A PROFILE OF KOLHAPUR DISTRICT

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3.1 Introduction

In this chapter we give a brief introduction to the Kolhapur district. In this introduction an attempt is made to acquaint the reader with the historical geographical, socio-cultural and economic features of Kolhapur district.

3.2 A Brief History of Kolhapur District

(Kolhapur is the district place. It is known as Dakshin Kashi, i.e. Southern Kashi.) The famous temple of Mahalaxmi or Ambabai is one of the oldest temples in Kolhapur.

The evolution of the name Kolhapur has been variously explained. According to one account a demon named 'Kol' was defeated and killed by Goddess Mahalaxmi in the vicinity of the town. As a result of it, the town came to be known as Kolapur.

Other derive the name from the sanskrit word "Kolhar" or the Kannada word "Kolihu". The two words signify the lotus, which were found in abundance in the lakes in and around Kolhapur.

Mr. Rajawade is of the opinion that the tract where Kolhapur is situated belonged to the people called 'Kol' or 'Kola' from which the name Kolhapur was derived.
According to Mr. G.H. Khare the name is derived from the word 'Koll' which means "a low lying trough between mountain ranges". The town really lies in a bowl formed by the end portions of five valleys of nearby rivers. Kolla was the local geographical deity of the place-goddess of the "Koll" or the bowl-shaped land. The town got its name from the goddess "Kolla".

Kolhapur is also known as Karvir. At the time of the great deluge the Goddess Mahalaxmi lifted the place from the waters by means of her mace or kar and so the name Karvir. However, the name Karvir seems to be of recent origin. Old inscriptions refer to Kolhapur and not to Karvir.¹

At the turn of the last century, to be precise in A.D. 1884, Chhatrapati Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj ascended the Kolhapur throne, when he was only ten years old. That laid the foundation of a new modern era. His authority extended to higher levels of socio-economic activities. During his rule, he touched every aspect of the social and economic life of his subjects.²

In 1884, Kolhapur as a state had six sub-divisions namely Karvir, Panhala, Shirol, Ajra, Gadhinglaj and Bhudargad. In addition, it had two petas Raybag under Shirol and Katkol under Gadhinglaj.
In 1948 the Kolhapur state was merged in the Bombay Presidency. In 1949, a new district of Kolhapur was created with transfer of some villages from the former state areas to the adjoining districts and of some villages from the adjoining districts or former princely states to the new district. The new district consisted of the following talukas and mahals. Shahuwadi, Hatkanangale, Shirol, Karvir, Radhanagari, Kagal, Bhudargad and Gadhinlaj talukas and Panhala, Bavda and Ajra mahals. Consequent upon the reorganisation of states in 1956, the Chandgad tahsil from the Belgaum district was transferred to the Kolhapur district.

At the time of 1961 census, the district comprised of 9 talukas and 3 mahals which in themselves included 1,086 inhabited villages and 11 towns. During the decade 1961-1971, the mahals were up-graded as talukas, thus raising the number of talukas to 12. At the time of 1971 census, the district had 12 talukas comprised of 1,093 villages (including 10 uninhabited) and 11 towns. Since then the number of talukas in the district has remained unchanged. However, there have been certain changes as to the number of villages and towns within the talukas during the decade 1971-1981. With the upgrading of Hamlets/wadis in the district, the number of villages has gone upto 1,208 (including 8 uninhabited). Likewise, one place viz. 'Kabnur' fulfilled the specific criteria for being declared as a town thus raising the number of towns in the district to 12.
3.3 GEOGRAPHICAL AND CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

3.3.1 LOCATION AND RELIEF

The Kolhapur District lies between 15°43' and 17°17' north latitude and 73°40' and 74°42' east longitude. It is bounded on the north by Sangli District, on the west by the Ratnagiri District and on the south and east by the Belgaum District of Karnataka State. The district lies in the Krishna-Panchaganga basin.

District Kolhapur covers an area of 8,047.00 sq.km. and has a population of 29,74,352 as per the 1991 census.

