

## Shri Swami Samarth Temple, A Religious Place of Akkalkot in Solapur District

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### Abstract:

*The temple is a socio-economic transformation of that region. They focus on the broad spectrum of the state's culture. It is also important in development of the region. Festival has direct and indirect impacts on communities. They provide opportunities for participation, skills development, volunteering and social, cultural, economic and environmental developments. Community fairs and festivals can attract tourists and visitors at regional, national and international level. They help to capture attention and promote attractions and infrastructures. They make it possible to maximize and rationalize the use of certain spaces. Preservation of these spaces may result in financial benefits. Present research paper is analyzed importance of Shri Swami Samarth festival in Solapur district tourism development.*

**Keywords:** *Shri Swami Samrtha Temple, Religious Tourism.*

### Introduction:

The Festivals empower communities to attract new visitors while capitalizing on local commercial and cultural value. The impact of these events created through the positive presentation of the community and the social interactions that fairs and festivals engender. When a community has sufficient funds, it helps to improve their facilities and help in development of the community itself. Increase in revenue adds to sales tax base, which the host city is able to provide more and better services. Many fairs and festivals are also brings new or increasing recreational opportunities to the festivals or fair more interesting. Development of the local population also favors the development of nearby communities with increase in trade. Public facilities as electricity, water supply, toilets, transport infrastructure etc. undergo a face change which are signs of development not only for an individual but for families and communities also. A.K.Bhatia, (2010) Fairs and

festivals are important part of social activities of man.

They are arranged all over world in a variety of ways. Some celebrations are specific to certain areas and some are celebrated by different group, communities in certain villages, cities or even state or country. This gives raise to fairs and festivals their own local flavors. Agarawal, S.K. and Raina, A.K. (2004). Fairs and festivals are important parts of the Indian cultural life. The life of Indian people revolves round the fairs and festivals. In other words we can say that fairs and festivals are heart of the Indian socio-cultural life. In India traditional fairs and festivals are connected with religious beliefs, changing season's harvests etc. They are varied in origin. Many of them are performed in a particular manner in different parts of the country. They attract large number of people from distant places. Hence fairs and festivals have tremendous tourism potential both domestic as well as foreign. Solapur district of the Maharashtra state

is one of the famous fairs and festivals tourist place in India.

Solapur district is unique in religious activities. In Solapur district there is a festival for every season. Many fairs and festivals celebrate on the various reasons such as birth or death anniversary of historical religious people in different religions, worship of different gods etc. There are number of places which have religious importance out of some places like Pandharpur, Akkalkot etc. are not only national but world famous. So these places are declared as tourist's centers by government. India is a religious country, so here many religious places and peoples are mostly visited to such places than the others. Bharadwaj, S.M. (1973) Shri Swami Samarth festival, Akkalkot is important festival in Solapur district of Maharashtra state.

The day Sri Swami Samarth manifested is taken as Chaitra Shuddha Dwitiya, year 1072 as per Hindu calendar and the month March or April of year 1150 as per English Calendar. Haribhau alias Swamisut the beloved disciple of Sri Swami Samarth had perceived by his divine sight that Sri Swami Samarth had manifested in the form of a Balayogi<sup>129</sup> from a pillar on this day of Chaitra Shuddha Dwitiya, in a village Chhedikhedha near Hastinapur. On this day of Chaitra Shuddha Dwitiya Haribhau would come from Mumbai to Akkalkot and celebrate the anniversary festival of the birthday of Sri Swami Samarth in the presence of Sri Samarth. Based on this lunar day well known astrologer Nana Rekhi had prepared the horoscope of Sri Swami Samarth. Sri Swami Samarth had approved this and then blessed Nana Rekhi with initiation. When Shri Rekhi went to Akkalkot for the first time along with his wife to take Sri Swami Samarth's 'Darshan', his wife Sakhubai's past life got awakened and she was blessed by the 'Darshan' of Shree Swami Samarth in the form of Balayogi. That is why the anniversary festival of the birthday of Sri Swami

Samarth is being celebrated on Chaitra Shuddha Dwitiya day.

