Chapter III

Historical Perspective

And

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Chapter III

Historical Perspective And Infrastructure Facilities

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Chapter III

Historical Perspective And Infrastructure Facilities

3.0 Introduction:

In this chapter an attempt has been made to highlight the historical perspective of the town, Vatvruksha temple and Shri Swami Samarth Maharaj from the viewpoint of pilgrimage tourism. This chapter also deals about infrastructural facilities available at Akkalkot from the viewpoint of the tourism development.

3.1 Historical Perspective of Akkalkot Town:

The history of this town does not stretch beyond 200 to 250 years back. The dynasty of the ruler of the state capital was directly related to the dynasty of Chhatrapati Shahu. The historical records do not mention about Akkalkot even up to the beginning of 18th century. Historical records after 16th century show that Akkalkot was included in Solapur district. In some old documents there is a mention that Malikamber Sara system was prevailing in 18th century in Akkalkot. From this it appears that Akkalkot province was connected to Ahmednagar state. However, Akkalkot was first known in the history of Maharashtra when Shahu Maharaj came to South after release from the imprisonment of Moghal.

A new mention in history regarding the events that took place at that time and the rise of dynasty of Akkalkot state are summarized as under. After the death of Aurangazeb Emperor, i.e.
after 1707 A.D. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was released from the Moghal Darbar and then he came to the south. He halted at Parad village in Aurangabad province. At that time there were two rival groups that emerged after Raja Shahu Chhatrapati. One group was on the side of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and the other on the side of Maharani Tarabaisaheb. The Patil of Parad village Sayaji was in the party of Tarabaisaheb. He attacked the troop of Chhattrapati Shahu, but he was killed in the battle. His wife thereafter approached Shahu Majaraj with her three children and requested him to pardon her and give them shelter. Out of these three children the eldest son Ranjoi was taken by Shahu Maharaj with him and Parad village was given back to the wife of Sayaji. Afterwards when Chhattrapati Shahu Maharaj was leading towards Satara, he was attacked by a party of bandits little Ranoji with his men defeated the bandits completely even at the risk to his life. For this victory Shahu Maharaj named Ranoji as Fattesinh in 1712. He was adopted in the dynasty of Shahu Maharaj and given a separate Jahagiri or Province i.e. Akkalkot. Thus, Akkalkot province came into existence, Fattesinh had taken active part in the battle of Kolhapur, Bundelkhand, Bhagnnager, Trichanapalli etc. He died in 1760. His two wives, Ahlyabi and Gujabi surrendered their lives at his funeral as per the custom prevailing, known as sati.

After Fattensingh, Shahaji ,the son of his brother Babaji Lokhande Patil of Parad Village was seated on the throne. After the demise of Shahaji I his son Fattesingh II was seated on the throne in 1789. Thereafter began the rival regarding right to the throne between Fattesingh and his brother Tulajaji. But Tulajaji
was granted Kural Village out of the Satara Province and therefore the trouble ended.

In 1818, kingdom of Satara was dissolved and went in the possession of British Empire. There by a political problem about the existence of Akkalkot state was created. However an agreement to continue the Akkalkot State was reached on 3rd July 1822. In 1822 due to death of Fattesingh II, his son Maloji I was seated to the throne. However, in 1828 due to the death of Maloji I his 8 year old son Shahji was seated to the throne. At this time he was a minor, the administration of the state was being looked after by the king of Satara.

Being dissatisfied with some of the changes made in administration system of the State by the king of Satara, Shankarao Deshmukh of Borgaon (Akkalkot) revolted against the King in 1830. To stop these revolutionary movements British Army was called upon and the movement was stopped by appointing British officer captain Jameson. The Satara State was merged in British Hindustan in 1849. There by Akkalkot State became memorial state of British rulers. At this time Shahaji II came to the gadi of Akkalkot state and ruled till 1857.

After his death Maloji II succeeded to the throne. During his rule from 1857 to 1866 Shri Swami Maharaj came to Akkalkot and blessed the Akkalkot Royal family. Maloji II and his wife were great followers of Shree Swami Majaraj who would spend time in the Old Palace whenever he wanted to. In 1866 Maloji II was deprived of his powers and his son Shahaji III took over the gadi of Akkalkot till his death in 1896. As Shahaji III had no male issue. His widow Rani Laxmibai took Sayaji in adoption from Kurle village (Satara) and named him Fattehsingh III. He joined British
Army and rose to the rank of a captain. He was the first Indian in the British army to become captain. He fought in the first world war in France against the Germans.

