIRAJ  
TALUKA

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:: CHAPTER - IV ::HISTORY AND PHYSICAL FEATURES OF MIRAJ TAHSIL4.1 GENERAL INFORMATION OF MIRAJ<sup>1</sup>:

Miraj lying between 16° north latitude and 74° 35' east longitude is 9.65 Km. (Six miles) north of Sangli, the district headquarters, and 48.28 Km. (30 miles) east of Kolhapur. It is the headquarters of the Taluka of the same name. The town has the offices of the prant officer, mamlatdar and panchayat samiti. There are two civil courts, one judicial magistrate's court, three branch post and telegraph offices, one sub post office, a police station, a telephone exchange, a rest house, civil and veterinary dispensaries and a maternity home. Besides the health institutions maintained by Government and the town municipality there are many private hospitals and dispensaries including the famous wanless T.B. sanatorium.

In respect of learning and education the town has very good facilities within the municipal limits there are three montessories, 27 primary schools, five high schools, two training schools, and one technical school. The institutions noted above include those run by Government as well as by private bodies.

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1. Gazetteer of India, Maharashtra State, Sangli District, Bombay 1969. P.P. 707,708.

Within a radius of 8 Km. (Five miles) taking the Wellington College as the centre, Sangli Miraj area has educational facilities in Arts, Science, Commerce, Medicine, Engineering and Training, barring only agriculture. Thus there are two Arts and Science Colleges, one Commerce College, one Engineering College and one College of Education. Miraj is a well-known medical centre in South Maharashtra. In collaboration with the Miraj Medical Centre Government has established a Medical College at Miraj. The town has two private libraries.

Miraj is a large trading town dealing chiefly in grains. There is a sub-market yard. An industrial estate is soon going to be set-up. There are quite a few banks and cooperative societies offering advance finance to agriculturists for purchasing fertilisers and modern agricultural implements. The weekly bazar is held on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Miraj Town is centrally situated in respect of the means of transport and communications. It is an important junction on the Poona Bangalore route of the South Central Railway. From Miraj trains run to Pandharpur as also a shuttle service to Sangli, which is only 9.65 Km ( Six miles) off. Besides the railway there is city bus service between Miraj and Sangli, buses plying every ten minutes to and fro. Miraj have extensive betelleaf orchards in the surrounding villages and these leaves are sent to places like

Bombay, Poona etc. by rail.

#### 4.2 HISTORY OF MIRAJ<sup>2</sup>:

Miraj passed on to the silaharas of Kolhapur when that house declared independence towards the close of the tenth century. Jattiga II (C. 1000-1020 A.D.) the 4th ruler of this dynasty has been mentioned by his son Marasimha (C.1050 to 1075 A.D.) in his Miraj plates dated Saka 980 or A.D. 1058. He was succeeded by Gonka who has been described in the same plates as the conqueror of Karahata( Karhad). Mairinja ( Miraj) and Konkan. But the Hotur inscription of 1037 A.D. records that Panhala, the capital city of Silahara Jattiga II was conquered by cavanrasa the general of Calukya Jayasimha II. The Miraj plates of 1024 A.D. reveal that Jayasimha II issued the grant when he was in his victorious camp near Kolhapur. This goes to establish that Panhala was captured before 1024 A.D. either at the end of Jattiga's reign or in the beginning of his son Gonka's. It seems that the Silaharas were allowed to retain their territory. There is no doubt that Gonka submitted to Calukya power but the fact that he is described as the conqueror of Konkan may mean that either he was appointed as the administrator or was allowed to penetrate beyond his territory. In 1216 A.D. Miraj along with other territories of Kolhapur Silaharas fell to the onslaught of the Yadavas who retained their hold up to A.D. 1318 when it passed on to the Bahamanis. We have it on the

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2. Gazetteer of India, Maharashtra State, Sangli District. Bombay 1969. P.P. 708,709,710 and 711.