In the month of Chaitra (April–May) in 1878, the thirteenth day of the dark-half of the lunar month, Shri Swami died. His body was taken on a procession all around Akkalkot. The Swami Maharaj lived mainly at the residence of his disciple Cholappa, where his samadhi and shrine are now located. The present temple is built around famous banyan tree. This is the same banyan tree sitting under which Shri.Swami Maharaj used to meditate and preach the followers. The temple consists of main temple, sabha mandap and accommodation. Annacchatra (free meals to devotees) is organized daily (two times in day) by temple authorities. The Swami Samarth Maharaj came to Akkalkot at the beginning of Shake 1779. Swamiji is located in the house of shri. Cholappa in the place already reserved for it before his bodily demise. This is known as Samadhimath. The spiritual fearless slogan in marathi 'BHIU NAKOS MI TUJHYA PATHISHI AAHE' (Don't fear, I am with you) is given by Shri. Samarth Swami Maharaj himself.

Present research paper is analyzed importance of Shri Swami Samarth festival in Solapur district tourism development.

#### **Study Region:**

Akkalkot Taluka in Solapur District of Maharashtra State, India lies between 17°15'47" to 17° 40' 00" North latitude and 75° 55 '29" to 76 ° 15' 54" East longitudes. It belongs to Pune Division. It is located 38 KM towards East from District head quarters Solapur. It is a Taluka head quarter. Akkalkot is surrounded by South Solapur Taluka towards west, Solapur North Taluka towards west, Aland Taluka towards East , Afzalpur Taluka towards South Solapur , Tuljapur , Umarga , Osmanabad are the nearby Cities to Akkalkot.. Hasapur, Safale,Kurnur, Hattikanbas, Chapalgaonwadi are the nearby Villages to

Akkalkot. As of 2011 India census, Akkalkot had a population of 40,103 out of which 20051 were male and 20052 was female. Akkalkot has an average literacy rate of 63%, higher than the

national average of 59.5%; with 59% of the males and 41% of females literate. 14% of the population is under 6 years of age. Along with Marathi, Kannada is widely spoken in Akkalkot.

