

CHANGES IN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF AN URBAN COMMUNITY

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THE Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics carried out a socio-economic survey of the city of Sholapur¹ in 1938, the report of which is yet unpublished. Another inquiry with emphasis on demographic and economic aspects was conducted there by the author in 1955.² This paper brings together comparable data of these two investigations in an attempt to see whether there have been any significant changes in the family composition, the socio-economic features of the population, the occupational composition of earners, the level of living of the families, etc., in Sholapur during the intervening period.

The total population of Sholapur was 203,691 in 1941 and 266,050 in 1951, thus representing an increase of 30.3 per cent during the decade. Sholapur has been a rapidly growing city. Its population has more than trebled itself since the beginning of the present century.

The 1938-survey of Sholapur covered a sample of 4,437 families with a total population of 20,701 persons, and in the 1955-survey, the total number of families and population investigated were 1,203 and 6,824 respectively. Both the surveys covered only the Municipal area. For a valid comparison of the two surveys, it is necessary that the respective figures refer to the same area. Fortunately, there was no substantial change in the Municipal area; only one small ward, called the A-Area, was the new addition during the period 1938-1955. The sample of families and population from the A-Area has, therefore, been deleted from the figures of the 1955-survey so as to make them comparable to the 1938-survey data.

Family and Population Characteristics

As regards the composition of families by religion and caste, no remarkable changes were noted between 1938 and 1955. The proportions of the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Jains and others were, roughly speaking, 80 per cent, 18 per cent, 1.5 per cent and 0.5 per cent at the time of both the inquiries. As between different Hindu castes also, no noteworthy changes in relative strengths were observed. In respect of the distribution of families

¹ Sholapur city is the headquarters of Sholapur District, State of Maharashtra. It has been a rapidly growing town and is one of the big centres of textile industry in the Maharashtra State.

² Pethe V. P., "Population and Fertility in Sholapur City — A Survey", (unpublished) Ph.D. Thesis, 1967, Poona University.