

CHAPTER IV

AKKALKOT TALUKA

Akkalkot was a princely State and was merged in the Sholapur district of the State of Maharashtra. The State of Maharashtra offered to transfer 99 villages of this taluka with a population of 1,06,403, 68 per cent Kannada-speaking, to the State of Mysore. It wished to retain 25 villages with a population of 43,035, wherein the Marathi majority was not absolute but was 48 per cent, Kannada being 24 per cent.

4.2. This offer was maintained in the memorandum submitted to this Commission on 31st March, 1967.

4.3. The two Mysorean members on the Four-Man Boundary Committee were of the opinion that the whole of the taluka of Akkalkot should be made a part of the State of Mysore. In the statement of the case submitted to this Commission on 31st March, 1967, by the State of Mysore, the claim was made to the whole of this taluka as in its complexion the area was predominantly Kannada.

4.4. Akkalkot lies to the south-east of Sholapur taluka. It was a princely State ruled over by Marathi Chiefs. To the south of this taluka, lie the areas of Indi taluka of Bijapur district while to its east and south lie the Kannada talukas of Aland and Afzalpur of Gulbarga district of Mysore State. To the west of Akkalkot is the South Sholapur taluka which is also admittedly a Kannada area. To the north lies Tuljapur taluka major part of which is also Kannada. Thus, the taluka is bounded on all its three sides by pure Kannada areas.

4.5. According to the Census of 1951 Kannada speaking population of the rural area was 59.8 per cent while Marathi was 22.4 per cent. Twelve villages in this taluka have a Marathi speaking majority. Almost all the rest have Kannada majority with few exceptions where neither Marathi nor Kannada is more than 50 per cent.

4.6. When the State of Akkalkot was merged in the Union of India in 1948-49, 101 villages of Akkalkot State formed the nucleus of the present Akkalkot taluka. Fifteen villages from Kurundwad State and 5 villages from South Sholapur taluka were added to it and the present Akkalkot taluka was formed comprising 121 villages.

4.7. In view of the clear admission of the Government of Maharashtra that 99 villages are Kannada, they may be transferred to Mysore. The only point for consideration is whether there are any grounds to justify the retention of 25 villages, including the towns

of Akkalkot in the State of Maharashtra. Akkalkot town has 44 per cent Marathi speaking population. It is hemmed in all sides except the north by Kannada speaking areas. Even on the north-west and on the north-east there are Kannada majority villages.

4.8. The Marathi population in this town is not absolute. It is 44 per cent. The complexion of the town has to be considered along with the languages spoken in the villages in the neighbourhood and in the sphere of influence of the town. Adjoining the limits of Akkalkot town on the three sides, viz., east, south and west, there are eleven villages, viz., Kolibet, Mahamudabad, Nimbgaon, Goudgaon (Kh), Rampur, Itage, Negenhalli, Matanhalli, Dodyal, Bagelhalli and Konhalli, all of which are Kannada villages. But in the case of four villages the Government of Maharashtra claims that they are Marathi on the technical ground that the percentage of Marathi speaking people (though less than 50 per cent), is slightly more than that of Kannada speaking people. In Bagelhalli, for instance, the percentage of Marathi speaking is 46.1 while that of Kannada speaking is 44.5. The village is quite adjacent to Kannada area. In Dodyal, Marathi is 44 per cent while Kannada is 36 per cent. In Nagenhalli Marathi is 30.1 per cent while Kannada is 12.8 per cent and those speaking other languages are 57.1 per cent. The village Itage is also claimed by the Government of Maharashtra though the Marathi there is only 21 per cent and Kannada is 45 per cent.

4.9. It is clear that the town of Akkalkot is surrounded on almost all sides by Kannada areas and has essentially a Kannada complexion.

4.10. The taluka of Akkalkot considered from all points of view and particularly owing to its geographical situation has to be kept in one State for its bifurcation will on administrative grounds be unsound.

4.11. The State of Maharashtra in its reply submitted to this Commission on 22nd May, 1967, maintained its stand and wanted to retain the 25 villages in Maharashtra on the basis of 1951 Census. In a later statement it wanted to retain the Akkalkot town and 28 villages but offered to surrender two towns of Maindargi and Dudhani and 93 villages.

4.12. There are two Maharashtra Assembly constituencies, one is Akkalkot covering some villages of Akkalkot taluka only and the second is Akkalkot-South Sholapur constituency for the remaining villages of the Akkalkot taluka and the whole of the South Sholapur taluka. No candidate sponsored by the Kannada Ekikaran Maha Samiti or any other Kannada body contested the elections in 1957, 1962 and 1967. The Village Panchayats of almost all the Maratha villages passed resolutions expressing their desire to continue in Maharashtra State. The municipalities of all the three towns, viz., Akkalkot, Maindargi and Dudhani, passed similar resolutions. The Taluka Panchayat Samiti also passed a similar resolution.

4.13. The memoranda received by the Commission about this area for and against the views of the States and the evidence taken by the Commission are given in Annexure IX, Volume II.