Its North-South length is approximately 160 km, while East-West breadth is approximately 60 km. It ranks 23rd in area and 9th in population among the 30 districts of Maharashtra State. Kolhapur is one of the smallest districts in the state in respect of area and fairly on the high side in respect of population.

The physical setting of the Kolhapur district can be best appreciated on the background of its relief and drainage. The district is a part of the Deccan table-land with an average height of 1800 ft. above the sea level. There is only one main system of hills and that is the Sahyadri range and its off-shoots. The main Sahyadrian range forms the Western boundary of the district.
3.3.2 CLIMATE

The climate of Kolhapur district is generally temperate and the seasons show considerable uniformity. They are not subject to abrupt changes of extreme heat or cold. Within the district, the seasons show local variations also. In the western part near the Sahyadris, it is always cooler than in the eastern part which is liable to hot winds during April and May. The nights are generally cool over the whole district due to the influence of the sea breezes which get in during the afternoons and continue till late in the evening.

The rainfall is not uniform in all parts of the district. A major portion of the district lies in the rain shadow of the Sahyadri ranges. The average annual rainfall in the district varies widely from about 600 mm. in Shirol tahsil to 6,000 mm. in Bavda tahsil near the Sahyadri in the West. Throughout the district the rain falls from May to November. However, the rainy season starts from June and lasts until the end of October. It is followed by cold weather from November to February and by hot weather from March to May.

3.3.3 SOIL

The district can be divided into three broad soil zones -
1) The western part covered with laterite soils.
2) The fertile central part, with brownish well drained soils, and
3) The dry eastern zone covered with medium to deep black soil of varying depths.

3.3.4 FORESTS

Kolhapur district has four groups of forests.
1) Evergreen forests on the Sahyadri hills.
2) Wet and dry deciduous forests on the slopes of the hills.
3) Forests with bushy and stunted trees.
4) Grassy area with tree growth.

3.3.5 WILD LIFE

This is mainly confined to the densely forest clad areas in the western portion of Kolhapur district. The chief wild animals are bisons, panthers, sambars, foxes, hares etc.

3.4 POPULATION-GROWTH, DENSITY, SEX RATIO AND LITERACY

3.4.1 POPULATION

As per the 1991 census, the population of Kolhapur district stands at 29,74,352 including 15,13,004 males and 14,61,348 females. This makes 3.78% of states' population over 2.48% of its area. Among the 12 tahsils in the district, Karvir tahsil is the most populated tahsil.
Whereas the Scheduled Caste population (including Baudh) of Kolhapur district stands at 3,81,029, the Scheduled Tribes population is 14,789.

3.4.2 POPULATION GROWTH

Kolhapur district registered a growth rate of 21.05% during the decade 1981-1991. The decade added 4,68,022 persons to the 1981 population of the district. However the growth rate of population in Kolhapur district was slightly lower than that of Maharashtra State (25.43%).

3.4.3 DENSITY

Kolhapur district has an average density of 387 persons per sq.km. Within the district the density varies from 903 persons per sq.km in Karvir tahsil to 102 persons per sq.km in Bavda tahsil. The western tahsils are mostly hilly areas without any big urban centre and hence their densities are lower. The density of population decreases as we go from the East to the West.

3.4.4 SEX RATIO

1991 census recorded a sex ratio of 966 females per 1,000 males in the district. The sex ratio in Kolhapur district has remained higher than that of the State average (935).
3.4.5 LITERACY

Any person who is able both to read and write with understanding in any language is recorded as a literate by the Indian Census. The latest 1991 census tentatively revealed that 60.01% to 70% of the total population in the district is literate as against the state average literacy rate of 63.1%.

3.5 SOCIAL BACKGROUND

3.5.1 LANGUAGE

In Kolhapur district Marathi is the principal language. Among other languages Kannad also holds an important place.

3.5.2 CASTES/CLASS

Castes have generally conformed to the occupational divisions. Formerly, the castes distinctions were very severe. But nowadays untouchability is banned by law. Social reformers have carried on propaganda for decades against untouchability as an inhuman practice. Therefore, the rigours of the caste system have to some extent weakened. There are several groups and sub-groups in Kolhapur district e.g. Malis, Ghisadis, Kasars, Kumbhars, Kunbis, Jains, Chambhars, Dhors, Mahars, Mangs etc.

