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## WAGHYAS OF PAL KHANDOBA OF SATARA DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA): A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:**-Geography is one of the social sciences. Social geography is one of the branches of geography in which different castes and tribes, their customs and traditions are generally studied. Study of waghya of Khandoba God temples are neglected by social sciences in general and by social geographers in particular. Hence in the present paper an attempt has been made to throw light upon the Waghya of the Khandoba by selecting Pal Khandoba Temple of Satara district of Maharashtra as a case study from the view point of social geographical perspective. However specific objectives are to know origin of word and concept of Waghya, to find out age of initiation, life, nature, native places of waghya of Pal Khandoba temple, to study socio-economic and demographic aspects of Waghya and their family members.

The study is primarily concerned with Waghya of Pal Khandoba temple only. The present study is entirely based on primary and secondary data as well on empirical knowledge. Primary data and information are sought through the interview technique and questionnaire method by visiting the villagers, pilgrims, Waghya, trusty of Khandoba Temple of Pal village.

**Keywords:** Waghya, Demography, Literacy, Sex Ratio, Khandoba Temple, Jagran, Initiation etc.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study of Waghya is quite neglected by the social sciences as well as by the linguistic sciences. Geography is one of the social sciences and geographers have also neglected to study the life style of Waghya. Hence in the present paper an attempt has been made to study Waghya of the Pal Khandoba from the view point of social geographical perspective.

### 2.0 STUDY AREA

The Pal Khandoba is a small village and pilgrimage centre. It is situated at the foothill of western Sahyadri ranges in Satara district of Maharashtra. It is situated 5 km west of Kashil village which is located along National Highway No. 4 approximately 25 km away from Satara and Karad cities.

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is primarily concerned Waghya of Pal Khandoba temple only. The present study is entirely based on primary and secondary data as well on empirical knowledge. Primary data and information are sought through the interview technique and questionnaire method by visiting the villagers, pilgrims, Waghya, trusty of Khandoba Temple of Pal village. For this purpose field work was conducted several times. All the Waghya of Pal Khandoba are selected

### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

Main objective of the paper is to throw light on life style perspectives of the Waghya of Khandoba God by selecting Pal Khandoba temple in Satara district of Maharashtra as a case study. However specific objectives are as under:

- 1 To know origin of word and concept of Waghya.

- 2 To find out age of initiation, life, nature , native places of Waghyas of Pal Khandoba.  
4 To study socio-economic and demographic aspects of Waghyas and their family members.

### 5.0 ORIGIN OF THE WORDS AND CONCEPT

Waghyas are the devotees of the Lord Khandoba. They have the same association between the devotee and the Lord - Gondhali - Amba, Bharadi- Bhairavnath, Jogti - Yellama. The childless couples make a Vow before Lord Khandoba - 'If we get two children, then the eldest shall be given to the Lord.' If the child who is given away to God is a boy, it is a Waghya and if it is a girl then a Murali. In one of the gazetteers of Bombay, "The people take a vow to give away their child, if it is alive. Even a married woman leaves her household and becomes a Murali, if a vision of Lord Khandoba, beckons to her in a dream." The word 'Waghya' may be derived from the Kannada word 'Oggaiya' which comes from the word 'Vaggu' which means to stutter. One of the animals' beloved to Khandoba so most of the scholars refer to a Waghaya as a dog – these references are from the works of Basweshwara. Yet another reference associates the word Waghya with the term 'Vagha or tiger. Perhaps, this is due to the fact that the Waghya carries a tiger with pouch on his person.

Waghya belongs to the sect of Shakti Yoga of Shakta Parampara. Yet, according to the scholars, there is a lack of refinement of culture and knowledge in the Waghya.

### 6.0 NATURE, INITIATION AND LIFE OF WAGHYAS

Waghya is clad in a dhoti with mundasa (head cloth locally known as pheta) and an upper garment across the shoulder (sometimes chest). In Karnataka the Waghya wears in addition to this a long woolen robe (long loose outer garment) with kotamba (bowl) in hand the waghaya goes from house to house for aims. There are two sects of waghayas – Ghar Waghyas and dar Waghyas. Initially the communities from which Waghyas hailed were mainly those of Kunbi, Sali, Mali, Dowari and Maratha. Later the Waghaya forms a community which has three sects viz. Dhangat, Vir and Mairala.. The Waghyas are learned in the traditional texts and can improvise their dialogues instantaneously. A glorious parampara of artistes - yet may have left the profession. In some cases, the modern influences of films and televisions have caused degeneration in.

