



## REVIEW OF DENOTIED AND NOMADIC TRIBES IN VAIJAPUR

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### ABSTRACT

Nomadic Tribes are spread all over India, they can be seen in Maharashtra also. Maharashtra is divided into many regions as per the geographical topography. Considering the geographical location, Vaijapur is considered as entrance into Marathwada region. Marathwada is drought prone region. So water scarcity is one of the major challenges before its people. Vaijapur too has its problems regarding water shortage and allied problems for farming sector. Though it is not highly fertile land, or business hub, the nomadic tribes can be seen here. Their visibility suggests their survival in different walks of life in Vaijapur. Present paper is an attempt to understand their life style, belief system and social customs, ethnic culture and traditions. It primarily focuses on Wadar, Beldar and Kaikadi community residing in Vaijapur.

**Keywords:** *Nomadic Tribes, Vaijapur, Wadar, Beldar and Kaikadi, Ethnic Culture, Traditions, Customs.*

### Introduction:

Nomadic Tribes are spread all over India, they can be seen in Maharashtra also. Maharashtra is divided into many regions as per the geographical topography. Considering the geographical location, Vaijapur is considered as entrance into Marathwada region. Marathwada is drought prone region. So water scarcity is one of the major challenges before its people. Vaijapur too has its problems regarding water shortage and allied problems for farming sector. Though it is not highly fertile land, or business hub, the nomadic tribes can be seen here. Their visibility suggests their survival and settlement in different walks of life in Vaijapur.

Present paper is an attempt to understand their life style, belief system and social customs, ethnic culture and traditions. It primarily focuses on Wadar, Lohar, Beldar and Kaikadi community residing in Vaijapur.

Various schemes of Indian government have proved fruitful in the permanent settlement of nomadic tribes. The exposure to education, access to various opportunities have given them sense of settlement. But the problems of their survival have not ceased, they prevail due to their belief system, customs and traditions as well as socio-political and economic-cultural aspects of Indian society. This paper would highlight on major belief system based on the Caste hierarchy in Hindu religion and their segregation in Varna system. The sense of alienation and exile given to them for ages have caused panic of survival in society. Present analysis would trace the Wadar, Lohar, Beldar and Kaikadi communities respectively.



### Wadar:

Wadar is denotified and nomadic tribe found in Deccan plateau in India. It is basically identified with the construction work. The Wadar community in Vaijapur wander in search of work. They wander from one place to another in search of work together with 10 to 15 families as per the need. They reside at the outskirts of the village with shelter made from tree wood, leaves etc. They carry their pet animals like donkeys, dogs, goats with them. This community is known for their work with stone and its use in construction work. They wander in various parts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana and Maharashtra. There is a ritual in inception of a non-Wadar person into the caste and expelling people from the caste. In Karnataka, a person from high caste can enter into the Wadar caste after undergoing the ritual of Kshaur (shaving the head or hair cut ceremony with knife) and burn the tongue with neemstick. The person is given new clothes and had to accept the *teerth* (sacred water) from *jangam* priest. The same ritual is followed for women also. The person expelled from the community is also compelled to undergo the same ritual of Kshaur. After shaving the head, the person has to enter into a hut with two doors. He waits for a while in the hut and exits from another door. And then hut is set on fire. Considering this, in old days, it can be believed that the person must be burnt alive through this ritual. Once expelled from the caste, person can be incepted into the caste through the above mentioned ritual. Nowadays, expelled person can be incepted after paying the penalty and applying *bhasma*.

Wadars have different sub-castes in different regions. In Maharashtra, *Jate-Wadar* or *Fatre Wadar* and *Gadi Wadar* or *Bandi Wadar* are the subcastes of wadars.

They follow the ancestral work. They restrict themselves from engaging the other sub-caste work. They don't marry with the person of same surname. There was only one *Devak* of the caste. Now, it is observed that they don't follow this belief. There is exchange or sharing of food among subcastes but marriages are prohibited. House is cleaned and purified where a woman has given birth to baby after 40 days. On the fifth day of birth, baby is named. There are no other ceremonies for it. Maternal uncle is considered as a crucial person with respect and playing important role during the ceremony. Baby's ears are pierced by goldsmith or *lawangi gosavi*. There is tradition of tattooing among women of the Wadar community. It was believed that Wadar women were cursed by Seeta or Jasma and hence they don't wear blouse. But with the education and sense of getting into mainstream life like others, women wear the blouse now.

In matrimonial relations, for marriage boy has to propose the girl through his elders. Girl is given dowry by boy's family. If he does not have money to pay the dowry, he has to work at girl's family as a 'rin'. Marriage takes place at girl's house at the expense of boy's family. The tent of blanket made of lamb wool (*Ghogadi*) is made where marriage ceremony takes place. Head of the caste used to conduct the marriage ceremony. Nowadays, Brahmin priest conducts it. Marriage can be arranged in the close relatives. Bride can be the maternal uncle's daughter or paternal aunt's daughter. There are various ceremonies during marriage, pre-wedding ceremony like *haldi*, wedding ceremony and many others. The ceremony spans over 2 to 3 days. Women sing traditional songs at such occasions.



### **Beldar:**

The Beldar community residing in Vaijapur belong to Rajasthan. To avoid religious conversion during Mughal period, they migrated and settled in Maharashtra. To earn the livelihood, they make stone mortar and pestle sets, work at construction sites, They consider themselves as Rajputs. They revere Mahrana Pratap. There are other subcastes in Beldar like Oad, Naik-Beldar, Gawandi-Beldar, Parmar-Beldar, Oad-Rajput Beldar, Kumbhar Beldar. There are certain surnames in Beldar community i.e. Gondhale, Kudale, Chavan, Kate, Nawale, Borde, Bhasati, Nivate, Ture, Harade etc. they are considered as prestigious.

This community is influenced by the culture of Maharashtra. They worship the deities like Tuljabhavani, Kanifnath, Khandoba. On the occasion of Rangpanchami, Beldar community gathers together at Madhi for resolving the disputes. JatPanchayat is very crucial for resolving the problems. If the problems are not solved at local level, then they can seek justice at Madhi. The judgement given at Madhi is considered as final. Bahuri is important in their marriage ceremony. Brahmin priest conducts the marriage ceremony. The attire of bride and groom are same as their place of origin. Widow marriages are prohibited in Beldar. Status of women is limited to child and hearth. But women participate in all kinds of works including physical labors. After death, corpse are cremated. Donkeys are pet animals and are used as carry the soil. In post-independence era, the community has adopted the change. They undertake different kinds of business activities. Beldar community in Vaijapur has increased the interest in education of their children though it is meagre in visibility.

### **Kaikadi:**

Another denotified nomadic tribe community residing in Vaijapur is Kaikadi. They also reside in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu. Influence of Kannada and Telugu in language use is clearly seen in Kaikadi community. From the observation of excessive use of Telugu, their origin might be from Telangana. The community is also seen in Madhya Pradesh. Kaikadi consider Kanhoba Ramjan as their ancestor. It is believed that Kanhoba gave a branch of tree and asked to earn the livelihood from it. Since then they weave the baskets and other things for their bread and butter. Prabhakar Mande in his book entitled as 'GavGada' mentions 9 sub-castes of Kaikadi including "Boriwale, Dhanwale, Kamathi, Kaiji, Laman, Makadwale, Urukaikadi, Aaioas, and Bhamare" Mande). Their profession are also different. They entertain people by controlling monkes and making them dance (monkey puppeteer), magic shows, making baskets from plant materials like Kanagi, Dale to store the food etc. Prabhakar Mande also mentions four main sub-castes of Kaikadi in his book as "Kunchi Korva (Makadwale), Gulde or Dhontale, Pamlor or Korvi" (Mande). Some of them are considered as separate castes now. There is exchange of food in sub-castes of Kaikadi community but marriages are prohibited. Satpade and Kawade are main surnames in Kaikadi community.

In Maharashtra, three major sub-castes are visible i.e. Urkaikadi alias Gavkaikadi alias Korva, Pamlor alias Dhuntale and Makadwale. There professions are different. Gavkaikadi make Kanagi, Khatade, Dale, Durkule, and fences for houses from the plant materials. Makadwale control monkeys and make them dance. Pamlor are snake charmers. Though Kaikadis are on move always, they have their own native places. Farsi is their code language. The tradition of adopting children from other



castes. If child is adopted, girl is called as Ursand and boy is called as 'Golya'. Savarna in Hindu hierarchy consider Kaikadis as untouchables whereas Kaikadi consider Mahar, Mang, Marwari and Wani as untouchables. Kaikadi worship village deity (Gaon Devi), DwarDevi, Firsti Devi, Gal Devi, Smashan Devi, family Deity, Khandoba, Bhavai, Firangi Devi, Maruti, Malik etc. They believe in omens, magic, black magic. They believe in this during their problems and illnesses.

On the fifth day of child birth, goat is sacrificed. But as community is settled they celebrate the Naming ceremony of the child. Kaikadi women have fascination for tattooing. Groom's family ask for girl in marriage to her parents. Marriage in close relative is prohibited such as marriage with paternal aunt's daughter and maternal aunt's daughter. Previously, marriages were decided during the pregnancy of women. Child marriages are still exist in the community. in Kaikadi community, *Paradat Shai* is ritual to fix the bride. Maternal Uncle is of utmost importance in marriage. After *Paradat Shai*, the ritual of *Wagisane* takes place. *Wagisane* of maternal uncle are called as '*suluksenullya*' from bride's family it is called as '*pardatullya*'.

They come to village during the monsoon season, so their marriages take place during the rainy season. The marriage ceremony lasts for 3, 5, or 7 days. Marriage ceremony never takes place without the permission of bride's maternal uncle which is called as '*Karon Manda*'. Previously, panch used to conduct the ceremony. Nowadays, Brahmin priest conducts the wedding ceremony. During wedding ceremony, maternal uncle tie the loose ends of clothes of bride and groom. It is called as '*Sulun Karodon Munda*'. If it is tied by relatives it is known as '*Datunt Mundi*' and if Panch ties the knot, it is called as '*Panch Mundi*'. They use Ghongadi or Ghodadi for setting the tent in the front yard of the house. Homes are decorated with the branches of mango, sandal tree, black plum tree. Nowadays, as per the financial condition, modern tents and decoration are done.

In post-wedding ceremonies, ceremonies like hiding the bride, searching the betel nut are conducted. Previously, groom used to live at bride's home. Now it is not followed. When bride gives '*Aagu*' to the groom, he becomes her lawful husband or owner.

The impact of Jat Panchayat is seen on Kaikadi community. If one disrespects the traditional rule, the person is punished. Adultery by women in punishable offence. If a widow gets impregnated by man out of her caste, then she would be given to poor man in marriage or she is out casted. The head of panchayat is called as '*Aakoli*'. The severe punishments in Kaikadi community are stamping with burning coin or cigar and expelling the person from the caste. Previously, Kaikadi used to bury their dead but now they cremate. On the third and tenth day of death, cocks and goats are sacrificed. Some plaques or things of metal are made and kept in *Devhara* (where all miniature of gods are kept and worshipped). Though Kaikadi are always on move, they are bound together through the Jat-Panchayat.

### **Lohar:**

India is agricultural country. The villages were interdependent with the various sections of society. The prevalent system of *Balutedari* and *Alutedari* were backbone of economic and social life of the villages.

Lohar or blacksmith is a community who make things with metals. they make the various equipments necessary for agricultural activities. They are also known as



Gadi-Lhoar and Ghumre Lohar. Though there is similiarity in the profession of Lohar and Ghisadi, they are different communities. There is visible number of Lohar community in Vaijapur.

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