4.14. The linguistic complexion of the taluka of Akkalkot as a whole is that in the Census of 1951 Kannada was 59·8 per cent and Marathi 22·4 per cent. In the Census of 1961 Kannada has improved to 60·3 per cent and Marathi has been slightly reduced to 22·2 per cent. In the town of Akkalkot in 1961 the Marathi percentage has gone down to 36·9 per cent and Kannada percentage has gone up to 32·5 per cent.

4.15. On 9th June, 1967 at Ooty, the State of Maharashtra put in an application requesting the Commission that it proposes to retain the three villages originally offered to Mysore, namely, Kiranahalli, Bhuir-Kavathe and Koli-Bet. The population of Koli-Bet from 74 in 1951 has gone up to 104. The Marathi speakers who were 8·1 per cent in 1951 are 42·3 per cent in 1961. Kannada has gone down from 55·4 per cent in 1951 to 32·7 per cent in 1961 while others constitute the rest. There does not seem to be any substantial ground to permit the withdrawal of this small village Goli-Bet from the offer made originally. The percentage of speakers of Marathi language is much below 50 even in 1961 and in 1951 it was only 8·1. In Bhuir-Kavathe the percentage of Marathi has gone up from 42·6 in 1951 to 44·3 in 1961. This is a very marginal change which does not make the village predominantly Marathi-speaking. In Kiranahalli the percentage of Marathi rose by 3 from 1951 and this again is a small gain and is not sufficient to allow the withdrawal of the offer. The Government of Maharashtra on the basis of the 1961 Census offered five more villages to be transferred to Mysore. They are Sultanpur, Kaji Kanbas, Baranpur, Karjal and Naganhalli. This offer was made on the same basis as the withdrawal of the three villages. The result of the new stand of the State of Maharashtra is that 101 villages stand offered by the State of Maharashtra to the State of Mysore instead of 99 or 95 villages. The remaining villages which the State of Maharashtra wishes to retain are mere pockets in the predominantly Kannada areas.

4.16. A look at the map prepared in 1961 Census about this taluka gives a visual demonstration of the present complexion of this taluka. The taluka as a whole has a very strong Kannada complexion and the few villages which the State of Maharashtra wishes to retain along with the town are mere pockets in this area. There is a small window from which some of these Marathi majority areas can have a look on the boundary of Osmanabad district; but otherwise this taluka is surrounded by the district of Bijapur and the taluka of South Sholapur, a Kannada contiguous area.

4.17. In my judgment, the taluka as a whole has a strong predominance of Kannada speakers and deserved to be transferred from the State Maharashtra to the State of Mysore. The population of the taluka including the three urban areas of Akkalkot, Dudhani and Maindargi in the 1961 Census is 1,75,333 out of which 99,872 are Kannada speakers and 39,525 are Marathi speakers while 27,872 speak Urdu and the rest speak Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Gujarati and Banjari. Kannada is 64·9 per cent of the population.

4.18. During its sitting at Akkalkot the Commission interviewed a very large number of persons. It had received a considerable number of memorandum which, as already stated, are given in Annexure IX, Volume II, referred to above. The Rani Saheba of Akkalkot was also pleased to interview the Commission and expressed her desire of maintaining Akkalkot in Maharashtra. The President of the Municipal Committee produced before the Commission all the sweepers, sweepresses, clerks, chaprasis and the whole Municipal staff. It took considerable time to interview them and to read their prepared briefs.

4.19. Number of complaints were made to the Commission of Police interference with the Kannada people reaching the Commission. All the same, quite a number of Kannada speakers interviewed the Commission and expressed their strong wish to be merged in Mysore. Some speakers of the Marathi language also expressed a similar desire. The impression that the Commission gained during its sitting at Akkalkot was that public opinion generally was for transfer of the taluka as a whole to the State of Mysore, despite the fact that the State of Maharashtra or its supporters brought people from the Kannada village who told the Commission that *status quo* be maintained. The persons who came to support the stand of the State of Maharashtra gave correct census figures of the total population of a village but told calculated untruth when asked about the percentage of Kannada population of their villages. They seemed to have been tutored about the percentages. During the arguments by the learned counsels it seemed clear that in view of the actual complexion of the taluka it was not possible to retain a number of Marathi speaking villages in Maharashtra.

4.20. From administrative point of view it would be incorrect to allow retention of a few villages in one unilingual State while transferring the rest to another unilingual State particularly when these villages are surrounded on all sides by speakers of another language. If the major part of the taluka admittedly has to be handed over to Mysore, the rest should go along with it for facility of administration and communications. The Marathi population should be given all constitutional safeguards by the State of Mysore. On linguistic considerations as well as on other grounds, I would recommend the transfer of the taluka of Akkalkot including the Marathi majority villages from the State of Maharashtra to the State of Mysore. On similar considerations I have declined to recommend the transfer of Kannada majority villages in the taluka of Shirol to the State of Mysore as the taluka as a whole has a predominant Maharashtrian complexion and Kannada villages are a wedge inside the Marathi majority areas.