After retirement from army, he settled down in Akkalkot and started ruling. During this period he made vast collection and he himself arranged the armory in three halls in the old palace. Thus the Armory Museum is named after him, which is one of the major attractions of the pilgrim tourist. He also planned the New Palace but he could not complete it as he died at a very young age (i.e. at the age of 28 years on 4th April 1923.) His widow Rani Tararaje completed the New Palace as per his wishes. His elder son Vijaysinh in 1923 at the age of 8 years was succeeded, as he was a minor, Rani Tararaje was the Regent of Akkalkot State. Vijaysinh died on 10th April 1952. As he had no issue, he named his younger brother Jaysinh as heir apparent. The state merged into Independent state in 1948, during Vijaysinh's tenure as a ruler. Jaysinh had two daughters namely Rajkumari Saynktaraje and Rajkumari Sunitaraje. They also adopted Malojiraje III from Kurle village (Satara) family, Satara on 24th October 2004 as a next heir of Akkalkot State. As the Royal Family is devotee of Swamiji on the occasion of Swami Puntithi the Puja is started with their hand every year.
AKKALKOT ROYAL FAMILY TREE

FATTEHSINH BHOSLE - I
(Ranoji Lokhande - From Pared Village)
1697 - 1760

SHAHAJI - I
Adopted
1736 - 1789

FATTEHSINH - I
1770 - 1822

MALOJIRAO - I
1822 - 1828

SHAHAJI RAJE - II
1828 - 1857

MALOJI RAJE - II
1857 - 1866

SHAHAJI RAJE - III
1867 - 1896

FATTEH SINH - III
Adopted (Kurle Family, Satara )
1916 - 1923

RANI TARARAJE
1899 - 1942

VIJAYSINH
1915 - 1952

SHANTA RAJE

JAYSINH RAJE
1923 - 1965

MIRUDULA RAJE

SANYUKTA RAJE
1949

SUNITA RAJE
1954

MALOJI RAJE - III
Adopted (Kurla Family, Satara) 2004

Ref: Selection from State papers, Imperial gazetteer, Marathi Riyasat, Bombay gazetteer, Solapur Dist.

Table 3.1
The town still has various remains of history such as huge palaces, forts, fort walls around the town but are in dilapidated condition. Akkalkot was then the capital of the then Akkalkot State having an area of about 498. Sq. miles. The citizens of this town still have fresh memories of the administration of state. Town was developed in such way that citizens of that time were happy. Electricity, drinking water facility, garden, schools and colleges were established by these rulers.

In December 1999 both the Princess decided to shift the armory museum into the New Palace, for better management. The armory museum was then shifted to the New Palace and was thrown open to the tourist for viewing from 30th March 2000. Fig. 3.1 shows the location of Akkalkot state and 96 villages, it then continued. This map is in fact the fore runner of the present tehsil map.(Fig.3.1)
HISTORICAL MAP (Period Patteesinh I - 1712)

Fig - 3.1

AKKALKOT TOWN
SOLAPUR TALUKA
PAKHRAJ
\text{SHOLAPUR TALUKA}

AKKALKOT
NIZAM STATE
NIZAM STATE

INDI TALUKA

NAGBALE

MALERAS
MALERAS TALUKA
SHOLAPUR

94 MILES FROM: AKKALKOT

AKKALKOT

HISTORICAL MAP (Period Patteesinh I - 1712)
3.2 **Historical perspective of Vatvruksh Temple**

Shree Swami Samarth Majaraj lived in Akkalkot for Twenty two years. During these years He spent maximum time under the Banyan Tree. Jyotiba Pande a devotee of Swamiji constructed a small temple nearly 10 x 10 feet in size by selling his all property. Today it is known as garbgrah. Shrimant Tara Raje of Akkalkot was a devotee of Swamiji. While constructing New Palace they also constructed a main temple. The size is 20 x 20 feet where pilgrims stand for darshan of Swamiji.