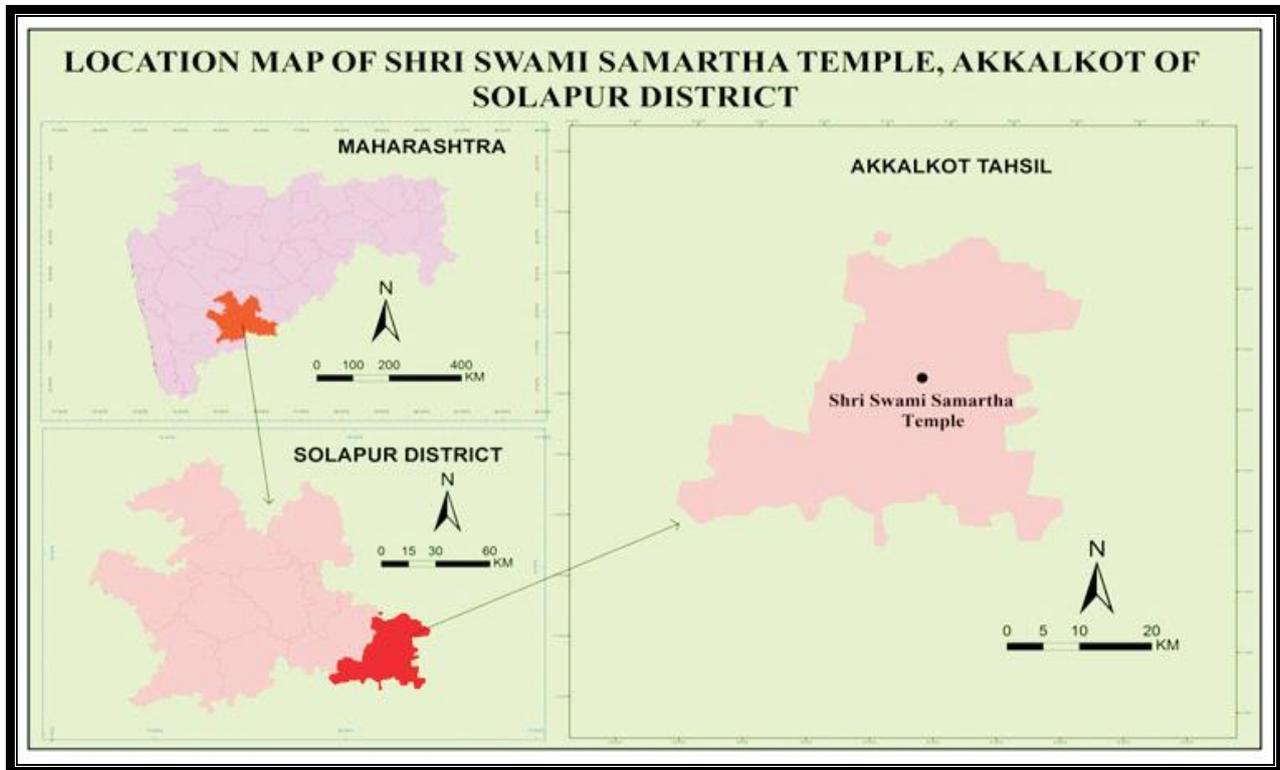


Fig. 1

#### Objectives:

1. To study Akkalkot festivals importance in tourism development in Solapur district.
2. To study numbers of tourist visited to Shri Swami Samarth temple Akkalkot.

#### Data collection and Methodology:

The proposed research paper based on secondary data. The secondary data is collected from District Gazetteers, Maharashtra tourism report, Shri Swami Samarth darshan committee report, Socio-Economic Review of Solapur district, and census. The data processed and analyzed by using different cartographic techniques, statistical and quantitative techniques, etc.

#### Interpretation:

The tourists who are coming from different places to the Akkalkot many have different behaviors, ideas, views and expectations, but if required facilities are practiced to them at reasonable rates they will be satisfied and it will be helpful to increase the reputation of tourist destination.

Following table shows the 10 years data who visited the Akkalkot Shri Swami Samartha temple in hole year.

Table 1 Numbers of tourist visited to Shri Swami Samartha temple.

Sr. No.	Years	No. of Tourist visited
1	2011	752000
2	2012	895000
3	2013	1080000

4	2014	1150000
5	2015	1175000
6	2016	1210000
7	2017	1245000
8	2018	1279000
9	2019	1305000
10	2020	1355000

Source: *Srhi Swami Samartha devasthan committee report 2011 to 2020.*

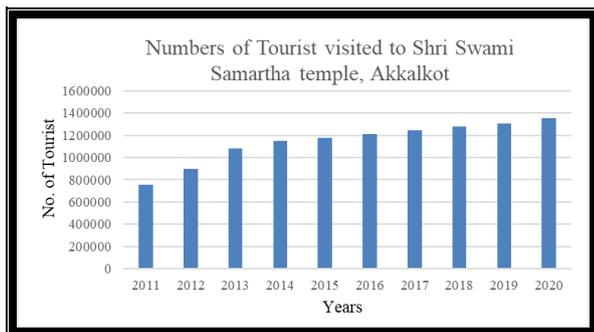


Fig. 2

The table 1 shows that number of tourist visited to Shri Swami Samartha temple in hole year from 2011 to 2020. The numbers of tourist visited to temple shows that numbers are increases every year. From the 2011 year to 2020 the number of tourist visited is doubled. i. e. in the year 2011 it is 752000 and in 2020 year 1355000 tourist visits to Akkalkot. The increases number shows that Akkalkot tourism center is developed rapidly and which contribute development of Solapur district. Because all type of tourist services are developed in Akkalkot like accommodation, hotels and lodges, transportation, religious objects etc.

### Conclusion:

Many religious fairs and festivals are also brings new or increasing recreational opportunities to the festivals or fair more interesting. Development of the local population also favors the development of nearby

communities with increase in trade. The increases number shows that Akkalkot tourism center is developed rapidly and which contribute development of Solapur district. Because all type of tourist services are developed in Akkalkot like accommodation, hotels and lodges, transportation, religious objects etc. The research paper conclude that the role of Shri Swami Samartha temple plays important role in tourism development of Solapur district.

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