authority of the Tazkirat mulk that Hason, the founder of the Bahamani dynasty was in the employ of one Saikh Muhammad Junaidi at Gangi near Miraj where he found a treasure with which he raised an army marched on Miraj and captured the fort after defeating and imprisoning one Rani Durgavati who was its subhedar. In view of his first victory the name of the town was changed to Mubarakabad at the wishes of Saikh Muhammad. This event took place in 748 Hijri or A.D. 1347. As to who built the fort of Miraj is not known some say that it was built by one of the Bahamani sultans but this view is untenable as the fort was in existence even before the establishment of the Bahamani dynasty. Bahamani sultans may have only carried some repairs. The first mention of Miraj in Ferista occurs in the account of the revolt of Bahadur Gilani in A.D. 1494, which was quelled by Sultan Muhammad II (1482-1518). The Sultan had received a complaint from his counter-part in Gujarat and wanted to punish him. He invested the fort which was surrendered by its governor Buna Naik after some resistance. He was honourably received by the Sultan. The troops of Bahadur Gilani were given the alternative of either joining his own or leaving the fort. It is said that nearly 2000 cavalry<sup>left</sup> the fort, and joined Bahadur Gilani. Those of whom preferred to enter Sultan's service were accepted and rewarded suitably. Whether this leniency shown towards the troops was an indication of the nobility of character of the Sultan or was the result of the growing weakness in the sultanate following Gavan's death may be best left to the imagination of the reader. Be that as it may, the importance of

Miraj as a base of operations for the expeditions against South Konkan and Goa was clearly envisaged by the Bahamani kings and there are not a few references to the place being used as a camping ground for the purpose.

The Bahamani empire disintegrated due to a succession of weak rulers who could not put down the turbulence of the powerful provincial governors. Thus in 1490 the governors of Ahamadnagar, Golconda, Bijapur etc. declared their independence and on the fall of the Bahamani dynasty Miraj passed into the hands of Bijapuri Sultans. Ali Adil Sah was kept there under surveillance during the later years of the reign of Ibrahim Adil Sah, his father, and on the death of the latter it was turned into a point d' appui in the operations undertaken to possess the throne. The garrison took part afterwards in the revolt of Ismail against Ibrahim Adil Sah II.

At the time Shivaji was fast rising into prominence and had carved out a separate principality at the cost of the Muslim dynasties that were gradually waning in power and losing hold over their dominions. His growing power was felt by the Moghals and the Bijapuris who relentlessly tried to suppress him though without any success. Within 18 days of Afzal Khan's (Bijapuri Sardar) death at Pratapgad, Panhala, the Capital of the Western Adil Sahi district was taken by Annaji Datto through negotiations on 28th November, 1659. Panhala and the surrounding district of Kolhapur, Vasantgad, Khelna, Rangna and other minor forts quickly capitulated. While yet Shivaji was camping at Kolhapur he sent Netaji Palkar to besiege Miraj fort. In January 1660 Shivaji arrived in person to press the siege which

had continued for two to three months, when news of Siddi Johar and Fazal Khan invading his territories urgently called him to Panhalgad. Under these circumstances Shivaji had to give up the siege and make arrangement to meet the challenge posed by the Bijapuri Sardars. In the regnal period of Sambhaji, Maratha generals Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav had chosen the fort of Miraj as a safe custody for their families, while they were engaged in carrying on a guerilla warfare against the invading hordes of Aurangzeb, the Moghal Emperor. With the fall of Bijapur in 1687 Miraj passed into the hands of the Moghals and remained so until it was captured by Sahu on 3rd October 1739 in a personally led campaign lasting for two years. Thus the remnant of the old Moghal power almost bordering on the Maratha capital was wiped once for and all. It was one of the many pockets of the Moghals which threatened the Maratha dominions the others being Rayagad, Gopalgad, Govindgad, etc. In 1761 the fort of Miraj with some thanas was assigned by Pesva Madhavrav to Govindrav Patvardhan for the maintenance of troops. The forefathers of the Rajas of Miraj and Sangli, the Patvardhan sardars made their names in the campaigns that the Pesvas led against Haider and Tipu of Mysore.