3.5.3 AMENITIES

Following amenities are available in Kolhapur district.
3.5.3.A  **EDUCATION**

Educational amenity is available in 1,192 (99.33%) villages in the district and these villages contain 99.76% of the rural population of the district.

3.5.3.B  **MEDICAL**

Medical institutions of some type or the other specified in the village directory exist only in three out of every ten villages in the district as per the 1981 census.

3.5.3.C  **DRINKING WATER**

It is heartening to note that all the villages in the district have drinking water amenity. The various sources of drinking water in the villages are tap water, well water, tank water, river water, tube-well water, canal, fountain spring etc.

3.5.3.D  **POST AND TELEGRAPH**

544 (46.33%) villages in the district have post and telegraph facilities. These villages cover 72.51% of the rural population of the district.

644 villages in the district do not have the facility of post offices. Among them, it is available within a distance of 5 kms. for 422 villages, at a distance of 5-10 kms. for 163 villages and beyond 10 kms. for the remaining 59 villages.
3.5.3.E ELECTRIC POWER SUPPLY

The rural electrification programmes, was given importance from the Third Five Year Plan. This accelerated the electrification of rural areas. 969(80.75%) villages in the district which cover more than three-fourth (87.53%) of the rural population now get the electric power supply.3

3.5.4 CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Kolhapur district is blessed with the thriving sector of co-operative activity. In fact in assessing economic development of tanning industries, we must give due consideration to the role played by co-operative movement. If we take into consideration various economic sectors of the co-operative movement, it becomes evident that the growth of P.A.C.S., dairy co-operatives, lift irrigation schemes, sugar mills, cotton mills and labour contract societies is more impressive than the growth of other sectors.

3.5.5 HOUSES

Rural houses are built of stones, sub-dried bricks and mud. But during the recent past even in rural areas there is a rapid growth of modern house construction. Similarly, houses in urban areas are constructed according to modern architectural styles and designs.
3.5.6 SACRED PLACES/GODS AND GODDESSES

Bhairoba, Khandoba, Jyotiba, Narasoba, Vithoba, Maruti, Ram, Krishna, Mahalaxmi, Bhavani, Mhalasa, Laxmi, Janai, Sita, Margai, Satwai etc. are some gods and goddesses which are worshipped by the people. Similarly people who belong to different religions worship their gods and goddesses according to their traditions and rituals.

Mahalaxmi, Jyotiba, Panhala, Vishalgad, Narsobawadi, Khidrapur, Kapashi, Peth Vadgaon etc. are also important places which have contributed to the overall development of Kolhapur district.

3.5.7 RECREATION

Loknatya, Bhajan, Ektari Bhajan, Powdas, Kirtan, Sangeet Bari, Vaghaya-Murali, Devachi Gani, Ambabaichi Gani etc. are some important modes of entertainment. Recently cinemas, use of Radio and T.V. has completely changed the means of recreation. Moreover it has been adversely affecting the Kolhapuri culture.

3.5.8 SPORTS

Wrestling or Kusti of Kolhapur is famous at all levels of culture. Along with it Huttu, Kho-Kho, Langdi, Atya-Patya, Viti-Dandu, Lezims, Zanz pathak, Malkhamb, Phugadi, Zimma, Chui-Fui, etc. are some sport activities available in Kolhapur district which create homogeneity among people.
3.5.9 OTHERS


Rajaram College, which is the oldest institutions of higher education in the district, has contributed to the development of intellectual tradition of Kolhapur in the past. Shivaji University, Agricultural College, Polytechnic, Engineering and Medical Colleges have also contributed to the development of Kolhapur district.

Kolhapur also has a tradition of Painting, Music, Drama and Film Production. Messrs. Abalal Rahman, Vadanagekar, Madhavrao Bagal, Chandrakant Mandare etc. in the field of painting. Ustad Alladiya Khan, Bhurjee Khan, Manji Khan, Nivritibuwa Sarnaik etc. in the field of Music, Master Vinayak, Bhalji Pendharkar, V. Shantaram etc. in the field of Film-Production and direction are among the celebrities who have enriched the cultural life of Kolhapur.