A huge banyan tree is opposite to the temple, where Swamiji used to sit and at this place a small temple is built by the Trust, which was established in the year 1953 and known as Shree Vatvaraksh Swami Samarth Devasthan trust. This Trust has been constantly making an effort for the development of the temple. They constructed 72 rooms for accommodation purpose, office, meeting hall within the temple area. The trust has also constructed Bhakt-Nivas for accommodation purpose, which is 725 meter away from the temple. Various religious books are also published by the trust. The trust is also having various future plans such as religious library, well equipped hospital etc.

3.3 **Historical Prospective of Sri Swami Samarth**

Swamiji is said to be a fourth incarnation of Lord Dattatraya. Shri Dattatraya is a very ancient Avatar highly venerated through the ages. He has been spoken of very highly in Jabala Upnishad, Narada Upnishad, Yaganvalkya Upanishad etc. according to Swami Harshanada.
The Dattatraya is one of the oldest Sampradayas in India and is the most revered too. It is popular because the welfare of all, whether at the individual or universal level, is the object of this Sampradaya. There is a synthesis of all that is good in Vaishnava and Shaiva Sampradaya. It began with the birth of Lord Dattatraya.

Lord Dattatraya avatar holds an important event in Hindu mythology. He is a supernatural figure not born out of any human form, but out of Spiritual Strength of Anusaya the wife of great Rishi Atreya. The three almighty Bramha, Vishnu and Mahesh got transformed into a juvenile form. This is the Dattatraya avatar.

Lord Dattatraya was the primal manifestation in the Datta Sampradaya the incarnations in this millennium were –

1) Sripad Sri Vallabh (1320-1350)
2) Sri NarasimhaSaraswati (1378-1458)
3) Sri Swami Samarth Akkalkot Majaraj (Shake 1760 to 1800)

These divines incarnations by their spiritual splendor and eminence, as well as by their guidance to the people who have made India a glorious place. A brief account of the first two incarnations will be given along with the Divine life of Sri Swami Samarth in detail. (Fig.3.2)
Places of Incarnation of Lord Dattatreya

1. Kuravpur - Shree Paad Vallabh
   Raichur (KS)
2. Gangapur - Shree Nursinha Sarasvati
   Gulbarga (KS)
3. Akalkot - Shree Swami Samarth
   Solapur (MS)

Fig - 3.2
1. **Shripad Sri Vallabh (First incarnation of Lord Dattatraya):**

Shripad Sri Vallabh was born in a poor Brahmin family at Pithapur, a town near Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh. It was no birth in the normal sense, the Lord just manifested himself as a child in the house. One of the 1001 names of the Lord is Om Ayoni Sambhavaya Namah Signifying that he is not born through the youni or Vaijana, he manifests at his sweet will! Great saints like Ramakrishnan Paramhansa also known to have come down to the earth in this way. He had mastered all the Vedic scriptures by the age of sixteen, 48 years is required for an average person to master all the Vedas, by Alias yogic power. He traveled all over India and finally settled down at Kurvapur near Raichur(Karnataka). He disappeared one day after entering the Ganga river i.e. on Guru Davadashi.

2. **Second Incarnation of Lord Dattatraya : Shri Narasinha Saraswati:**

Narahari was born in Karanja a town near Akola (in Maharashtra). The year of his manifestation is not known exactly and scholars are not unanimous about the date. From his birth, instead of crying, an infant normally does. He uttered only the sacred word OM when he was seven years old the thread ceremony was performed and a miracle happened. He chanted Vedic Mantras. The formerly dumb child chanted them perfectly. He also traveled throughout India. Sri Narasimha Saraswati conducted a number of Gyan Yadana for enlightening the common people. He stayed for 12 years at a place was called Narsinhawadi and later Narsoba wadi. from Narsimnha wadi he went to Gangapur and
remained there for 24 years. Gangapur is believed to be the Dattasthan abode of Lord Dattatraya. There is a holy hillock of Vibhuti (holy ash) from which devotees pick up the ash as prasad to take home. This hillock has not been depleted even though devotees have been taking away vibhuti for centuries. One day he announced his departure from this world. A float was prepared on banana leaves and was adorned with flowers. This float was then placed in the river and Sri Guru Sat on it. He cheered them (devotees) up and then he was grim to Kardali Vana (grove of banana trees) near Srisailam (Andhra Pradesh) in the year 1458.