#### 4.3 PHYSICAL FEATURES OF MIRAJ TALUKA<sup>3</sup> :

The physical features of Miraj Taluka is given as below :

##### a) PHYSICAL SETTING :

The Miraj Tahsil is located in the rain shadow of Sangli— one of the districts in Southern Maharashtra. It is bounded on the West and South-west by Kolhapur District, on the North, by Tasgaon Tahsil on the North-east by Kavathe Mahankal Tahsil, and on the South and South-east by Belgaum and Bijapur Districts of Karnataka State. According to 1981 census, there are 66 villages and three urban settlements namely Sangli, Miraj and Madhavnagar in Miraj Tahsil.

##### b) AREA :

The Tahsil measures about 57 Km from West to East and 30 Km. from North to South. The Tahsil is having an area of 909.6 Sq.Km.

##### c) TOPOGRAPHY AND SOIL :

The topography of the Tahsil is undulating towards the North-east because of the existence of Dandoba Hills. Towards West and South-west the area is more or less plain as the area falls in the Krishna Valley. To the East also the area is plain. Towards North-east the most high area is about 850 meters, and it gradually decreases to the West at Krishna river. The general slope of the area is towards South-west.

Geological formation in the Tahsil is Deccan Traps. The Soil is derived from basol rocks. Towards West and South-west and East

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3. Physical features of Miraj Tahsil is taken from Gazetteer of India Maharashtra State, Sangli District, Bombay 1969. from Page No. 1 to 33.



in general the black cotton Soil is found. Especially towards West i.e. in the proximity of Krishna river the depth of soil is about ten meteres. Towards North-East the area consists largely of granular black soil. Such soils are useful for the cultivation of Jawar, Pulses. In the irrigated areas sugar-cane is pre-dominant crop. In a few villages betel leaves and grape gardening is developing.

d) RAINFALL :

Major portion of the rainfall occurs during the monsoon period. The average rainfall of the Tahsil is 635 mm. The rainfall in the tahsil shows a considerable variation from year to year. The varying ability is about 28%.

e) CLIMATE :

The climate of the Miraj Taluka is on the whole agreeable and is characterised by general dryness during the major part of the year. The cold season is from December to about the middle of February. The Hot season which follows, lasts till the end of May. June to September is the South-West, monsoon season and the two months October and November constitute the post-monsoon or retreating monsoon.

f) TEMPERATURE :

Mean maximum temperature is about 40° (Forty degree) centigrade and mean minimum temperatue is about 9° (Nine degree) centigrade. May is the hottest month and December is the coldest month in this area. The Miraj Tahsil comes in the rainshadow area and it is often

affected by the draughts.

g) RIVERS :

The West of the Tahsil is bounded by river Krishna which measures about 28 miles and on the North-West, the Tahsil is bounded by Verala River. And the remaining small part of the Tahsil is dependent upon the rainy season only. The River Krishna is very useful for irrigated sugar-cane farming. Number of lift irrigation schemes of the West Miraj Tahsil are responsible for sugar-cane cultivation.

h) VIGITATIONS ( FOREST ) :

The natural vigitations (Forest) area is about one percent of the total area of the Tahsil. The vigitation is sparse and the trees are of dry decidues and thorny bush-type. Neem Babhul Tamavind and Mango are the major trees found in this area. In the Eastern parts especially on the Malran thin grass is found.

i) CROPS :

In this Tahsil Jawar, Bajara, Pulses and Oil Seeds are major dry farming crops. Sugar-Cane grapes betel leaves, chillies, Turmeric, Tobacco are the major irrigated and commercial crops.

j) POPULATION :

According to 1981 census population of Miraj Taluka is 506320.