

CHAPTER FOUR

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC
CHARACTERISTICS OF
GAVALIS**

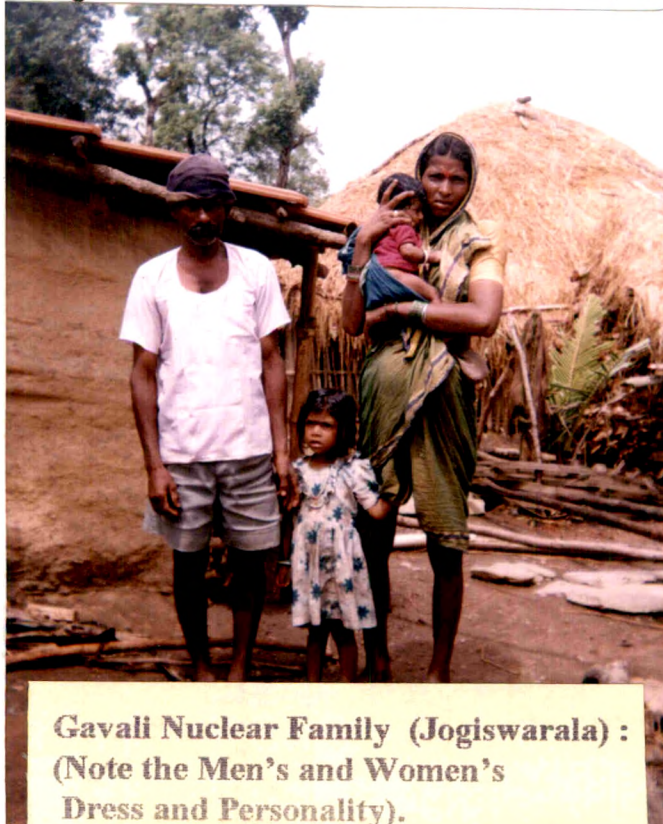
CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF GAVALIS**INTRODUCTION :**

In this section, I propose to provide an outline of Gavali's socio-economic characteristics or features : personality type, dress, house type, food habits, literacy, etc.

PERSONALITY TYPE :

Men wear half pants, white shirt and a turban on their head, many have big and sturdy mustache. Women wear nine yard saree in distinctive Kasauta a traditional Maharashtrian style. Young and married women wear green bangles. Elderly women have their head covered with Padar an end of the saree. Younger women's wearing saree in a typically urban style.



Gavali Nuclear Family (Jogiswarala) :
(Note the Men's and Women's
Dress and Personality).

SETTLEMENT :

Gavalis are found only in the three talukas situated in the western parts of the Western Ghat region. This region is characterised by broad hill plateaus and very high rainfall. The Gavali population is widely spread in this region but is however sparse and their settlements are very small each comprising only about 10-15 house-holds.

The size of the settlement is obviously dictated by the vegetation that determines the availability of fodder and water for live-stock. The vegetation indirectly determines the ecological pressure on their animals. The three taluka of Gavali settlement and their population is given below in Table no. 4.1.

Table 4.2 Showing the Gavali Settlements and Population in Three Talukas

Sr. No.	Taluka	No. of Settlements	Total Population
1.	Haliyal	13	2080
2.	Mundgod	32	5120
3.	Yellapur	18	2880
Total		63	10,080

This is an estimated population on the basis of an average of 5 members per family.

The Gavalis or Dhangar settlements are satellites of the peasant villages and are known as Dhangarwadas or Gavaliwadas.

LANGUAGE :

Gavalis speak a distinctive dialect of Marathi which is different from the Marathi spoken in the urban as well as rural areas of Maharashtra. This indicates their relative isolation from the rest of the population and their special habitat and forest eco-system.

DWELLINGS :

We can distinguish between two types of housing among the Gavalis, the traditional huts, and the improved houses. The improved houses are built by burnt or sun-baked bricks and stones and are roofed with the Mangalore tiles. But usually the Gavalis live in the huts constructed by using the local wood and other available material. A wooden frame of country timber makes the structural frame. For roofing, grass or leaves are used and the walls are made of bamboo and plastered by mud-cow-dung mixture. The floor is also plastered by cow-dung. Gavalis as well as their animals live under the same shelter. Their houses have a well protected compound built by indigenous forest wood. The size of the hut depends upon the size of the family and the number of animals domesticated.

Normally a hut consists of two parts. The front part (60-70 percent of the built-up area is meant for the animals where the roofing is low. It is called Gota i.e. cattle-shed. The back portion has a little higher roof and is used by the

humans. This part is usually divided into two portions, the outer portion used by the men-folk and the inner portion used by women for cooking. This traditional hut has only one entrance. The door is made by intercepting Karvi (*Storbilanthes Callosus*) sticks and is called Kud.