3. Sri Swami Samarth of Akkalkot: (Fourth Incarnation of Lord Dattatraya)

Shri Swami Samarth’s appearance is a puzzle. There are two holy views about his divine appearance in a physical plane. The first one is the popular belief that he is the extension of the fifteenth century incarnation of Lord Dattatraya, namely Shri Narasinha Saraswati. It is mentioned in the holy book, Gurucharitra that Shri Narasinha Saraswati entered Mahasamadhi in Kardalivana near Shri Shailya in 1458. After remaining in Mahasamadhi for over 300 years, there was a complete transformation in the personality of Shri Narasinha Saraswati. That divinely transformed personality is Shri Swami Samarth. He emerged from encircling ant hill because a wood cutter accidentally cut through a tree and hit Shri Swami Samarth. This awakened him from the prolonged Samadhi.
According to the second popular holy view Shri Swami Samarth manifested as an eight year old boy on Chaitra shuddha II Hindu Shake 1071. (Second day after the new moon in the Hindu month of Chaitra) at Chelikheda near Hastinapur in India. This has credence and several incidences strongly support this holy view. He traveled to many holy places in Northern India. Then traveling through ShriShaila, Himalayas, JaggannathPuri, Culcutta, Haridwar, Kedareswar he come southwards to Rameshwaram, Madurai, Mangalvedha, Pandharpur, Begampur, Mohol, Solapur and then stationed himself at Akkalkot (Fig. 3.3). He was called then by the name Chanchal Bharati. However, Swamiji would call himself by the name Narsinhabhan and prove to his devotees from time to time that he was incarnation of Lord Dattatraya. He was an Avadhoot a person who is a yogi having no attachment or attraction for materialistic things and free from the bonds of the society.

The wide fame of Swamiji was to come after 1856, when he arrived at Akkalkot. Swamiji stayed for 21 years at Akkalkot, therefore this place not only assumed a religious but historical importance too. The land of Akkalkot previously called as Pradnya Puri place of knowledge and as Buddhigram (Abode of knowledge).

Swamiji’s total appearance is 40 years (Shake 1760 to 1800) in this mortal world. Out of this 21 years he lived and moved until he took Mahasamadhi as per his ardent devotee Chollappa’s residence in Akkalkot on 30th April 1878.
TRAVEL PATH OF AKKALKOT SWAMI SAMARTH MAHARAJ

INDEX
SP - Starting Point
LP - Last Point

Fig - 3.3
As Swamiji’s fame lingered in different directions many saints, the poor, the rich, intellectuals, Pandits, Shastris, yogis, politicians and kings started to see Swamiji to obtain his blessings. Every day thousands of devotees flocked Akkalkot. Though Swamiji had lakhs of devotees he never formed a different seat (Sampraday). He guided his devotees, removed their sufferings and spiritually elevated those eligible meet their ultimate goal. His spiritual work was carried out by Ballappa, Swamisut, Shri Gangadhar Majaraj Shri Gajanan Maharaj, successions of Shri Swamiji.

The 20th century shows new development about Swamiji. Nearly 250 maths were built in India as well as abroad (England and USA). The number of Palkhis visiting Akkalkot is increased within a short span of period. A movie was realized on the life of Swamiji. Number of devotional songs were sung by various renowned singers in Mararhi, Hindi, Telugu, and Kannada. From these available information about Swamiji one can easily understand the spiritual Divine of Shree Swami Samarth of Akkalkot.

Worship And Rituals In The Vatarksha Swami Samarth Maharaj Temple:

In every Hindu temple the deity is worshipped everyday. In the main temple at Akkalkot, God is worshipped and rituals performed from 5.00 am to 8.00 pm. There are various types of worship and rituals performed in the temple. The first is Daily worship and second is performed on specific days of the year.
1) Daily Worship

The daily worship consists of two ‘Artis’ and three service.