3.6 SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

There is no standard definition of scheduled castes or scheduled tribes. Scheduled castes include castes, races or tribes as are declared to be scheduled castes by the
President of India by public notification under article 341(i) of the Indian Constitution. Similarly, Scheduled tribes mean all such tribes or tribal communities as are declared by the President of India, as Scheduled Tribes under article 342(i) of the Indian Constitution. In Maharashtra State, 59 castes and 47 Tribes have been recognised as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively.

// TABLE 3.1 //
POPULATION OF SIX SCHEDULED CASTE COMMUNITIES IN KOLHAPUR DISTRICT, CONCERNED WITH TANNING AND LEATHER BUSINESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Year 1961</th>
<th>Year 1971</th>
<th>Year 1981</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mahar</td>
<td>1,22,805</td>
<td>1,47,818</td>
<td>1,84,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(67.92)</td>
<td>(65.78)</td>
<td>(64.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dhor</td>
<td>2,726</td>
<td>3,441</td>
<td>4,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.51)</td>
<td>(1.53)</td>
<td>(1.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mang</td>
<td>29,849</td>
<td>40,256</td>
<td>51,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(16.51)</td>
<td>(17.91)</td>
<td>(18.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chambhar</td>
<td>24,554</td>
<td>31,822</td>
<td>39,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(13.58)</td>
<td>(14.16)</td>
<td>(13.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Holar</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>1,371</td>
<td>1,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.48)</td>
<td>(0.62)</td>
<td>(0.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Khatik</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>4,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(1.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,80,795</td>
<td>2,24,708</td>
<td>2,85,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in the Brackets Indicate Percentages
Source: Maharashtra State Gazetteer Kolhapur District. Editor: K.K. Choudhari
Table 3.1 indicates that population of the Mahar community is the highest among the people of the Scheduled Castes. Next to it is the population of the Mang community. Chambhar community holds the third place. The share of population of Chambhar community is more or less the same during the period 1961 to 1981.

The population of the Dhor community is very small. It is more or less the same during the years 1961 to 1981. Its percentage is 1.5.

The Holar community repairs old footwear. Its population is very negligible during the two decades i.e. 1961 to 1981. The percentage population of the Khatik community in the year 1981 is only 1.56.

