

# ***Gadyanchi Jatra* in Mahalwada Canacona Goa: A Sociological Study of Folk Religion**

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### **DECLARATION BY STUDENT**

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled “*Gadyanchi Jatra* in Mahalwada Canacona Goa: A Sociological Study of Folk Religion” is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Sociology at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University under the Supervision of Mr/Ms/Dr/Prof. Mozinha Fernandes and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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Date: 19/04/2024

Place: Goa University

## COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation report "***Gadyanchi Jatra in Mahalwada Canacona Goa: A Sociological Study of Folk Religion***" is a bonafide work carried out by Ms. Arya Ramchandra Shenvi Belyo under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts** in the Discipline Sociology at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University

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## **PREFACE**

The primary motivation behind choosing *Gadyanchi jatra* as a topic for the dissertation stems from my personal experiences. Although I have witnessed *Gadyanchi jatra* alongside my family numerous times, my understanding of its origin and rituals and other aspects remained limited. This gap in knowledge sparked a curiosity within me, prompting me to delve deeper into the study of the *Gadyanchi jatra* for my dissertation, in pursuit of answers to my lingering questions.

The dissertation highlights the myths, rituals and origin associated with the *Gadyanchi jatra*. It shades light on how the villagers are closely associated with this event. The celebration of *Gadyanchi jatra* has social and cultural relevance as it is not only just a festival devoted to Shree Betal, but also a factor which brings people from different background together. In this dissertation we can see how different castes and tribe come together and perform their allocated roles for the *jatra's* success.

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## **CONTENT**

Chapter	Title	Page no.
	Declaration	ii
	Completion Certificate	iii
	Preface	iv
	Acknowledgement	v
	List of Photographs	viii
1	Introduction	1-17
2	Oral narratives: Origin of <i>Gadyanchi jatra</i>	18-28
3	Rituals of <i>Gadyanchi jatra</i>	29-51
4	Castes and Tribe roles in <i>Gadyanchi jatra</i>	52-72
5	The <i>Gades</i> : Devotees of Shree Betal	73-84
6	Conclusion	85-87
	References	88-94
	Appendix I	95

## LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Picture number	Description	Page
2.1	Shree Navadurga devi	20
2.2	<i>Tulsi Vrindavan</i> at Shree Navadurga temple	20
2.3	Shree Aadipurush god	21
2.4	Shree Naagejan deity	21
2.5	Shree Betal god	22
2.6	Celebration of <i>Gadyanchi jatra</i> at Mahalwada	27
3.1	<i>Tako</i>	35
3.2	Traditional path for <i>Tako</i> procession	39
3.3	Masks used for <i>Perni Zagor</i>	44
3.4	<i>Khaambe</i> for <i>Gadyanchi jatra</i>	46
3.5	<i>Rahat</i> for <i>Gadyanchi jatra</i>	47
3.6	<i>Gades</i> rotated for <i>Gadyanchi jatra</i>	48
5.1	The <i>Gades</i>	73
5.2	<i>Gades</i> carrying the <i>devasthaan</i>	75
5.3	Swords kept at <i>Tulsi Vrindavan</i> at Khavat	77
5.4	<i>Gades</i> climbing the <i>khaambe</i>	80

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

One of the oldest social institutions that have withstood the test of time is religion and has continued wielding a strong influence on human society. According to Emile Durkheim, religion is systematically ordered collection of beliefs and acts that is intimately connected with sacred entities that are considered to be unique or prohibited. It creates a moral community for those who believe in these things. The rich interplay between religion's structures on one hand, and the broader social context on the other is demonstrated in the complexity of religion. Definitions of religion differ among scholars based on their various points of view. Each person in a given society values his or her own religion. Robert provides definition of religion as belief systems with religious practices that seek to find answers to common issues confronting humans in their daily life (Roberts & Yamane, 2020, pp.1-8). It is considered to be a socially established idea across all cultures in the world that involves moral values, ways of life, worship practices and symbols. Although religion helps to bond communities together; the same is used as a ground for community conflicts. It should be noted that various people are close or attached to religion differently in the community. There are several religions in the world such as Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and many more.

In India, religion takes on a complex and diverse role within the social fabric. Religious history in India is deeply intertwined with enduring traditions. Religion functions both as a unifying force and a catalyst for communal tensions. The divergence in beliefs, values, and norms inherent to each religion often leads to clashes. Despite

India's multiculturalism and metalinguistic features, different religions retain the freedom to practice their theologies and customs. As a result, India sustains its status as a secular democracy (Sardella & Sain, 2013, pp. 2-7).

Hinduism, traced back to antiquity with its roots in India, is marked by ancient texts like the Rigveda and a caste-based societal structure. The fourfold division of varnas – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras – coexisted alongside the fifth varna, the outcastes (untouchables), outside this hierarchy. Purity and pollution were central to ancient Hindu society. Brahmins' privileged access to the Vedas and ancient Hindu scriptures reinforced their superiority. The varna division originated from occupational rights and later evolved into the concept of caste. Varnas, associated with designated duties, differ from castes, which denote an ascribed status. Birth into a caste confers belonging to that caste.

Religions all over the world celebrate their beliefs through festivals, fairs, and feasts, imbuing them with cultural significance. Hinduism is no exception, boasting numerous festivals and fairs, where different castes play unique roles. Among these are *jatras*, Indian fairs that vary across castes. These festivals, deeply embedded in the historical landscape of religion, foster unity across caste boundaries, fostering social cohesion within a stratified society. Although restrictions persist, festivals provide an opportunity for people to temporarily transcend these limitations, participating in collective joy (Soni, 2021, pp. 2-4).

A noteworthy festival unfolds in the Canacona taluka of Goa, the smallest Indian state situated along the western coastline. Goa's distinctive cultural identity, developed over 450 years under Portuguese rule, nurtures religious syncretism. Goans, regardless of their faith, respect and participate in each other's festivals, exemplifying religious harmony uncommon in many places. The '*Gadyanchi jatra*,' performed every

three years in Mahalwada, in Poinguinim village of Canacona, is a remarkable example of bringing people together. Despite the stratified society, people from nearby villages such as Loliem and Khargal, gather to celebrate this *jatra*, forging connections irrespective of different backgrounds. This *Gadyanchi jatra* is celebrated at Shree *Betal* temple in Mahalwada, Poinguinim village in the month of April with the series of rituals and feasts known as *Jevni* and *Tako* in one year. Each participant fulfils their assigned role with respect, fostering social relationships. While limited literature and documentation exist on this event, investigating its significance will reveal, how '*Gadyanchi jatra*' unites individuals and what role does it play in shaping their sense of identity and belonging. This endeavour aims to contribute to understanding how this *jatra* binds people, transcending their varied origins.

## 1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Over thousands of years ago, religion is probably the most important of all of the world's oldest institution that has shaped human history. Religion, however, represented an important social phenomenon. Sociology was seen by Auguste Comte and Saint Simon as a substitute for the social phenomena that took the place of religion. For Comte, Christianity and Roman Catholicism were at the culmination of religion that referenced the God Centre. Nevertheless, he wanted to supplant religion by positivist sociology. According to Karl Marx, religion was mystification which means it was nothing but false consciousness through which the ruling classes sought solace in times of class warfare. Society, human consciousness, and all its pathologies were explained through religion (Wilson, 1968, pp. 1-7). Religion is then defined by Émile Durkheim as composite system of beliefs and practices concerning the sacred things, which are separated and prohibited beliefs and practices bringing together in one moral community of believers, into a single church. He further argues that religion consists

of sacred practices, rituals and forms of social organization linked by common heritage. This ensures that all people believe in the same thing. The people's lives are covered by these traditions which form a sacred canopy. Inherent to these cultures, social life and religious ideas and expressions belong together with specific styles and definitions of individuals (Kurtz, 2015, pp. 6-12). The significance of religion for particular classes, ethnics and individuals changes with time and is different for different traditions.

Varied scholars have provided varied definitions of religion over the years, based on their assessment of the importance of religion in human lives. Religion, according to Edward Taylor, is belief in spiritual beings that began as explanations for natural events. Belief in spirits developed as a result of attempts to explain life and death. Taylor employed the concept of animism, which he considered to be a religious theory. This animism theory is based on the innate inability to discriminate between dreams and waking consciousness. When humanity's "primitive" forefathers dreamed about deceased friends or family, they assumed the dead were still alive in some spiritual form. Following Taylor, James Frazer explored the global commonalities in magical and religious ideas. According to him, human beliefs progress through primitive magic, are replaced by religion, and are subsequently replaced again by modern science. He made a distinction between magic and religion. Magic was utilised in primitive man's life to control the natural world and operate through rules, whereas religion is faith in which the natural world is ruled by deities. In contrast to Taylor and Frazer, Freud saw religion as an underlying manifestation of psychological neuroses and anguish. Religion, he saw, was a delusion. Religion, in his opinion, provides defence against the crushingly greater power of nature, as well as the desire to correct

the inadequacies of civilization that have made them cruelly felt (Abalogu & Okolo, 2020, pp. 48-66).

Folk religion is distinguished from organised religion, primal religion, popular religion, and sectarian religion by Don Yoder. According to him, folk religion exists in a complex community in relation to and in conflict with the organised religion(s) of that culture. It differs from structured religion in that it is often unorganised. Its part-cultural setting distinguishes it from primitive religion, which is, in some senses, official religion as a people's religion (Yoder, 1974, pp. 2–15). Whereas Enges listed some elements with regard to folk religion which included understandings about the genesis of the universe, its structure, and the forces operating within it, understandings the relationship of nature and universe with human essence and life-course, death and afterlife, natural and supernatural, society, different supernatural agencies, such as gods, spirits, and ancestors, calendar rites and rites of passage, and corresponding cult places, benign and malignant magic, folk medicine, and its understandings of diseases and healing. Religious specialists, such as cunning folk, witches, and healers, popular modes of thinking, examples, understandings of morals, norms, sanctions, and luck and the religious genres of folklore, like memorates, myths, spells, a spiritual song (Sonja, 2013). Undertaking a thorough investigation of folk religion practised in the Manirampur region, Akter highlighted the significance of folk-religious practises in shaping the cultural identity and history of the Manirampur people. It revealed how these practises are firmly ingrained in the fabric of daily life, connecting individuals to their history and traditions. Akter's research focussed on the significance of rituals, festivals, and sacred sites in folk religion. It illustrated how these practises not only promote spiritual fulfilment but also social cohesiveness by offering a sense of community connection and continuity. This work emphasised how these practises are

effortlessly incorporated into all facets of life, contributing to the overall well-being of the community and provides insights into how folk-religion operates as a crucial element of the Manirampur community's life and legacy by digging into themes of identity, rituals, spirituality, and integration (Akter, 2016, pp. 247-256).

Religion has always played and will continue to play an important role in promoting universal brotherhood, compassion, and love in India. However, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the same religious institution is also used in the country to produce discomfort and communal problems. India has given rise to four religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. When the world experienced great religious ferment in the sixth century before common era, when spiritual and moral unrest prevailed in society, reformers raised their voices against the existing religious order and built the new foundation; similarly, in India, people were disgusted with old philosophical dogmas and sought simple methods of worship. They rebelled against social patterning, ceremonial forms of religion, and the ultimate power of the priest craft (Reddy, 2006). India is among the most religiously diverse nation in the world inhabited by the most religious communities and cultures. Traditional Indian society is characterized by a very tight social structure. India has unique social stratifications based on the categorization into thousand endogamous hereditary entities called caste (Jati) or castes. According to ancient Hindu texts, there are four varnas: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. The 5th varna is considered as untouchables, who are outside the varna system. Social status is determined by one's caste. Caste has been very rigid in India society. It implies the idea of cleanliness and uncleanness. After having been a local and hereditary till practicing traditional occupation, Jati became nationwide (Srinivas et al., 2009, pp.161-165).

Despite of being multifaceted, persuasions of every kind such as political, religious, philosophical, ideological have coexisted in India since time immemorial. Hinduism has coloured the other religions; in this regard, Christians, Muslims, and Sikhs in India have diversity within their religious ranks. Although there are variances between India's religions, all of these differences serve a purpose. In reality, India is famed for its diversity while being together. Integration essentially meant the joining of multiple components into a single cohesive whole. A society, such as India, has functional integration if its members carry on or engage in cooperative activity, and moral integration if they share the same ideals and have the same consensus. The attitude of absorption and integration is a product of the Indian subcontinent's great diversity.

This functional integration seen among the religions or the people comprises of wide range of notions proposed as “Functionalism”, differently by a number of authors such as Durkheim, Malinowski, Parsons and Spencer among others. Society was likening to a living thing by Spencer using a natural comparison. To him, society was akin to a living body comprised of different organs interacting to achieve a good state of running of the same he referred to it like a system. For Spencer, such a system was held together using culture based on the fact it was what socialized them into a common set of norms, values and identity, thus, turned them to whole parts of such a system (Kidd & Teagle, 2012, pp. 35-43). Durkheim on the other hand is considered as the dominant influence on the development of sociological functionalism as he argues that social institutions exist solely to fulfil specific social needs. He underscored the significance of culture in a society and for social interactions. According to him, culture is what drives people to behave uniquely, hence ensuring peace in society. Durkheim posited that the socialization process was made up of ‘the collective consciousness’

which included very essential ideals or beliefs in the society to ensure stability. In particular, it is the societal groups norms in the rituals that facilitate such a phenomenon (Swingewood, 1991). Based on these not just like in the case of Parson who considered culture as an agent of maintenance of patterns or a channel in which people internalise the social icons by means of the socialisation process. Hence, such signs help develop societal calmness and identity which lead towards tranquilization within any certain community (Kidd & Teagle, 2012, pp. 35-43).

Applying the functionalist perspective to India, it shows that through all variations of multi-religious and multi-lingual Indians, they are able to coordinate and coexist with members of different cultural backgrounds successfully. At the same time, one cannot ignore the fact that, there also exist conflict in society because of increasing competition and limited resources. Each of these religions holds festivals or feast days, various rites and rituals in India. India has a rich ancient base consisting of numerous ceremonies, institutions, rituals, customs, and hoary past presents. Scholars have undertaken some studies on this functional relationship between rituals and different groups. The study by Watson and Legare takes an in-depth look at how the different ritual practices help reinforce the bonds among members, transmit social information, and structure interactions within the group. It revealed that group rituals play an important role in developing common feeling among members sharing community identity. These sharing group activities creates stronger feelings among members about oneness, trust, and social unity. At the same time, this also holds significance attached to group rituals as a means of passing down cultures, values, and traditions among generations. Rituals successfully pass relevant information about a culture along with appropriate practices which ensure conservation of a cultural heritage. The rituals often evoke strong feelings, which produce an emotional experience even greater than that

experienced in any other setting (Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016, pp. 42-46). The term "ritual" is derived from the Latin word "ritualis," and refers to all aspects of ritus. A ritual, in its most basic form, is a ceremonial practice or observance committed to worship or devotion that serves to fulfil one's duties and obligations. It refers to any symbolic action, behaviour, or habit performed by individuals in order to establish a relationship with gods, deities, or other intelligible entities (Kreinath, 2018, pp.1-11).

Similarly, Perinbanyagam tries to show how interlinked caste, religious practices and rituals are for a single culture homogenous group of Ceylon Tamils. They practice folk religion, and although every case owns a folk temple, it is allowed to other castes to participate in rites of this temples. However, it is the dominant caste that controls the folk temples and excludes people of an alien order from visiting a shrine by other castes. Nevertheless, during the festivals every caste group is expected to take part in the organization as well as the distribution of the fees necessary for covering the expenses. There is tranquillity in the community as depicted in the festival season even after acts of discrimination (Perinbanyagam, 1965, pp. 218-227).

There are studies carried out by scholars which reveal various reasons for bringing people together. One such study takes a step forward and determines factors responsible for unifying different communities by distinguishing two major causes: these were natural calamities like floods, plagues, and drought that pulled people together as well as strong anchors to tradition. Rites and rituals were seen as the important way of promoting sociality. Overall, these person-centric/group-oriented ritual or festive event are vital in fostering cohesiveness among people. This study suggested these ceremonies, customs, and gatherings in rural settings bind together different kinds of persons with distinct ethnicities, professions, and positions in the society (Chattopadhyay, 1970). Another study in this aspect brought out the fact that

people from Southern India set aside their routine responsibilities and enjoy themselves together during annual festivals. This was in regard to the Hindu village of Bandipur. A caste stratified society. Each caste had their festival to perform. Despite of emergence of new festival against a specific caste, each caste has a specific role to play during this harvest festival which was of mainly brahmins and it is not only considered a privilege but also a responsibility. Working together, each of the castes contributes within its expected role during the performance (Hanchett, 1972, pp.1517-1522).

Folk religion and individual beliefs in society have an impact on the level of social trust. In this context, social trust refers to a general trust in strangers as well as persons in one's community with whom one is directly familiar. This trust stems from adherence to societal norms, publicly recognised principles, and shared expectations for others to do the same. The development of social trust eventually leads to a stable society (Vallier, 2019). The concept of social trust is popular in sociological literature and is defined as a social expectation resulting from a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behaviour based on common norms (Francis, 1996). Durkheim's Division of Labour, in particular, emphasises the concept of mechanical solidarity, emphasising collective consciousness and similarities within a group. This represents the social integration of individuals of society who share values and ideas (Durkheim, 1984). These notions can be viewed as fundamental components of social trust when viewed through the lens of popularly held folk beliefs within a society. This viewpoint was used in a study conducted in China to evaluate the impact of folk beliefs on social trust and how it influences social support and a feeling of identity. The data demonstrated a significant positive association between folk beliefs and Chinese inhabitants' social trust. Furthermore, the study discovered that social support and a

feeling of identity serve as intermediates between folk beliefs and social trust (Hou et al., 2023, pp. 1-19).