Table No. 3.2 Akkalkot Town

**Daily worship in the Main temple of Swamiji**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Daily Worship</th>
<th>Time of Worship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kakadarti</td>
<td>5.00 a.m. to 06.00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Abishek</td>
<td>7.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Laghurudhra</td>
<td>8.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Maha puja</td>
<td>8.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sejarti</td>
<td>8.00 p.m. (Except Thursday)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Vatavarksha Swami Samarth Devasthan Committee, Akkalkot.

1) Kakadarti:

(Prayer in the Early Morning) The Kakadarti is held every day early in the morning at 5.00 a.m. It is the rite of awakening of the Lord Swamiji. Devotes of Swamiji and Pujari of the temple and other employees of the temple come together at the main garbagraha. Pujari of the temple open the door and start the arati. After it nirmalya Visarjan (removal of garland) process continues. Then Idol of Swamiji which is placed on ling of God Shankar is kept aside and in hymns of Sadaguru Swami Samarth, in a box holy Padukas are generally kept. Tirth is served to devotees. Then Panchamruta Puja is (mixture of Haldi, Kumkum, flower, curd and honey etc.) performed till 7.00 am.
2) Abhishek Puja (7.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.):

The second rite is Abhishek Puja which is performed daily at 7.00 am to 11.00 am. Various types of Abisheks are carried out by devotees.

a) Simple Abhishek Puja:

The simple Abhishek Puja is performed from 7.00 am to 11.00 am. It is carried out opposite to garbhgraha for ten minutes. This process is performed with Panchamruta, coconut, sugar etc. Devasthan committee charges Rs. 25/- per head for this puja.

b) Laghurudra Puja:

It is performed from 8.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. daily. It is also carried out opposite to garbhgraha for one hour. This process is performed with eleven different types of Puja items. The characteristic of this puja is as per wish of devotee the prasad is first given to Swamiji then eleven Bharamins and Suhasinis. Rs. 201/- is charged for the purpose. This amount is submitted to Devasthan committee.

c) Maha Puja:

It is also performed daily from 7.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. This puja is performed with reshim cloth, pedha, fruits, Panchpakkavann and as per wish of devotee copper, silver or gold is donated in this ritual.

After completion of all above rituals and idol of Swamiji is put at ling of God Shankar and holy Padukas are kept in box. Idol of Swamiji is decorated with various fixed colours of the cloth as per specific day on Monday (White), Tuesday (Violet), Wednesday
(Panchu), Thursday (Puskraj), Friday (Green), Saturday (Blue) and Sunday (Red). Then Pujari the of temple offers the garland, Navidaya to Swamiji.

Every day at 12.00 Noon arti is held and after that Mahaprasad is offered by Shree Swami Samarth Annachatra Mandal to Swamiji. then all devotees disperse for (receiving) getting the Prasad. Everyday the door of garbhagraha is remains closed between 12.00 Noon to 4.00 p.m.. It is known as rest period of Swamiji . Everyday between 4.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. doors are open to all devotees for darshan purpose.

4. Sejarti:

The last ceremony of the everyday is Sejarti. This function is held in memory of Shree Swami Samarth Maharaj to bed at 8.00 p.m. except Thursday.

In this ceremony Vida, Hukka is given to Swamiji for sleeping purpose and Sejarti begins in which Pray, Dhava and Sholaka are sung by Pujari and devotees. Then the door of garbagrah is closed.

On Thursday the Sejarti is performed in different way, which is conducted in following manner.

Sejarti begins at 8.00 pm in which Palakhi is kept opposite to main garbhagraha, in Palkhi idol of Swamiji, photo, holy Paduka are kept and three Pradakshinas around garbhagrah and vatvarsha tree are conducted by the pujaris. In this process Abhang is sung by Pujari and devotees. Chavari Dalane and Peacock piece (Morchal) are performed by the Pujari. Then devotees take darshan of Palkhi and some devotees go through the bottom of the palkhi and palkhi visarjan procedure is completed.
5) **Palkhi Procession:**

It is celebrated on two specific days per year. On second day of Datta Jayanti (Gangapur Festival) Magh Vaddya Partipada and on Swamiji Punnatithi. Thousands of devotees participate in this procession. It starts from Vatavarksha Temple to Madala Maruti Mandir and Samadhi Math of Swamiji and return to Vatavarksha temple through main road. On opposite of palkhi various cultural programmes are arranged.(Fig. 3.4).

