



HISTORICAL APPLICATIONS IN TOURISM SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOLAPUR

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ABSTRACT

In the twentieth century tourist industries developed in India and abroad. Also now a day many historical, religious, cultural and other places came in to the focus as a tourist centers in Maharashtra. Solapur is one of the Tourist centre in Maharashtra. Geographically Solapur came into arid zone and always faced many problems in connection with the famine. From ancient times Solapur never a Political Capital of any kingdom. From medieval period Solapur developed as a industrial centre and changed its face. From medieval period with its development Solapur made its name and fame in various field of life. Many landmarks of that development leg behind in the history. Among them Solapur Fort, Siddheshwar Temple, Rupa Bhawani Temple, Saraswati Mandir Rajrajeshwar temple, Veer Hanuman and Rushi Ashram, Ratnatraya Digambar Jain Mandir and Marwadi Ram Mandir, Khandoba Mandir, Markandeya temple, Choundeshwari temple, Mecca Masjid, Shubharay Maharaj Math etc. historical monuments are important tourist places of Solapur city.

Keywords : Bhakti, Math, Kavya, Vesh, Lingayat, Gadda Yatra, Yogdanda, Wachane, Veershai, Samadhi, Puran, Sholapur.

INTRODUCTION

Solapur made its name in various cultural activities, such as art, architecture, film industry, literature, sports, singing, music, etc. Some eminent personalities of this field have made their mark on the cultural life of the city. Due to the vicinity of various cities, states and regions Solapur City has been influenced in the context of culture, language, history, socio-political and economic factors. In Solapur there are sixteen spoken languages. The city includes people of various castes and communities migrated from various regions of the country making it cosmopolitan in nature. Cultural and social character of Solapur City is slightly different than other cities of Maharashtra, because of the effect of adjoining states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, the nature of educational development is different compared to other cities in Maharashtra.



HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The present study will endeavor to test the following hypothesis.

1. There are many tourist places in Solapur city.
2. Due to many factors Solapur is became neglected tourist centre in Maharashtra.
3. It is possible to develop Solapur as a tourist centre in Maharashtra.
4. Cotton industry of Solapur also a important factor in the development of Solapur. Therefore it is an important tourist centre of the city.
5. Cultural development and cosmopolitan nature of Solapur also attracted to the tourists.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The major objectives of the present study are listed below:

1. To focus on the tourist centres of the city.
2. To discuss on the issues which are favorable for the development of the tourism of Solapur.
3. To explain the cosmopolitan culture of Solapur.
4. To focus on the historical monuments of the city.
5. To focus on the obstacles in the way of developing tourism of Solapur city.

METHODOLOGY AND RESOURCES / REFERENCES

The present study is basically field visit based and fully relies on the primary and secondary data. The data is collected by the visited to the historical places of the Solapur city. The data is collected from the souvenirs, periodicals, proceedings, annuals and notebooks of the various renowned institutions of the city. Some Newspaper clippings from Daily Anandvritta Ani Kalptaru as well as Solapur Samachar are also used for this study. Interview of the eminent personality of the city is helpful for the cross checking and the lacuna of the information. All this collected data interpreted in the light of the hypothesis and objectives of the study.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Solapur city is the headquarter of Solapur District and the fourth largest city in Maharashtra State.ⁱ It is an important industrial centre in Southern Maharashtra. It is situated in the latitude of 17°40'18"N and longitude 75°50'38"E.ⁱⁱ It is about 283 miles from the seacoast and lies 1800 feet above sea level.ⁱⁱⁱ Bhima and Sina are the near by rivers. National highway No. 9 from Mumbai to Bijapur passes through the city. It is an important junction on the southeast branch of central railway connecting Mumbai and Madras. Poona, Mumbai and



Hyderabad are at a distance of about 250, 500 and 435 Kms. respectively. The states Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are closely linked with Maharashtra, because of the situation of Solapur City.^{iv}

Geographical situation of the city is such that it is exposed to the winds from all sides. The climate except during March to May is salubrious. Solapur falls in the arid zone of the state of Maharashtra. Drought is a common phenomenon in the economy of Solapur.^v Climatically it falls in the rain-shadow area. The rainy season ranges between June and October. The annual average rainfall is 28 inches.^{vi} The paucity of rainfall and large variations both in extent and the distribution in different years makes agriculture almost a gamble. Solapur always suffered from famines and it has affected socio-economic and educational conditions. Generally the temperature of Solapur is moderate except for the hot months in March, April and May. The highest temperature measured is in May. Mean daily maximum temperature is 39.9°C and lowest in December, mean daily minimum temperature is 14.8°C.^{vii} The City is covered by black and fertile soil, which is beneficial for cultivation of crops specially, cotton. That is why textile industry flourished in the city. Also trade and commerce progressed which gave impetus for the economic development of the city.