There is no separate bath-room as such for family members. They take bath in a corner in the cattle-shed or in the backyard of the hut. Some of the houses have a small and separate shed called Kalvad for storing fuel-wood. Recently the migrated Gavalis are constructing pucca and improved houses of bricks or stones on account of housing schemes of the Karnataka government.

Table 4.2 : Showing House Type of houses of the Gavali families in Jogiswarala and Kandrankoppa.

Sr. No.	Village	Traditional House	Improved Pucca (Tiles roofs)	Total	%
1.	Jogiswarla	06	03	09	45%
2.	Kandrankoppa	08	03	11	55%
Total		14 (70%)	06 (30%)	20	100%

Traditional houses constitute 14 (70%) majority in both the villages, however we can also find improved tiled houses 6 (30%) in these villages.



**Modernised Traditional House type of Gavali:
(Note the fencing around the house prepared out of the forest wood)**



**The Researcher and his Supervisor
Interviewing Gavali Children (Jogiswarala)**

Table 4.3 : Showing Distribution of Gavalis by their Family Type

Sr. No.	Village	Joint	Nuclear	Total	%
1.	Jogiswarla	2	7	09	45%
2.	Kandrankoppa	1	10	11	55%
Total		3 (15%)	17 (85%)	20	100%

Nuclear families constitute 17 (85%) majority while joint families 3 (15%) are also seen.

FOOD AND DRINK :

A) Food :

The daily food of the Gavalis consists of Millet bread (Bhakar), Chilli powder or Onion to gulp it and Curry in their daily diet. Food on few festive days consists sweet items such as 'Gul-bhat' and non-vegetarian items especially during Dasara, (Holi) Shimaga, Marriage ceremony, etc.

They also eat seasonal fruits like Mangoes, Phanas, Jack-fruit, Jambhul and in rainy season eat vegetables like Takala or some tubers and roots. Nachna and Bhat (paddy) and milk are their main. The Gavalis usually eat three times a day. In harvest season, they eat meat, dried fish and vegetables.

B) Drink :

The Gavalis did not know tea for several generations. But now a days it has been a common beverage among them. Most of the time it is prepared

when the respectable guest comes. However they are accustomed to take black tea without milk.

C) Habits :

Liquor is consumed to a great extent by them at the time of wedding, village fairs and festivals. Many of them take it regularly also. It was observed that in Jogiswarala almost all the males take liquor daily from their neighbouring tribal Lamanis and significant part of their earnings is spent on it. Smoking, chewing Pan and Tobacco chewing is common among the Gavalis. Recently, the younger generation has also turned to take to tobacco : chewing of Pan and smoking. Gavalis have high illiteracy as is seen from the Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 : Showing Educational Status of Heads of Family

Sr. No.	Educational Category	No. of Heads of Family	Percentage
1.	Illiteracy	15	75%
2.	Pre-primary	02	10%
3.	Primary	02	10%
4.	Secondary	01	5%
5.	Higher Secondary	-	-
	Total	20	100%

Majority of the 15 (75%) family heads are Illiterates. As the table indicates the percentage of literates to the total is only 5 (25%). Out of 20 respondents 2 (10%) family heads have studied upto Pre-Primary, 2 (10%)

family heads have studied upto Primary level and 1 (5%) family head has studied upto Secondary level. There is no single family who has studied upto Higher Secondary. Illiteracy is a major characteristic of the Gavalis.

Further, we see that there is no significant relationship between the Land holding and literacy as is seen from the Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 : Showing the Distribution of Respondents by Land Holding and Education.

Sr. No.	Education	Landless	0-2	2-4	5-6	7-8	9 above	Total
1.	Illiteracy	03 (15%)	02 (10%)	07 (35%)	01 (5%)	-	02 (10%)	15 (75%)
2.	Literate	01 (5%)	-	03 (15%)	-	01 (5%)	-	05 (20%)
	Total	04 (20%)	02 (10%)	10 (50%)	01 (5%)	01 (5%)	02 (10%)	20 (100%)

Agriculture and agriculture labour is the primary occupation while domestication of buffaloes and selling milk in the nearby towns is their secondary occupation. Both these activities demand the physical and strenuous activities of men, women and their children. Majority of the Gavali family members time is spent in the forest and on working in their farm land. Hence there is no difference in their economic activities land holdings and we therefore do not find any significant correlation between their economic status and literacy rate.