6) **Nagar Pradakshina (Chaitra Shudda to Charitra Vadhya Tryaodashi):**

Chaitra Shudda is a day which is known as Prakat Din of Swamiji in Akkalkot. From this day Chaitra Vadya Tryaodoshi (Punnatithi) Nagar pradakshina process is arranged for devotees. During these specific days daily 4.00 am to 5.00 am the palakhi of Swamiji in which idol, photo is kept and proceed on traditional route. Thousands of devotees participate in the Nagar Pradishna ceremony. Nager Pardakshina route is as shown the Fig. 3.4 .It starts from main temple towards Samadhi Math via main road and return to main temple via Madhala Maruti road. After returning to Vatavarksha temple all devotees attend the kakad arati ritual. It is supposed to best period of ‘Punnakal” according to devotees.
AKKALKOT TOWN
ROUTE OF PALAKHI PROCESSION & PRADAKSHANA

Index
1. SM - Samadhi Math
2. VSSM - Vatuksha Swami Samarth Mandir
3. MR - Main Road
   → - Route of Palkhi Procession & Pradakshana

Fig. - 3.4
7) Punyatithi: (Chaitra Vadya Tryaodashi):
This is an important and sacred day for all devotees of Swamiji. The system of rituals on this specific day is completely different from the other day. On this sacred day early in the morning at 2.00 am. rituals begin with Kakadarti, Daily Nittaya Puja. These are carried out by the Head of the Akkalkot Sansthan, Shrimnt Ranisheb. The garbhgraha is opened to all devotees during 6.00am to 6.00pm for darshan.

On this specific day during 6.00 pm to 12.00 pm Palkhi Procession ceremony is arranged on traditional route. On second day ‘Dhahi-Handi’, function is celebrated in the Vatavarksha Temple. Thus Punnatithi ceremony is concluded.
3.4 **A survey of Infrastructure Facilities:**

Availability of basic infrastructure facilities is the single most important challenge to travel and tourism in reaching its potential for wealth and employment generation. Many regions in the world are not in a position to reap the benefits of tourism because of the lack of infrastructure. The study region is also not an exceptional in this regard. A design provides framework or skeleton for a place, infrastructure makes the design possible. Absence of well mentioned infrastructure is a serious liability in the study region. To sustain quality of life and to support economic productivity, region requires infrastructure to be developed and mentioned.

Here an attempt has been made to highlight the present status of infrastructure facilities available at Akkalkot from the viewpoint of tourism development.

### 3.4.1 Accommodation:

Accommodation is the key element in the tourism product and is an essential component of tourism. The WTO's definition of a tourist presupposes that the tourist must spend at least one night in the destination visited. This definition indicates a central role that accommodation play an important role in tourism development.

Tourism is to a great extent dependent on the range and type of accommodation available at the destination. At present in the study region various types of accommodation facilities are available to the pilgrims. The table 3.2 and Fig 3.5 show the total accommodation capacity of each type of accommodation.
Table 3.3 Akkalkot Town

Accommodation facilities available (2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Type of Accommodation</th>
<th>Nature of Rooms</th>
<th>Capacity (in person)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Vatvrikash Temple</td>
<td>Dormitory</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Murlidhar Mandir</td>
<td>Dormitory &amp; rooms</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Bhakt Nivas</td>
<td>Rooms</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Yatri Nivas</td>
<td>Dormitory &amp; rooms</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>Rooms</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Samadhi Math</td>
<td>Rooms</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based upon field work (2004).

Shree Vatvraksha Devasthan Committee has constructed 45 rooms inside the temple campus, the total accommodation capacity is only 350 persons, room charges are very cheap. Therefore devotees prefer to stay here.

Murlidhar Mandir is another place where accommodation facility is provided to pilgrims by Devasthan Committee. It is located 500 meter from the temple. The nature of rooms available to pilgrims are dormitory and room types. The charges are at the moderate rate. They are charging Rs. 50/- per person. The total capacity of this place is 500 persons at a time.

Shree Swami Samarth Annachatra Mandal is one of the local Non Governmental organization playing an important role in providing accommodation facility of two types that is rooms and dormitory types. They consider the income group of the pilgrims while constructing Yatri Nivas. It is located 250 meter from
temple. The accommodation capacity is also 1000 persons. Rs. 200/- is the rent for rooms.