ETYMOLOGY OF ‘SOLAPUR’

We come across four etymological references about the origin of the name ‘*Solapur*’. Firstly, it was a territory comprising of sixteen (in Marathi ‘*Sola*’) villages namely Adilpur, Ahmadpur, Chamladeo, Jamadarwadi, Khadarpur, Kajalapur, Khandarawachiwadi, Mohmadpur, Ranapur, Sandalpur, Shaikpur, Solapur, Sonalgi, Sonapur, Vaidkiwadi and Fattehpur.^{viii} Secondly, during the time of Kalchuries of Kalyani in the 12th century, it was known as ‘Sonnalgi,’ where the famous Lingayat saint Siddheshwar was born.^{ix} Afterwards ‘Sonnalgi’ was called as Solapur. Thirdly, during the rule of the Yadavas, it was termed as ‘Sonalipur.’ Fourthly, there was an inscription in Solapur fort, which indicates that the town was known as ‘Sandalpur.’ Later on Sandalpur came to be known as ‘Sonalpur.’ It is therefore probable that in course of time the name ‘*Solapur*’ evolved by dropping ‘*na*’ from the name Sonalpur. Solapur was pronounced and spelt as ‘*Sholapur*’ by the British officers which was carried on till 1975.^x After 1975, the Government of India fixed its name as ‘Solapur.’

Solapur fort

After the defeat of Yadavas, Solapur came under the regime of Bahamani. The strong fort of the city surrounded by a ditch is ascribed to the medieval history of the city, which was built by the Bahamani rulers during 1358 to 1375. The medieval history of the city says nothing of the history of the Solapur fort. On the dissolution of that kingdom in 1489, it was since forty years a source of constant quarrels between Ahmadnagar and Vijapur.^{xi} In 1668, in accordance with the terms of the treaty of Agra, Solapur fort passed to the Mughals, from whose possession it fell to the Nizam in 1723, at the time when Ramchandra Pant, the Maratha threw off his allegiance to Muhammad Shah the emperor. In 1795, it was ceded by

the Nizam to the Marathas, after the battle of Kharada. At the close of the Ashta war (1818), Solapur was stormed by General Munro.^{xii}

Siddheshwar Temple

Many ancient documents refer to the city of Solapur. In his '*Siddheshwar Purana*' written in the Kannada language by Raghawankacharya mentions Solapur as a holy place.^{xiii} The temple of Siddheshwar constructed in the middle of Siddheshwar tank around the *Samadhi* of Veershaiv saint Siddheshwar became a reverend place for the Lingayat community. Saint Siddheshwar (1137-1180) a devotee of Lord Shiva regarded Mallikarjun as his *Guru*. He built a temple of Mallikarjun in Solapur and initiated various socio-religious works in Solapur City. He also wrote 68,000 *Wachane* in Kannada. He is the presiding deity of Solapur City.^{xiv} The marriage ceremony with his *Yogdanda* celebrated in each year for three days from 13th to 15th January. On this occasion a month-long pilgrimage is held at Solapur, which is known as '*Gadda Yatra*.'^{xv} This big pilgrimage in the city is attended by the people from all over the country. The temple of Revansiddheshwar and Mallikarjun in Solapur have become important religious centres of the Lingayat community.

Other Temples

The temple of Rupa Bhawani which is situated on the north side of the city in Tuljapur Vesh and the Saraswati Mandir are the important religious centres of the Hindus. The Jain community has also constructed temples of various gods and goddesses and saints. Among them Rajrajeshwar temple, Veer Hanuman and Rushi Ashram, Ratnatraya Digambar Jain Mandir and Marwadi Ram Mandir are some of the important religious places of the Jain Community. The Markandeya temple situated in Siddheshwar Peth and the Choundeshwari temple situated in Bhavani Peth are important religious places of the Padmashali Community. Mecca Masjid and other mosques are religious places of the Muslim community.

Many religious groups and communities settled at Solapur for the purpose of trade and commerce and some of them only for the cause of religion after the 12th century. For their socio-religious activities, they established religious trusts. In the modern period, they opened private institutions, which afterwards enriched the educational activities of Solapur for all. There are some educational institutions attached with religious trusts of the temple, such as Siddheshwar Devasthan Shikshan Mandal, Sangameshwar college, etc. Because of the religious importance, the city was a famous tourist centre from medieval times. Apart from the above religious centre and tourist attractions there were some other important places such as Balaji Mandir, Nilkantheshwar Mandir, Parshwanath Mandir, Vitthal Mandir, Jayshankar Ashram, Indrabhuwan office of the Municipal Corporation, Hutatma Smruti Mandir, etc. These religious centres and historical monuments are the tourist spots for the people. As well as these places became sacred places for the people of the city.^{xvi}



Shubharay Maharaj Math

Shri Shubharay Maharaj was a great saint poet of Solapur. He held the post of Deputy Prime Minister of Tipu Sultan. He had command on the Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Urdu and Sanskrit languages with Marathi as his mother tongue. He composed *Bhakti Kavya* (devotional songs) in Marathi. He was a learned Sanskrit pandit, expert in music and also in dance. He created attractive paintings on some important incidents from Ramayana and Mahabharata. The people of Solapur constructed a math in his memory named as ‘Shubharay Maharaj Math.’^{xvii}

MAJOR CONCLUSIONS:

Through this study it is clear that in Solapur city there are many tourist centres and these centres became helpful for the development of tourism industry. Major conclusions are as under:

1. Solapur is a cosmopolitan city and there are many religious places of various religions.
2. Solapur fort is the most important tourist place but it is remained leg behind.
3. Gadda Yatra is the biggest festival of the city. For this festival people came from Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra.
4. The Government, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation, Solapur Municipality don't pay much attention towards the development of these tourist centres.
5. Solapur famous for its cotton industry and many people visited city for the cotton articles.

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