The reason behind the large proportion which the Mahar or Mang communities have in the total Scheduled Caste population may be given as follows. The Indian social structure has at its basis the fourfold-class-system. Each rural or urban society, in order that it be self contained and self dependent, was based on this system. As such, it was composed of people doing all sorts of different occupations which the society required and generally in such numbers as the society required. Therefore the number of Mahar or Mang families used to be large compared to the number of Chambhar or Dhor families.
TABLE 3.2
TAHSIL-WISE LIVESTOCK POPULATION OF KOLHAPUR DISTRICT-1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Tahsil</th>
<th>Cattles</th>
<th>Buffaloes</th>
<th>Goats</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cow-Bullocks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Karvir</td>
<td>29,575</td>
<td>72,447</td>
<td>12,167</td>
<td>28,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(9.53)</td>
<td>(15.20)</td>
<td>(6.88)</td>
<td>(19.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Panhala</td>
<td>26,049</td>
<td>39,029</td>
<td>15,587</td>
<td>7,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(8.39)</td>
<td>(8.19)</td>
<td>(8.81)</td>
<td>(4.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hatkanangale</td>
<td>25,375</td>
<td>63,440</td>
<td>15,857</td>
<td>43,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(8.18)</td>
<td>(13.31)</td>
<td>(8.96)</td>
<td>(30.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Shirol</td>
<td>17,873</td>
<td>51,990</td>
<td>13,275</td>
<td>18,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(5.76)</td>
<td>(10.90)</td>
<td>(7.50)</td>
<td>(12.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kagal</td>
<td>24,165</td>
<td>43,518</td>
<td>12,972</td>
<td>19,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(7.79)</td>
<td>(9.13)</td>
<td>(7.33)</td>
<td>(13.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gadhinglaj</td>
<td>20,064</td>
<td>46,651</td>
<td>19,958</td>
<td>18,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(6.46)</td>
<td>(9.79)</td>
<td>(10.14)</td>
<td>(12.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chandgad</td>
<td>32,954</td>
<td>38,563</td>
<td>10,933</td>
<td>1,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(10.62)</td>
<td>(8.08)</td>
<td>(6.18)</td>
<td>(0.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ajra</td>
<td>53,320</td>
<td>22,383</td>
<td>12,444</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(17.17)</td>
<td>(4.69)</td>
<td>(7.03)</td>
<td>(0.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bhudargad</td>
<td>18,495</td>
<td>24,797</td>
<td>13,239</td>
<td>1,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(5.96)</td>
<td>(5.20)</td>
<td>(7.48)</td>
<td>(0.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Radhanagari</td>
<td>24,326</td>
<td>34,516</td>
<td>17,252</td>
<td>2,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(7.84)</td>
<td>(7.24)</td>
<td>(9.75)</td>
<td>(1.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bavda</td>
<td>6,080</td>
<td>5,523</td>
<td>7,333</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.96)</td>
<td>(1.68)</td>
<td>(4.14)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Shahuwadi</td>
<td>32,125</td>
<td>33,900</td>
<td>27,959</td>
<td>4,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(10.34)</td>
<td>(7.71)</td>
<td>(15.80)</td>
<td>(3.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,10,401</td>
<td>4,76,757</td>
<td>1,76,976</td>
<td>1,46,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in the Brackets Indicate Percentages

शंदर्भः जिल्हा सामाजिक व अर्थिक समालोचना, कोल्हापूर जिल्हा 1990-91, अर्थ व सांप्रदायिक संचालनात्मक महाराष्ट्र शासन, गुर्जर
The growth rate of population in the case of Mahar community during 1961-1971 was 20.37%, during 1971-1981 it was 24.58%. The overall growth rate during the twenty years between 1961-1981 was 49.55%. The respective percentages during these periods in the case of Dhor community were 26.22%, 34.05% and 69.22%. In the case of Mang community they were 34.86%, 27.93% and 72.53% respectively, in the case of Chambhar community they were 29.60%, 22.90% and 59.58% respectively and in the case of Holar community they were 59.23%, 6.92% and 70.26% respectively.

Statistics given in Table 3.2 reveals the Tahsil-wise livestock population of Kolhapur district in the year 1987.

Highest cattle population is found in Ajra tahsil i.e. 53,320 (17.17%) and lowest cattle population is found in Bavda tahsil i.e. 6,080 (1.96%). Population of all kinds of livestock in Bavda Tahsil is very small. As a result its livestock population percentage is also small compared to that of other tahsils. This is so because 37 villages from Bavda tahsil were transferred to Vaibhav Wadi tahsil of Sindhudurg District. Now there are only 39 villages in Bavda tahsil. So naturally livestock population is limited.

Highest number of buffaloes are found in Karvir tahsil i.e. 72,447 (15.20%). Next to it 63,440 (13.31%) buffaloes are found in Hatkanangale tahsil. A large number of buffaloes are
reared in these two tahsils for milk purposes. Dairy industry is very much developed in these two tahsils. Gokul Dairy of Gokul-Shirgaon and the District Level Gokul Milk Federation (Dairy) in Karvir Tahsil, Hanuman Co-operative Diary of Yalgud in Hatkanangale Tahsil are some of the renowned dairies. Warana Milk Dairy of Warananagar in Panhala Tahsil is another renowned dairy, situated on the border of Panhala and Hatkanangale Tahsils.

A large number of goats is found in Shahuwadi tahsil i.e. 27,959 (15.80%) while sheep in large numbers are found in Hatkanangale tahsil i.e. 43,901 (30.00%). As such the number of people belonging to the shepherd or Dhangar community in Hatkanangale tahsil is very large. Their main occupation is rearing of the sheep.
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