Only one hotel owner has constructed a lodge to provide accommodation to very high income group tourist. They are providing one star hotel facility. It is located near to the MSRTC bus stand. The capacity is only 20 persons.

Pujari of Samadhi Math has constructed rooms for accommodation purpose. It is located near to the MSTRCs bus stand. The total capacity is 25 persons.

The study reveals that there is wide scope for development of accommodation facility in the study region. It is found that there is inverse correlation between available accommodation facility and required accommodation facility to the pilgrims. Therefore, it is suggested that state government of Maharashtra through its agency like MTDC should construct Yatri Nivas and other interested private investor should construct well furnished lodges.

Bhakt Nivas is one of the important place where accommodation facilities provided by Devasthan Committee to the pilgrims of higher income group. The study region attracts large number of pilgrims whose income level is high. It is located 900 meter from temple. The maximum accommodation capacity of Bhakt Nivas is 1000 persons. The rent for each room is Rs.200.
Akkalkot Town

No. of Pilgrims

Fig. 3.5
3.4.2 Eatable Foods:

Generally hotels and restaurants provide the eatable foods to the tourist. Therefore here an attempt is made to survey the availability of the hotels in the study region. Apart from refreshments and meal hotels also provide accommodation. In broad terms hotels provide facilities to meet the needs of the modern traveler. Over the years the concept and the format of hotels have changed a great deal. There are various types of hotels catering to the increasing demand of tourists.

In the study region there are total 16 hotels which provide basic requirement to pilgrims. It is observed that the standard of these hotels are not up to the mark as per norms of sanitation and hygienic conditions. There is wide scope for the development of hotel industry in the study region. Therefore, it is suggested that private investor should take initiative to establish hotels in the study region.

3.4.3 Drinking Water:

Water is the base of overall development of any region. Availability of drinking water facility in the study region is also hampered by geographical location of the destination. As Akkalkot lies in Rain Shadow area, clean, safe and filtered drinking water must be essential for survival of human being. Lakhs of pilgrims visit regularly Akkalkot destination from different parts of the country. The first requirement of these pilgrims is clean and filtered water for drinking purpose. Fortunately Akkalkot municipal corporation is having central water filter system. The water is collected from Sangavi lake which is
situated on Bori river and is located 6 kms. away from the town. Hilli supplementary water supply scheme is also available which is lifting water from Bhima river which is 28 km. away from the town. From both water supply the daily requirement of the town is fulfilled.

A part from this, Devasthan Committee has three bore wells and Shree Swami Samarth Annachatra Mandal is also having its own bore wells and they provide drinking water to those pilgrims who stay at temple, Murlidhar Mandir, Bhakt Nivas and Yatri Nivas.

Many times during low amount of rainfall at the destination residents and pilgrims suffers from drinking water and it hampers the flow of pilgrims. At present on Bori river a medium sized dam (i.e. Kurnur Dam) is being constructed and after completion of this dam the problem of drinking water will be automatically solved.

3.4.4 Internal Transport:

Tourism does not exist in isolation. Internal transport plays a vital role in the development of tourism. It is an integral part of tourism. Robinson States, “Transport has been at once a cause and effect of the growth of Tourism”. (Robinson, H. 1976). The pilgrims visiting Akkalkot by MSRTC buses, private buses, motorcycles and even by walk from a long distance.

Pilgrims who visit Akkalkot by MSRTC buses get down at the bus stand which is 1.5 km away from the main temple. These pilgrims require internal transport. At present only Auto Rickshaws are available to render their service to pilgrims. In the year 1985
there were only 15 autos at present 210 autos are available to serve pilgrims. (Table 3.4)

Internal transport network of the town is not up to the mark due to congested roads. There are some maths related with Swamiji but they are located at congested area and approach roads are very narrow. Therefore it is necessary to widen these roads by the municipal council of Akkalkot. It is observed that there is positive correlation between nature of internal transport and employment generation and economic development of the town.