### 7.0 NATIVE PLACES OF WAGHAYAS OF PAL KHANDOBA TEMPLE

The total number of Waghayas of Pal Khandoba are sixteen. 87.5 per cent of the Waghayas of Pal Khandoba have their native places within Pal village. One Waghaya has his native place in Indur in Karad taluka of Satara district while only one Waghayas has his native place out side the Satara district viz. Vadgaon village in Baramati taluka of Pune district.

**Table 1**  
**Native Places of Waghayas of Pal Khandoba**

Sr. No.	Native Place	Taluka	Dsitric	Waghayas	
				In Nos.	In %
1	Karad	Karad	Satara	14	87.5
2	Vadgaon	Baramati	Pune	01	6.25
3	Indur	Karad	Satara	01	6.25

Source: Field Work.

### 8.0 LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL STATUS

The present study shows that out of the total Waghyas of Pal Khandoba 75 per cent Waghyas are literates, while only 25 per cent Waghyas are illiterates. Among literate Waghayas of pal Khandoba 50 per cent Waghayas have taken secondary school education. The present study reveals that due to the social change in attitude of Waghayas literacy and educational status of waghayas of pal Khandobas are remarkable improved.

### 9.0 AGE OF INITIATION AND CAUSES OF WAGHYAS

The present study shows that age of initiation of Waghyas of Pal Khandoba. It is found that minimum age of initiation of Waghyas in Pal was three years, while the maximum initiation age of Waghyas was 20 years. Average age of initiation of Waghyas of Pal Khandoba is 10.1 years. The present study reveals that the main causes behind the initiation of Waghyas are by forced, self wished and traditional. 80 per cent of the total Waghyas of Pal Khandoba entered in this job because of vow of either father or mother to God Khandoba. While only 10 per cent of the total Waghyas are initiated by self wishes and 10 per cent of total Waghyas are initiated due to tradition.

### 10 INCOME OF THE WAGHYAS

The study is also directed towards the income source of Waghyas. The average income of Waghyas of Pal khandoba from pilgrims is Rs.781per month / Rs.9375 per annual. Maximum monthly income of them is Rs 2500/ and maximum annual income is 30000/ and minimum annual income is 3600. Out of the total Waghyas 56.25 per cent have their monthly income below the average income and 43.75 per cent. Waghyas have above the average monthly income. The study shows that the income received from the pilgrims to the Waghyas is declining. The main cause is changing attitude of pilgrims due to modernization.

### 11.0 ECONOMY OF JAGRAN

An attempt has been made to find out the economy of jagran of Waghyas of the Pal Khandoba. The rate of jagran varies Waghyas to waghyas. The study shows that 50 per cent of total Waghyas of Pal khandoba are engaged in jagran. Average 64 jagrans are held per year and maximum number held in one year is 250 and minimum is 5. The rate of per jagran ranges from Rs. 300 and minimum rate is only Rs.40. The average annual income of Waghyas from jagran Rs.8600/ only. The maximum annual income of waghyas of Pal Khandoba is Rs. 25000 and minimum is Rs. 500. Maximum rate of per jagran is Rs.300 and minimum is Rs.40.

### 12.0 SEX STRUCTURE OF FAMILY MEMBERS

The waghyas have their own families. They have 34 family members. Out of the total family member of Waghyas 52.49 per cent are male and remaining 47.6 per cent are females and the sex ratio of Waghyas of Pal Khandoba is 889.

### 13.0 LITERACY STATUS OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS

Out of the total family members 55.88 per cent family members of Waghyas are literates and 44.12 per cent family members are illiterates. Illiterate male family members of Waghyas account 20 per cent and illiterates family members Waghyas are 80 per cent Amongst literate family members 84.21 per cent are males and only 15.79 per cent are female members. Out of the total literate family members 36.85 per cent members have primary school educated. 57.89 per cent members are secondary school educated in which 72.73 per cent are males and 27.27 per cent are females. Lastely 5.26 per cent of family members of Waghyas have higher educated and all of them are males. Not a single female member of Waghyas of Pal Khandoba has higher educated.

### 14.0 JOB SATISFACTION

Present study is directed to job satisfaction of Waghyas of Pal Khandoba. Out of total Waghyas only 25 per cent Waghyas have negative approach to this job and 75 per cent Waghyas have possitive approach. 75 per cent Waghyas agreed to carry to continue their job due to tradition and obedient to their fathers and only 25 per cent Waghyas are unwilling to continue their job as Waghyas due to less earnings and disrespect by the pilgrims and society. The present study reveals that literacy and education have played an important role in changing attitude of the Waghyas about their job.

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