The *jatras*, *yatras*, *urus*, and *melas* have been among an important part of the historical landscape where trade and religious activities were held. The society places tremendous importance on them as they affect social religion, culture and economy. ‘*Bhatkyachi jatra*’ (Marathwada) fair held at Malegaon village is for traditionally nomadic communities and these *jatras* were critical locations in which they made life occur. *Jatra* occupies a certain position in the cult of *khandoba*, it is also an annual meeting of some nomadic and peripatetic caste communities – *jaat* panchayats. It acts as a market for the conventional mobile society and the highest tribunal for numerous nomadic, pastoral or transient communities. Movement happens in this space despite its temporary nature as well as resultant transverse intersection of networks such as religion, culture, society, and economics (Soni, 2021, pp. 2-11). Similarly, in the annual fair of the God *Nagoba* at Kesalpur, Andhra Pradesh, during celebrations such as festivals or fairs, individuals seek to retain and preserve their cultural norms including religion, customs and traditions. Participation in this *jatra* has no caste barriers. However, one can witness gender discrimination in this *jatra*, as women are prohibited from handling holy water meant for the *jatra* and also men can’t come into contact with any food prepared by women (Salunke, 2014, pp. 1046-1051). The importance of touch in relation to ritual activities associated with these festivals was also examined with the purpose to understand the different ways of touching as an instrument of communication, and what role it plays in ordering rituals. It revealed that these celebrations are incomplete without touch that helps in communicating feelings and strengthening the bonds of society and culture and highlighted the delicate relationship between touch, ritual, and cultural practices (Gamliel, 2019).

Goa, India's smallest state in terms of land area, is located on the country's west coast. It shares boundaries with Maharashtra in the north, Karnataka in the south and east, and the Arabian Sea in the west. Because of the 450 years of Portuguese rule, numerous religious cultures and traditions met and altered Goa's socio-cultural landscape. Goa, like the rest of India, has a caste system, however it is not as severe as in the rest of the nation. Goa displays a special charm of religious harmony between many communities. Goa can be called as pantheon of gods (Pawaskar, 2019). Every Goan village has its own spiritual protector known as the "*gramdevta*" or village deity, who is usually chosen by the community. These deities are associated with local legends and are considered as the village's founders, guarding it against disaster and assuring the well-being of its residents, animals, and harvests. Smaller protector deities known as "*rakhane*" or "*jagavaile*" protect cultivated lands and the surrounding village from natural hazards, with shrines typically built near farmlands or boundaries. Stories about the relationship between "*gramdevta*" and "*rakhane*" include deity migrations owing to upper-caste movement or Hindu flight to avoid conversion during conquests (Henn, 2005, pp. 83-104).

Whereas Gomes investigated the intricate relationship between human civilizations, their adaptive responses to the natural environment, and the cultural aspects guiding these interactions. Examining Goa's animistic traditions, particularly focusing on symbols like termite mounds, the research highlighted their cultural significance as emblems of the Earth Mother Goddess. There exists a profound connection between nature, cultural practices, and spirituality in Goan traditions. Fire plays a central role in various ceremonies, including firewalking and fire-related rituals, contributing to a spiritual connection within the community. Specific ceremonies like *Gadde Jatra* in Sal village underscore the importance of fire in cultural expressions

(Gomes, n.d., pp. 7-10). The festival of *Gadyanchi jatra* is observed in some places of Goa. Each taluka has its own significance and style of carrying it out. Ghosts and holy spirits are mentioned in the *Gadyanchi jatras* of Sal, Borde- Bicholim, Pilgao, Kudne, and Savoi-Verem. It is seen as a festival worshipping demons and spirits. Sal in Bicholim is famous for this *Gadyanchi jatra*, which is performed on the day of Holi Poornima by decorating and erecting a wooden trunk of a mango tree near Mahadev temple. People wearing in white dhoti congregate around the *mand* (holy site) on the second day, while elderly people sing uninterrupted folk melodies. As *Gade* moves around the trunk built in front of the shrine, 52 people of various castes dress up. When they are in trance they run in direction of hill and it is believed that they are taken into the forest by mysterious torch shown by *devchar*. *Devchar* also hides some *gades* in the forest or inside the temples (Kerkar, 2009). *Devchars* are the cherished spirit gods, it means the one who has gone the god's way. Generally, *devchars* are considered to be benevolent spirits, and are also notorious for creating nuisance for people (Kamat, 2018). The unconscious *gades* are then handed over to conscious *gades*, who bring them to scared place and after pouring holy water on to them, they gain back their consciousness. During these nights, *gades* also visit crematorium and carry ramet of dead bodies for some time (Kerkar, 2009).

The *Gadyanchi jatra* is also celebrated at Shree Betal temple in Mahalwada, Poinguinim village, of Canacona in South Goa. Here, the celebrations differ a bit and *gades* are suspended by hooks on a rotating wheel. The *jatra* here is celebrated once in every three years in April. Pandurang Phaldessai investigated "*Gadyanchi jatra*" performed at Mahalwada Poinguinim Cancona Goa and emphasised the various types of rituals performed throughout this *jatra*, as well as the roles allotted to the participants. He has also explained the roots and rites associated with this *jatra*. People

from different backgrounds and regions of Goa have a significant role to play in making this *jatra* a success (Phaldessai, 2001). Similarly, Vasudev Phaldessai in his book gave overall picture of Poinguinim village, ranging from its early history to recent developments and has mentioned all the festivities that take place in this village. Some chapters from his book speaks of *Gadyanchi jatra*, especially with regard to the rituals performed during the event and he also explained the meaning of rituals and the verses used in Sanskrit language (Phaldessai, 2011). Hemant Aiya (2024), also provides information about the *Gadyanchi Jatra*. Thus, the research gap identified by the researcher is the lack of the documentation of this folk religion and is also lesser known to the people in comparison to the *Gadyanchi jatra* that takes place in other parts of Goa. The researcher aims to study *Gadyanchi jatra*, to analyse its uniqueness and cultural significance to the villagers and evaluate its role in a stratified society.

### 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

The *Gadyanchi jatra*, is a triennial event deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of Mahalwada, Poinguinim, Canacona, Goa. This traditional celebration offers a unique window into the enduring customs and rituals that have been passed down through the ages, carrying with them the collective memory of the community. The research questions which are central to this research investigation are:

1. What is the significance of *Gadyanchi jatra* to the villagers?
2. How does this *jatra* resonate with them on a personal, cultural and spiritual level?
3. What role does *Gadyanchi jatra* play in shaping their identity and sense of belonging?
4. Does the *Gadyanchi jatra* foster a sense of unity and inclusivity among the society or does it reinforce existing social hierarchies?

By examining these dimensions, the study aims to shed light on the multifaceted role of cultural traditions in shaping not only individual identities but also the social cohesion of diverse communities in Canacona, Goa.

#### 1.4 OBJECTIVES

1. to document the oral history of *Gadyanchi jatra*
2. to understand the social and cultural relevance of *Gadyanchi jatra* to the villagers
3. to analyse the roles played by different castes and tribe in the *Gadyanchi jatra*
4. to analyse the customs and social lives of the gades during the *Gadyanchi jatra*

#### 1.5 METHODOLOGY

The research will be qualitative research. This approach will be utilized to record essential information about the given topic. Both primary and secondary sources will be utilized to comprehensively grasp the subject matter. To achieve a profound comprehension of the studied community and their culture, the researcher will engage in ethnographic research. Ethnographic research takes a cultural lens to the study of people's lives within their communities (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This method will facilitate an exploration of various facets of the context and the group under examination. Additionally, narrative research will be integrated to acquire insights into the origins and myths related to the subject. Narrative research reveals consequential stories of people's lives as told by them in their own words and worlds (Nitinda, 2019).

To attain a comprehensive understanding of the chosen topic, primary data will be collected through qualitative methods such as participant observation and unstructured interviews. These interviews will use interview guide which will consist of open-ended questions, enabling participants to elaborate freely on their responses. A purposive sampling and snowball sampling method will be utilised to conduct the

interviews of the participants for the study. Alongside primary sources of data, secondary data from diverse sources like books, newspapers, journals, blogs, and mass media will also be used.

## 1.6 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Historically, the Canacona area was known by its original name, *Advat*, which in Prakrit signifies a distant or remote region connected by a route. Subsequently, *Advat* underwent a linguistic transformation influenced by the Kannada language, evolving into *Kadkona*. This name change was partly associated with the presence of the wild Indian bison or gaur as the entire area was once teeming with vast forests hosting large herds of these wild bison. Another interpretation of the name Canacona derives from the Kannada words "*kan*" or "*kanu*," meaning jungle, and "*icon*," signifying a lake. Accordingly, Canacona could be understood as a jungle containing a lake, forming the name "*Kankon*." With the influence of the Portuguese language, the spelling evolved into "*Canacona*," which remains in use today. Agriculture and horticulture form the backbone of the Canacona taluka's economy, supporting a majority of its population (Phaldessai, 2001).

Rice cultivation in Canacona occurs during two annual seasons, namely, "*vaingan*" (winter) and "*sarda*" (summer). The establishment of irrigation facilities became of paramount importance, with the construction and maintenance of tanks becoming a significant communal endeavour. Local administrative bodies, such as the "*comunidades*" and "*devasthanas*" (temples), played crucial roles in these efforts. The "*comunidades*" also allocated lands with irrigation facilities to impoverished peasants at reasonable assessment rates (Phaldessai, 2001).

In Canacona, several village names bear the suffixes "*gain*" or "*guise*," indicating low-lying areas. Poinguinim village falls within this category. "*Poi*" refers

to a strip of low-lying land along a river or the sea, which can also encompass saline waters, narrow creeks, or inlets susceptible to flooding during high tides. Another etymological origin suggested for Poinguinim is "*Panchaygram*," aligning with the trend of Sanskritizing place names. It's also noteworthy that certain Gaud Saraswat Brahman families, such as Prabhudessai, Prabhugaonkar, Phaldesai, and Phalgaonkar, originally hailed from the Pernem mahal but later migrated to settle in Canacona, specifically in the villages of Poinguinim (Phaldessai, 2001). Poinguinim village is located within the Canacona Tehsil of South Goa district in Goa, India. It is positioned 10 kilometres away from the subdistrict headquarters, Canacona, and 46 kilometres away from the district headquarters, Margao. The village covers a total geographical area of 3546.4 hectares and has a population of 6,625 people (Village Panchayat Poinguinim, n.d.). The village of Poinguinim is a home to a number of temples such as Lord Parashuram Temple, Shree Sidheshwar Temple, Shree Narayan Temple, Shree Navadurga temple, Lord Betal Temple and many others.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **ORAL NARRATIVES: ORIGIN OF *GADYANCHI JATRA***

A narrative is a story about the people, event and place that may either be fictional or factual. Oral narratives therefore would be verbal renditions of people, event and place. Oral narratives are synonyms to folktales, which are stories told by the common people (Ibiyemi, 2017).

Poinguinim village in Canacona taluka has a unique genesis narrative rooted in history. According to folklore, multiple communities relocated to Poinguinim from Pednem taluka in the eleventh century, though the identities of these people are unclear. Today, the village's demography reflects this diverse movement, with distinct caste groups living in different wards. These communities took with them their deities, resulting in a rich religious culture in Poinguinim. As a result, the small village gradually took shape, with its residents building homes and temples to worship. The creation of these temples resulted in temple committees, which played critical roles in village organisation.

These committees also oversaw the distribution of land to people who committed their lives to serving the gods or doing other religious responsibilities. This arrangement, known as the '*Gaunkari system*,' required locals to live on temple land in exchange for completing their religious duties.

#### ***2.1 PAINGIN PANCHAGRAM***

As the Poinguinim village grew, it also developed its relationship with the neighbouring villages of Loliem, Khargal, and Mashem. The five villages of Canacona are intricately linked. *Shree Parshuram Panchagram* connects all of the adjacent villages. This *Panchagram* includes the villages of Poinguinim, Loliem, Polem, Mashem, and

Khargal. This is because Poinguinim is home to the only temple devoted to Shree Parshuram in Goa. The settlement of Poinguinim is thought to have existed only after Shree Parshuram and thereafter by Shree Betal.

Another meaning of *Shree Parshuram Panchagram* states 5 main important temples in this village of Poinguinim. All these temples are governed by the main temple committee of Shree Parshuram temple. In Mahalwada ward itself there are 3 temples, which all together hosts or coordinate the triennial event of *Gadyanchi jatra*.

### 2.1.1 Shree Navadurga Temple

Shree Navadurga Devi Temple ranks third among the *Panchagram's* most prominent temples. It is around 1-2 kilometres from the main Poinguinim market. The idol of Shree Navadurga Devi has four hands. There are roughly 90 steps to ascend from the road on both the east and west sides of the temple. Eight *dipakalas* (lamps) are found on the temple's left and right sides. Yam, Irsh, Vaayu, Nairuti, Agni, Varun, Indra, and Kuber are the guardians of these eight directions. In front of the temple stands a big stone known as '*Wagra*'. It is believed that if a coconut is offered to that stone, it will protect the villagers from the tigers. Thus, it is customary to offer coconut once a year during the Dusshera festival.

*Tulsi Vrindavan* is situated within the hall of Shree Navadurga temple, where many people go into *bhar* (trance). It is assumed that whatever said during the *bhar* is genuine and correct. Even individuals who are possessed by evil or demonic spirits are given suggestions for how to be cured.



**Picture 2.1: Shree Navadurga devi**

Source: Researcher



**Picture 2.2: *Tulsi Vrindavan* at Shree Navadurga temple**

Source: Researcher

### 2.1.2 Shree Aadipurush Temple

Around 200 metres from the Shree Navadurga temple lies Shree Aadipurush temple, which has a small inner sanctum with a wooden pillar. This god is worshipped in the shape of a wooden pillar and is not an idol. Shree Aadipurush ranks fourth among

*Panchagram's* most prominent temples. This temple was established in the 1970s, and it is said that 13 *tumbya* flowers (*Leucas aspera*) are offered to the pillar. Meeting Shree Aadipurush first and then Shree Betal has been a long-standing tradition.



**Picture 2.3: Shree Aadipurush god**

Source: Researcher

### 2.1.3 Shree Naagejan

Shree Naagejan is a deity, located behind Shree Aadipurush temple. His temple is a small *ghudi* made up of stones. Instead of food, he is offered only fruits. Shree Naagejan is considered to be a descendent of priest of Shree Betal and Shree Aadipurush. It's from his name '*jana*' which means knowledgeable, he is considered to be intelligent.



**Picture 2.4: Shree Naagejan deity**

Source: Researcher

### 2.1.4 Shree Betal Temple

Shree Betal Temple is located on the right side of Shree Aadipurush Temple. This temple is quite old and features a sanctum. However, devotees who visit Shree Betal do not perform *pradakshina* since the sanctum is covered. Shree Betal's stone idol is around 4-5 feet long. In front, there is one *chouk* with four carved pillars and sixteen panels. The pillar on the right is used to serve 13 *tumbya* flowers *prasad*. His adherents also address him as 'Betubaab'



**Picture 2.4: Shree Betal god**

Source: Respondent

*Devulnass* lives on the right side of Shree Betal, who receives food offerings on full moon and new moon nights. *Aagyakond* is located on the left side of *chouk* and is used for sacrificial rituals. There are seven black *pashan lings* on the left side of the Shree Betal Temple. *Chakranass* sits atop a large rock in the temple's front yard known as Chakra fator.

Shree Betal's *Khadagaghar* and *Takyaghar* are to be found at the back of the temple. Many Velips of Sisheval consider it as their *gharvoi* and pay visits during festivals. Shree Betal's *khadag* (sword) is maintained in *Khadagaghar*, while *Takyaghar* houses *Tako* and *Taranga* inside.

## 2.2 NARRATIVE ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF *GADYANCHI JATRA*

Shree Betal is considered as God of ghosts and spirits. It is believed that he had conquered 12 kingdoms and killed people and had come to Poinguinim to conquer the village, thus making it the 13<sup>th</sup> kingdom. His presence in the village created chaos among the locals. During this situation, an intelligent guy named as Negu Velip came forward as a representative of 3 villages of Poinguinim, Loliem and Khargal to welcome Betal. At first, he requested Betal to reside permanently and be the protector *Trigram* (3 Villages). 'Tri' means three and 'gram' means village, thus *Trigram* means 3 villages of Poinguinim, Loliem and Khargal. But Betal demanded in return a foetus. Listening to the demands of Shree Betal, Negu offered to him a foetus of arecanut tree covered with membrane. Although Betal had demanded a human, bull and animal of 10 legs, which is considered to be a crab, he was astonished by Negu's intelligence and thus agreed to be the *rakhondar* of *Trigram*.

Another story reveals that when Betal came to conquer Poinguinim village, Negu acting as representative, used his abilities and made Betal fall for his tactics stating that if he keeps on killing people from villages, it will become empty and there would no single person to worship him. And further promised him the offerings such as 5 kilos of rice, sweets for prayers, meat, 4 legs domestic animals every Sunday and Wednesday from his devotees. The triennial event of *Gadyanchi jatra* or *Tisala parab* (Third festival) is also the part of the religious agreement Negu had with Shree Betal. Negu had promised to celebrate Shree Betal, by carrying his procession through

Loliem, Poinguinim, Khargal, inviting other deities and reading out his saga of bravery at the particular places. Even after realising that he fell in Negu's trap, he stood on his words. Thus, agreeing to all these promises, Shree Betal became the protector of 3 villages and the *Gadyanchi jatra* is celebrated in every three years.

This festival is a triennial event, consisting of *Jevni*, *Tako* in one year and the coming year *Gadyanchi jatra* thus leaving one year blank. Earlier *jevni* ceremony used to take place in the Hindu month of *Maagh*, However, because of certain circumstances they began to perform both *Jevni* and *Tako* in the same year during the *Vaishakh* month, then the following year *Gadyanchi jatra*.

Devotees from *Trigram* gather to celebrate this triennial Shree Betal festival. Shree Betal devotees come from all communities of *Trigram*. These communities have been assigned the work as their contribution to the event. As previously stated, it is believed that the temple committee provided these communities with land in exchange for their performance of occupational tasks. Thus, throughout time immemorial, these groups have carried out their obligations as a hereditary responsibility.

When there are occupational duties, there is indeed stratification. These society of *Trigram* is a stratified society, meaning only a particular caste and tribe has to perform their duty, no other group can perform it. All the rituals or contributions related to the *Gadyanchi jatra* are totally based upon castes and tribe or hereditary occupation. This stratification cannot be seen as there are no conflicts happening between them, but if one observes it carefully, they are deeply rooted in this event. For instance, the priest in Shree Betal temple is from the Velip community, however, they are not considered as '*Mahajan's*' rather the Gaud Saraswat Brahmins are given the title of *Mahajan's*. *Mahajans* are the devotees of the lord. This is mainly because village has been celebrating this *jatra* from many years, earlier communities well versed in their work

were assigned those work only. As they being well versed in their work, will make their contribution perfect, thus making overall *Gadyanchi jatra* a success.

There have been cases narrated by the villagers wherein a member of particular community declined to perform his role. In this regard, a person from different caste tried to perform it. That man after performing the role, faced severe repercussions.

In 2009, Poinguinim was flooded. An elderly guy, whose daughter-in-law had given birth a few days prior, was stressed when flood water entered his home. He didn't know what to do, so he took one coconut, remembered Shree Betal, prayed for his family's safety, and touched it to the floodwaters. That water quickly vanished, and after a while, there was no water in his home. After a few days, after the flood had decreased, he went to Shree Betal temple and cried, thanking him for saving them. This shows that people have a lot of faith in Shree Betal.

One cannot disregard the fact that you should never lie in front of Shree Betal. People have faced consequences as a result of their actions or situations. Such instances date back in time. During the seven-day mourning period after the *jatra*, when *Chowgules*, *Velip*, and others were at the temple, they went to look for fruits in someone's garden. They climbed the coconut tree and plucked coconuts, mangoes, and jackfruit for food. All of this made the house's owner quite upset. After a few days, he went to meet the temple committee to complain about how they had destroyed his garden. He requested compensation and was handed rupees 300 by the committee. He accepted the money and returned to his home. After a few days, he began to experience complications, including health issues. He was not the only one suffering; his family members also had health problems. He then realised his mistake and decided to repay the same amount, or rather the same notes, to the committee. He went and put it in the donation box, then apologised to Shree Betal for complaining about his disciples.

Beside Shree Betal Temple, there is one site. It is believed that if someone steals a coconut from a tree, the owner must remove the '*shevok*' of the coconut tree and keep it at a sacred place known as 'Chakra Fator', praying to punish the thief. It is believed that Shree Betal will punish the one who stole the coconut.

Shree Betal is the *rakhondar* of these three villages. People have faith in him. Not only Hindus, but many Christians from Mahalwada who have been converted return to this temple to pay their respects or to offer him promised gifts in exchange for fulfilling their wishes. Shree Betal is presented with their first catch of the season by the fisher community.

The *Gadyanchi Jatra* can be performed in the same year as *Tako*, or in the next year. After the *kono fodne* ritual, which involves breaking bamboo, no other functions such as marriages or thread ceremonies, take place in *Trigram* for at least one month. This is because people from all castes and a tribe of these three villages assemble to celebrate the *jatra*; if they host a ceremony at home, they will be unable to attend. Another reason could be that because all gods and goddesses are invited during the *Tako* procession, it is believed that all gods and goddesses from these three villages gather in Mahalwada to attend the *jatra*. Since all gods and goddesses are present at Mahalwada, they are unable to attend functions at people's homes to bestow their blessings. However, one could argue that this has an impact on local customs or traditions, because this *jatra* takes place primarily in April or May, wherein many people come from far to visit their home for vacation or to celebrate functions. There can be no other celebration or festival in the village due to the *bandhan* (restriction) of one month in all three villages. It is considered that even when some people fail to listen and celebrate functions, they would face consequences later on. Locals are believed to be afraid and do not hold any functions during this time.



**Picture 2.5: Celebration of *Gadyanchi jatra* at Mahalwada**

Source: Respondent

The *Gadyanchi jatra* is celebrated in Poinguinim, but it is also significant in the surrounding villages of Loliem and Khargal. As Shree Betal is the protector of three villages, devotees from the adjoining villages of Loliem and Khargal play an important role in this *jatra*. One year before the *Gadyanchi jatra*, Shree Betal leads a procession reading his legendary narrative known as '*Tako*'. This *Tako* is also claimed to be an invitation to Shree Betal's seven sisters, who live in three villages: Poinguinim, Loliem, and Khargal.

Loliem village has '*nagdo betal*', a naked sculpture of Shree Betal, who is considered to be the younger brother of Shree Betal in Poinguinim. This Betal sculpture is located in the Tengse family's backyard in Loliem. Devotees offer him sandals and weed. It is believed that the sandals handed to him were later worn out, indicating that they were used by Shree Betal. Villagers say he is still alive and goes about the village

at night to protect it. Loliem village has a strong and intriguing cultural continuity, with 20 temples belonging to several castes. The phrase *lola* refers to an unequal state or something that is unstable, whereas *aye* means land. Thus, Lolyem signifies a landscape composed of mountains, plateaus, and low-lying (Phaldessai, 2009).

The name of village Khargal ends with suffix '*gal*' which basically means a plain grassland. There are temples in Khargal which have significantly related to the *Gadyanchi jatra*. As one of the sisters of Shree Betal resides in Khargal, he visits her and invite for the *jatra*, similarly done in Loliem village. Thus, the festival of *Gadyanchi jatra*, brings three villages of Cancona together.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RITUALS OF GADYANCHI JATRA**

Ritual is a religious service which involves series of actions performed in a fixed order. It is a way of behaving as per prescribed or established form of religious ceremony. 'Ritual' usually meant repeated and voluntary bodily acts which are symbolic, and in the case of religious rituals they symbolise the divine objects (Argyle, 2002). Rituals and socio- religious events are the evidence of spirituality deeply ingrained in India. Hindu festivals, created by ancient sages, take place at certain times, providing moments of joy and escape from everyday routines (Selvaraju, 2018). These festivals, *jatra* and *mela* can establish a separate identity of the places to the whole world. Every year in auspicious day and time with different mottos people worshipped gods and goddesses, they can observe different festivals and *jatras* (Dulal, 2022).

*Jatras*, which combine festivals and pilgrimages, are held at specific locales for one day to a month. These folk festivals provide a sense of hope, transformation, and rebirth while briefly breaking free from societal standards. *Jatras* establish a ceremonial area outside of daily life, defining a cultural barrier separate from politics (Pandey & Pant, 2021).

The *Gadyanchi jatra* being a triennial event is held in the second year. A year before *Gadyanchi jatra*, other rituals are performed which involves *Jevni* and *Tako*.

#### **3.1 JEVNI**

Food and rituals have significant role in the triennial event of *Gadyanchi jatra*. A year before *Gadyanchi jatra*, the ceremony of *Jevni* is held. *Jevni* means feeding food. The ceremony of *Jevni* means feeding the communities involved in the *Gadyanchi jatra*. In the month of *Vaishakh*, particularly on *Akshaya Tritiya*, a Hindu auspicious day, *Jevni*

ceremony begins lasting for 4-5 days at the Shree Navadurga temple. After bathing and worshipping Lord Ganesha, they perform the '*med ghalap*' ritual (establishing an arecanut tree). The installation of *med* leads in a one-month ban on all functions such as marriages and thread ceremonies in *Trigram*. This is known as '*bandhan*' (restrictions) and is to be observed in the *Trigram*. The food we eat can represent a sense of belonging, being a part of a wider group, and can be associated with both joy and sorrow. Furthermore, dietary preferences are heavily influenced by cultural, historical, and sociological influences. Eating becomes an important social and cultural practice, reflecting shared beliefs, traditions, and connections within a society (Rokach, 2020).

### 3.1.1 *Kara Bharne* Ritual

Velips execute the *kara bharne* ritual, *kara* means *kalash*, and this ritual involves filling the *kalash* with water. This water is subsequently treated as holy water for all rituals. On the same day, *Chowgules*, Velip, *Purohit*, and *Vajantri* visit Shree Parshuram temple to do *pooja* and *mahapooja*. After doing the *rang pooja* in the evening, they return to the Shree Navadurga temple to worship. *Rang pooja* is a complex set of rituals that could begin days before or close to the performance. They consisted of various *poojas* addressing the gods displayed onstage. (Www.wisdomlib.org, n.d.).

### 3.1.2 *Bhatanichi Jevni*

There are three main types of *Jevni* conducted over three days. During this time, all 3 villages are given permission to carry out their *Jevni*. *Bhatanichi jevni* is held on the third day. This *Jevni* is only carried out by the Bhat community. The *Purohit* (Priest) comes from Phanaskhande Ward in Loliem village to perform this ritual. First, they worship Lord Brahma, who resides near a small spring in Mashem village, by offering him coconuts, bananas, *panavida*, and holy thread. *Chowgules* fetches five pots of

water from the spring. This water is then utilised for the *abhishek* and *havan* of Shree Navadurga devi, followed by the breaking of the coconut and the *visarjan* of Lord Ganesha. *Abhisheka* ritual is a highly revered Hindu ritual that involves the ceremonial bathing of a deity or a sacred object with sanctified substances.

### 3.1.3 *Brahmanachi Jevni*

*Brahmanachi jevni* is held the following day. On this day, *jevni* is served to the Gaud Saraswat brahmins, also known as the *Mahajans*. At the same time, sacrificial ritual is taking place in the neighbouring areas. Water from the Mashem spring and the *devabaaay* (God's borewell) is carried to the Shree Navadurga temple in the evening, while singing *harree haree* and dancing to the sound of musical instruments. Children, mothers, teens, and other people enthusiastically participate in the process. *Naivaidya* is served to the Navadurga devi at night, after the public dinner and *rang pooja*. Offering food to the deities during ceremonial worship or *pooja* at home or temples is a prevalent practice in Hindu Dharma. The deities receive the *Naivedya* once it is offered, and this offering is known as *prasad*, which is consumed by everybody (Bhat & C,2021). *Naivaidya* is more than just a food offer to God; it includes all offerings, tangible or intangible. It extends beyond mere edibles to include resolutions, promises, or a commitment to certain acts or constraints.

### 3.1.4 *Kharvya Jevni*

On the last day of *Jevni*, *kharvya jevni* takes place. On this day, all remaining communities are fed. After performing *abhishek*, *pooja*, and offering sacrifices, water is fetched from Mashem and *devabaaay* in the afternoon. Copper pans are used for carrying the water. The process is actively participated in by the Velip and Pagi communities. Velip prepares *ukdya tandool rice*, *varan*, and *suray tandool payas* at night and fills them into bamboo pots. *Gades* for the *Gadyanchi jatra* can still be found

at Shree Narayan Temple in Poinguinim. The *Mhar* brings them to the Shree Navadurga temple by playing drums early in the morning, around 4 o'clock.

As they approach the entrance, *Chowgules*, *Purohit*, villagers, and *Vajantri* come from Shree Navadurga temple, bow, perform *tripradakshina* to welcome them. *Chowgules* and Velip release rice, *varan*, and water in *Purohit*'s presence. Later, Pagi and other communities organises leaves for serving *naivaidya*. While chanting *Har Har Mahadev*, villagers fold the leaves and carry it as *prasad*, and the remaining food is sprinkled on each other by the villagers during *tripradakshina*. It is common to perform *lolti* on this occasion as *angon*. During *saangni*, individuals, particularly ladies, would show respect by doing *lotangana* around temple. All this happens in early morning and they live for bathing at Bhatabaandh on the Galjibagh river. Shenvi-Belyo family who lives at Tamne ward near Bhatabaandh invites these participants for tea. After having refreshments, all return back to the temple. This practice of people called by the Shenvi-Belyo family is there since many years. Earlier their ancestors used to welcome these participants with fruits, tea. Now, they offer people *kasaay*, *ussal* and fruits. This Shenvi-Belyo family's house is the first house after crossing the Bhatabaandh, so this could be reason behind participants coming to their house. They perform their role without any hesitations.

### 3.1.5 Twelve *Mandalis*

Except for *Bhatanichi jevni*, it is traditional to feed twelve *mandalis* (groups) at the *Jevni* ceremony. In this 12 *mandali* feeding ritual, food items, such as rice, coconut, and jaggery, are first placed in the circle on the right side of the goddess Shree Navadurga. Velips are second on the right side, *Jana* is third on the right side, *Malgado* is fourth on the left side, *Gades* are fifth, sixth, and seventh on the left side, *Katkaar* is eighth on

the right side, *Madval* is ninth on the right side, *Pernis* is tenth on the right side, *Mhasmaari* is eleventh on the right side, and *Mhar* is twelfth.

Later, the villagers serve the rice cooked by Velip of *ukde tandool*, *payas of suray tandool* and *varan* in the order listed above, followed by Velip, who sprinkles the *ghee* again. The portion of food placed on their leaves is called '*mannlin*'. A food-related ritual comprises specific types of food, the place where it is consumed, and other elements such as prayers, storytelling, or socialising before and after meals. According to Rook, food rituals can reveal information about social norms, rites of passage, and various ways people behave and interact. (Rook, 1985).

### 3.1.6 *Tond Bandhun Paavni*

At the end of the last day, they conduct '*tond bandun paavni*'. *Paavni* means auctions. In the traditional sense, festivals are occasions to celebrate shared values and strengthen bonds via mutual interests. Similarly, auctions bring together buyers and sellers who have similar objectives, with the ultimate goal of mutual profit. In this event, the leftovers brought for the ceremony of *Jevni* are filled in small amount in the copper bowl and mouth is tied with paper. Since the mouth of the bowls are tied or covered, it is called as '*tond bandun paavni*'. Names are written on the pots and the contents of the pots are called for auction. The ceremony then ends with the distribution of *prasad*.

## 3.2 *TAKO*

*Tako* procession begins shortly after *jevni*, generally on the following Wednesday. *Tako* is a document written on blue fabric from 1823. The size of the cloth is 167cm x 140cm. This holy cloth features an embroidered depiction of Shree Betal in the centre, surrounded by various deities and symbols. It contains the embroidered texts in Devnagari. There are two *takes* (plural of *tako*), one older and one new, with the latter referencing to the previous one. The ancient *Tako* features a portrait of Shree Betal, and

13 statues of Betal in various poses along the border. This holy cloth, known as *Tako*, narrates the story of Shree Betal's bravery and excellence and the *Gadyanchi Jatra*. *Tako* is read exclusively by Brahmins; no other castes are permitted as in earlier times only brahmins had access to education, they were in a better position to read than all others.

*Tako* is read in all three villages: Poinguinim, Loliem, and Khargal. It is regarded as a method of inviting other deities from *Trigram* to the *Gadyanchi jatra*. It is believed that Shree Betal goes to invite his seven sisters for *Gadyanchi jatra*, which is held the upcoming year. These seven sisters live in the villages of Loliem, Khargal, and Poinguinim. Sateri at Galyem, Bhagwati at Khavat, Sateri at Tadvya, Mohini at Sadolshe, Sateri at Kholsar, Loliem, and Bhagwati in Khargal. Although he goes to call his sisters, he also invites other deities who live in these villages to the *jatra*. Thus, this *Tako* encompasses the entire *Trigram* via a permanent traditional way to walk. Following is the *Tako*

श्रीगडिखांबगडिचा मेडा गडि अंक टंक सुख चवर गादि गादियेवर पडगादि दावु पाच्छावू मलरावु  
स्थापनाचारी सोन्याच्या वाटीयेवरी रुपेचा गोळा बावन्न ब्रिदांचा पाटपरिमळा उद्धरती पांचशे  
सतियां

ची महिमा काळी गादि पांढरी साती तिही भुयी ची ची उपरी सुवर्णाचा कलश गुत्ती मसराटी  
गजागण बेतुराणा बोलावून आणि ला माणीकेसी खांब घातला बारा रायाचा झुजार बारा राय  
खाडियेचे खांडे स्थळीं के

ले तेरावे राज्याचा अंकणा घडिएक सिंह भैरपाळ शरणागता रक्षपाळ, आले गेले याचा प्रतिपाळ  
उलंघुनी धाडीता बळी आश्रमचा आंबला पोटिचे देती पण पाठिचे राखती शरणागता वज्रपं जरु



**Picture 3.1: Tako**

Source: Konkani united, <http://konkansunited.blogspot.com/2021/07/gadyachi-jatra-festival-in-go-is.html?m=1>

Statements written on *Tako*

## Meaning

श्रीगडिखांबगडिचा मेडा

*Khaamb* and *med* in *Gadyanchi jatra*

गडि अंक टंक सुंख चवरगादि

Formation and organisation of *Gadyanchi jatra*

गादियेवर पडगादि

Formation and organisation of *Gadyanchi jatra*

दावु पाच्छावू मलरावु स्थापनाचारि

Description of Shree Betal's bravery

सोन्याच्या वाटेवरी रुपेचा गोळा

Description of the surrounding environment

बावन्न ब्रिदांचा पाटपरिमळा

52 important symbols and history

उधरती पांचशे सतियांची महिमा

350 sisters of Shree Betal

काळीगादि पांढरीसाठी तिही भुवीची उपरी

Formation of *Gadyanchi jatra*

सुवर्णाचा कलश

*Kalash* used to carry '*karyapaani*'

गुत्ती मसराटी गजागण बेतुराणा बोलावून आणिला

Shree Betal send invitation to all

माणीकेसी खांब घातला

*Khaamb* has been established for the *Gadyanchi jatra*

बारारायाचा झुजार बाराराय खाडियेचे खांडेस्थळीं केले

After conquering 12 kingdoms with his power

तेरावे राज्याचा अंकणा

Came to Poinguinim village, the 13<sup>th</sup> territory

घडियेके सिंहभैरपाळ

Description of Shree Betal's excellence

आले गेले याचा प्रतिपाळ

Wars and enemies who came

उलंघुनी धाडीता

Sent them back fighting

बलि आश्रमचा आबला

Providing home to everyone

पोटिचे देती पण पाठिचे राखती

Gave everything but also protecting us

शरणागता वन्न पजरा

We are surrendering and praying to you the god

The language in which *Tako* is written is not identified by anyone. It becomes difficult to the people to understand its meaning. However, attempts have been made by few villagers to relate those words to the process of *Gadyanchi jatra* and understand its meaning.

### 3.2.1 *Tako*: Day One

On the first night, all *sevajan* (service providers) with *devasthaan*, 52 *birude*, and Shree Betal's *Chattri* must be present. *Katkaar* then inquires whether people from Trigram are there, and if so, he proceeds with *Saangni*. *Devasthaan* refers to the *Chattri*, *Pillakucho*, and *Khaamb*, so when it is carried by people, that group is referred to as *Devasthaan*. These 52 *birude* are fundamentally essential symbols, some of which are *shank* (conch shell), *surya* (sun), *paan* (leaf), *mugut* (crown), *rumaal* (towel), *ghanta* (bell) *chakra* (wheel), *langot* (loincloth) *mor* (peacock), *chavari* (ornamental tassels), *shera* (lion), *shingi* (blowing horn), *trishul* (trident), *tura* (skull), *kankan* (bangle), *naadi* (knot). Others include *Shirtaj*, *Maayatajak*, *maahe martab*, *gand bhairi*, *shaeel*, *chang*, *patta*, *samala*, *gadi*, *naagbandh*, *vaaki*, *barak*, *ranjod*, *kalagi*, *meghdambr*, *huma*, *ankush*, *khanda*, *farash*, *babamorchel*, *Vallabh*, *langar*, *saiile*, , *naagjyoti*, *halar wak*, *shendur*, *korda*, *muraj*, *padna*, *gada*, *khadaka*, *mekh*, *mogai*, *panchrangi* and *nishaan*, whose meanings are not known to people.

The person who gets possession of Shree Betal is dressed in a special style and carries *khadag* (sword). Everyone gathered goes to *Takyaghar* to get *Taranga*, *Chattri*, and *Kara*. In this ritual, one person holds Shree Betal's *khadag*, the other holds *Kara*, and two persons carry *Tako*. Their mouths are covered with cloth until *Sanchar*. *Sanchar* refers to the journey where they will recite the *Tako*. *Taka Sanchar*, together with the *sevajans* and villagers, embarks on a seven-day journey to *Trigram*. Shree Betal's *Taka vachan* begins at Shree Narsimha temple and then moves on to the next

location. At Kalpurush temple, *Tako* is recited while performing *pradakshina*, after done with the ritual of *karapaani*, on third *pradakshina* they go to Shree Navadurga temple, staying there overnight wherein food is served to all the people. The rituals of *karapaani* means, they drop water at the entrance of every temple they visit for *Taka Sanchar*. From this day to next 7 days, they go on visiting from one place to another. For welcoming *Tako* at every fixed place, the villagers also erect ‘*torans*’ (traditional arcs).

### 3.2.2 *Tako*: Day Two

They began with *Taka Sanchar* at Shree Navadurga temple in the morning and then proceeded to Galyem to visit Goddess Sateri. Here, food is offered to the *devasthaan*. *Taka vachan* and other rites are performed in the presence of everyone at 2 p.m., following the welcome and supper. For the night, they remain at the Bhagwati temple in Khavat. Similarly, food is served to the *devasthaan* and the locals, and *Taka vachan* is performed in front of everyone.

### 3.2.3 *Tako*: Day Three

On the third day, about 9 a.m., *Taka vachan* and *karapaani rituals* are performed at Bhagwati temple, after which they go to Talem ward, to offer a coconut, and then to Welwada ward to rest. After the lunch, they execute *Taka vachan* and *karapaani* rituals in front of everyone before proceeding to the Shree Parshuram temple via a permanently set path. They get *bhar* on the way to the Parshuram temple, and their aides must be prepared and vigilant to handle it. After the rituals are completed, they show *Taranga's* to Shree Parshuram and Shree Purshottam.

After *Saangni* being performed, *Taka vachan* is done before Shree Parshuram and coconuts are offered to both the gods. As usual, they move to Shree Siddheshvar temple to perform *Taka vachan*, *karapaani* rituals, offers coconut and then continues

their journey to Tadvya ward to meet goddess Sateri. *Taka vachan*, *karapaani* rituals, coconut is offered and then for night stay they go to Shree Paachapurush temple.

#### 3.2.4 *Tako*: Day Four

The next morning, *Taka vachan* takes place along with other rituals, and they proceed to Sadolshe ward to meet Goddess Mohini. During their journey, they are offered *gullpaani* (sweet water) as per old rituals to provide them strength while walking. Once they reach the temple, they perform *Taka vachan* and *karapaani* rituals, and on the third *pradakshina*, they visit the Sateri goddess in Kolsar.



**Picture 3.2: Traditional path for *Tako* procession**

Source: Respondent

#### 3.2.5 *Tako*: Day Five

The next day, in the early morning, *Taka vachan* and other rituals are carried out in front of the villagers, and they continue their journey back to Shree Betal temple, but first they stop at Shree Aadipurush, where *Taka vachan* is performed, followed by *saangni* and *karapaani*, and then they proceed to Shree Betal Temple. Since Shree Betal has returned home, *Taka vachan* and other rituals are performed, food is provided, and

everyone is free to return home. Shree Betal stayed at his residence for one day, so he can resume his journey at any time. It is customary for the people of Loliem to come to Poinguinim on the next day, which is the sixth day to request *Tako* to come to Loliem.

This is because, during early times, *Painginkar* (villagers of Poinguinim) opposed and told *Lolyekar* (villagers of Loliem) to come and carry *Tako* since they would not come to Loliem village. However, the lolyekars did not arrive, so *Tako* was detained at Chandanaped, and everyone stayed at Shree Narayan temple in Poinguinim. *Lolyekar* arrived late, took *Tako* with them and stayed at Shree Keshav temple, but for some reason, they abandoned a small idol of Goddess Sateri. Following that, *Painginkars* took the idol near the Shree Betal temple. Since then, goddess Sateri does not carry *Tako* to Loliem, and Shree Betal is also hesitant to visit Loliem.

### 3.2.6 *Tako*: Day Six

On the sixth day, while travelling to Chandanaped, the same person gets possession of Shree Betal, once *Taka vachan* and other rituals are completed, they must bridge the Galjibagh river to reach Loliem, so *Lolyekars* provide boats to carry *Tako* to Loliem village. However, when everyone has left, Shree Betal is hesitant to leave since his sister, who travels with him, will not accompany him to Loliem. He is then grabbed by the other participants and forced to sit in the boat as it crosses the river. He regains his awareness.

They rest at regular intervals along the way to Shree Keshav temple. By evening, they arrive in Khaanle Paand.

### 3.2.7 *Tako*: Day Seven

On the final day, after performing the rituals, they proceed to the Shree Vishnu temple, where they perform *Taka vachan* and *Karapaani* rituals, offer coconut, and continue their journey to Khargal. When they get in Khargal, they are greeted by the locals. They

go along a predetermined route to Bhadegali, where they rest at Shree Durga Devi shrine. The next morning, the first roster to make a noise in the early morning is picked for sacrifice. *Katkaar* carries the rooster. He and Shree Betal are kept behind while the rest of the *devasthaan* marches on. The rooster is then released at Chakra Faator. He then moves freely throughout the year, staying at anyone's known as '*deva kombo*' and being treated with respect. If he survives for the whole year, till the *Gadyanchi jatra*, he is taken for sacrificial rituals. There are circumstances wherein such roosters are killed by dogs or other animals. In such cases they substitute it with another.

They begin the journey back to Shree Betal temple after completing the rituals at Shree Durga Devi Temple. After arriving at the Betal temple, *Katkaar* inquiries *Painginkar aaile? Lolyekaar aaile? Khargalkar aailo? Khushi Jale? Painginkar arrived? Have the lolyekars arrived? Has Khargalkar arrived? Is everyone happy?* The next day, they perform *rangpooja*, feed food to Shree Betal, and give *ashirwad*, bringing the *Tako* procession to an end and also marking the end of *bandhan* on *Trigram*. Though *Tako* cannot be deemed *jatra*, '*jatra*' was supposed to be a musical parade where the deity was conveyed from one area to another; thus, it is related with the word journey or the state of a journey in Bengali. (Maitra, 2019)

### 3.3 GADYANCHI JATRA

*Gadyanchi jatra* is one of the most significant elements of this triennial event, which takes place in the second year, the year following the *Jevni* and *Tako* procession. The *Gadyanchi jatra* is also known as '*Tisala Parab*'. The term '*Tisala*' means third, and '*Parab*' means festival, hence the combination represents the third festival. This *jatra* is observed for about 27 days and includes a variety of rituals and customs passed down from ancestors. This *jatra* is of the three villages: Poinguinim, Loliem, and Khargal. Similar to this *jatra*, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, celebrates the Nhaya Gaya Jatra, which is a

seven-village jatra. During this *jatra*, scores of smaller nearby villages celebrate their respective patron goddesses (Maharajan, 2009). *Gadyanchi jatra* usually begins on Wednesday after the ritual of '*kono fodne*' (breaking bamboo). After this ritual is performed, *bandhan* is observed in *Trigram* and followed by the other events.

### 3.3.1 *Zagor*

During this 27-day period, many rituals are carried out, including various forms of *Zagors*. *Zagor* is a prayer to the Almighty for protection from all misfortune that befalls the village (Rodrigues, 2004). On the first Wednesday, '*Daitya Zagor*' is performed, in which a large *Daitya* (giant) of roughly 10-15 feet is built, placed on wheels, and kept at the location away from the temple's main premises called as '*Daityamol*'. This *zagor* involves three *Daityas*: Ramu, Kitu, and Madhu. The biggest one is Ramu, who is decorated by the *Perni* community. Madhu and Kitu are tiny *Daityas*. According to traditional traditions, these *Daitya* are built using *sup* (bamboo winnowing pan), *haatari* (pallet), and *kaambal* (rug) no other things are to be used.

There is a story of *Daitya* running to fight Shree Betal. To assassinate this *Daitya*, a *Perni* portrays himself as the goddess Mahishasurmartini. Once he is adorned and wearing her jewellery, he gets possession of the goddess. If he does not wear these ornaments, he will be unable to kill *Daitya* since he will be reduced to an ordinary being. Villagers pull the rope linked to *Daitya* and carry him to '*Chakra Fator*' in front of the temple. The *Perni* then runs from the temple, holding *Khadag*, to attack *Daitya*, accompanied by the beats of *dhol* and *taso*. When *Perni* touches his *khadag* to *Daitya*, *Mhasmaari* must offer one sacrifice in reference to *Daitya's* death. This act is repeated three times to kill all three *Daityas*. Later, they throw a *Daitya* at Chakra Fator, indicating that he has been beaten, prompting all viewers to gather together and defeat the *Daitya*. The beating of *Daitya* is a long-standing habit. People assemble in vast

numbers to see and participate in this event. They are overjoyed since an evil has been defeated by their goddess, and the *jatra* will continue without any complications.

The following Wednesday is kept for *Chora Zagor*. Here *Perni's* have to enact as robbers and has to steal the belongings of Shree Betal such as bell or lamp along with fruits available in the surroundings. After stealing when they are roaming around the temple premises, *Katkaar* catches them and present in front of villagers for an investigation. Later the committee which has been set for this act hears the complaints of villagers present and allows the *chor* to speak for themselves. They are investigated by asking questions such as '*tumi khanche? Tumi hanga kityak aaile? Kite chorle tumi?* Where are you all from? Why you came here? What did you steal? The committee then decides the punishments for both of the robbers, wherein one is given the punishment of slaughtering and other is buried in ground. However, *Perni's* are not actually punished as these punishments are performed with animal sacrifices.

*Divza gondhal*, also known as *Divza zagor*, takes place on Fridays night. *Divja* translates to light or *devache rup*. The word *divz* is derived from the word *divzam*, which means four corners; it is a *divli* with four *pontio* and one on top (Rodrigues, 2004). *Mharachi divza* are regarded as essential as they are required for the proper functioning of other *divza*. It is believed that if *Mharachi divza* arrives first and performs perfectly, everything will run smoothly and without incident during the *jatra*. This *Mharachi divza* must move in front of *devasthaan* and perform *pradiskshana* just around Shree Betal temple and keep *divzas* at Daityamol, unlike the *divzas* of *Chowgules* and others, they cannot attend Shree Adipurush temple since he is a brahmin. For this *Divza zagor* all caste groups participate, there is no discrimination as such. These *divzas* are to be performed by women of these groups in the early morning around 4 am.

In between *Daitya zagor* and *Divza gondhal*, *Pernis* execute another sort of *zagor* called as '*Perni Zagor*'. This *Perni zagor* is performed every day, even before the *Daitya zagor*, and continues every night till *Divza gondhal*. For this *zagor*, God masks such as Lord Ganpati and Lord Vishnu are used. There is a total of 12 such masks, which are worn when performing *zagor* dancing and singing. Lord Ganpati comes first, followed by Saraswati and Mahadev. The most essential figure in this *zagor* is '*Mhatari*' (elder women), who appears at the end. This is a humorous character. This *zagor* is akin to dance performances (*pyakha*), in which men dress up as deities and ambulate from one location to another while performing dances. Bhadrakali Dance and Pachali dance, Astamatrika dance of Bhaktapur, etc fall into this group. The purpose of these dances is to get rid of the evils, and it is considered as a war against evils (Maharajan, 2009).



**Picture 3.3: Masks used for *Perni Zagor***

Source: Respondent

Although the *Gadyanchi jatra* takes place on Saturday, preparations begin the day prior. All four *gades* leave early in the morning for Khavat; for the *jatra*, they must fast, so they eat only fruits. Once *Mhar* arrives in Khavat, after his lunch, he beats the *dhol*, and the *gades* must abandon whatever they are doing, and run furiously towards

Shree Betal temple in Mahalwada for the *Gadyanchi jatra*. As these *gades* are in trance or possession, generally locals, are assigned to assist and manage them while they are unconscious.

On their route from Khavat to the Shree Betal temple in Mahalwada, they offer four coconuts to each deity temple they pass. They reach near the temple about 4-5 in the evening. But first, they must wait at Shree Navadurga temple. By that time, *devasthaan* have positioned themselves at the entrance of Shree Betal temple to greet *gades*. As the *gades* arrive, they greet one another, hug, and then proceed near *devabaay* for bathing.

After bathing, they dress themselves in white *dhotar*, *feta*, and flowers. They hold a cloth in one hand and an adorned *talvaar* in the other. After worshipping all the gods, *saangni*, and *Taka vachan*, these *gades* arrive and take their seats in front of the Shree Betal temple. A Metri pierces them with *gare* (iron hooks) along the spine of their back. *Malgado*, the leader, gets pierced twice on his back, followed by the other three. They are given a dried betelnut to place between their teeth while being pierced. *Shelgade* dances around them to distract or make them happy. Once all four *gades* have been pierced, a white cloth is tied to their back and brought near the '*khaamb*' (pillar).

To carry out the *jatra*, two 45-50-foot-long *khaambe* (plural of *khaamb*) are set up in front of the Shree Betal temple. There are no religious restrictions for selecting these *Khaamb*; nonetheless, they must be *Fodgurs* or *Automb* trees. Previously, when people went into the forest to collect, hunt, or graze their animals, they would observe large trees and converse with other people. They would then cut it from the jungle and bring it to the temple. However, because of the forest department's strict rules, they are now unable to chop anything without authorization. As a result, they must now acquire

permission from the forest department before chopping the tree that serves as *khaamb* for the *Gadyanchi jatra*.



**Picture 3.4: *Khaambe* for *Gadyanchi jatra* (Pillars)**

Source: Researcher

On this *khaamb*, they construct a small platform onto which a *rahat* (wheel) is attached at a height of four feet from the stage. This *rahat* is constructed from *Khairi*, *Daban*, and *Gotak* trees. Loliem *Sutars* prepare this *rahat* and inspect it prior to the *jatra*. Because *gades* must climb these two *khaambe*, there are four ladders made of betelnut trees linked to the four sides of the *khaamb*, one for each *gado*.



**Picture 3.5: Rahat for Gadyanchi jatra (Wheel)**

Source: Respondent

These *gades* climb the ladder and reach the top of the stage. At first *Malgado* is tied to *rahat* with cloth, followed by the next three. Once all four *gades* are tied to *rahat*, they are rotated four times. After rotating *Malgado* asks from above, "*Lolyekar aaile? Painginkar aaile? Khargalkar aaile? Chowguli Basle? Khushi Jale?*" *Lolyekars* arrived? Have *Painginkars* arrived? Has *Khargalkar* arrived? Did *Chowgules* take a seat? Is everyone happy? *Khargalkar* is given particular attention in this case because the remainder of the questions apply to all, but *Khargal* just has one. As with *Tako*, only one individual from *Khargal* is granted the right to provide meals for *devasthaan*. The *rahat* is rotated five times as the audience respond with '*hay*' (yes). After some time, the *gades* are untied sequentially as done while tying them and brought back down.

Following the *jatra*, the *gades* undergo a transformation as their piercings are removed, and they are ceremonially escorted to the Shree Aadipurush and Shree Betal temples to receive blessings and offerings known as *prasad*. Following that, community people rush to the *gades* to show their gratitude and provide gifts, indicating that the *jatra* has been completed successfully. There is a widespread notion that the

*gades* experience a rebirth throughout this sacred voyage, representing renewal and spiritual restoration.



**Picture 3.6: The *Gades* rotated for *Gadyanchi jatra***

Source: Konkani united, <http://konkanisunited.blogspot.com/2021/07/gadyachi-jatra-festival-in-go-is.html?m=1>

### 3.3.2 *Kheech* (Sacrificial rituals)

The day following of the *jatra*, usually a Sunday, is called as "*Kheech*." During this time, sacrificial rituals are performed as offerings to Shree Betal. These rituals are often held at night, with all electricity turned off to prevent observation, especially by women. The blood from the sacrifices is mixed with white boiled rice, then showed it to the *gades* and finally tied to Shree Betal's mouth. Furthermore, *rahat* is flung from the top onto the Chakra fator, with the intension that it will break on impact. Following these procedures, both the *gades* and Shree Betal are subjected to seven days of restrictions. Certain communities, including *Chowgules*, *Perni*, *Mhasmaari*, *Velip*, and *Mhar*, are obligated to stay at the temple for the duration of the seven days. Although the *gades* are allowed to leave their houses to eat meals given by villagers, these community members staying at the temple are not. They can carry Shree Betal's *panti*

and are permitted to harvest fruits from families in the *Trigram* at night. They are regarded as Shree Betal's devotees, and no one can stop or question their deeds.

After 7 days, they head to the Talpona River to bathe. After being cleaned and performing *pooja*, they return to the Shree Betal temple. Here, everything is cleansed, and Shree Betal is bathed. When they untie a piece of cloth tied around his mouth, they observe that blood has been absorbed into the rice, and the rice is completely white. The white rice is then buried in front of Shree Betal temple.

### 3.4 TRANSITION IN *GADYANCHI JATRA*

This traditional event's functioning shows signs of transition. Traditionally, only men participated and witnessed the rituals of *Jevni* and *Tako*, but women are now engaging in greater numbers. Previously, during the *Jatra*, animal sacrifices were popular, and the skins were used to manufacture sandals. However, this practice has recently been discontinued. The spinning and throwing of *gades* during the festivities were once a frequent custom, but it has since been substituted by symbolic animal motions. During this time, wives of the *gades* would lay their *Mangal sutras* (auspicious necklaces) in *Tulsi*, praying for their husbands' well-being. The number of piercings in the *gades* has decreased from four to two. Technological improvements have brought about substantial changes; for example, instead of personally sending letters to the temple committee, the *Katkaar* now communicates via phone. Furthermore, forest rules have made it difficult to secure the necessary timber for the event.

The transition observed in the *Gadyanchi jatra* can be analysed using Modernization Theory. According to Modernization Theory of Daniel, societies go through a modernization process, which includes changes in social, economic, and cultural aspects as they transition from traditional to contemporary forms. This idea contends that technical improvements, urbanisation, industrialization, and higher

education cause changes in societal structures, values, and behaviours (Sigelman, 1974). In the context of *Gadyanchi jatra* we can observe how there has been transition in gender roles that is now women can also be the part of *Jevni* and *Tako* ceremony. Though the transitions are happening, they have preserved their authentic ways of carrying out the rituals.

The triennial event gathers a large crowd, including not just villagers but also people from all across Goa who are eager to witness the *Tako* and *Gadyanchi jatra*. While they may not actively participate, they like witnessing the rituals and customs. This collective experience generates a sense of togetherness that cuts across barriers, bringing individuals together in mutual reverence. People worship Shree Betal as he protects the villages and his disciples from natural disasters, epidemics. They celebrate this *Gadyanchi jatra* to pay their gratitude to Shree Betal, for always blessing them. For the villagers, this *Gadyanchi jatra* resembles the blooming of a flower. Every person from villages, also those who have migrated, return back to their hometown during this period. Their connection with Shree Betal is not merely spiritual but deeply emotional, as evidenced by numerous instances where devotees attribute their help and solutions to Shree Betal's intervention.

Among the traditions, offering coconuts to Shree Betal is an appeal for assistance, and many people credit Shree Betal with solving their problems. This faith expands beyond the village's borders, covering a diverse group of followers from both local and distant locations. Such acts of devotion strengthen the importance of faith and community in devotees' lives, fostering a deep sense of connection to Shree Betal.

This *Gadyanchi jatra* creates a sense of unity and equality among the participants. They experience 'communitas'. (Turner, 1961) Turner's concept of communitas refers to the strong sense of community and solidarity that emerges during

liminal or transitional periods, such as rituals or festivals. During these times, societal hierarchies are temporarily suspended, and people feel a deep feeling of togetherness and equality. Elements of *communitas* can be observed in a gathering of people from all regions of Goa to watch the *Tako* and *Gadyanchi jatra*. Despite their various backgrounds and socioeconomic situations, they all have a common experience of observing rituals and customs. This collective witnessing generates a temporary sense of unity that crosses cultural barriers, establishing a sense of community among participants.

All the *jatras*, festivals and fairs have their own importance. Though they are celebrated for enjoyment they all have some religious purpose behind it. According to the villagers, celebration of *Gadyanchi jatra* creates a religious environment which helps in strengthening their confidence and behaviour towards others. They believe such celebration helps them to connect and express their devotion to Shree Betal. The celebration of *jatras* and festivals keeps one's soul and spirits in tune with the traditional values and ethics.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **CASTES AND TRIBE ROLES IN GADYANCHI JATRA**

#### **4.1 ROLE OF DIFFERENT CASTES AND TRIBE**

*Gadyanchi jatra*, a cherished triennial festival steeped in age-old rituals and traditions, is vital to the *Trigram's* cultural legacy. This great event, passed down through centuries, represents the combined passion and commitment of many castes and tribe groups. As the *jatra* progresses, each member of the community plays an important role, adding to the elaborate tapestry of customs and rituals. Among the bustling activities that surround *Jevni*, *Tako*, and the *Gadyanchi jatra*, the activities or roles are systematically dispersed among the villagers of *Trigram*. This duty allocation indicates a strong reverence for Shree Betal, the guardian deity cherished by all three villages. The respect for Shree Betal is demonstrated by the community members dedication to sustain its shared religious and cultural traditions.

Recognising the importance of shared responsibility, *Trigram* residents work together to ensure the success and continuation of this tradition. The different roles performed by the different castes and tribe groups in the *Gadyanchi jatra* as follows:

##### **4.1.1 *Purohit***

The *Purohit* is the designated priest, primarily associated with the Shree Parshuram temple. Associated with the *Panchagram*, this *Purohit* performs religious responsibilities at numerous temples and occasions. Belonging to the 'Karahade Brahmin' lineage, distinct from the Gaud Saraswat Brahmins who partake in non-vegetarian practices, Karahade Brahmins strictly adhere to vegetarianism and hold priestly roles.

The *Purohit's* function is critical, assisting *Chowgules* and *Velips* in performing rituals. During *bhar*, they are responsible for *saangni* and *pooja*, including accompanying the *Tako* procession and performing specific *poojas* and *garahane* rituals during *Taka Sanchar*. Furthermore, during *Gadyanchi jatra*, they are in charge of *poojas* and *saangni*. They live on the temple premises and are rewarded for their services.

#### 4.1.2 Gaud Saraswat Brahmins: *Chowgules*

The Gaud Saraswat Brahmins of Poinguinim village, particularly the Prabhugaonkar, Prabhudessai, Phaldessai, and Phalgaonkar, are known as '*Chowgules*'. There are four *Chowgules* in total, one from each of the families listed above. They play an important role in *Paingin Panchagram*. Their role extends beyond the *Gadyanchi jatra* to include other temples and activities in *Panchagram*. The temple committee provides these *Chowgules* with land in exchange for their services.

These *Chowgules* are considered *Mahajans* of Shree Betal. They are given the most relevance in *Trigram*. All events, such as *Jevni*, *Tako*, and *Gadyanchi jatra*, proceed only with their approval. In other words, when asked about the villagers, *Gades* expressly asks '*chowgule basle?*' Did *Chowgule* seat? This means that they are given higher importance at the time of *Gadyanchi jatra*.

They play an essential role in the triennial event; without them, rituals wouldn't take place. They must be present for the *poojas* and other ceremonies. They undertake rituals at the *Jevni* ceremony with the assistance of *Purohit*. For the *Tako* procession they must stay with the *devasthaan* for seven days. During *Taka Sanchar*, this *Chowgules* carry a stick made of bamboo as a symbol of dignity and respect. They must be present for *Gadyanchi jatra*, where they primarily perform *poojas* with the assistance of the *Purohit*. Otherwise, they have no additional tasks to complete; they

simply need to be present. Furthermore, after the *Gadyanchi jatra*, they must stay in the temple for seven days. Only after completing 7 days, bathing at Talpona river and after the pooja at Shree Betal temple, they are allowed to go home.

#### 4.1.3 The Velip Tribe

Shree Betal is the main deity of the Velips in Poinguinim, and many of them live closer to Shree Betal temple in Mahalwada. The origin tale of the *Gadyanchi jatra* traces back to a Velip named Negu, who, through his cleverness, secured Shree Betal as the *Rakhondar* of *Trigram*.

These Velips hold the revered post of priests at the Shree Betal temple, where they faithfully execute daily rituals including *pooja* and *prasad*. Their significance extends to the *Gadyanchi jatra*, where they perform key roles. They control critical aspects such as *Jevni* arrangement, '*med*' setup, and food and other essentials preparation.

During the *Tako* procession, Velips are entrusted with the responsibility of carrying and handling the *Tako*, as well as holding *Pillakucho*, *Khadag*, and Shree *Betal's chatri*. They accompany the *Taka Sanchar* for the entire seven days. On the day of the *Gadyanchi jatra*, Velips are tasked with managing the *devasthaan* and overseeing all other arrangements. Some of them also assist the *gades* near the rahat area during the tying ceremony. In recognition of their contributions, they receive rewards and are granted land by the temple committee.

#### 4.1.4 Lohar (Blacksmith)

The *Lohar* community plays an important role in the *Gadyanchi jatra*. These *Lohars* are from the Chari family, which is further divided into the *Lohar* and *Sutar* subgroups. *Lohars* are people who live in Mahalwada, whereas *Sutars* live in Iddar. The *Lohars* of Mahalwada are skilled in ironwork, and their major activity during the *jatra* is the

creation of *Gare* (iron hooks) and *Daban* (bodkin). These delicate and soft *gares* are essential for the *jatra* because they are to be placed into the backs of the *gades* without causing damage. They are polished with oil to guarantee a smooth insertion. The *daban*, is placed on the back of the *gades* before inserting *gares* as with the help of *daban* they insert *gares*. These *gares* are of 2.5-3 inches and *daban* are of 2 inches. They need to be made by a skilled person. The main reason for this that, when they are inserted in the back muscles of *gades*, they should not cause harm and skin infection.

The work of producing *gares* and *daban* is divided among 2 *Lohar* families. One is in Mahalwada and the other is in Loliem. As there are 4 *gades*, each of them requires 2 *gares* and 2 *daban*, in total 8 *gares* and 8 *daban*. The production of these is further equally divided among these 2 families that is 4 *gares* and 4 *daban* are to be produced by *Lohar* in Loliem and the remaining 4 are to be produced by *Lohars* in Mahalwada. Also, the reward which they receive at the time of *jatra*, that is usually the cash is equally shared among both the families. The *khadag* (sword) of Shree Betal, claimed to be made by their ancestors and once in a year, they polish it during the *jatra*.

Once in three years, these *Lohars* are given an animal sacrifice as in the reward for their contribution. With this animal they have perform rituals at fixed places. This is done because it is believed that years ago one *gado* got untied from *rahat* during *jatra* and fell down and died at this place. This ritual is performed to show gratitude to him.

They provide four *aadolis* and four *katnis* for the *Jevni* ceremony. Despite their participation in the *Taka Sanchar* in *Trigram*, *Lohar* and *Sutar* are not permitted to consume the food given by the hosts. While the *devasthaan* remains at a particular place and is provided meals, these *Charis* are offered vegetables, rice, sugar, and fruits, which they are expected to take home, cook, consume, and then return to follow the

*devasthaan*. This habit stems from the assumption that Charis was traditionally regarded pure and hence avoided eating at other people's houses. These Charis are also in charge of carrying the *Ranvadya* during the *Tako* procession, which lasts seven days. The *Ranvadya*, a musical instrument of frog skin, must be silent, so it is wrapped with cloth and carried by the *Lohar* under their arm while walking.

This responsibility is inherited, passed down from ancestors to descendants. The elders taught their offspring how to make these *gares* and *daban*. Even during mourning periods lasting 12 days following a family loss, an individual from this family is designated to stay separate from others, prepare the *gares* and *daban* for the *jatra*, thinking it their job and expending tremendous effort to fulfill it. Typically, there are no dietary limitations throughout this process; people can choose to be vegetarian or eat meat. This task encourages familial togetherness because 4-5 family members frequently combine to construct a single *gare*.

These *gares* are not to be touched by anyone during *jatra*, since it can catch any bacteria which might further create infection in *gades* body. However, these *Lohars* are supposed to be present at that moment with all their equipment's since some *gares* might require more polishing while inserting them for their body.

#### 4.1.5 *Sutar* (Carpenters)

As previously stated, the Chari families in *Trigram* are further separated according to the type of work they do. Charis from Mahalwada is a blacksmith, whereas Charis from Iddar are carpenters who work with wood. Their contribution to *Gadyanchi Jatra* begins with the creation of a wooden *Khambo* during *Daitya Zagor*. *Perni*, Velip, and *Sutars* have prepared this *Daitya* (devil). *Daitya* is then relocated and positioned atop a rock. When a *Perni* is meant to kill *Daitya*, he brings *laakdachi khili* (wooden bar) and uses it to shove *Daitya*. This *laakdachi khili* measures about 6-7 metres. All of the

wooden equipment must be handmade; no machines are permitted to accomplish this work.

Velips are given responsibility to bring *Sutar*'s wood and only Charis from Iddar are given the authority to deal with wood during this period of *jatra*. This wood has to be of *kaare* specie. From this wood they make *rahat*, by giving it square shape, each side around 4 metres. All this have to be prepared in a very special way by paying extreme attention, so that there are no mistakes and it does not cause harm to *gades* when they are rotated on *rahat*.

To avoid future complications, they must conduct a trial test by rotating the *rahat* on the ground two days before the *jatra* begins. It takes approximately 13-15 carpenters from the Chari family to prepare it. All of this labour takes at least a week. This *rahat* must be prepared at the Shree Betal temple itself. Unlike the previous tasks, *Sutar* is unable to bring the wood back to their location and build it. *Rahat* is manufactured from three types of wood: *Kaarya* wood, *Moh* wood, and *Daaban* wood. As previously stated, all woodwork must be done by hand, without the aid of machinery. Along with *rahat*, these Sutars form four ladders of arecanut tree, one for each *gades* to climb. This *rahat* is then thrown from top after untying *gades*, which then breaks. So, they have to make new *rahat* for *jatra* every three years.

These Charis from Iddar also accompany *devasthaan* during the *Tako* ceremony. This responsibility is passed down from one generation to the next. There are no such requirements for making *rahat*. They cannot stop other carpenters from accompanying them. They believe God summons them and that they will learn to make without any specific training. This procedure is used to teach their children and relatives and pass it down to the next generation.

However, even if they are rewarded for their work, they deny to take it, dedicating their work to deity. During the period of 1 week, when they make *rahat*, they are given refreshments or are invited for lunch and dinner by the villagers. They remain vegetarian when they make *rahat*. In *Paingin Panchagram*, all wood work is given to the Charis. They believe they get more work because of *jatra*. People recognise their work, appreciate it and give them orders for other wood works.

#### 4.1.6 *Vaajantri*

The Devli caste residing in the *Trigram* is given the responsibility of serving as drum beaters at the time *Jevni*, *Tako* and *Gadyanchi jatra*, commonly referred as '*Vaajantri*'. Members of this caste are dispersed over *Trigram* but congregate during festival seasons. They only use two instruments, the *dhol* and the *taso*, which requires about eight people four for the *dhol* and four for the *taso*.

There are seven different styles for playing these instruments, each adapted to a specific function, such as *pooja*, welcome the *devasthaan*, *avatar*, or *pradakshina*. They begin beating the *dhol* throughout the *Jevni* ceremony, notably at the '*med ghalap*', and continue to do so throughout the three *Jevni*'s. During *Tako*, they play the *dhol* exclusively during daylight hours. During *Gadyanchi Jatra*, they perform these instruments at night. For *Daitya zagor* *vaajantri* plays the instruments to assist Perni.

The *Vaajantri*'s duties are never-ending, as they must constantly play the *dhol* and *taso* to keep the participants' levels of energy up. The rhythmic sounds of the instruments frequently distract the *gades* as they are pierced with *gares*, relieving their anguish and easing their trek up the *khaamb* for the *Gadyanchi jatra*. These *Vaajantri* are paid Rs. 800 per month and perform at the Shree Navadurga temple once a week.

Earlier people from this caste used to come together to offer their services to God, but the younger generation can be seen moving away from their traditions. They

often rent those people who can play same like them from the *Trigram* itself. They also have taken initiative by teaching new people coming from Devli caste itself how to play the *dhol* and *taso*

#### 4.1.7 *Katkaar*

A member of the same Devli caste is entrusted with the critical responsibility of carrying the *mashal*, also known as *devti* and referred to as a *Katkaar*. Lighting this *mashal* is critical because the *devasthaan* or Shree Betal's *khadag* cannot move forward without it. This process is completed early in the morning, when *Taranga* is carried from Bhaktipurva to the Shree Betal temple for *Tako*. It is essential to follow this with the lighting of the *mashal* and the beating of the *dhol*.

When the *devasthaan* returns to Mahalwada after the seven-day *Tako* procession, the *Katkaar* sets the *mashal* under the Jambli tree and checks for the presence of *Trigram* residents. The *Katkaar* is an important figure in *Chora zagor* because they arrest robbers and present them to the public. The *Katkaar* is largely responsible for everyone's well-being, keeping them informed about the *jatra* and related events. This is a hereditary duty that is carried out with respect. *Katkaar* are paid 800 rupees per month for their services and given a specific belt to wear when carrying the *mashal*.

Earlier *Katkaar* in the earlier times used to write letters about the events but now because of technology, they either call or text them about the events.

#### 4.1.8 *Mhalo* (Barber)

The Mahale family, which reside in the Welwada ward of Poinguinim village, also plays a vital role in this triennial celebration. Although there are other Mahale families, only one is allowed the privilege to cut hair. This authority has been passed down from one generation to another. They continue to practise their hereditary occupation and are

proud of their commitment to this triennial event. Their contribution begins before the ritual of '*med ghalap*' at the *Jevni* ceremony. They have to cut the hair and beards of four *Chowgules* and two Velips, as well as clean their faces. After that, these *Chowgules* Velips take a bath and continue with their routines.

During the *Gadyanchi jatra*, *Mhalo* cuts the hair and beards of four *gades* before massaging them with oil. Velips pour oil over the hands of *gades*, who apply it to the *Khaambo* before returning to the *mhalo* with a *padi* (rice and coconut). Following this, two *mhales* from the same family are selected, with each allotted two *gades* for hair cutting.

After 7 days of restrictions of the *jatra*, when *Sudhaachar* (Purification) happens at Talpona river, wherein they perform *havan*, and get purified. Here, *mhalo* is given the authority to shave hair, moustache and beard of *Chowgules*, *Mhasmaari* and Velip.

They are honoured for their role, as the *Tako* moves first from their place, whereby they offer prayers to it. they also move with *Tako*, but not for all the 7 days as they are not assigned any specific tasks. Though the role of *mhalo* is very small but has impact during *jatra*. They receive an animal sacrificed as a reward. They are rewarded after the *pooja* performed on the last day at Shree Betal temple, after completing 7 days of restrictions of *jatra*.

#### 4.1.9 Gosavi

The *Gosavi* caste resides in the Kaalshi ward of Poinguinim village. The members of these family have significant role to play in this triennial event of *Gadyanchi jatra*. When the *Tako* ceremony begins, that is when *Tako* is brought from *Takyaghar* and is read for procession or *Taka Sanchar* in *Trigram*, it must start its journey only after

‘*shunk*’ (Conch shell) is blown by the ‘*Gosai*’. These *Gosavi* in village is also referred to as ‘*Gosai*’.

The main responsibility of this family is to blow *shunk* before every event. They have to go for *Taka Sanchar* in *Trigram* for all the 7 days as they must blow the *shunk* at every fixed place for *Taka vachan*. After *Tako* ends, on Sunday ‘*kheech*’ is performed. On this day, sacrificial rituals take place. For this *Gosavi*’s have to fill a pot full of ‘*sur*’ and show it to Shree Betal. This ‘*shunk*’ is kept at Shree Kaalbhairav temple at Khavat ward in Poinguinim village.

During the year of *Gadyanchi jatra*, there are series of other rituals taking place, one of which is *Zagor*. For *Daitya Zagor*, these *Gosavi*’s are given the responsibility to prepare artificial blood. They make blood by using *Pinzar*. This blood is to show that *Daitya* is killed. When *Perni* in the *avatar* of goddess Mahishasurmartini attacks *Daitya* and kills him, *Gosavis* have to show that blood to all, indicating that *Daitya* has been killed. The same blood is then shown to Shree Betal. This has to be done only by the *Gosavi* family.

Before all the rituals, even before the *zagors*, *Gosavi*’s have to blow the *shunk*. Their blowing of *shunk* alarms people about beginning of the event. On the day of *Gadyanchi jatra*, when *Gades* are taken to Khavat, the rituals there begins only after *shunk* is blown by the *Gosavi*. He then has to move with *gades* and assist them by blowing the *shunk*. They stated that, while the whole process of *Gadyanchi jatra* is going on, that is while *gades* are pierced with *gares* or when they are rotated on top, *Gosavis* has to continuously blow the *shunk*. They must not stop.

This task of blowing of *shunk* is performed only by one male member of *Gosavi* family. This is a hereditary responsibility passed from generations. Their forefathers performed it as their duty, teaching it to their heirs to continue doing so. They are

monthly paid rupees 300 for their work and also at the time of *jatra* they receive reward for their contribution. Sometimes if that one person who performs his role of blowing the *shunk* is not well or not available, he tells the male member of his family to do so. All family members are aware of their contribution and overwhelmed to do so.

For the ritual of blowing *shunk*, ‘*Gosay*’ has to remain vegetarian, they believe their services for God provide them with good deeds. One *Gosay* is a rickshaw driver and claimed that performing his role in *jatra* does not affect his professional life. Though there are very few rickshaws in the village and at the time of *Gadyanchi jatra*, many people from other places come to witness it. At this time, they require rickshaws and motorcycles to travel. While performing his task, he will be unable to drive his rickshaw, somehow it affects his profession. But he is happy that he has been chosen to serve Shree Betal.

#### 4.1.10 *Parit*

*Parit* is the washerman’s caste which resides in Mahalwada ward of Poinguinim village. These *Parit* are also known by the other name as ‘*Madval*’. This community has a significant role in the triennial event.

Their role is to wash clothes. They need to carry *taranga*’s of the *devasthaan* after rituals are performed to Kumeghal ward to wash them. During the *Gadyanchi jatra*, they also wash clothes of Shree Betal. For *Perni zagor*, they are given honour, wherein they have to wear and show the mask of *Parit*. This mask indicates their community.

They do not have main role to perform during the *Gadyanchi jatra*, but their contribution is important after the *jatra*. That is after the completion of 7 days of restrictions, they carry all the clothes, *Tako*, *Taranga*’s, *devasthaan* to Talpona river.

Here they wash all these holy clothes and carry it back to their home. They must not keep it back to the temple after washing.

After getting to back to their houses, *Parit* have to wash again all the holy clothes, *Tako* and tie it tightly. It is called as '*Parit ghadi*' only technique known by the *Parits* to tie clothes. At least for 2 days they have to keep those clothes at their home and then give it to the Velips.

Their profession itself is washing clothes and also, they are daily wage labourers. They believe that they are lucky to wash Shree Betal's clothes, *Tako* and *Taranga*'s. Since no one can easily touch these things, they consider it to be their destiny. However, they are paid for their work annually. This has been passed from their ancestors. They keep other work pending and complete this work first. For their contribution, they are also given the land on which they reside by the temple committee.

#### 4.1.11 Bhagat

Bhagat's family lives in Kumeghal ward, Poinguinim. The male members of this family are referred to as '*Bhagat of Paingin Panchagram*'. Before the start of the triennial festival, the *devasthaan* kept at Bhaktipurva, also known as Bhaktigal, where the Bhagats live, must be carried to the Shree Betal temple. This *devasthaan* is carried by the *gades* from Bhaktipurva to Mahalwada. Only until it reaches Shree Betal Temple is it taken over by Velips, and the triennial festival begins.

This *devasthaan* contains two *tarangas*, one *devti satri*, and one *pilakucho*. Because this *devasthaan* is carried by *gades* to Shree Betal temple before the start of *Gadyanchi jatra*, on the day of the *jatra*, when the *gades* are rotated on the *rahat*, bhagats should take the *devasthaan* back to Bhaktipurva. Despite the fact that the *devasthaan* was brought by the *gades*, it must be taken back by the Bhagats before the *gades* get down from *rahat*.

The Bhagats bear the primary responsibility for the *devasthaan*. They preserve it at the Shree Aadipurush Temple in Bhaktipurva and worship it all year. They carry *devasthaan* for seven days during the *Tako* procession. *Tako* is when the family's main bhagat receives *bhar*. *Tako* stops for *Taka Sanchar* and performs 'sasara', which means he moves the '*talvaar of Bhagat*' around him, this act is called as '*sasar*'.

This role is performed by the Bhagat family from many years. The place of Bhaktipurva is full of Bhagat families. However, in earlier times there were not many families of Bhagat so, this gave rise to one incident. One girl from bhagat family carried the *devasthaan* and performed rituals. She happily performed it with support from her villagers and succeeded in doing so. These Bhagat family are also given the land by temple committee for their contribution in *Gadyanchi jatra* on which have built their houses. They are also offered reward but deny taking it as they consider their services to God.

#### 4.1.12 *Mhasmaari*

*Mhasmaari* is the designation given to the Sudhir caste member who lives in the Mahalwada ward. The phrase '*mhas*' means buffalo, and '*mari*' means to kill it, hence the name *Mhasmaari* refers to the person who kills buffalo. This *Mhasmaari* is a key figure in the triennial ceremony since he oversees all of the sacrificial ceremonies. Their duty in the *Jevni* ceremonial is to execute sacrificial rituals in and around the temple. On the last day of *Jevni*, they are provided meals. They are offered a large amount of rice on a banana leaf, and with that rice, they must form a circle around which all other meals are served.

*Tako* begins after the ritual, therefore an *Mhasmaari* must offer a sacrifice during its procession in *Trigram*. A *Mhasmaari* performs a sacrifice at each designated location. When the *Tako* is carried from Poinguinim to Loliem village by crossing the

Galjibagh River. *Lolyekars* must carry it aboard the boat. *Mhasmaari* plays a role in this by offering sacrifices, as it is thought that only after sacrifices are offered can boats move; otherwise, they do not. Also, these tributes are to be tossed into the boats. On the final day, *Katkaar* carries a rooster that initially makes noise in the early morning to the Shree Betal temple. *Mhasmaari* accepts this sacrifice and leaves at Chakra fator.

*Gadyanchi jatra* has various other rituals including *zagors*. For *Daitya zagor*, 3 *Daityas* are prepared. When *Perni* touches his sword to *Daitya*, *Mhasmaari* has to perform sacrifice to replicate the act of *Daitya* being killed. This act is performed thrice thus leading to 3 sacrifices. For *Chora zagor* as well, when *chors* are caught, they are given the punishment of burying and slaughtering. This act is also replicated with the sacrifices, one sacrifice is buried and other is killed. During *Divza zagor*, the wives from *Mhasmaari* families have to perform the *divzas* at early morning 4 am surrounding the whole premises of Shree Betal temple.

On the day of *Gadyanchi jatra*, *Mhasmaari* has to perform sacrifice before *rahat* is carried on top to tie to *khaamb*. When *gades* stand near the *khaamb*, *Mhasmaari* has to perform each sacrifice for each *gado*. Thus, leading to 4 sacrifices.

The next day of *Gadyanchi jatra* is called as '*kheech*'. On this day, all other sacrificial rituals happen. These sacrifices are then equally shared among the communities who have played role in *Gadyanchi jatra*. The blood of these sacrifices is then mixed with white rice and then tied to the mouth of Shree Betal by a *Mhasmaari*.

*Mhasmaari* is one of members who have to be in temple for 7 days. These days are considered as them to be mourning. They make their own food; temple committee looks after them. They are restricted to go their home. After these days are completed, they go to Talpona to get purified. *Mhasmaari* then removes the cloth from Shree

Betal's face and then asks '*Painginkar aaile? Lolyekar aaile? Khargalkar aaile?* And then shows rice to everyone. Then they bury it in front of the temple.

*Mhasmaari* the same night, goes to *gades* house and sponsors food there. *Gades* have to throw rice over the head of *Mhasmaari* to make him purify. When this act is done, *Mhasmaari* is purified and then again seats with *gades* and eat. Some more sacrifices are offered which then leads to end of the *jatra*.

These *Mhasmaari* are given the land on which they reside for their contribution. They are also given reward for their work but they don't take it because they consider their work as devotion to Shree Betal. Their ancestors did it earlier now it has been continued by them. When they were new to their work, they shared them being sacred of blood, but they then accepted it and carried it out as God gave them strength. Even if they have some work, they deny doing it and come to fulfil their duty of *Mhasmaari*.

#### 4.1.13 *Perni*

*Perni zagor* is a well-known folk theatre in Goa. This *Perni zagor* is performed by the *Perni* caste in Poinguinim village during *Gadyanchi jatra*. *Perni* play a significant role or influence in this triennial event. They live in the Galyem Ward in Poinguinim. They claim to be the only *Perni* family in Goa that still performs *zagors*. Although they are known as *Perni*, their surname is Pednekar.

Though they have no specific role during *Jevni*, they are invited on the final day and offered food. Their primary responsibility is to perform the three varieties of *zagors*. The first name is *Daitya Zagor*. They themselves prepare and decorate the *Daitya*. The same *Daityas* is thereafter killed by a *Perni* dressed as Goddess Mahishasurmartini's avatar. He wears deity jewels in order to become possessed by her. The *Pernis* also serves as the *chor* in *Chora Zagor*. They act as *chor* and steal Shree Betal's belongings, including his light. They are eventually caught and punished. In

between these intervals, they practise *Perni zagor* on a daily basis. For this they use around 7-8 masks which consists of Lord Ganesha, Lord Mahadev, Lord Krishna, 2 masks of Putna, 1 big and small, *Mhatari*, *Waagh*. Using these masks, they act to entertain people during the *Gadyanchi jatra*. They also have to remain in the temple after *jatra* ends, as way of mourning.

This art of theatre has been passed from many generations. These *Perni* community are also given land by the temple committee and are given rewards for their contribution. They being the only family, has been facing problems. They are called everywhere to perform. There also has been cases when the younger generation denied to perform the *zagors* during the *Gadyanchi jatra*. But eventually, after listening to everyone they agreed to do so. This art is known only to them.

#### 4.1.14 *Metri*

*Metri* caste live in the Mahalwada ward of Poinguinim village. These *Metri* play an important role in the *Gadyanchi jatra*, and as a result, they are given land by the temple committee and receive a reward in form of cash on the day of the *jatra*.

The *Metri* is responsible for piercing *gares* in the back skin of the *gades*. They fulfil their duties with complete dedication. Aside from this, they have no other tasks to complete. However, they are satisfied with whatever they have received as part of their service to Shree Betal.

#### 4.1.15 *Pagi*

The *Pagi* families are found in the villages of Loliem and Poinguinim. They are otherwise also known as *Kharvis*, thus belonging to *kharvi* caste whose occupation is fishing. Members from these families are also called as '*shelgade*'. *Shelgades* are the *gades* from the fisherfolk community. These *shelgades* also perform during *Gadyanchi jatra*, but they are not significant as the *Gades*. They play an important role in

supporting the *gades* that is they dance while the *gades* are pierced with *gares*. They dance surrounding them, distracting them from the pain. These *shelgades* also assist *gades* to climb the ladder and also while they get down.

Also, while *gares* are pierced to *gades*, *suyo* (small needles) are also pierced near the abdomen of the *shelgades*. Their main role is to assist the *gades*. These *Shelgades* are also given the land on which they have built their houses and receive rewards for their contribution.

#### 4.1.16 *Mhar*

The *Mhar* family lives in Mahalwada and plays an important role in the *Gadyanchi Jatra*. During the *Gadyanchi jatra*, when the *gades* travel to Khavat and stop to eat fruits, the *Mhar* is responsible for beating the drum. The *gades* get energised upon hearing the drumbeat. This marks the beginning of the main *Gadyanchi Jatra*. Additionally, the *Mhar* performs sacrificial ceremonies for the event, such as taking the head of a sacrifice and performing its *pooja* at a specific location. A *Mhar* then buries the sacrifices at a specific area. The *Mharachi divza*, which is predominantly conducted by *Mhar* spouses, is critical to the smooth progress of the *Gadyanchi jatra*. It is considered that the complete completion of *mharachi divza* guarantees the smooth progression of the *Gadyanchi jatra*. It is believed that the successful completion of *mharachi divza* ensures the smooth celebration of the *Gadyanchi jatra* without any obstacles.

All of the tasks assigned to various castes and tribe in the *Gadyanchi jatra* are important. If even one member of a specific caste refuses to perform their job, the festival would be put on hold. Each caste and tribe have a distinct job that only members of that group can fulfil; no one else can take it. For example, if a Brahmin caste member plays the role of *Mhalo*, it produces issues and consequences for them.

The *Parshuram Panchagram* temple committee recognises the various castes and tribe efforts by granting them land. During the *jatra*, some of them receive a monthly wage as well as prizes. Oral histories describe how these castes and tribe were assigned positions based on their traditional occupation. Moreover, the caste system is deeply ingrained in Indian society, according to scholars such as Kathleen Gough, caste is a system of ranked birth status groupings that are usually associated with specific occupations. Hutton defines caste as a hierarchical system associated with traditional jobs (Deshpande, 1979), whereas Srinivas defines caste as a hereditary, localised, endogamous group with traditional occupational affiliations (Srinivas, 1964).

Various theories offer insights, into the beginnings of caste with differing perspectives shaping discussions. (Soam, 2022) According to Risley's theory caste emerged from conflicts and interactions among different races. Risley attributed the formation of caste to the Aryans, who viewed themselves as integrated civilizations upon contact. In contrast Nesfield (1885) put forward the Occupational Theory suggesting that caste origins stemmed from roles and occupations, then racial connections. He proposed that inherited skills led to the development of "Occupational Guilds," which eventually transformed into castes. This argument is consistent with the data, as the occupations of castes and tribe groups in the *Gadyanchi jatra* have defined their identities over generations.

Caste is not only a social structure, but also a common feature in every Indian village. When caste is viewed as a system, it has an unbreakable bond with other castes in religious, economic and political spheres. The *Gadyanchi Jatra* reflects this relationship and interdependence among different castes and tribe from three villages, as the devotion towards Shree Betal despite their differences. The celebration of the *jatra* is based upon the participation of all castes and tribe groups, any refusal jeopardies

the *jatra*. The research findings are consistent with functional sociological theory that emphasizes the interplay and interdependence of social institutions.

According to the Davis-Moore theory of functionalist stratification, social inequality is necessary for society to function smoothly because it encourages the most talented and capable persons to hold the most important jobs. Social inequality arises because some roles in society are more functionally important than others. Similarly, within the framework of the *Gadyanchi jatra*, some castes and tribe groups may play more important roles for instance the *gades* from Sudhir caste. Each caste and tribe group are assigned distinct obligations and responsibilities based on their traditional occupation and skills. This stratification ensures that the *jatra* operates well, since each group contributes in its own way to the overall success of the event (Ritzer, 2010).

Functionalism, sometimes known as 'Structural Functionalism,' emerged in the 1950s and comprises a wide range of theories proposed by notable thinkers including Durkheim, Malinowski, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Merton. Evolutionary theorists such as Herbert Spencer compared society to a biological creature with interrelated components. Spencer and Durkheim saw society as made up of various parts, each fulfilling a definite purpose. Social institutions, like biological organs, work together to create a more harmonious system. Religion, kinship, and economics are fundamental parts of society that collectively form it, similar to how biological systems integrate in an organism (Barnard, 2000).

Like Durkheim, Parsons saw society as a system of interconnected components. Parsons identified four essential functions that every society or system must do to ensure survival. These functions are known as AGIL (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latent Pattern Maintenance). Adaptation refers to the system's ability to adjust to its external environment or modify it to meet its demands. Goal attainment

refers to identifying and achieving the system's objectives through the mobilisation of resources. Integration controls the interrelationships between the system's components. Latent pattern maintenance guarantees that all participants in the system are motivated and that internal conflicts are efficiently controlled. According to Parsons, culture plays an important role in the preservation of latent patterns by providing shared symbols that individuals internalise through socialisation, fostering a cohesive societal identity. Thus, the AGIL scheme outlines the essential requirements of any functional living system within structural functionalist theory (Ritzer, 2010).

## 4.2 THE FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

The functionalist perspective is applicable to understand the *Gadyanchi jatra* dynamics. Since the cultural event involves several caste and tribe groups who all combine efforts to execute their duties to successful completion, it guarantees *jatra's* success. The *Gadyanchi jatra*, as a system, consists of several castes and a tribe group, each with their own assigned functions that thereby complement each other to ensure the success of the event. Therefore, the inability of one group to execute its function renders the entire *jatra* at stake, thus, emphasising the interdependence and necessity of each group's contribution. Consequently, the execution of the assigned functions by the various castes and tribe results in the joyful celebration of the *Gadyanchi jatra*.

Furthermore, the functionalist perspective throws light on the rich social web permeating the entire *Gadyanchi jatra*. The participation of various castes and tribe in *jatra*, with each of them playing a vital role in maintaining the life of the event demonstrates as interconnected components. In this case, Talcott's concept of adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latent pattern maintenance are reflected in how each caste and tribe perform their assigned functions. To elaborate, adaptation can be perceived in how *jatra* adjusts to external variables such as changes in certain

traditions because of technology while the *jatra* continues to innovate, and its inner components have arguably metamorphosed over the years. Goal Attainment is critical, as particular objectives like respect for cultural heritage and binding together are set by the *jatra* and also mobilises resources to attain them. Integration is important since the *jatra* activities are interrelated, with different castes and tribe groups cooperating to make it work effectively. Lastly, latent pattern maintenance ensures spirited generations' participation in *jatra* as a way of avoiding loss motivation over time as well as internal conflicts control.

Furthermore, the *Gadyanchi jatra* holds a connection, to the idea of culture as a means to preserve traditions within the *jatra*. Culture, within the *jatra* setting encompasses shared values, beliefs and symbols that unite people and lend importance to the event. Individuals belonging to castes and tribe groups internalize these elements through socialization fostering a sense of community and solidarity. This collective cultural framework not only shapes participants conduct during the *jatra* but also instils them with motivation and resolve bolstering the events longevity and significance within the community. Therefore, applying the functionalist theories offers insights into the organizational structure, dynamics and cultural importance of the *Gadyanchi jatra*, emphasizing its role, as a crucial societal institution embodying principles of functional interdependence and social unity.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **THE GADES: DEVOTEES OF SHREE BETAL**

The *Gades* are the representatives or the devotees to serve Shree Betal. Four males dressed in white *dhoti* are known as '*Gades* ' and execute the ceremonies, hence the term '*Gadyanchi jatra*'. These *Gades* are recognised as mediums who have been possessed by the spirit of a deity and can only participate in ceremonies directly. These four male devotees belong to a single household. It is a genetic duty passed down from one generation to another. Their forefathers used to carry out these rituals, which their offspring continue to do today. Eventually, they belonged to the Sudhir caste, and their surname was Sudhir. However, because they are titled as *Gades* during the *jatra*, they began to be identified and termed a '*gado*' (singular of *Gades*) and surname changed into '*Gado*'. All of these *gades* belong to the same *Gado* family, who live in Welwada ward in Poinguinim village. This is the lone family in the entire *Trigram*. Only four *gades* participate in and perform their roles for this triennial event.



**Picture 5.1: The *Gades***

Source: Respondent

There are no criteria for selecting the *gades*; the only need is that they be male members of the *Gado* family. Women in these families have no specific say. Because they go through menstruation, women are deemed impure for such a work. Many people still perceive women to be impure while menstruating, which is a major issue because women are regarded unsuited to act as ritual specialists. These four *gades* are further subdivided, with one labelled *Malgado*, a leader among them. The *Malgado* was chosen based on the *Gado* family's dynamics. It is stated that only the descendants of one side of the *Gado* family can be *Malgado*, whereas the other male members of the *Gado* family can only be *gado*. This was mostly because their forefathers were given the responsibility, which was passed down to them. The *Malgado* is a follower of Shree Muller deity, whereas the *gades* are Shree Aadipurush worshippers. This could be because both these deities are significantly related to the *Gadyanchi jatra*.

Their participation in this event, which takes place every three years, begins with the *Jevni* ceremony, which comes immediately after the '*malne bharpache*' ritual, which entails filling the pot. All four *gades* must spend the night at the Shree Narayan temple. The next morning, around 5 a.m., *Mhar* shows up, drumming the *dhol* to accompany them back to Mahalwada. They visit the temple, perform the *pradakshina*, and then proceed to Bhatabandh to bathe. As previously stated, they next pay a visit to the Shenvi Belyo family's home for tea and refreshments, accompanied by everyone.

During the *Tako* ceremony, the *gades* play an important part in carrying the *devasthaan*, which includes Shree Navadurga *Chattri*, Shree Aadipurush *Khaamb*, and Shree Muller *Khaamb*. Furthermore, one *gado* carries the Shree Nirakar *kuchho*, which is then transferred to a Velip to carry. The idols atop these *devasthaan* are temporarily kept at Bhaktipurva. Prior to the *Tako*, Dusshera, and *Jatra* festivities, all *gades travel* to Bhaktipurva to retrieve the *devasthaan* and transfer it to the Shree Betal temple.



**Picture 5.2: *Gades carrying the devasthaan***

Source: Respondent

During the other events involving *Daitya zagor*, *Chora zagor*, and *Divza Gondhal*, these *gades* serve no specific purpose. Because they are the most essential to the *jatra*, they also attend these other events. However, three days before the *Divza Zagor*, the *Gades* are massaged with oil. This is done so that their skin becomes smooth prior the piercing ritual. When the *Mhalo* arrives to cut their hair, they are all required to sit in a queue. On the day of *Divza Zagor*, all participants remain awake and enjoy the *Natak*; this typically occurs on Friday because the next day, Saturday, is allocated for the *jatra*.

On the day of the *jatra*, the *gades* travel early in the morning to the Khavat ward in Poinguinim village to perform the *pooja* ceremony for the Muller deity. This god is decked with a garland of *Pitkuli* flowers. While everyone else is provided food, the *gades* are only allowed to eat fruits on this day because they are fasting during the *jatra*.

In front of the Shree Muller temple is a *Tulsi Vrindavan*, where the four *gades* assemble and sit. At this point, all *gades* enter a state of trance or get possessed.

Numerous scholars have investigated the phenomena of possession, particularly from a psychological perspective. It is regarded as a disease of hysteria caused by traumatic experiences, a psychophysiological disorder marked by changes in consciousness, personal identity, and bodily processes. Within ritualistic contexts, there is a widespread notion that such modifications occur as a result of the intervention of another entity whether a spirit, an ancestor, live person, or even an animal (Bourguignon, 2004).

Individuals become uncontrollable during possession, exhibiting symptoms such as body tremors and shivers that are in stark contrast to their normal demeanours. In this state, they give up control of their bodies and subject to the power of the possessed spirit or entity. This type of spirit possession is often defined as "a complex of neurophysiological changes underlying the physical expression of trance behaviour," which is culturally linked to manipulation by spirits, demons, or deities. It is a cooperation between the mind and body, culturally understood via the lens of deities, spirits, and devils. (Seligman, 2005).

*Mhar*, seated isolated, finishes eating before commencing to play the *dhol*. As soon as the *gades* hear the *dhol*, the *Malgado* kicks and destroys one portion of the *Tulsi*. This section of mud is thought to be crucial for the *jatra* to continue effectively. The *gades* then stand up and retrieve the swords set about *Tulsi Vrindavan*. Because the *gades* are unconscious and trance-like, they rely on assistance to guide them about and perform other rites. The *gades* are then led to the Shree Muller deity, where each must offer and break a coconut. The *Pitkuli* flower garlands that were initially presented to the deity are removed and worn by the *gades*. This practice dates back to ancient times,

when *Pitkuli* garlands represented sacrifice, identifying the *gades* as sacrificial figures. In the early stages of the *jatra*, *rahat* (wheel) was thrown from the top alongside the *gades*, symbolising sacrifice as they fell. However, this practice has changed with time, and animal sacrifices are now used in place of this act.



**Picture 5.3: Swords kept at *Tulsi Vrindavan* at Khavat**

Source: Respondent

In dread of losing their husbands, the wives of these *gades* would sit at *Tulsi Vrindavan* and pray for their safe return. They also kept their *mangalsutra*, nose ring, bangles, and other wedding-related jewellery in *Tulsi Vrindavan*. They used to sit at the *tulsi* and water it. This practice might have two meanings: one is their dedication to praying for the safety of their husbands and praying to save their '*soula singaar*'. Another possibility is that when thrown from the top, *gades* had no chance of surviving; their wives would later take *sati*. However, this has ended because *gades* are no longer

thrown from the top, and instead, animals are sacrificed. Adding to this, wives of these *gades* must not attend the *jatra* and witness their husband performing it. This could be because wives cannot see their husbands dying in front of their eyes, as earlier they were thrown from top, usually leading to their death.

Throughout history, patriarchal influences on religion have encouraged the marginalisation of women's religious practices, restricting them to the sphere of isolation. Women have a high social and familial place in early Hindu scriptures such as the Rig-Veda. While their duties as mothers and spouses were emphasised, the scriptures recognised women's significant spiritual and educational contributions. Despite men dominating religious and social arenas and preferring sons over daughters, daughters were not undervalued until the Atharva-Veda. Women's positions in both religious and social arenas were marginalised as a result, widening the gender gap. The widely held view was that women's well-being is achieved by aiding their spouses in reaching their full potential and achievement. As a result, it became commonly believed that women fasted and practiced religion not for personal gain, but to secure the safety, success, and health of their husbands and children (Surgirharajah, 1998). The ideal woman is epitomised as *pativrata*, which translates as "she who fasts for her husband," a concept reflected in epic heroines being depicted as embodiments of the *pativrata* ideal (Hellman, 1998).

After the rituals at Shree Muller temple are completed, these four *gades* are taken to other temples along the path till they arrive at Shree Betal temple, where they offer coconuts at each temple. Once they reach at the Shree Betal temple, they are led to a well, *devabaaay*, where they perform *pradakshina*, offer coconuts, and take a bath. Later, they dress in a white *dhoti* and *feto*, holding an adorned *talvaar*, and proceed to Shree Aadipurush temple to perform *pradakshina*.

After receiving god's blessings, *gades* dance to the music of *dhol* and *taso* before having their backs pierced. This music, which consists of *dhol* and *taso* beats played in a specific manner, keeps them energised while also distracting from the agony of piercing. *Shelgades* dance around them to distract them. Instead of being possessed by spirits, the *gades* fall into a trance. The *gades* expressive gestures demonstrate that trance is closely tied to music and dance in their context. The music's powerful rhythms elicit their heightened emotional state. Trance, defined as a state of consciousness induced by energetic and rhythmic movement and music, is distinguished by a merging of awareness between mind and body during ritual practices (Naik 2014). Possession, on the other hand, is an intentional choice in which an individual is taken over by a specific deity without the use of music or dance. In the case of this triennial occasion, Shree Betal possesses a specific designated person every year. While this function was previously filled by family members, it is now carried on by the individual himself, known as 'Betal' among the villagers.

*Malgado*, the leader, is the first to be pierced, with two *gares* pierced on his back muscles, one on each side, followed by the rest three *gades*. They are given betelnut to keep between their teeth, with the goal of breaking it and demonstrating their anguish from the piercing. Although four *gares* were formerly perforated on the back, these *gares* are now reduced to two. After being pierced, they are led to the *Khaamb* (pillars), where each of them stands on their allotted ladder. Here is where the sacrificial rituals occur wherein 4 roosters are sacrificed.

*Gades* can be envisioned. as leaving their normal daily lives and embarking on a journey to the 'Centre out there'. (Turner 1973) Turner has described the ritual process in three steps. During rituals, *gades* are separated from the familiar structures of everyday life (the centre) and enter a liminal space (the periphery). This liminal phase

is marked by ambiguity and transition, with the *gades* possibly experiencing a temporary suspension of societal rules and hierarchies. Following the liminal phase, *gades* in rituals go through a reintegration process in which they return from the peripheral to the centre once the ritual process, or *Gadyanchi jatra*, has been completed.

These *gades* are never allowed to touch the *khaamb* it is only on the day they are massaged with oil; they should go near the *khaamb* and apply oil to their side of the *khaamb*. And the next time is directly on the day of *jatra*, when they are supposed to climb the *khaamb*.



**Picture 5.4: *Gades* climbing the *khaambe***

Source: Respondent

Once they reach the top of the ladder, the *Malgado* is tied first to the *rahat*, followed by the other three. One hand holds a *rumaal*, (towel) while the other holds an adorned *talwaar*. They are closely attached to *rahat* with a cloth. This *Malgado* is offered *paanavido* and then asks *Lolyekar, aaile? Khargalkar aailo? Painginkar aaile? Chowgule Basle? Khushi Jale? Lolyekars came? Painginkars came? Khargalkar*

came? *Chowgules* sat? everyone is happy? Once everyone responds to *Malgado* 'hay'(yes), he drops *paanavido* from the top and rotates *rahat*. Both clockwise and anticlockwise, approximately 4-5 times. Once *jatra* is over, one animal must be taken to Talpona through forest before the *gades* get down. This is because it is believed that in early times, one *gado* fell at that place while thrown from *rahat*. So, that sacrifice is given in his honour.

After rotating these *gades* and untying them sequentially, return to the temple by going down the ladder. Their *gares* are removed from the back, and they pay a visit to Shree Aadipurush and Shree Betal. As this concludes, they sit outside the temple, where the temple committee rewards them with cash, followed by villagers. It is claimed that this *jatra* resurrects *gades*.

Following the *jatra*, these *gares* are taken home by the *gades* themselves. Previously, when it rained, farmers would use *kambhal* to keep themselves from getting wet; these *gares* were then used as a clip to keep the *kambhal* on their heads.

When *gades* return home, their wives are to welcome them with *pooja*. This is their method of expressing appreciation that they are still alive and have safely returned to their homes. Because the *jatra* concludes on Sunday, these *gades* must adhere to particular restrictions for the next 7 days, such as refraining from bathing. They must not change their attire, i.e. they must wear the same *dhoti* they wore during the *jatra* throughout the week. However, if they needed to use the loo, they could only loosen one knot of the *dhoti* and tie it again.

They must stay vegetarian for 7 days, with the exception that the sacrifices made must be consumed by the *gades* and split among the helpers who assisted these *gades* while they were in trance. There is also a restriction that the sacrifice can only be

consumed by male members of the family, not females, particularly the wives of these *gades*. They can cook but cannot consume.

The piercing ritual causes injury on the back of these *gades*. So, the temple committee gives each person a *khani* of rice, which they must cook and store under the mat on which these *gades* sleep. This is done to provide warmth for their back. They take the coconut offered to them during sacrifices and bring it home. Grated coconut is then fried on a pan and placed in a cloth to be applied to the back to treat the damage. They are also massaged with the oil that is provided to Shree Aadipurush. Within the societies, the traditional approach to healthcare, involves a body of knowledge about certain herbs, animals, and minerals that have healing and palliative properties. This wisdom has been passed down through generations and is the result of courageous experimentation over hundreds of years, formed by trial and error. This holistic approach to understanding health is known as Ethnomedicine or otherwise also known as Traditional knowledge or Folk knowledge (Vedavathy, 2003).

During this seven-day time, no one, including their wives, must not touch these *gades*. They sleep in a different room from their wives. They are unable to go to the doctor for medical treatment for their injuries. They are also unable to apply medication at home. They are cured naturally. Every morning for a week, these *gades* should apply *gandh* and flowers on the *gare* as a form of worship before beginning their day. On the fourth day, they are invited to Partgali Math to receive the blessings of Shree Ramdev. Here, the *Swami* of Partgali Math seeks the blessing. A *gado* is not permitted to leave his home alone for the duration of the week. They all 4 should go together wherever they want to go.

They are unable to undertake their customary duties, including worshipping God, during these seven days since they have not showered and have eaten non-

vegetarian food. This also has an impact on their professional life for seven days, as they claim to have accomplished their tasks prior to the *jatra*.

After completing these 7 days of constraints, these *gades* are taken to the Talpona river, where all participants perform rituals with a *havan* before releasing coconuts into the water. Following this, everyone takes a plunge in the river. Later, they visit Dhoneshwar temple, offer him coconuts, pray, and return to their homes.

*Mhasmaari* sponsors food preparation at one of the *gades'* homes. Following the meal, the four *gades* must sit in a row. *Mhasmaari* is considered impure since he handles sacrifices. It becomes the *gades* obligation to purify him. *Mhasmaari* appears with a bag and a jug, claiming to have visited the shrine at Tirupati. The *Malgado* asks him, *khai gello re?* 'Where did you go?' He responds, *haav Tirupati gello* 'I went to Tirupati.' The *Malgado* then asks, *kite hadle tuve?* 'What did you bring?' He responds, *tirth aani prasad* 'I brought holy water and *prasad* (blessed food).' *Mhasmaari* then presents the symbolic holy water and *prasad*. This ceremony is repeated three times to represent *Mhasmaari's* travel to Tirthkshetra, which indicates sacred locations and pilgrimage in Hinduism. The act is performed primarily to demonstrate that *Mhasmaari* has visited such places and been purified. The *gades* are then offered meals, while *Mhasmaari* is forced to sit outside the compound of the home. After eating, these *gades* should wrap their leaves and throw them on *Mhasmaari* to purify him. He takes a bath and then sits with *gades* to eat, symbolising his purification.

During the 7-day period, Shree Betal is only bathed after the *havan* and then clothed. These *gades* believe it is their destiny to be *gado* and serve Shree Betal. Despite their status as *gades*, they work for a living. However, during this triennial celebration, they must refrain from working. And they gladly do it without complaint. If they are far away conducting their work, they will promptly live if summoned by the committee.

They are the most respected members of the *Trigram*. It is also thought that anyone who fights with them or says evil things about them suffers and is punished by Shree Betal

Aside from these constraints, there are several rules that must be obeyed even before the festivities begin. For example, for the *Tako* ceremony, these *gades* must be vegetarian for 22 days and 8 days for the *Gadyanchi jatra*.

Being a *gado* earns them a respectable status in society. The truth is that these *gades* have no idea why only their family was picked to be *gades*. They consider it their duty and carry it out with dignity. They are honoured to be *gado* since they are the most esteemed in the *Trigram*. The temple committee rewards their dedication and services by providing them with property on which to live. Thus, they allege that Shree Betal has provided them land and it is their duty to serve him.

### **5.1 Shelgades**

These *Shelgades* also perform during *Gadyanchi jatra*, but they are not as prominent as the *gades*. These *Shelgades* are largely from the Pagi caste and are referred to as *gades* from low status community. These *Shelgades* inhabit within the Mahalwada itself. They serve an essential role in supporting the main *gades*, which dance while being pierced with *gares*. They danced surrounding them, distracting them from their misery. These *shelgades* also help *gades* ascend the ladder and get down. These people are also given the property where they have built their homes. Also, they are pierced with small *suyo* (needles).

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSION**

This dissertation has endeavoured to shed light on the triennial event of the *Gadyanchi jatra*, a festival celebrated by the 3 villages of Poinguinim, Loliem and Khargal in every three years. The four objectives of this qualitative research were to document the oral history about the *Gadyanchi jatra*, to understand its relevance to the villagers, to analyse roles played by different castes and tribe in the *jatra* and the customs and social lives of the *gades*.

Oral narratives as a method of qualitative research provided insights on the origins of *Gadyanchi jatra*. Oral histories provided informative knowledge about the rituals, myths, and beliefs with regard to *Gadyanchi Jatra*. This information not only exemplify the continuing cultural folk religious ritual of *Gadyanchi jatra*, but also provide insight into the villagers' collective memory and identity.

*Gadyanchi jatra* has a social and cultural significance as it promotes community solidarity among different castes and tribe. The *jatra* also fosters religious devotion, and cultural preservation. The rituals during the *jatra* allows villages to express their we feelings in terms of common values, beliefs, and rituals. This we feelings results in establishing a sense of unity among the different castes and tribe and the continuation of the *jatra* from one generation to the other.

The essential role of the *gades* for the *Gadyanchi jatra* is important as without *gades* there cannot be *Gadyanchi jatra*. The *gades* have to perform various rituals, customs, taboos and practices that control their way of life during the *jatra*. The norms which include intricate purification rites and prohibition provide vital insight into the *gades* collectives ethos and worldview.

The dynamics of the *Gadyanchi jatra* can be analysed from the functionalist perspective. This *jatra* brings together different caste and tribe groups who work in coordination with each other to complete their allotted duties, assuring the *jatra's* success. The *Gadyanchi jatra*, is a folk ritual in which various castes and tribe, each with its own set of responsibilities contribute their services as a form of devotion to God Betal. The rituals for this *jatra* cannot be performed by one single caste therefore the entire *jatra* emphasises and acknowledges the need for mutual interdependence among different castes and tribe to perform their respective roles. As a result, the effective performance of prescribed functions by various castes and tribe culminates in the joyous celebration of the *Gadyanchi Jatra*.

Although there are notions of purity and pollution among castes and tribe in the society, still different castes and tribe come together during the *Gadyanchi jatra*. Though in normal mundane life, the notions of purity and pollution are followed, these notions are not followed when they enter the sacred space of *Gadyanchi jatra* for instance, *Mhar* is considered to be a lower caste, but this caste also has important role in *Gadyanchi jatra* that is without *Mharachi divja*, *Gadyanchi jatra* cannot commence. Irrespective of degree of purity and pollution, every caste and tribe are allowed to perform their role in the sacred space, where *Gadyanchi jatra* is performed.

The findings of this research explicitly show that the *Gadyanchi jatra* is more than just a celebration dedicated to Shree Betal; it also serves as a unifying factor, bringing people from various backgrounds together. This cultural event is a powerful structure to the continuing principles of collaboration and cultural legacy, emphasising the importance of collaborative effort in preserving and honouring shared past and customs. The relevance of the documentation of the *Gadyanchi jatra* through this research serves as a repository for community memory, preserving ancestral narratives

and cultural practices for future generations. By actively participating in its rituals and practices, participants not only affirm their cultural roots, but also contribute to the continuity and vitality of tradition in their communities.

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## APPENDIX I

### Glossary

<i>Aarti</i>	A form of Hindu worship
<i>Ashaya Tritiya</i>	Hindu auspicious day
<i>Abhishek</i>	Dropping milk, holy water on an idol
<i>Aagyakond</i>	Sacred place near temple
<i>Aadoli</i>	Coconut scrapper
<i>Angon</i>	A vow to an idol
<i>Avatar</i>	Trance presenting the deity
<i>Archak</i>	Priest
<i>Bhar</i>	Trance
<i>Betubaab</i>	Term used for Shree Betal
<i>Bandhan</i>	Ban/ restriction
<i>Bhatanchi jevni</i>	Food feeding for bhat
<i>Brahmanachi jevni</i>	Food feeding for brahmans
<i>Birude</i>	Symbols
<i>Chouk</i>	A quadrangular space forming central portion of temple/ house
<i>Chattri</i>	Holy umbrella
<i>Chavari</i>	Ornamental tassels
<i>Chakra</i>	Wheel
<i>Chakranass</i>	Diety residing on Chakra fator
<i>Chowgules</i>	Title given to four brahmans
<i>Chor</i>	Robbers

<i>Daban</i>	Bodkin
<i>Dipakalas</i>	Guardians of 8 directions
<i>Devasthaan</i>	Adobe of gods
<i>Devabaaay</i>	God's borewell
<i>Deva kombo</i>	Rooster dedicated to God
<i>Devakarya</i>	Pooja of God
<i>Daitya</i>	Demon
<i>Devulnass</i>	Protector of the temple
<i>Divza</i>	Light
<i>Divli</i>	Lamp
<i>Dhotar</i>	Type of garment
<i>Dhol</i>	Music instrument/ drum
<i>Feta</i>	Turban
<i>Ghudi</i>	Small house made up of stones
<i>Gharvoi</i>	A family clan
<i>Gadyanchi jatra</i>	Jatra of Shree Betal
<i>Ghee</i>	Butter
<i>Ghanta</i>	Bell
<i>Gaadi</i>	Mattress
<i>Garhane</i>	Prayer to God/ grievance
<i>Gadha</i>	Weapon of Shree Hanuman
<i>Gullpani</i>	Sweet water
<i>Gare</i>	Iron hooks
<i>Gades</i>	Devotees wearing white dhoti and feta
<i>Gandh</i>	Paste of Chandan

<i>Gaunkari system</i>	System of self-rule
<i>Haatari</i>	Pallet
<i>Havan</i>	A ritual burning of offerings
<i>Jana</i>	Knowledgeable
<i>Kara</i>	Kalash
<i>Kharvya jevni</i>	Food feeding for kharvis
<i>Khadag</i>	Heavy sword
<i>Kheech</i>	Occasion when sacrificial rituals are held
<i>Kucho</i>	Broom
<i>Khunto</i>	Pole made up of mud
<i>Kankan</i>	Bangle
<i>Khaamb</i>	Pillar
<i>Khani</i>	Bag
<i>Kambhal</i>	Rug
<i>Kaatni</i>	Type of cutlery
<i>Kasay</i>	Beverage of milk
<i>Katkaar</i>	Person looking after temple
<i>Kono fodne</i>	Breaking bamboo
<i>Khadagaghar</i>	Place where <i>khadag</i> is kept
<i>Langot</i>	Type of cotton garment worn by men
<i>Laakadachihi khili</i>	Wooden bar
<i>Lolti</i>	Practice of rolling in temple premises
<i>Lohar</i>	Blacksmith
<i>Lotangana</i>	Grovelling
<i>Magh</i>	A Hindu month

<i>Mahajan</i>	Devotees
<i>Med</i>	Arecanut tree
<i>Mandap</i>	Temple porch
<i>Mandalis</i>	Groups of people
<i>Malgado</i>	Leader of the gades
<i>Mor</i>	Peacock
<i>Mugut</i>	Crown
<i>Malne</i>	Pot
<i>Managalsutra</i>	Auspicious necklace worn by married women
<i>Mhasmaari</i>	Person dealing with sacrificial rituals
<i>Mhatari</i>	Elderly women
<i>Mhalo</i>	Barber
<i>Madval</i>	Washerman
<i>Naadi</i>	Knot
<i>Naagdo betal</i>	Naked sculpture of Betal
<i>Naivaidya</i>	Holy food
<i>Panchagram</i>	Five villages
<i>Pooja</i>	Worshiping god
<i>Pradakshina</i>	Circumbulation of gods
<i>Pasan ling</i>	Stone lings
<i>Paanavido</i>	Leaf and betelnut together acts as symbol
<i>Payas</i>	Sweet dish of rice, milk
<i>Paan</i>	Leaf
<i>Pancharangi</i>	Five colours

<i>Pitkuli</i>	Flower known as <i>Syzygium zeylanicum</i>
<i>Pontio</i>	Small cup shaped oil lamp of clay
<i>Prasad</i>	Holy food
<i>Purohit</i>	Priest
<i>Rahat</i>	Wheel
<i>Rumal</i>	Handkerchief
<i>Rakhondar</i>	Protector
<i>Shila Vighrah</i>	Idol
<i>Shakundivo</i>	Lamp
<i>Suray tandool</i>	Raw rice
<i>Saangni</i>	Prayer to God requesting good deeds
<i>Samala</i>	End of turban
<i>Sasar</i>	Act performed by Bhagat
<i>Shera</i>	lion
<i>Surya</i>	Sun
<i>Shingi</i>	A blowing horn
<i>Shendur</i>	Red lead used as colour liquid for gods
<i>Shelgade</i>	Gades from low caste
<i>Shunk</i>	Conch shell
<i>Shevok</i>	Trunk of coconut tree
<i>Sup</i>	Product made of bamboo
<i>Sutar</i>	Carpenters
<i>Suyo</i>	Small needles
<i>Sevajan</i>	Service providers of temple
<i>Taso</i>	Music instrument

<i>Tirth</i>	Holy water
<i>Tulsi Vrindavan</i>	Small podium with sacred Tulsi plant
<i>Tako</i>	Holy cloth having the scriptures of Shree Betal
<i>Taka vachan</i>	Reciting the Tako
<i>Taka Sanchar</i>	Journey of carrying Tako to villages
<i>Takyaghar</i>	Place where Tako is kept
<i>Trishul</i>	Trident
<i>Tura</i>	Skull
<i>Tond bandun paavni</i>	Auction where mouth of pots is covered
<i>Tripradakshina</i>	3 times circumambulation
<i>Tisala parab</i>	Third festival of Gadyanchi jatra
<i>Trigram</i>	3 villages
<i>Taranga</i>	Umbrella shaped procession of deities
<i>Tumbya</i>	Flower known as Leucas aspera
<i>Torans</i>	Traditional arcs
<i>Ukde tandool</i>	Parboiled rice
<i>Ussal</i>	Dish of peas
<i>Visarjan</i>	Immersion
<i>Vaalo</i>	Towel
<i>Vaishakh</i>	A Hindu month
<i>Varan</i>	Lentils curry
<i>Vaajantri</i>	Person serving as drum beaters
<i>Waaki</i>	Armlet
<i>Waagra</i>	Stone in front of temple

*Zagor*

Prayer to almighty to protect the village