Table 3.4 Akkalkot Town

Internal Transport & Employment Generated in the Year 1985 & 2004

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total No. of vehicles (A)</td>
<td>Total no. of Employment generated (B)</td>
<td>Total No. of vehicles (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Auto Rickshaw</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tangas</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>02</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based upon field work (2004)

3.4.5 Communication Facilities:

In the era of Global Village, communication is one of the basic infrastructure facilities required by the pilgrim tourists. For the development of tourism at any place communication system plays a significant role. The study region is also not an exceptional as far as the development of communication network is concerned.
The table 3.4 gives an idea about communication facilities available at the town. In the year 1985 there were only 35 landline telephone connection given by telephone exchange office of Akkalkot.

The concept of STD booths, coin box and mobiles were totally unknown in 1985 in the study region. At present (2004) there are 2416 land line telephone connections, 92 STD booths, 196 coin box and mobile communication network is also available in the town. BSNL, Idea and Reliance are providing mobile service. Due to these communication facilities pilgrims feels that they are in their home.

Table 3.5 Akkalkot Town


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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Landline Phones</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>STD Booths</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Coin Box</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Post and Telegram office</td>
<td>01</td>
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</table>


It is found that directly or indirectly communication networks helps in generating employment which leads to economic development of the town.

Post and Telegram office of the Akkalkot destination is indirectly earning money from pilgrims. Vatavarksha Temple authority, Samadhi Math is providing postal Abhishek facilities to the pilgrims as per their request.
3.5 Conclusion:

The history of the town reveals that during the period of Maloji II Shri Swami Samarth came to Akkalkot. Royal family were devotees of Swamiji, therefore they built a temple while constructing New Place. Fattesingh III joined British Army and rose to the rank of captain. He made a vast collection of Armor and arranged in three halls in Old Place. This Armory Museum is named after him, which is one of the major attractions of the pilgrim tourists. New Palace was planned by him but completed by his widow Rani Tararaje due to death of the king Fettehsingh III. At present the Armory museum is located in New Palace for better management. It is open to tourist for viewing purpose from 30th March 2000 onwards.

Malojiraje III is a next heir of Akkalkot State. As the Royal family is devotee of Swamiji on the occasion of Swami Punitithi the Puja is started with their hand every year. Vatvrukāsh temple is having a glorious history. Earlier it had only the area of 10x10 feet but today it has developed like a banyan tree because of Vatvarkash Devastan Committee. Due to live presence of Swamiji. They also planning to restructure the temple site from safety precautions point of view.

Shree Swami Samarth is said to be a fourth incarnation of Lord Datatraya. Sripad Sri Vallabha and Sri Narasimha Samarth were the earlier incarnation of Lord Dattatraya. Sri Swami Samarth's were appearance is a puzzle. The wide fame of Swamiji was to come after 1856, when he arrived at Akkalkot. He stayed for 21 years at Akkalkot. His total appearance is 40 years. Everyday thousands of devotees flocked Akkalkot. His spiritual work was carried out by various successors. At present 250 maths were built
in India as well as abroad. Through this one can easily understand the spiritual Divine of Swami of Akkalkot.

Availability of basic infrastructure facilities is the single most important challenge for the development of any tourist destination. Many regions in the world are not in a position to reap the benefits of tourism because of the lack of infrastructure. The study region is also not an exceptional in this regard. Tourism is to a great extent dependent on the range and type of accommodation available at the destination. All types of accommodation facility is available to pilgrims as per their income level. At present only 2745 beds are available which is not sufficient as per requirement of the pilgrims. The study reveals that there is wide scope for development of accommodation facility in the study region. Food is the second requirement of pilgrims, which is fulfilled by hotels and restaurants. In the study region there are total 16 hotels which provide basic requirement to, pilgrims. It is observed that the standard of these hotels are not as per norms of sanitation and hygienic conditions. There is wide scope for the development of hotel industry in the study region. The study region is always suffers from scarcity of drinking water and it hampers the flow of pilgrims. Drinking water is the urgent need of the destination.

Internal transport plays a vital role in the development of tourism. It is observed that there is positive correlation between nature of internal transport and employment generation and economic development of the town. The increasing number of auto rickshaws shows the positive effect of pilgrimage. Along with this communication network of the town is developing very fast. The spatio-temporal change shows this effect (Table 3.5)
References: