A CULTURAL STUDY OF THE VATSAGULMAMĀHĀTMYA

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by
Dhanashree Nikhil Shejwalkar
(Registration No. 00119004704)

Under the Guidance of
Dr. Ambarish Vasant Khare

Shri Balmukund Lohia Centre of Sanskrit and Indological Studies

May 2023

CERTIFICATE OF THE SUPERVISOR

It is certified that the work entitled "**A Cultural Study of the Vatsagulmamāhātmya**" is an original research work done by Mrs. Dhanashree Nikhil Shejwalkar under my supervision for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Sanskrit to be awarded by Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis

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Place: Ambarish Vasant Khare

Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune

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Signature

(Name- Dhanashree Nikhil Shejwalkar)

Address: 102, Charusheela Aptts, Near Bedekar Ganapati Mandir, Off Paud Road, Near MIT College, Kothrud, Pune-411038

Ph. No.:9850999166/7507178688   **e-mail:** shejwalkard@gmail.com

Date: **Place:**

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Abstract

The present work titled "A Cultural Study of the Vatsagulmamāhātmya" is a cultural study of a Sanskrit *Sthala Māhātmya* named Vatsagulmamāhātmya, arranged in 39 *adhyāya*s and about 4500 verses. This type of literature is observed in the Mediaeval and late Mediaeval period, i.e., after 12th century C.E. This text is the description of the 108 sacred places around the main sacred place of Vatsagulma.

Vatsagulma is famous in the ancient Indian history as the capital of the Vatsagulma branch of the then rulers of the land- the Vākāṭakas. The dynasty ruled in Maharashtra and some part of Madhya Pradesh from 3rd century C.E. to 6th century C. E. as the follower of the Vedic tradition. The present text, however, does not recognise this dynasty.

The focus of the text is to imbibe the philosophy of the Purāṇas, i.e., the theory of rebirth, and the theory of fruition. With about 51 legends stated in the text, the writer tries to convince the readers about the importance of good deeds.

The locations of some of the 108 sacred places mentioned in the text are traceable today also. In this thesis, an attempt has been made to analyse these locations on the ground. The three *āvaraṇa*s stated in the text show the proximity of those places from the central place of Vatsagulma.

This study is the analysis of the interrelation of various cultural factors seen from the text. They mainly include the religion, the language, the society, the geography of the sacred places, and so on. The legends in the text throw light on various cultural factors.

Overall, the text shows the Paurāṇika Dharma- the religion pertaining to the Puranic period. Various deities are mentioned in the text, the main is lord Śiva. The devottees are advised to come to this place, bathe in the holy waters of various water bodies present in the area and wipe out their sins. This typical Puranic feature is often found in the text.

The period of writing of the text can be inferred from the language of the text. There are ample times when the language is like the Marathi language- the local language. There are various expressions in the text to prove that the local language has an influence on the writer. Moreover, the style of the text is narrative style. Some famous legends are mentioned in detail.

Thus, the complex cultural factors seen from the text are analysed in the study. There is a need for more attempts of this type of study of any local *māhātmya* text in sketching the cultural landscape of the region.

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List of Abbreviations

1) VGM- Vatsagulmamāhātmya

2) MB- Mahābhārata

3) HoD- History of Dharmaśāstra

4) RHAI- Religious History of Ancient India

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

I.1.   Sanskrit Literature

The Indian subcontinent, during the last 3500 years, has seen creation of literature treatises in Sanskrit language. Narasimhaswamy (1945:54) says that this field is so vast that it would be no exaggeration to say that each branch can be independently studied and analysed. Researchers have conducted studies in Sanskrit literature with a focus on perspectives such as linguistics, principles of *śāstra*, rituals, social conduct and many more. These studies have involved interdisciplinary approaches to understand the cultural, political, and social scenarios prevailing in the society during the period of creation.

Around the beginning of the Christian Era, one finds a remarkable change in the Sanskrit literature. A gradual shift from Vedic and *śāstra* literature to classical and Purāṇic literature is observed. Slowly and gradually, there is a deliberate attempt of composition of the classical literature. This period marks the shift from oral tradition to the written manuscript tradition. The new knowledge tradition divides the literature in two parts, the *dṛṣya kāvya* (the performing plays) and *śravya kāvya* (the written poetry). The end of the classical period is marked by the Naiṣadhīyacarita composed by Śrīharṣa in the 13th Century CE.

Parallel to the classical period, we find that the compilation of the text of Purāṇas—a special type of Sanskrit literature—was also going on. Purāṇas are said to be composed in the Gupta-Vākāṭaka period, mainly in the written form, which varied from literature composed till then. The great Indian Epics, prior to the Purāṇas showed the tradition of *sūta*s or *kuśīlava*s. The Vedic literature was not meant to be passed down in written form. The knowledge sharing had to be through oral tradition.

I.2.   The Purāṇas

Purāṇas emerged in the period of the Guptas, wherein all types of prosperity, be it in terms of the trade, commerce, literature, rituals of the Vedic religion and so on was present. There are archaeological and literary evidence to prove the above statement. The Purāṇa literature marked a new beginning in the religious landscape for the people in the Indian subcontinent. The earlier religious practises were Vedic and demanded the knowledge of sacrificial rituals, the memorization of the Saṃhitās, and understanding of the Vedāṅgas. The worshipping practise in the Vedic period was dominated by the sacrificial fire, in which the oblations made were supposed to be carried by the fire god to the deity in consideration. The result of that sacrificial ritual was sometimes materialistic, i.e., obtaining a son or gaining a bigger kingdom; and sometimes abstract, like obtaining the *svarga* (the heaven).

On this background, when the Purāṇic religion emerged, it gradually changed the focus of the worship from the natural phenomena to the man-like deities. The natural phenomena like rain, dawn, waters, the Sun were being worshipped in the Vedic period. In Purāṇic period, deities like the Śiva, the Brahmā, the Viṣṇu gained importance in the religious beliefs of people. This multiplicity in terms of the gods is a part of religious life of the people in the Indian subcontinent even today. Vide Kane (1930: 162), "Though there is a remarkable continuity in India as to religious thoughts and practices, yet the popular religion of modern Hindus is pre-eminently pauranic."

The Purāṇa literature is seen in the literary tradition after the Vedic literature. It ascertains the values in the Vedic society. The tradition of the Purāṇas starts from the fourth century CE and continues for many centuries till 17th century CE.

The word *purāṇa* in Sanskrit is a variant of the word *purātana* (the old one). (Dange 1976: 270) Since Vedic times, this word is being used as an adjective, meaning old, or prevalent in ancient times. It is alternately defined as – *purā anati iti* (That which is there since old times). The Purāṇic period was characterised by different worshipping practises involving elaborate *pūjā* (worship). The trinity of gods- Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva- gained importance over the Indian subcontinent during this period. The temples for worship were

an important marker of this period. The economic prosperity during this period led to building the temples where the masses could gather for performing rituals together. Literature taking a note of this change in the religious practises started describing these processes in detail.

The linguistic characteristics and subject matter of the Purāṇic texts were also different than those of the previous ones. The Purāṇic literature mainly comprises of Mahāpurāṇas and Upapurāṇas. Mahāpurāṇas were the texts which were bigger in size and stated important principles of Purāṇas. They are eighteen as under- Matsya, Mārkaṇḍeya, Bhāgavata, Bhaviṣya, Brahma, Brahmavaivarta, Brahmāṇḍa, Vāmana, Varāha, Viṣṇu, Vāyu, Agni, Nārada, Padma, Liṅga, Garuḍa, Kūrma and Skanda. The *Upapurāṇa*s were smaller texts in size and focused mainly on secondary deities.

The literature falling in the genre of Purāṇas primarily shows five characteristics (*pañcalakṣaṇa*):

सर्गश्च प्रतिसर्गश्च वंशो मन्वन्तराणि च ।

वंशानुचरितं चैव पुराणं पञ्चलक्षणम् ॥ (Bhaviṣyapurāṇa 2.4–5)

The Purāṇa has five characteristics, *sarga* (creation), *pratisarga* (destruction), *vaṁśa* (the generations of sages and seers), *manvantara* (different time periods), and *vaṁśānucarita* (the dynasties of kings)[1].

The Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa (4.133.7-10) enlists more than ten characteristics of the Purāṇic literature as under:

सृष्टिश्चापि विसृष्टिश्च स्थितिस्तेषां च पालनम् ।

कर्मणां वासना वार्ता मनूनां चक्रमेण च ॥

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[1] According to Wilson's translation, the original five components of a Purāṇa are (1) primary creation, or cosmogony; (2) secondary creation, or the destruction and renovation of worlds, including chronology; (3) genealogy of gods and patriarchs; (4) reigns of the Manus, or periods called Manvantaras; (5) history, or such particulars as have been preserved of the solar and lunar races, and of their descendants to modern times. (Rocher 1986: 26).

वर्णनं प्रलयानां च मोक्षस्य च निरूपणम् ।

उत्कीर्तनं हरेरेव वेदानां च पृथक्पृथक् ॥

दशाधिकं लक्षणं च महतां परिकीर्तितम् ।

The ten characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*s) of the Purāṇas are 1. *Sṛṣṭi* – creation of the world, 2. *Visṛṣṭi*- destruction of the world, 3. *Sthiti*- maintenance of the world, 4. *Pālana*- the protection of the world, 5. *Karmaṇām vāsanā*- the desire to perform actions, 6. *Vārtā*- the commerce, 7. *Manūnāṁ cakramaṇaṁ*- the cyclic nature of the time, 8. *Pralayānāṁ varṇanaṁ* the description of the end of the world, 9. *Mokṣasya nirūpaṇaṁ*- description of the liberation, 10. *hareḥ utkīrtanaṁ*- praising the lord Viṣṇu, 11. *vedānāṁ utkīrtanaṁ*- praising the Vedas. Thus, the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa enlists more than ten characteristics of the Purāṇic literature.

Many Purāṇic treatises do not contain majority of the characteristics described earlier that are required to qualify as a Purāṇa. But still they are known and accepted as a Purāṇa. To understand why such literatures have been classified as Purāṇa, one needs to understand the classification process for Purāṇas.

The Purāṇas are classified in various ways. Dange (1976: 284) opines that the primary classification of the Purāṇas is ancient and non-ancient. In this regard, she considers Vāyu, Brahmāṇḍa, Matsya and Viṣṇu Purāṇas as the ancient or original or basic, as those treatises show all the five characteristics of the Purāṇas. The rest of the Mahāpurāṇas do not show all these characteristics. Therefore, the remaining are termed as non-ancient.

There has been a variety of opinions and studies of Purāṇas. The work of R. C. Hazra (1940) entitled "Studies in the Purāṇic Records on the Hindu rites and Customs" is considered as a pioneer work in Purāṇic studies. According to Hazra, the Purāṇic literature shows two stages of development. The changing subject matter in the Purāṇa literature was observed as per the

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stages of development. The Purāṇa literature after the sixth century included many more topics like *tīrtha*s, *dāna*[2].

The first composers of the Upapurāṇas, according to Hazra (1940: 54), were the "*smārta brāhmaṇa sectaries*". They included the *Brahmā* worshippers, the practitioners of the *pāñcarātra* philosophy and the *pāśupata* philosophy. They saw the common people in society losing their faith in the Vedic rituals and took a chance to spread their own philosophies along with the reestablishment of the *varṇāśramadharma*. Hazra (1940: 6) opines that due to this, the new nature of the Purāṇas emerged. They came to be known as the important codes of the Hindu rites and customs by including chapters on Varṇāśramadharma, Ācāra, Śrāddha, Prāyaścitta, Dāna, Pūjā, Vrata, Tīrtha, Pratiṣṭhā, Dīkṣā, Utsarga, etc.

I.3. *Paurāṇika Dharma*

At this point, it will be helpful to discuss the nature of *paurāṇika dharma*. It is a special phase in the religious life of people living in the Indian subcontinent because it gave the people living in the area the name Hindu. What we call it as Hinduism is the outcome of this period. It primarily provided the basis for all the religious practises. It was not only the rituals, but the philosophy on which it was based, was different than the earlier. Goyal (1986:3) opined that the earlier Vedic and Brāhmaṇical tradition was regarded influential and divinely established. One may find the elements of *bhakti* in pre-Vedic period also. It gained a larger canvas in the post-Upaniṣadic period. This was the period, when several religious cults centred around the worship of the individual gods, like the Śiva, the Viṣṇu, the Śakti, the Sūrya, and the Gaṇeśa. The religious practises that arose as a response to these cults, are identified as Paurāṇika Dharma. This is alternatively called as *smārta dharma*. The basis of Vedic religion was *varṇāśramadharma* which was based on the sacrificial

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[2] See also A.D. Pusalker (1955: 197) According to Hazra, in the first stage (third-fifth century A. D.) only topics on Hindu rites and customs which formed the subject matter of early *Smṛiti-Saṁhitā*s such as Manu and Yājñavalkya were incorporated, while the second stage (A. D. 600 onwards) incorporated new topics regarding gifts, initiation, sacrifices, homa, *pratiṣṭhā*, *tīrtha*s, *utsarga* etc., not found in Manu and Yājñavalkya or in Purāṇas written prior to the sixth century.

rituals. The *paurāṇika dharma*, however, merged itself gradually into an entirely different set of rituals. This new set of rituals included the worship of the idols of different gods with sixteen elaborate means (*ṣoḍaśopacāra pūjā*), personally preparing Śivaliṅgas and their worship, the *bhakti*- devotion-towards the gods, construction of temples of different gods, the sacred places with water bodies to perform rituals, the pilgrimages carried out by common people to visit the sacred places and many more.

The significant angle of this changed practise of rituals was the doctrine of *karman*. It has been variously discussed by elite scholars like P. V. Kane[3] and S.R. Goyal[4]. It was based on the good and bad deeds performed by a man. The basis of this doctrine is that the good deeds lead to merits and the bad deeds lead to sins. A man who has more sins than the merits at the time of his death, is reborn lesser than a human, or even if born a human, attains grief and faces losses. This doctrine of *karman* co-exists with the theories of rebirth and fruition of action- *punarjanma* and *karmavipāka*. All these three together create a complete picture of the religious base of the Purāṇic religion.

The texts that addressed this changed philosophy and the rituals associated with it were also termed as Purāṇas, but they came with a difference. They were minor or localised texts which noted the sacred places in their vicinity. Inclusion of these aspects in the Purāṇas changed its outer and inner characteristics considerably. The prototype of the five characteristics or the ten characteristics was never followed by the later Purāṇas. Their focus shifted more to the affirmation of the glory of the place and the important deity in that place. That is where the texts of *māhātmya*s appear as a genre in Purāṇa Period.

I.4. Māhātmya Literature

The word is formed by adding the *taddhita* affix *ṣyañ* to the word *mahātman* (Abhyankar 2012(1961):402). The word *mahātman* itself is a *bahuvrīhi* compound which means the one whose nature is great. The affix *ṣyañ* is added

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[3] See HoD vol.4, pages 1-40
[4] See RHAI vol.2,141

to it in the sense of nature. By this, the word means the sense of being magnanimous.

According to Monier Williams (1970: 815), the Sanskrit word *māhātmya* is derived from the word *mahātman*, which means magnanimity, high-mindedness, exalted state or position, majesty, dignity, the peculiar efficacy or virtue of any divinity or sacred shrine or a work giving an account of the merits of any holy place or object.

The changed religious beliefs in the Purāṇic age gave a firm base to the idea of devotion, the sacred places, and the temple traditions. The sacred places gradually gained importance due to various rituals prescribed in the scriptures to be performed in them and in their vicinity. As aptly described by the prominent scholar Stella Kramrisch (1946: 3), "Tīrtha is the name of a place of pilgrimage on the bank of a river, the sea-shore or a lake. The meaning of the word is a ford, a passage. Water, the purifying, fertilizing element being present, its current which is the river of life can be forded in inner realisation and the pilgrim can cross over to the other shore. The place of pilgrimage is the end of the journey to the Centre; but it is not itself the goal and only the means for crossing over to the Centre. For this very reason the number of *Tīrtha*s and *Kṣetra*s is indefinitely large."

The glory or the importance of such sacred places was the main subject matter of the later Purāṇic literature. It is characterized by the relatively smaller texts that glorified the sacred places. They are localized in nature as they mainly talk about the greatness of the region. There may be various reasons of the sacred places gaining importance. Almost every Māhātmya text follows a certain pattern or structure. The chief gods like Śiva, Brahmā, Viṣṇu are sometimes described meditating on the lands of these sacred place. Also, the commoners who are sinners or wish to gain something are featured to reach this sacred place either knowingly or unknowingly. Then they gain merit just by being around the sacred place. This is a general outline of any *māhātmya* text.

The journey of the society in religious field was gradual from Vedic to Purāṇic and of course both had a simultaneous existence since the Purāṇic

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religion gained popularity in the society. Katre (2011: 75) explains this transition from Vedic religion to Pauranic religion. According to her, the extravaganza of the rituals in the Brāhmaṇas was deglamourized by the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. But the common man did not have the ability to experience the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. The society that was caught in such a conflict was allotted the enriching environment for the worshipping of the favourite deity by the Purāṇic literature and presented the stories, sub-stories and history and changed the original form of the Vedic deities and in the same process, there was an emergence of the *tīrthakṣetra*s with this firm base. The pilgrimage helped the formation of the devotees with good conduct. Observing this, various *tīrtha*s were included in the Purāṇas. The Purāṇas told the glory- Māhātmya- of the places, the result of the pilgrimage and the common man was also attracted towards the pilgrimage.

The *māhātmya* literature also includes the glory of some specific months, like *Puruṣottama-māsa-māhātmya* or *Māgha-māsa-māhātmya* etc. They mainly emphasise the importance of those months according to the Purāṇic rituals and worships of specific deities that must be carried out during that period. But the *māhātmya* literature is not confined to the glory of the months only. It mainly includes the literature that states the glory of various places mainly of religious importance. The popular sacred places like Vārāṇasī, Prayāga, Gayā find special texts assigned to them, which mainly state the sacred places in their vicinity. The Nīlamatapurāṇa is popular to state the glory of Kashmir. Nepāla-māhātmya is famous for the glory of Nepal.

The *māhātmya* literature does not talk only about the glory of places or of some deities or some months, but they also state the importance of some things or concepts pertaining to Indian culture, such as *Tulasī māhātmya*.

This vast *māhātmya* literature is well reviewed in the volume 2, fascicule 1 of the History of Sanskrit literature by Jan Gonda in the chapter entitled "medieval Sanskrit literature". He writes, "They (the *tīrthamāhātmya*s) are often composed in Sanskrit and profess to be part of a purāṇa in some cases they were included in a work of that genre. Their number is very large because every holy place of some importance possesses

such a "glorification" in which the legends and eulogies upon the holiness of the tīrtha have been brought together. In accordance with their name these decidedly popular "glorifications of holy places", mostly compiled by the resident priests, are primarily meant to inform the innumerable pilgrims of the holiness of the tīrtha and the rules and customs obtaining there."

Thus here, Gonda highlights the highly localized nature of the *māhātmya*s and in a way indicates to look for the *māhātmya*s in regional languages even if they are available in the Sanskrit language.

This thought made the researcher to look for the other localized *māhātmya*s popular in the vicinity of Vatsagulma especially. They are *Viraja māhātmya* (a text stating the glory of Lonar), *Reṇukā māhātmya* (a text stating the glory of goddess Renuka in Mahurgad. It is said to be a part of Skanda Purāṇa) and *Mahīkhala māhātmya* (glory of Mahur). The Sanskrit version of Viraja *māhātmya* could not be traced though it is said to be a part of Skanda Purāṇa. (Apte, Joglekar:2015). With the non-availability of the original manuscripts or the published editions, the study of *māhātmya*s become a tricky task. It needs to be addressed well.

Generally, the *māhātmya* literature emphasises the religious aspects of the specific place. In doing so, it states the rituals, the traditions, and an overall religious landscape of the place.

I.5. Studies on the *Māhātmya*s: Need of Holistic Approach

There are numerous texts of *māhātmya*s which are studied mainly from the point of view of the religion. This traditional approach of studying the *māhātmya* for religious aspects is needed for a general study of those texts. But *māhātmya*s are more than that. Those are the treasure of various geographic, cultural, religious, and historic glimpses, numerous stories of the glory of the place, and so on.

A specific geographic location of a place is an important reason for that place to gain importance. Thus, the *māhātmya* literature needs to be studied with various angles for its deep understanding. Dr. B. C. Law was one of the first scholars who realised the importance of the geographical location

of a sacred place. He emphasised the need to study the vast expanse of the *māhātmya* texts with the geographical point of view. His work in the field of historical geography is the most important one. He was right in pointing out that a holistic approach towards the study of the *māhātmya* literature should be adopted by including the study of geography and topography of the region. R. C. Dhere was one of the eminent scholars from Maharashtra who has extensively used these *māhātmya*s or *Sthala purāṇa*s for his research of the important religious places such as Pandharpur, Kolhapur, Tuljapur and many others. He has referred to more than ten *Sthala purāṇa*s in his research. He held an opinion that all the aspects of any religious place could not be understood unless and until one study the ancient accounts of the place in the form of such *māhātmya*s.

Special attention on the local *māhātmya* literature can bring about various characteristics of the place, the ancient importance, or the continuity of the traditions in the place. A thorough study of the localized literature can complete the jigsaw puzzle pertaining to the religious landscape of a region. The basic nature or the earlier nature of the Purāṇas gradually changed, and the structure of the later Purāṇas showed the emergence of localised *māhātmya*s. R. C. Hazra (1940:7) correctly points out- "Consequently, the accounts of genealogies of kings and sages were little cared for, and often fabricated; and sections on holy places etc. were composed by different people at different times and freely attached to the Purāṇas as their integral parts, so that the extents of these works varied. People also took absolute liberty in making changes in the texts of the Purāṇas. Consequently, textual corruptions increased hopelessly."

Thus, the study of the *māhātmya* literature needs to be carried out carefully and with a holistic approach. Only religious and literary aspects have been widely studied in this genre. But there is a need to study this type of literature with an integrated approach, i.e., with the aspects of political history, historical geography, economic history and many more.

Owing to this need of more inclusive study of the *māhātmya* texts, the researcher has chosen the text of the Vatsagulmamāhātmya. It is a printed text

about the glory of Vatsagulma, written in about 4500 Sanskrit verses. It is well-divided in 39 *adhyāya*s with a description of 108 sacred places in and around Vatsagulma.

I.6.   Aims and Objectives

The focus of attention of the researcher is to interweave the knowledge of Sanskrit, geography, and ancient history to understand the *māhātmya* literature in depth. This approach can help in fathoming the depths of this genre of the literature. Thus, this topic was chosen by the researcher.

With many mentions of the word Vatsagulma in the Sanskrit literature, it is evident that the place of Vatsagulma had gained importance during Vākāṭaka period. This place of Vatsagulma has been identified as present day Washim in the eastern Maharashtra (20° 6′ 0.0000″ N and 77° 9′ 0.0072″ E)[5]. The place seems to have gained the religious importance in the later Purāṇic period. Its religious glory has been written in Sanskrit in the text of Vatsagulmamāhātmya. The manuscripts of the text were collected and studied in the early 1920s by Dr. Y. K. Deshpande. Its edition was published by the efforts of some elite members in the society as evidence of the ancient Vedic and Purāṇic tradition in and around Vatsagulma.

For the present research, the researcher has tried her best to collect the original manuscripts from the Sharadashram Library, Yavatmal; but the efforts were not fruitful. Thus, the present study is based on the published book of the Vatsagulmamāhātmya.

I.7.   Earlier Attempts

It is evident from the earlier paragraphs that there is an overgrowing need for the cultural studies of the Sanskrit historical texts. Thus, the present text was selected. The text under consideration is titled 'Vatsagulma Māhātmya' (Prācīna Vāśīma) with the introduction written by the great historian late Mr. Yashwant Khushal Deshpande Papalkar of Yavatmal. It was published and printed by Mr. Shankar Gopal Dabeer at Washim at the printing press by

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[5]Plate I- Location Map of Washim

INSET MAP

MAIN MAP

Maharashtra

Washim

Districts

Washim

Talukas

Districts

AKOLA

Karanja

Karanja

Mangrul Pir

20°20'N

BULDHANA

Malegaon

Mangrul Pir

Mangrul Pir

Manora

Mehekar

Washim

Washim

Risod

20°0'N

Lonar

YAVATMAL

HINGOLI

76°40'E

77°0'E

77°20'E

77°40'E
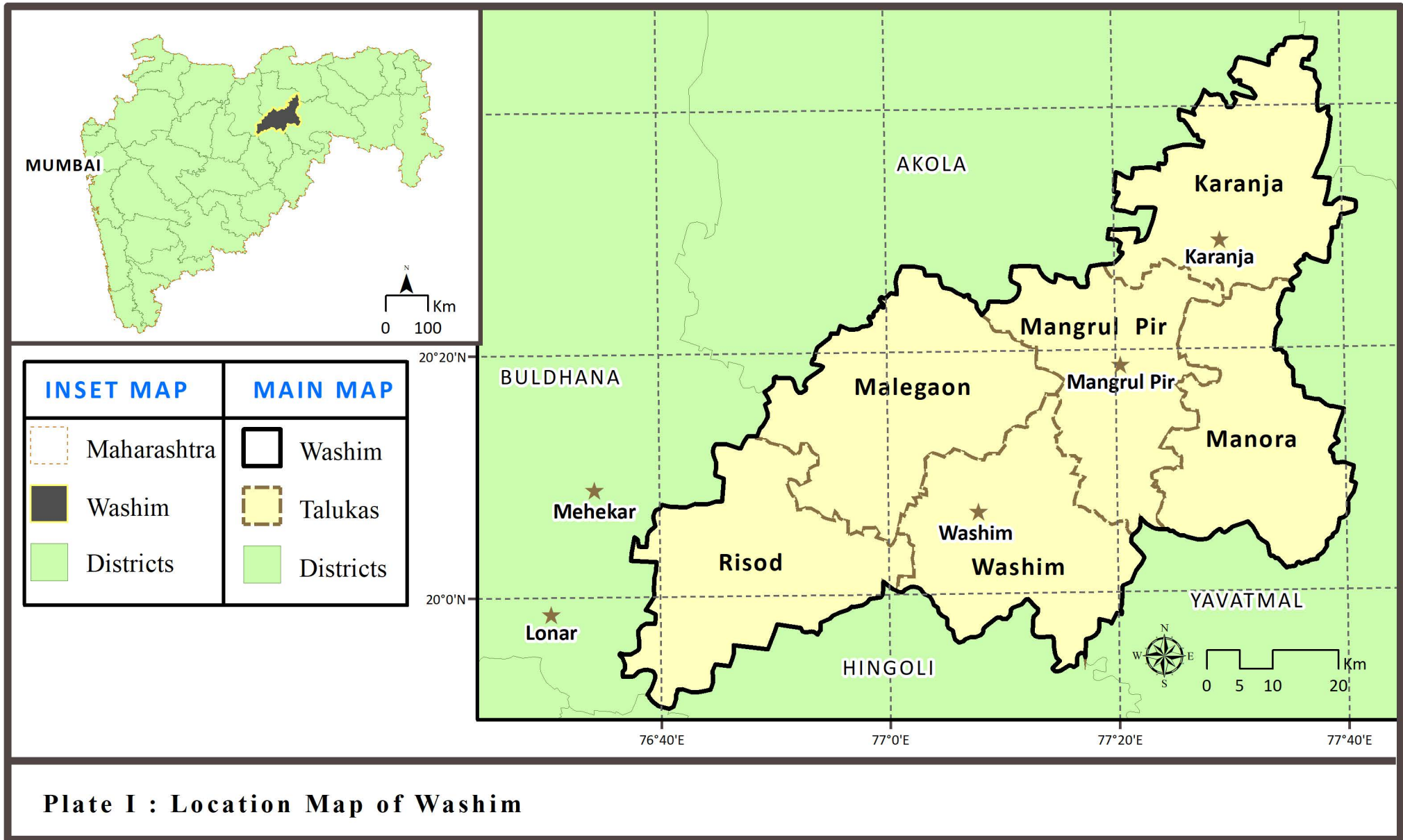
Plate I : Location Map of Washim

name Koshatvar Mudranalaya, Washim in the year 1873 of Śaka era i.e., 1951 CE There is a ten-page long prologue of the book by the publisher Mr. Shankar Gopal Dabeer.

There is also an attempt by Dr. Deshpande to locate these *tīrtha*s in the vicinity. The attempt was quite noteworthy. It was important to preserve the local tradition of glory of the place. The present study is an attempt to map some of these *tīrtha*s with the help of modern techniques of mapping and see if there is some explanation of the three *āvaraṇa*s mentioned in the original text.

In addition to this, some points will be newly studied in this work. The economic connections of the Vatsagulma, the role of socio-linguistic features of the VGM to decide the time of the text, and the probable writers of the text. The present research will be more accurate or holistic after studying the original manuscripts, the problems of which has been addressed earlier. The linguistic associations, the qualities of a scribe, the paper quality of the manuscript could have thrown some light on the period or other things.

I.8.   Hypothesis

The cultural study of the text of the Vatsagulmamāhātmya will bring out the religious, social, linguistic, and other important cultural aspects so that in the broader perspective, the localized *māhātmya* texts will be helpful in designing the cultural landscape of the region. The political and economic significance of such places can provide a base to further studies of the *māhātmya* texts. This text belongs to the mediaeval period, wherein the influence of local prevailing language is found.

I.9.   The Text of the VGM

The Sanskrit text of the Vatsagulmamāhātmya stretches for 39 *adhyāya*s and total 4795 verses. As stated in the published available edition, it was edited from the manuscripts which were claimed to be present in the Sharadashram library at Yavatmal at the time of editing i.e., around 1951 CE It is a text written primarily to explain the glory of the sacred place of the Vatsagulma. It

also describes total one hundred and eight *tīrtha*s in the periphery of five *kosa* (around nine kms) of Vatsagulma. The *tīrtha*s referred to in this text are not only a waterbody or the confluence of rivers, but it is also sometimes a tree or a temple.

This text claims to be a part of Padma Purāṇa, but as is the case of many *māhātmya* texts, it is not found in any of the recensions of the Padma Purāṇa.

The deity which is mainly seen in the sacred places around Vatsagulma is lord Śiva. Even other deities like Viṣṇu, Hanūmat, Sūrya, Brahmā are mentioned at some *tīrtha* in this text. The first eight *adhyāya*s are presented as the background or introduction to the main text. The following table shows the name of all the *adhyāya*s and the total number of verses in it.

Chapter no.	No. of verses	Name of the chapter
1	69	Rājapatnīvilāpaḥ
2	125	Nṛparājñīsaṁvādakathanaṁ
3	95	Vāsukivasiṣṭhadarśanaṁ
4	132	Karmavipākakathanaṁ
5	143	Brahmastutikathanaṁ
6	49	Viṣṇudarśanaṁ
7	75	Kailāsagamanaṁ
8	123	Vatsavarapradānaṁ
9	209	Karuṇeśamāhātmyakathanaṁ
10	124	Vimalatīrthacāmuṇḍākhyānavarṇanaṁ
11	60	Madhyameśvaranīlakaṇṭheśvarākhyānavarṇanaṁ
12	117	Mallikārjunavarṇanaṁ
13	188	Nṛsiṁhatīrthākhyāne Nṛsiṁhāvirbhāvaḥ
14	71	Nṛsiṁhatīrthananditīrthākhyānavarṇanaṁ
15	120	Puṣkara-tīrtha-khaṇḍeśvarākhyāna-varṇanaṁ
16	152	Daridraharaṇatīrthamahimākathanaṁ

17	145	Dāridryaharaṇopākhyānavarṇanaṁ
18	225	Gaṇeśatīrtha-Suvarṇatīrtha-Parṇaśālātīrthamahimāvarṇanaṁ
19	115	Karañjatīrthasaubhāgyatīrthamahimākathanaṁ
20	123	Dāridryaharaṇākhyānakathanaṁ
21	130	Sūryatīrthakeśavākhyānalakṣmītīrthalakṣmīnṛsiṁhatīrthākhyānamahimāvarṇanaṁ
22	101	Candratīrthacandrabhāgāpraṇītāsaṅgamamahimākathanaṁ
23	130	Padmatīrthopākhyāne Dadhīciprāṇamokṣaṇaṁ
24	106	Padmatīrthopākhyāne Dadhīcibhāryāgnipraveśanaṁ
25	80	Padmatīrthamāhātmyakathanaṁ
26	204	Padmatīrthopākhyāne -----------nāma
27	83	Bālatīrthacakratīrthākhyānaṁ
28	139	Pāpapraṇāśanāditīrthacatuṣṭayavarṇanaṁ
29	72	Muñjālayādihanumattīrthāntavaāhaśatīrthavarṇanaṁ
30	78	Kālikātīrthalokapāleśvaravarṇanaṁ
31	138	Kalyāṇādisiddhālayāntasaptatīrthavarṇanaṁ
32	181	Maṇināgatīrthavarṇanaṁ
33	128	Prathamadvādaśīrāmeśvaratīrthavarṇanaṁ
34	88	Govindeśvarāditīrthavarṇanaṁ
35	93	Laṅkālayāditīrthavarṇanaṁ
36	120	Vasiṣṭhāśramavarṇanaṁ
37	155	Sadācāravarṇanaṁ
38	221	Sadācāravarṇanaṁ
39	88	Sadācāravarṇanaṁ tathā phalaśrutivarṇanaṁ

The first edition of the Vatsagulmamāhātmya was published in 1951 CE This book was edited and published with an agenda to gain back the rights of the Hindus over Padma Tīrtha in Washim, which was a successful attempt. In that regard, the editor of the book Dr. Deshpande brought about a

descriptive account of the social structure of the Washim town and its surroundings. He gave summary of all the chapters and discussed the word Vatsagulma. That study mainly highlighted the antiquity of the manuscripts which were edited, and that edition was published in the public interest. It was presented to the civil court at that time as evidence.

That published edition, however, lacked some significant points such as studying the linguistic features of the text and studying economic importance of the place in ancient times etc. Moreover, some references about the political history in the edition are absolute after these 70 years in 2023 CE. Those references need an updating with the latest findings. Hence, the researcher has come up with the present study to unfold and widen the scope of the earlier edition of the book.

The second edition of the Vatsagulmamāhātmya was published in 2003 CE, which had the only addition of the chapter on the archaeological excavations at Washim that were carried out in 1992 CE.

I.9.1. Vatsagulma

The name Vatsagulma of a region in southern India and the region with the same name in the Vatsa *janapada* is common. The Vatsa *janapada* is one of the 16 *mahājanapada*s of ancient India. It was in the north India, with its capital Kosāmbī. The name Vatsa for a region is mentioned at several places in MB also. However, the very name Vatsagulma has been defined by various ways.

First, the text of Vatsagulmamāhātmya itself defines the Vatsagulma as an amalgamation of many sages along with the main sage Vatsa residing in the region. The VGM 8.115-116 state that the gods in a disguised form went to the region of Vatsagulma and stayed collectively at the Vatsa āśrama. Hence the place got its name.

इति वत्सस्य ते क्षेत्रे सुरा वासमकल्पयन् ।

स्वांशेन च ततो जग्मुरतस्तत् क्षेत्रमुत्तमम् ॥८.११५॥

गुल्मत्वेन स्थिता देवा वत्साश्रमपदं प्रति ।

अतोऽस्य चाभवन्नाम वत्सगुल्ममिति प्रभो ॥८.११६॥

These verses can be translated as – 'In this way, those gods resided in the region of Vatsa (sage). They went to that great region with their own powers. The gods stayed in a group on the hermitage of Vatsa. Therefore, o lord, its name became Vatsagulma.'

The Kāmasūtra of Vātsyāyana in the fifth *adhikaraṇa*, mentions the people of Vatsagulma. Its commentary Jayamaṅgalā by Yaśodhara (dated to 13th century CE) mentions a different definition of the name Vatsagulma. He states that there were two twin brothers namely Vatsa and Gulma. The region in which they lived was named as Vatsagulma. The original statement from the commentary is –

वात्सगुल्मकानामिति दक्षिणापथे सोदर्यौ राजपुत्रौ वत्सगुल्मौ ताभ्यामध्यासितो देशो

वात्सगुल्मक इति प्रतीतः ।

The meaning of the statement is– "To explain *Vātsagulmaka,* *Vātsagulmaka* is the region in the southern part, inhabited by two prince brothers, named Vatsa and Gulma."

Thus, it is evident from this that by the 13th century, Vatsagulma was forgotten as a capital city of the Vākāṭaka kings. Its origin was traced only by mentioning its association with the sages of pious and meritorious nature. In this way, the name Vatsagulma can be traced over a vast period.

The place of Vatsagulma is mentioned more than once in the Sanskrit and Prakrit literature. Following paragraphs will discuss the mention of the name Vatsagulma in the history.

1. The cave no. 16 at Ajanta has the mention of Vākāṭaka kings like Vidhyashakti II, Sarvasena and Pravarasena I, who were later identified as the kings in the Vatsagulma branch of the Vākāṭakas (Mirashi 1963:104).

2. The name *Vātstyagulma* is seen in the India office plate of Devasena (Mirashi 1963:102), which is identified with the Vatsagulma.

3. Padma Purāṇa mentions Vatsagulma in Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa- 1.14.164 as a place while describing the condition of lord Śiva as he wanted to clean the sin caused by the killing of lord Brahmā. The date of the text is 1000 CE according to the scriptorium at DC, Pune.

कपालपाणिर्देवेशः पर्यटन्वसुधामिमाम् ।

हिमवन्तं समैनाकं मेरुणा च सहैव तु ॥१.१४.१६२॥

कैलासं सकलं विन्ध्यं नीलं चैव महागिरिम् ।

काञ्चीं काशीं ताम्रलिप्तां मगधामाविलां तथा ॥१.१४.१६३॥

वत्सगुल्मं च गोकर्णं तथा चैवोत्तरान्कुरून् ।

भद्राश्वं केतुमालं च वर्षं हैरण्यकं तथा ॥१.१४.१६४॥

कामरूपं प्रभासं च महेन्द्रं चैव पर्वतम् ।

ब्रह्महत्याभिभूतोसौ भ्रमंस्त्राणं न विन्दति ॥१.१४.१६५॥

These verses can be translated as under- The king of gods, having the skull (for alms) in hand, felt helpless due to the (sin of) *brahmahatyā*, and while travelling on this earth, went to the Himalayas, Maināka, Meru, Kailāsa, the entire Vindhyas, the big mountain of Nīla, Kāñcī, Kāśī, Tāmraliptā, Magadhā, Āvilā, Vatsagulma, Gokarṇa, and Uttara Kuru; but did not find any resort.

4. The text of Kośakalpataru dating to 1644 CE enumerates Vatsagulma as the name of a town.

5. The text on astronomy- Karaṇakutūhala- dated to 1183 CE mentions Vatsagulma as a place situated on the first meridian.

पुरी रक्षसां देवकन्याथ कान्ती सितः पर्वतः पर्य्यलीवत्सगुल्मम् ।

पुरी चोज्जयिन्याह्वया गर्गराटं कुरुक्षेत्रमेरू भुवो मध्यरेखा ॥

The meaning of these verses is as under- the meridian of the earth is (obtained by joining) the city of the demons, *devakanyā kāntī*, the white mountain, *Paryallī*, *Vatsagulma*, the city of *Ujjayinī*, *Gargarāṭa*, *Kurukṣetrea* and *Meru*[6].

6. The text Kadarpacūḍāmaṇi dated to1576 C. E. mentions Vatsagulma as a town (5.5.40) in the fifth part, named as *pāradārādhikaraṇa*.

रात्रौ च वत्सगुल्मे या च महामात्रकामिनी सुभगा ।

सा याति क्षितिवल्लभसेवायैतेषु देशेषु ॥

It means- In these regions, in the Vatsagulma, the beautiful wife of the chief minister (*mahāmātra*), goes to serve the king at night.

7. Vatsagulma is mentioned as a name of a city in Vidarbha in Kāvyamīmāṁsā- a text by the poet Rājaśekhara dated to 900 to 950 CE, in the third *adhyāya* of the first *adhikaraṇa*.

विदर्भेषु वत्सगुल्मं नाम नगरम् ।

It means that, there is a city by name Vatsagulma in the Vidarbha region.

8. The place Vatsagulma also finds a significant name in the reign of the Vākāṭaka kings who ruled in the central India near Nagpur from about 250 to 525 C. E. (Jamkhedkar 2021:2). The Vākāṭaka kings had four branches, of which two flourished and became famous. The first branch was at near present day Nagaradhana- i.e., ancient Nandivardhana and the second was near Washim- i.e., ancient Vatsagulma.

9. The local *māhātmya* by name Vatsagulmamāhātmya, which is the topic of the present study, finds the name Vatsagulma, as a place, where there was an assemblage of various sages.

10. The treatise *Kāmasūtra* of *Vātsyāyana* mentions *Vātsagulmaka*- the people residing in the Vatsagulma. In the fifth *adhyāya* by name *Īśvarakāmitaṁ*

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[6] Plate II- Meridian Indicating Vatsagulma.
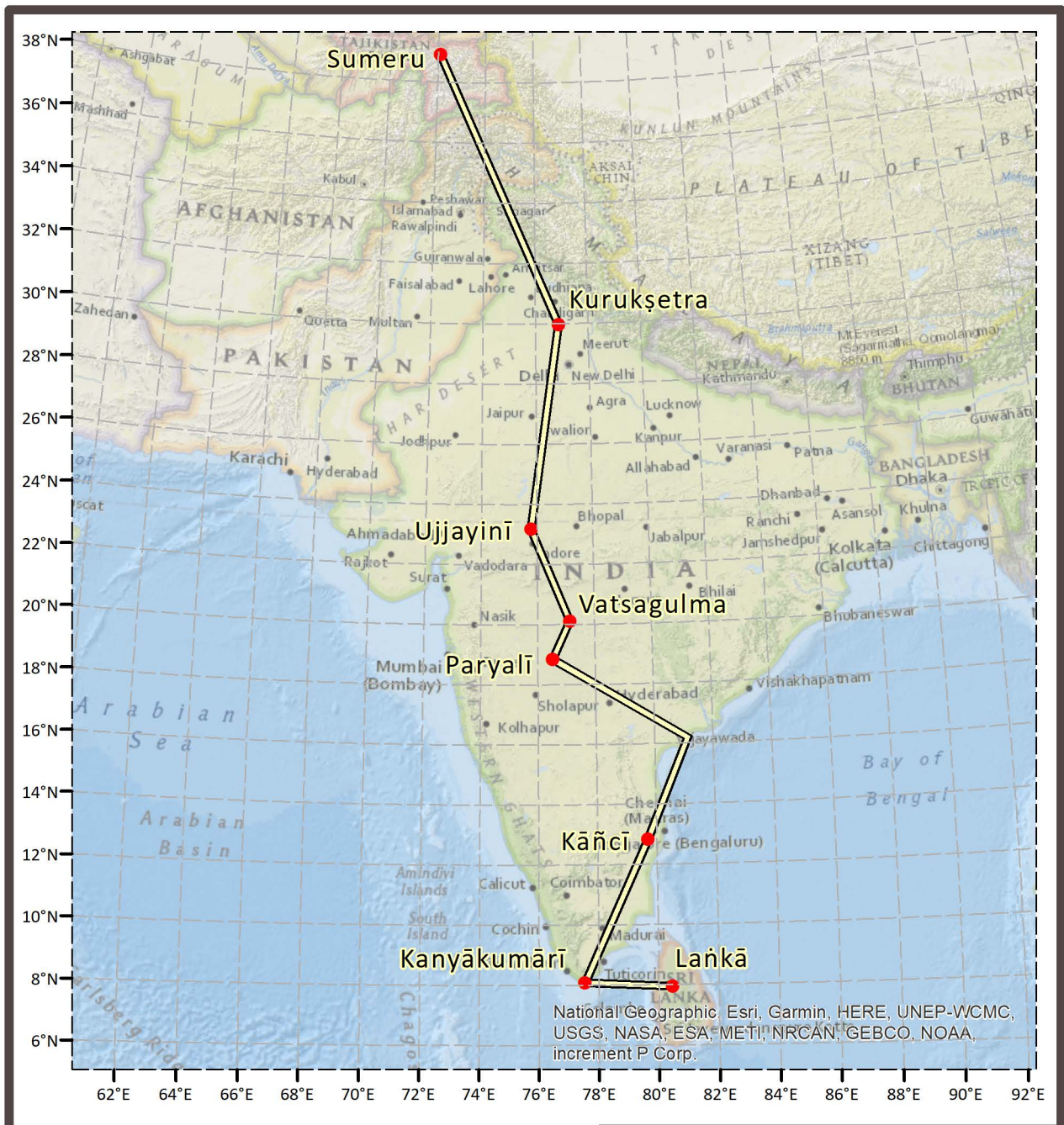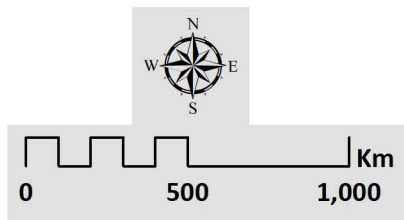
Plate II : Meridian Indicating Vatsagulma

of the fifth *adhikaraṇa* by name *Pāradārika*, the following line is mentioned-

महामात्रेश्वराणामन्तःपुराणि निशि सेवार्थं राजानमुपगच्छन्ति वात्सगुल्मकानाम् ।

It means that "(the wives) of the chief ministers of the Vatsagulma go to the gynaecium of the king for service at night."

Again, in the sixth *adhyāya* by name *āntaḥpurikaṁ dārarakṣitaṁ*, there is mention of people of Vatsagulma. It is stated there that-

(तत्र राजकुलचारिण्य एव) प्रेष्याभिः सह तद्वेषान्नागरकपुत्रान्प्रवेशयन्ति वत्सगुल्मकानाम् ।

Its meaning is – "(There, the ladies in the royal palace itself) cause the city boys enter in the (royal gynaecium) with the lady messengers dressed like them."

11. B.C. Law mentions Vatsagulma in the southern India chapter of historical geography of ancient India. The paragraph reads as "The Bāsim Plates of Vākāṭkaka Vindhyaśakti II refer to this place which was probably the capital of Vindhyaśakti (E.I., XXVI, Pt. III, July 1941). Rājaśekhara in his Karpūramañjarī (p.27) mentions Vacchomī which corresponds to the Sanskrit Vatsagulmī. Vacchomī is derived from the name of its capital Vacchoma (Vatsagulma) and is identical with Vaidarbhī. Rājaśekhara tells us that Vacchoma was situated in Dakṣiṇāpatha. It was a centre of learning in Rājaśekhara's time. This place is identical with Bāsim, the headquarters of the Bāsim taluk of the Akola district in Berar)."

All these mentions of the name Vatsagulma suggest that the city had a lot of importance at the time of Vākāṭakas in the fourth to sixth century. Again, in the tenth century, the city gained importance. The absence of evidence of the period of about four hundred years or in other words, the discontinuity of historical records about Vatsagulma has aroused the researcher's curiosity and this thesis tries to solve this mystery a bit.

I.9.2. From Vatsagulma to Washim

The eminent poet in Vidarbha- Rājaśekhara- explains the name *vacchomī* style in poetics. The transition of the word can be shown as *Vatsagulma* (Sanskrit)—*Vacchoma* (Prakrit)—Washim (Marathi)—Basam (Farsi). The first ever grammarian of Prakrit languages- Vararuci- in his treatise 'Prakrit-Prakash' has discussed the rules regarding the interchanging of the letters. Owing to that, the form *Vatsa* changes to *Vaccha* and the form *gulma* changes to *uma*. Thus, the Prakrit word *Vacchoma is* formed. The Marathi form of this word is Washim and the administrative papers in the British period mention Washim as Basam. Thus, the journey of this word shows the change in the language along with the change in the power of the rulers.

However, the text of the Vatsagulmamāhātmya has a different edition of the transformation of the name of the city. VGM 8.119 tells the four names of the city in four different time periods i.e., *yuga*s.

चतुर्युगात्मकं क्षेत्रसंज्ञाऽस्य युगभेदतः ।

वत्सारण्यं कृते नाम त्रेतायां वासुकं पुरम् ॥

वत्साश्रमं च द्वापारे वत्सगुल्ममतःपरम् ॥८.११९॥

It means that - there are different names to this place according to the time periods. It was *Vatsāraṇya* in the *kṛta yuga*, *Vāsuka pura* in the *tretā yuga*, *Vatsāśrama* in the *dvāpāra yuga* and after that the name of the place became *Vatsagulma*.

I.9.3.   Washim in Modern Times

The old Maharashtra State Gazetteer of Akola district in 1977 mentions the history of Washim. It mainly comprises of the etymology of the word Vatsagulma. It states the ancient connection of present day Washim. It affirms that the main sacred place in Vatsagulma was Karuṇeśa Mahādeva and the Padma tīrtha. The details about the religious characteristics of the place are based mainly in the text of Vatsagulmamāhātmya.

The same district Gazetteer has a section on the history of the Akola district, contributed by MM. V. V. Mirashi. In that section, some paragraphs

throw some light on the historicity of Vatsagulma, in which along with the archaeological history, the political history of Vatsagulma has been well reviewed by Mirashi.

The Gazetteer then states the affiliation of the ancient Vatsagulma with the Vākāṭaka kings and states the epigraphical evidence brought forth by the scholars from the year 1939 CE onwards. Then the chronology of the Vākāṭaka kings is discussed in detail from Vindhyashakti, the founder of this dynasty, Pravarasena I, then his son Sarvasena, who made Vatsagulma as the capital city for his dynasty, to the last king, the son of Hariṣeṇa. It is evident from those details that the city of Vatsagulma flourished as the capital city of the Vākāṭaka kings from 330 CE to 500 CE. Then the mention of Vatsagulma in Rājaśekhara's works is highlighted which proves that the city of Vatsagulma at the time of Rājaśekhara, i.e., 875 CE to 925 CE was still an important city. Then the details are given for the city of Washim in the late mediaeval period, which mainly consist of its identity as a cloth producing state. Thus, the entry in the old district Gazetteer about Washim is quite detail. It is given in Appendix I for the perusal of the readers.

It is affirmed by Mirashi (1975: 114) as "The Vatsagulma branch was founded by Sarvasena, a younger son of Pravarasena I. The capital of this branch was at Vatsagulma (modern Bashim or Vashim) in the Akola District. This branch also produced some very learned princes. Sarvasena, the founder of this branch, is well-known as the author of the Prakrit kavya Harivijaya, which had, for its theme, the bringing down of the Parijata tree from heaven. This kavya has received unstinted praise from several eminent rhetoricians like Anandavardhana".

Then Mirashi talks about the branches of the Vākāṭaka kings in the later paragraph as "According to the Purāṇas, the Vakataka king Pravarasena I had four sons, all of whom ruled as kings. As stated before, the eldest of them was Gautamiputra, whose son Rudrasena I established himself at Nandivardhana near Nagpur. The second son was Sarvasena, who ruled from Vatsagulma (Bashim in the Akola District)".

I.10. Recent Researches about Vatsagulma

The previous discussion shows that various aspects of cultural study of the VGM can be studied by a researcher. Owing to this, the researcher has tried to link the available knowledge about the ancient place of Vatsagulma with the recent research in the various fields, mainly the archaeology and the ancient trade routes.

The book entitled "*Sārthavāha*" in Hindi by Motichandra is an important document on the ancient Indian trade routes. It has a thorough discussion about the numerous trade routes, which had criss-crossed the ancient Indian subcontinent. He even gives a detailed account about the sea routes that played a significant role in the ancient India. The same book has some maps showing the important trade routes in ancient India. The important point from the trade routes in southern India for this research is that the town Vatsagulma is mapped on that trade route[7]. The presence of Vatsagulma on a prominent ancient trade route hints us to the reason of it being important. The ancient traders and merchants must have been travelling along Vatsagulma, while on their way to Madhya Bharat or towards the road to Paithan, and they must have preserved the religious importance of the place.

Bhaisare (2012) has done significant research about Washim in recent times while studying the Vākāṭakas. The excavations in Vatsagulma- present day Washim- produced good results about the antiquity of the place. In the fifth chapter of her thesis, she states some archaeological findings and material evidence obtained from Washim. She has identified some pottery and terracotta figurines from the site. She states the pottery analysis in the chapter which concludes that the pottery dates backs from first century B.C.E to fifth century C.E.

The actual excavations at Washim were carried out in 1991-92 and 1994-95 i.e., for two seasons on a small scale at two localities, in Fukatpura and Lal Deul localities[8]. "The site has yielded some coins, which are stylistically allied to the Vakatakas specially known from Paunar few years

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[7] Plate III- Vatsagulma on Ancient Trade Route (adopted from Moti Chandra).
[8] Plate IV-Two Excavation Sites in Washim.
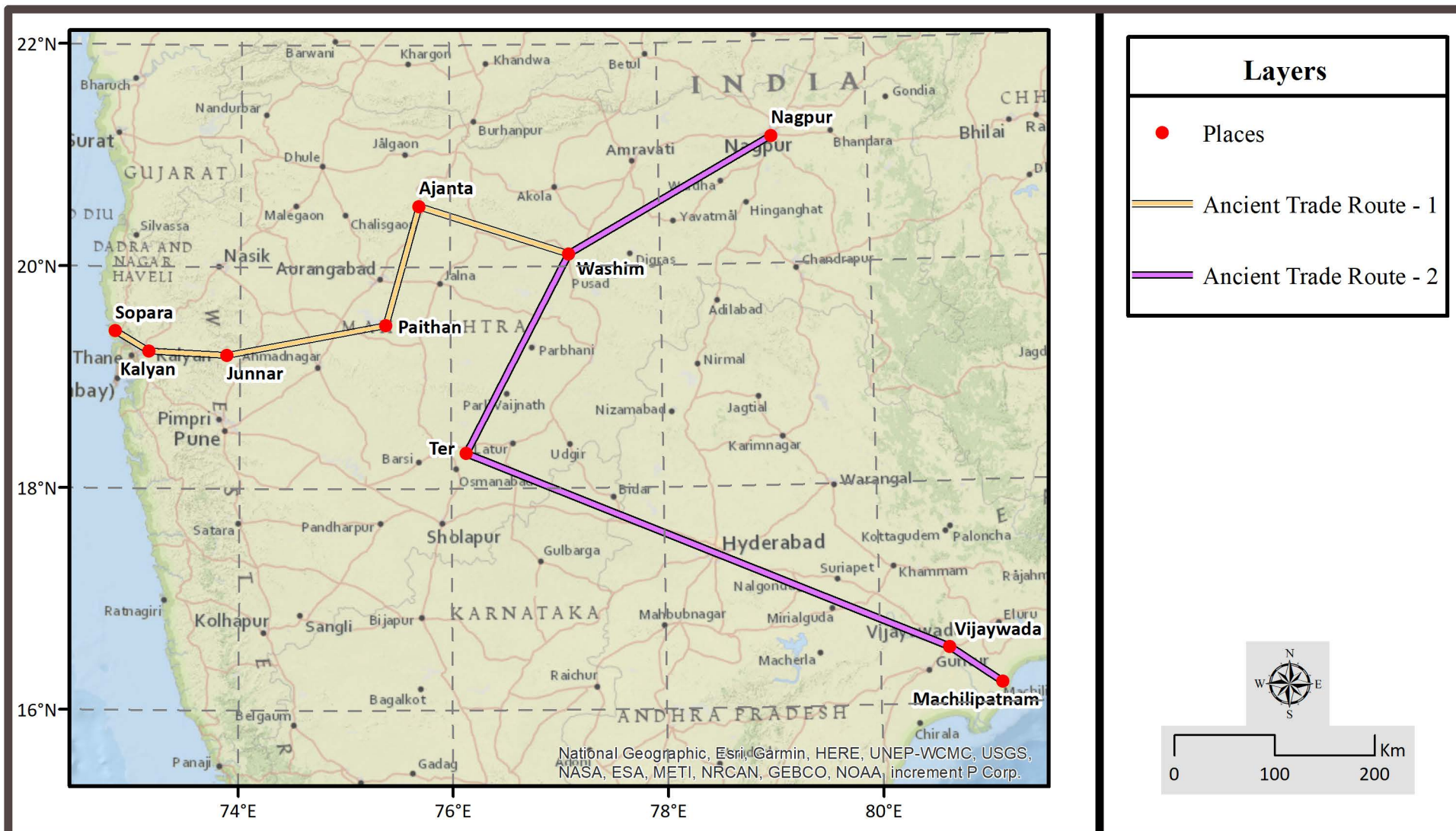
Plate III : Washim on Ancient Trade Routes (adpoted from Moti Chandra)
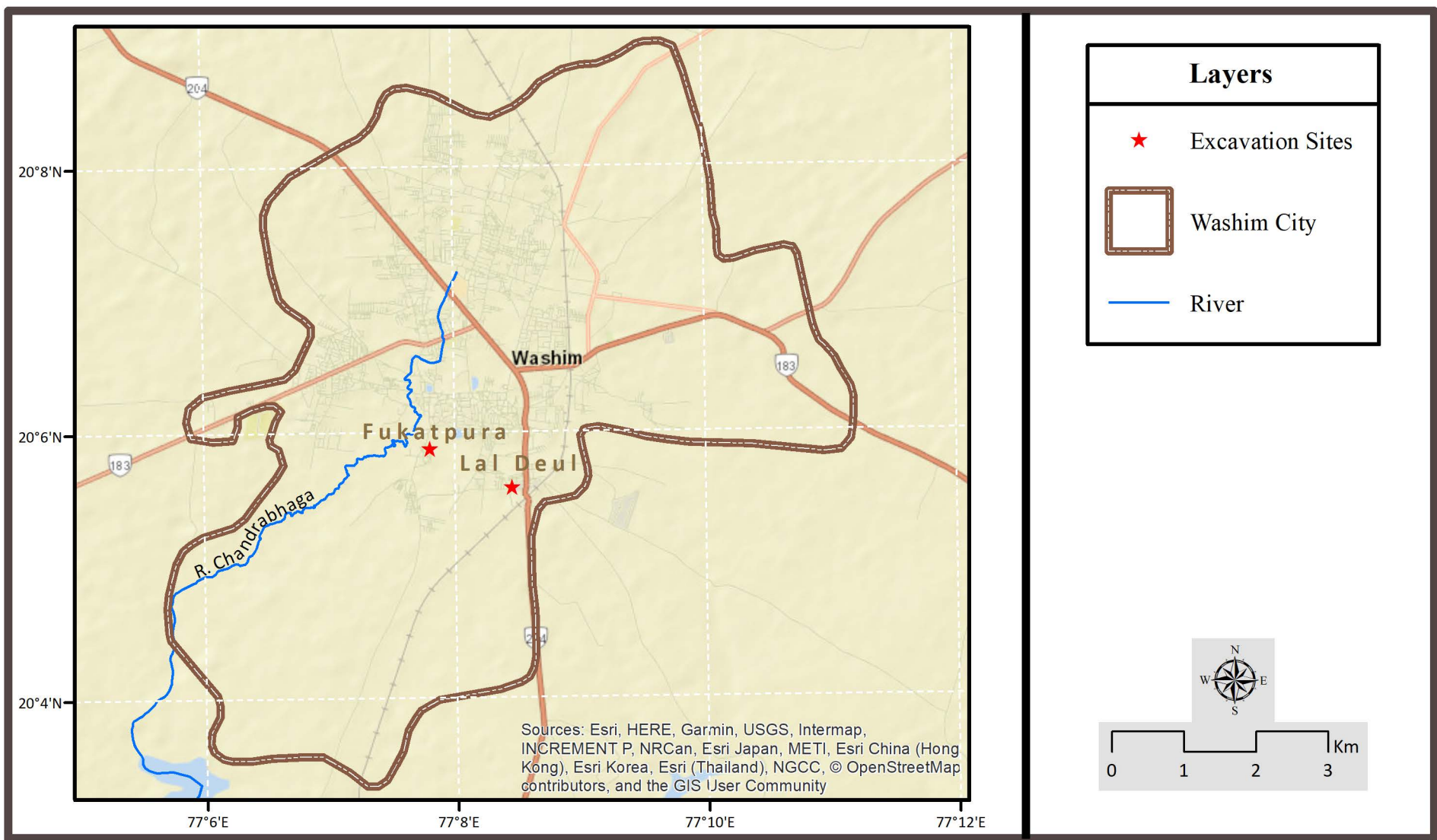
Plate IV : Two Excavation Sites in Washim

ago" (Bhaisare: 2012) Besides this, an oval temple with a star-shape plan was found, which indicates the presence of a Śivaliṅga in the centre. Moreover, coins from Vākāṭaka and Kṣatrapa period are found here.

The excavation at the second locality showed the 1 m thick wall running 70 m east to west and a few structures along it. The north-eat side of the site showed four structures, one of which is exactly like the oval shaped eight-angled structure found in the first locality. The site also had some fifty coins that belonged to the Vākāṭaka and Kṣatrapa period.

Thus, the archaeological evidence is sufficient to support the presence of ancient settlement in and around Washim.

I.11   Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study focuses mainly on various cultural characters as reflected from the text. It tries to correlate various factors that are important for cultural and religious influences in the area.

It however does not include the study of the original manuscripts from which the published edition was prepared. Also, the passing references of flora and fauna are not studied in the present thesis, as they are not a focus in this Cultural Study.

Following the norms of the Vidyapeeth, the present thesis has been divided in five chapters, namely, (1) Introduction, (2) Review of Literature, (3) Research Methodology, (4) Analysis, and (5) Conclusions. The Bibliography and Appendices appear at the end.

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Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter II
REVIEW OF LITEARTURE

II.1. Introduction

The cultural studies are not new in Sanskrit. The text in Sanskrit provides the base for various aspects of study. Many attempts have been made in the past to study many treatises with all possible cultural characteristics. The cultural studies of a text have been somewhat stereotype about 60 to 70 years ago, which focussed mainly on the linguistic aspect of the text or classifying the data in the text under some headings that would represent the culture of the region. This trend seems to change in past few years, where the researchers are keen on relating not only the linguistic and informative details from the text, but also the history and geography of the area under consideration.

As discussed in the introduction, there have been many attempts by some scholars to use the *māhātmya*s as the primary source of their further deep study. Those various attempts will be referred to in the thesis as and when required. The following paragraphs are the notes on some noteworthy attempts to study a *māhātmya* text.

II.2. Vasudevahiṃḍī: A Cultural Study

It is a published book by A. P. Jamkhedkar, based on a Jaina *saṁkiṇṇakahā*, a story of religio-romantic nature, written in two parts. The first part is the story of the wanderings of Dhammilla and Vasudeva. The second part, as the author tells, is still in the manuscript nature. The authors of both the parts, Saṅghadāsagaṇī and Dhammadāsagaṇī claim that the story has come to them through tradition.

Jamkhedkar tries to give a detailed account of the contents of Vasudevahiṃḍī, and various cultural aspects that are associated with it. The book extending to 280 pages, discusses Vasudevahiṃḍī critically, states the political conditions of that time, tries to elaborate the social conditions, economic conditions, religion, and philosophy.

Each chapter has separate list of references and notes. The subject matter of the book is such that the knowledge of many streams is necessary to comprehend the text. Jamkhedkar shows his in-depth understanding of various fields of knowledge, like language, religion, social customs, the art, architecture, the omens, social beliefs and customs, economic conditions on individual or social level, so on and so forth. He points out that by a critical understanding of the Vasudevahiṃḍī, one comes to know the changing nature of the Jaina religion at the time of Vasudevahiṃḍī.

The thorough understanding of the author has made this book a guideline of the cultural studies till date.

II.3.   Cultural and Historical Study of Kalkipurana

This Ph. D. thesis b Dr. P. N. Bhatt was chosen for review because it is the cultural study of one *upa purāṇa*. Kalkipurana is a minor Puranic text. This thesis, after the chapter of introduction, is divided in two parts, historical study, and the cultural study, of which the first part notes the life of Kalki and history. The second part is the analysis of the text in various points, namely society, religion, philosophy, and miscellaneous, which includes architecture, towns, gardens etc.; geography, flora and fauna, dress-ornaments, food-drinks, music-dancing and lastly war and weapons. The last section of appendix discusses the date of the composition of Kalkipurana.

The author has in detail described the birth and naming of Kalki, his marriages, and then his warfare with Buddha and others and his death. The portrayal of Kalki as a king is evident from the whole description. Then the author goes on mentioning Kalki from other Puranic texts.

Then follows chapter on the historicity of Kalki. The author in detail compares the main Puranic literature for tracing the character of Kalki. Also, Kalki as the tenth incarnation of Vishnu is also thoroughly studied. The author also considers the mention of Kalki in Jain and Buddhist literature. Then he traces the chronology of Kalki. Then follows a detailed chapter on the important persons in the life of Kalki. The conclusion of this chapter is that

the Kalkipurana, though was composed in around 14ᵗʰ C.E., the life of Kalki was portrayed in it with the help of "independent genuine traditions."

Then in the later paragraphs, the writer explains the position of Kalki in history with the help of chronological position of the wars fought against him. The conclusion of that discussion is that "Kalki becomes contemporary to the last king of Pradyota family and Śiśunāga. Pradyota was a contemporary of lord Buddha. So, Kalki chronologically comes after Buddha. The author claims that Kalki was a king and with his death, there is an end to the age of Kalki.

Then the second part of the thesis talks about the society as reflected from the Kalkipurana and concludes that there reflects a society from 13ᵗʰ or 14ᵗʰ century. There are ample Sanskrit original verses to support these points. Various *saṁskāra*s are described to show the dominance of Vedic culture.

Then one small chapter talks about the religion from Kalkipurana. Śaivism, Buddhism, Śāktism, Vaiṣṇavism, concept of *avatāra* is well-explained. All the discussion points out to the development of the religious concepts of these sects as in 13ᵗʰ or 14ᵗʰ C.E. Some paragraphs discuss the *pūjā vidhi* in Kalkipurana.

Then the next chapter describes the philosophy. Various ideas reflected in the Kalkipurana are discussed here.

Then follows the chapter including many miscellaneous points. In the discussion of architecture, various names of houses are alphabetically arranged, and their reference and meaning are given.

Then in the discussion of geography, various countries, towns and *tīrtha*s are listed. Then there is an attempt to locate some of the countries, cities, and *tīrtha*s. Then the flora and fauna are discussed. Lists of various trees and animals are found here. Then there is some discussion on the tribes mentioned in the Kalkipurana. Then the dress and ornaments, food, and music are discussed. The last point is the warfare and weapons, arrays in the army etc.

The Appendix discusses the date of the composition of the Kalkipurana. The main source is the manuscripts of the same. Then the thesis ends with bibliography.

Thus overall, the thesis discusses the character of Kalki in detail. There is a noteworthy attempt of dating the Kalkipurana in this thesis.

II.4. The Nīlamata Purāṇa– A Cultural and Literary Study of a Kashmiri Purāṇa

It is a book which is a slightly revised Ph. D. thesis by Dr. Ved Kumari, which attempts to analyse the Nīlamata Purāṇa as Purāṇa and not merely a *Sthala Māhātmya*.

This is evident from the detailed and elaborate 11 chapters in the book, which are namely- 1. Introductory, 2. The Geology and the Geography, 3. Tribes in the Nīlamata. 4. Social and Economic Organisation, 5. Social and Economic Life, 6. Political Thought and Organisation, 7. Religious Cults, 8. Festivals and other Religious Practises, 9. Philosophy, 10. Literary Value of the Nīlamata, 11. Conclusion.

The author, being native of Kashmir, has a thorough understanding of its culture and it is clearly seen from the minute details of various factors in all the chapters. The author begins the book with the discussion of various names of the Nīlamata Purāṇa and the name Kaśmīra in the introductory chapter with various resources.

The book proceeds with highlighting the subjects in the Nīlamatapurāṇa, which has total 1453 verses with no further division in *adhyāya*s. The author then gives a thorough representation of the subject matter of the text in various subjects mentioned earlier. For that she chooses to divide each chapter into various subchapters. She also provides apt references for her study. The footnotes add further detailing of the subject matter.

To give an example of the deep study of the author, the third chapter on the tribes in the Nīlamata can be viewed. Both the subchapters of this chapter written in the book mention the views of different scholars about these tribes- Nāgas and Piśācas and proceed with the references of both tribes in the

Nīlamata along with earlier Sanskrit works, like the Vedic literature, the epics, the Gaṇapāṭha and others. This gives us an idea of the depth of the study of the scholar.

The chapter on the social and economic life seems to be the most interesting one. It has several references of the rich and peaceful life in Kāśmīra with sufficient freedom to women.

Thus, the book provides a complete account of the ancient culture of Kāśmīra. The author very minutely and carefully provides all the details of various aspects of it. The deep study of the author becomes a strong point of this book and makes it one of the best cultural studies of an Upapurāṇa.

II.5. Nepāla Māhātmya

This book by Pt. Kedarnath Sharma was chosen by the researcher as it is a typical example of general studies that are carried out regarding the *māhātmya* texts. This is a book by Pt. Shri Kedarnath Sharma with a foreword by Panditraj Shrirajeshvarashastri Dravid. This book claims that this *māhātmya* is a part of Skanda Purāṇa. It was published by Choukhamba Surabharati Prakashan at Varanasi in 1976. It is with Hindi commentary by name Pārvatī and an index. This book, which is about 250 pages in length, gives a list of sacred places in Nepal in the beginning with chapter and verse numbers. Then the book gives all the 30 *adhyāya*s one by one with the Hindi commentary in the footnotes. The commentary mainly includes the translation of the verses. The translation is word to word and helpful for the commoners and researchers alike.

The last 13 to 15 pages of the book are like appendices and mention the origin of the name Nepal or Nemipāla. Then it enlists the modern significant places in Nepal. Here, the author tries to correlate the ancient and modern places of importance. It further mentions the places of importance which are not found in *māhātmya*.

II.6. Exploring Ancient Sites through Texts: A Case Study of Bhīmā Māhātmya

This research article by Varada Khaladkar is a good example of relating the text and the archaeological evidence. For this ten-page long article, the writer has travelled in the Bhima River valley, in Maharashtra especially and has tried for identification of the towns mentioned in the *māhātmya*. In doing so, being an expert archaeologist, she uses the powerful tool of locating ancient mounds in the smaller towns along the Bhima River, namely Dhulkhed and Palasdev. Her article is a sincere attempt to connect archaeology, ancient history, and Sanskrit literature. She identifies the Dhulkhed in modern times as Dhulkheta in the Bhima Māhātmya and Palasdev as Palasheshvaramahadeva in the Sanskrit text. With an extensive field work, she has tried to throw some light on the temples at Palasdev and their time.

This is a significant article as regards the Sanskrit Sthala Māhātmya texts and the identification of the sacred places in it.

II.7.   Sthala Analysis of the Karavīra Māhātmya

This research article by Dr. Madhavi Narsalay published in the proceedings of the Purāṇa Section of the 17th WSC, is a ten-page long article that discusses the pivotal role in sacred geography in the religious consciousness of people. She emphasises the role of *māhātmya* texts in this regard and introduces the text of Śrī Karavīra Māhātmya. Then the article proceeds with the information about the goddess Mahālakṣmī, who is the deity in consideration for this text. Then she discusses some myths related to the goddess and focuses on the three episodes mentioned in the text of Karavīra Māhātmya. The three episodes are 1. The episode of Parāśara, 2. Mahālakṣmī killing the demons and 3. Tryambulī.

Then she concludes that the myth of the *śaktipīṭha*s is absent in the text and urges for an in-depth study of the text so that the religious change taking place in Maharashtra during 13th and 14th C.E. can be traced.

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Chapter III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

III.1. Methods of Research for Cultural Study

The present study intends to study the cultural aspects of the text of the VGM. Being a cultural study, it focuses on tracing the interrelationships between geographical, literary, and historical references that are depicted in the text. The text is about the glory of the city of Vatsagulma, once the capital city of the Vākāṭaka dynasty, who ruled over the area occupying the current central and the southern Maharashtra, south-eastern Madhya Pradesh, and the western Andhra Pradesh, from third century C.E. to sixth century C.E. The Vākāṭakas, being an important ruling dynasty, were involved in trade, art and cultural exchanges that took place at that time. Therefore, the capital city and the rulers find mentions in various ancient historical as well as literary sources. Taking a note of this background, one expects detailed mention about the Vākāṭaka dynasty in the Vatsagulmamāhātmya. But the text, which focuses on religious and geographical context, does not make any comment of the Vākāṭaka dynasty. The prime source of data for the analysis in this study therefore relies on the VGM text. Cursory mention about Vatsagulma and the VGM in other religious text have been described in the introduction. These citations have been utilised as supporting evidence for the results that have been identified through the analysis.

The researcher tried to obtain the manuscripts from which the published edition was prepared. But she could not get access to the manuscripts. The factors that have given rise to the current published edition were not fully comprehended by the researcher. Hence, the present study is entirely based on the printed available edition of the text.

Descriptive and Historical methods of research have been adopted for the present study. The study has been done with a focus on historical evolution of the sacred places in the Puranic period. This is presented in a descriptive manner.

III.2.   Primary Sources

The published edition of the VGM is therefore the primary source for the study. A thorough detailed study has been carried out to understand the geographical, literary, and historical references.

III.2.1. Text of the Vatsagulmamāhātmya

The last few decades have seen cultural studies being an important aspect of the research involving ancient Sanskrit texts. Researchers have studied the interrelationship between the linguistics and the cultural development that can be deduced through the Sanskrit texts or manuscripts. Newer research trends, along with the linguistic and cultural aspects, have included the historical and spatial knowledge imparted through the selected text.

The methodology adopted was basically studying the primary source, i.e., the VGM. The available published edition was prepared by Y. K. Deshpande from Yavatmal, from some manuscripts he obtained from various sources. This edition was published as a book and same was obtained by the researcher from the library of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune (accession no. 98263/XIG/12/Deshpande). First step in the study of the manuscript was translation. The translated material was observed as follows.

1) **Religion and Geography of the VGM:** As the text gives a detailed picture of religious landscape of the region, this point was extensively studied. The deities, the ways of their worship, rituals, the importance of specific days to perform rituals, the social gatherings or pilgrimage to a sacred place, the mention of specific sects - these and other significant factors were studied that contribute to the religious landscape of the region. The text that glorifies a place, with 108 sacred places, has mentions of different deities. There are numerous times when the deity is praised. In this work, the *stotra*s and the deities for which they are sung, were listed. Their linguistic characteristics and the philosophy gleaned from them were studied.

The names of sacred places, rivers, their sources, mountains, the city names, their description, the measurement of distances of the sacred places, the role of waterbodies in the rituals at sacred places, the types of water bodies– these geographical parameters were found out from the verses. There are 108 *tīrtha*s in and around Vatsagulma, arranged in 3 *āvaraṇa*s. The small region with so many sacred places is bound to have adopted names of the places from famous *tīrtha*s. Thus, the connection between the names of the places and the well-known *tīrtha*s in the rest of Indian subcontinent was studied. It was observed that many *tīrtha*s mentioned in the text have some or the other myth to state the glory of the place. Some of them are long and stretch for even two *adhyāya*s. Some stories are short. All the stories glorify the sacred place under consideration. Some famous stories are linked with a sacred place, to show the importance of the place. More geographical information can be collected from the verses that state the glory of the Vatsagulma. Some verses typically praise the place of Vatsagulma, which in turn helps to understand the place thoroughly. Those verses were identified. Their significance for location other sacred places in the vicinity was considered.

2) **Language of the VGM:** The *māhātmya* text shows many specialities of the Purana literature. Keeping that in mind, the language of the text was studied. Being a local text, the influence of local language, i.e., Marathi, was taken into consideration. The numerous occurrences of grammatical forms not permitted by Pāṇinian grammar were enlisted.

3) **Society on the VGM:** The people believe and carry out rituals as a part of their socio-cultural and socio-religious understanding. Owing to this, the text shows various social customs and traditions at the time of composition of the text. They were studied with rituals in background. That helped to understand the interrelation of rituals and social beliefs.

4) Geography of the VGM: The names of sacred places, rivers, their sources, mountains, the city names, their description, the measurement of distances of the sacred places, the role of waterbodies in the rituals at sacred places, the types of water bodies– these geographical parameters were found out from the verses. There are 108 *tīrtha*s in and around Vatsagulma, arranged in 3 *āvaraṇa*s. The small region with so many sacred places is bound to have adopted names of the places from famous *tīrtha*s. Thus, the connection between the names of the places and the well-known *tīrtha*s in the rest of Indian subcontinent was studied. It was observed that many *tīrtha*s mentioned in the text have some or the other myth to state the glory of the place. Some of them are long and stretch for even two *adhyāya*s. Some stories are short. All the stories glorify the sacred place under consideration. Some famous stories are linked with a sacred place, to show the importance of the place. More geographical information can be collected from the verses that state the glory of the Vatsagulma. Some verses typically praise the place of Vatsagulma, which in turn helps to understand the place thoroughly. Those verses were identified. Their significance for location other sacred places in the vicinity was considered.

III.2.2. Field Visits

The field visits are necessary to understand the area under consideration. The cultural aspects of any text involve the actual geographical and social conditions of the place, which become clear when the site visit is carried out.

To support and augment the analysis, field visits were conducted to current Washim and neighbouring region. Various religious places, and temples mentioned in the text were identified using the help of Google Maps and during the field visits photo-documentation was carried out. Data collection about the visited location was carried out using an Android based application named MapIT. The MapIT solution provides facility to create point, line, or polygon features with either the satellite image or Google map as background layer. User can create layers specific to the project under consideration. Each

graphic entity created, has facility to maintain attribute information. The structure for the attribute data / information can be customized according to specific needs of the project.

An attribute data structure was created for mapping of the places and temples mentioned in the manuscript. This included attribute information such as name of place, name of temple, and whether the place contains multiple deity temples or not. MapIT provides facility to capture geo-referenced photographs of the place under observation.

The spatial information thus collected using MapIT was transferred through the export facility. Various maps have been created based on the observations and data collected during the field visits using a GIS software called ArcMap. Both the applications utilized during the process can communicate well with each other, helping the researcher to generate necessary maps seamlessly.

III.3. Secondary Sources
III.3.1. Library Work

A cultural study encompasses various aspects of human behaviour, their religious beliefs, social traditions and many more. The language of the text reflects many angles of the culture. Keeping this in mind, various books and reference material on the related topics were accessed and studied thoroughly to analyse various cultural aspects. For that, a combination of the primary source, the field visits and the library work together were carried out to study the VGM with all possible angles.

Along with a variety of books on various cultural topics, numerous articles in research journals were studied. They were obtained either in hard copy or through the secure and authentic online platforms. The scholarly dictionaries and thesaurus were referred to while analysing the data and generating the secondary data. The Puranic corpus has been variously studied and many encyclopaedias pertaining to the Puranic concepts were referred for the present study. This varied reference material belonged to languages like Sanskrit, English, Marathi, and Hindi.

III.3.2. Vatsagulma through Inscriptions

Inscriptional evidence regarding the place was studied with the help of various research works referring to the inscriptions referring to Vatsagulma to know the antiquity of the region.

III.3.3. Vatsagulma through Excavations

Archaeological evidence about the place was studied mainly by the two archaeological excavations on small sites in Washim in recent times. That indicates the earliest presence of human beings in this region. The two small excavation sites were mapped with contours. The correlation between the ancient political and social conditions and the time understood from the excavations was found. This further affirmed the ancient nature of the region[1].

III.4. Observations

Any *māhātmya* text with many cultural aspects needs a detailed study of the subject matter with all possible sources. The present study involves such factors that are seen from the text. Following paragraphs state the various points that were identified and studied thoroughly for the cultural study of the text. They mainly involve observations regarding linguistic, geographic, historical, and social factors. Wherever needed, the original verses from the text are quoted and their translation is provided for easy understanding.

After observations, the attempt of analysing them is done. For that the data from the text are interlinked with a variety of knowledge streams. The observations were classified for the ease of understanding as under as Primary Source, which includes the text of the VGM. From this, the data will be observed for the following points-

1. Religion and Geography
2. Language
3. Society

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[1] Refer to Plate IV.

The second important primary source will be the Field Visits. These are basically helpful for the extraction of the Geographical Data.

Then the Secondary Sources will be listed to note the Inscriptional Evidence and the Archaeological Evidence. The following paragraphs are the collection of basic data which will be analysed further in the above-mentioned categories.

III.4.1. Observatios from the Primary Source

To understand the religious landscape seen from the text, various attributes were studied. This is a Puranic period text. Therefore, the religious beliefs that will be gleaned through the text will be mainly Puranic. Owing to this, the data were observed. The primary data were collected in the form of Chapter-wise Details of the VGM, the names of the *tīrtha*s, the deity of the *tīrtha*, and the location of the *tīrtha*. Moreover, there are 51 legends or myths scattered all over the text. Those were understood to comprehend the relation between religious factors and the social, geographical, or economic factors.

III.4.1a. The Text of the VGM

The first and foremost thing of studying any text is to comprehend its parts. The total number of verses in the text is 4795 which are distributed over 39 *adhyāya*s. The following paragraphs discuss the subject matter in each *adhyāya*s as the Chapter-wise Details of the VGM.

Chapter 1: *Rājapatnīvilāpa* (69 verses)

1 to 27– Dialogue between the sage and the Sūta

28 to 69– Dialogue between Vyāsa and Śuka. Beginning of the story of the king Vāsuki

Chapter 2: *Nṛparājñīsaṁvādakathana* (125 verses)

1 to 35– The king sees the unhappy queen.

36 to 46– Queen's talk

47 to 57– The King laments

58 to 74– The King goes to forest for hunting.

75 to 88– Dream of Kanakalekhā

89 to 125– The King confesses to Kanakalekhā.

Chapter 3: *Vāsukivasiṣṭhadarśana* (95 verses)

1 to 28– The King decides to go to the same place.

29 to 33– The King goes to the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha.

34 to 48– Description of the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha

49 to 95– Dialogue of Vasiṣṭha with the King

Chapter 4: *Karmavipākakathana* (132 verses)

1 to 104– Dialogue of Vyāsa and Śuka about Kramavipāka as explained by Vasiṣṭha to the King

105 to 132– Importance of the sacred places

Chapter 5: *Brahmastutikathana* (143 verses)

1 to 71– Vasiṣṭha narrates the previous birth and curse to the King Vāsuki

72 to 99– Dialogue between Vasiṣṭha and Vidhi

100 to 143– Dialogue between Vyāsa and Vasiṣṭha

Chapter 6: *Viṣṇudarśana* (49 verses)

1 to 49– Visit of gods to Vaikuṇṭha and description of Vaikuṇṭha.

Chapter 7: *Kailāsagamana* (75 verses)

1 to 75– Visit of gods to Kailāsa and description of Kailāsa.

Chpater 8: *Vatsavarapradāna* (123 verses)

1 to 26– Gods visit Vatsa Forest with the lords Śiva and Viṣṇu.

27 to 71– Śiva sees Vatsa.

72 to 123– Dialogue between Śiva and Vatsa

Chapter 9: *Karuṇeśamāhātmyakathana* (209 verses)

1 to 209– Vasiṣṭha explains Karuṇeśvara, Karuṇeśvarakūpa and Gaṇeśa *tīrtha*.

Chapter 10: *Vimalatīrthacāmuṇḍākhyānavarṇana* (124 verses)

1 to 47– Glory of Vimala *tīrtha*

48 to 124– Glory of Cāmuṇḍā *tīrtha*

Chapter 11: *Madhyameśvaranīlakaṇṭheśvarākhyānavarṇana* (60 verses)

1 to 25– Glory of Madhyameśvara *tīrtha*

26 to 60– Glory of Nīlakaṇṭheśvara *tīrtha*

Chapter 12: *Mallikārjunavarṇana* (117 verses)

1 to 78– Dialogue of the Kṣemakara king with the sages

79 to 117– King's pilgrimage and the glory of Mallikārjuna *tīrtha*

Chapter 13: *Nṛsiṁhāvirbhāva* in the *Nṛsiṁhatīrthākhyān* (188 verses)

1 to 188– Story of Hiraṇyakaśipu and Prahlāda till appearance of Nṛsiṁha

Chapter 14: *Nṛsiṁhatīrthananditīrthākhyānavarṇana* (71 verses)

1 to 37– Glory of Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*

38 to 71– Glory of Nandī *tīrtha*

Chapter 15: *Puṣkaratīrthakhaṇḍeśvarākhyānavarṇana* (120 verses)

1 to 29– Glory of Puṣkara *tīrtha*

30 to 120– Glory of Khaṇḍeśvarā *tīrtha*

Chapter 16: *Daridraharaṇatīrthamahimākathana* (152 verses)

1 to 152– Glory of Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*

Chapter 17: *Dāridryaharaṇopākhyānavarṇana* (145 verses)

1 to 145– Story of Dattātreya and glory of Datteśvara

Chapter 18: *Gaṇeśatīrthasuvarṇatīrthaparṇaśālātīrthamahimāvarṇana* (225 verses)

1 to 45– Glory of Gaṇeśa *tīrtha*

46 to 89– Glory of Suvarṇa *tīrtha*

90 to 225– Glory of Parṇaśālā *tīrtha*

Chapter 19: *Karañjatīrthasaubhāgyatīrthamahimākathana* (115 verses)

1 to 44– Glory of Karañja *tīrtha*

45 to 115– Glory of Saubhāgya *tīrtha*

Chapter 20: *Dāridryaharaṇākhyānakathana* (123 verses)

1 to 9– Glory of Bhāṇḍa *tīrtha*

10 to 99– Glory of Tārā *tīrtha*

100 to 104– Glory of Cakra *tīrtha*

105 to 110– Glory of Dhautapāpa *tīrtha*

111 to 123– *Phalaśruti*

Chapter 21: *Sūryatīrthakeśavākhyānalakṣmītīrthalakṣmīnṛsiṁha–tīrthākhyānamahimāvarṇana* (130 verses)

1 to 86– Glory of Sūrya *tīrtha*

87 to 122– Glory of Janārdana *tīrtha*

123– Glory of Lakṣmī *tīrtha*

124 to 130– Glory of Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*

Chapter 22: *Candratīrthacandrabhāgāpraṇītāsaṅgamamahimākathana* (101 verses)

1 and 2– Glory of Nārasiṁha *tīrtha*

3 to 52– Glory of Candrasarovara

53 to 101– Glory of Candrabhāgā *tīrtha*

Chapter 23: *Dadhīciprāṇamokṣaṇa* in the *Padmatīrthopākhyāna* (130 verses)

1 to 5– Narration of three *āvaraṇa*s

6 to 130– Glory of Padma *tīrtha*

Chapter 24: *Dadhīcibhāryāgnipraveśana* in the *Padmatīrthopākhyāna* (106 verses)

1 to 106– Story of Dadhīci

Chapter 25: *Padmatīrthamāhātmyakathana* (80 verses 80)

1 to 80– Glory of Padma *tīrtha*

Chapter 26: (Name not printed) in the *Padmatīrthopākhyāna* (204 verses)

1 to 30– Kalivarṇana

31 to 42– Story of a Brahmin at Narmadā

43 to 66– Glory of Padma *tīrtha*

67 to 204– Story of Dharmagupta vaiśya

Chapter 27: *Bālatīrthacakratīrthākhyāna* (83 verses)

1 to 27– Glory of Bāla *tīrtha*

28 to 83– Glory of Cakra *tīrtha*

Chapter 28: *Pāpapraṇāśanāditīrthacatuṣṭayavarṇana* (139 verses)

1 to 54– Glory of Pāpapraṇāśana *tīrtha*

55 to 69– Glory of Brahma *tīrtha*

70 to 92– Glory of Janārdana *tīrtha*

93 to 139– Glory of Candrakūpa

Chapter 29: *Muñjālayādihanumattīrthāntavaāhaśatīrthavarṇana* (72 verses)

1– Glory of Muñjālaya *tīrtha*

2– Glory of Dharmakūpa

3– Glory of Nārasiṁha *tīrtha*

4 to 23 Glory of Vyāghra *tīrtha*

24 to 27– Glory of Śukla *tīrtha*

28 to 44– Glory of Maṅgaleśvara

Chapter 34: *Govindeśvarāditīrthavarṇana* (88 verses)

1 to 75– Glory of Govindeśvara *tīrtha*

76 to 79– Glory of Devī *tīrtha*

80 to 83– Glory of Bhairava *tīrtha*

84 and 85– Glory of Hanūmat *tīrtha*

86 to 88– Glory of Agni, Kaubera and Nāga *tīrtha*

Chapter 35: *Laṅkālayāditīrthavarṇana* (93 verses)

1 to 85– Glory of Vāruṇa or Laṅkālaya *tīrtha*

86– Glory of Yama, Kārttikeya, Liṅga, Dhārā, Agastya and Mārkaṇḍeya *tīrtha*

87– Glory of Jalaśāyī *tīrtha*

Chapter 36: *Vasiṣṭhāśramavarṇana* (120 verses)

1 to 120– Glory of Vasiṣṭhāśrama

Chapter 37: *Sadācāravarṇana* (155 verses)

1 and 2– Glory of Pañcālaya *tīrtha*

3 to 6– Glory of Reṇukā *tīrtha*

7– Glory of Candrabhāgā, Pūṣā and Vatsarā *tīrtha*

7 to 9– Glory of Aruntudā *tīrtha*

9 to 12– Glory of Karuṇā *tīrtha*, Vatsarā-Praṇītā confluence, Praṇītā *tīrtha* and Candrabhāgā- Praṇītā confluence

13 and 14– Glory of Kaṇṭaka *tīrtha*

14 to 16– Glory of Kuṇḍālaya *tīrtha*

17– Glory of Tapovana *tīrtha*

18 and 19– Glory of Audumbara *tīrtha*

20– Glory of Pārāśara *tīrtha*

21– Glory of Vṛddhapārāśara *tīrtha*

22– Glory of Ṛsyaśṛṅga *tīrtha*

23– Glory of Brahmakuṇḍa *tīrtha*

24 to 155– *Sadācāravarṇana*

Chapter 38: *Sadācāravarṇana* (221 verses)

1 to 221– *Sadācāravarṇana*

Chapter 39: *Sadācāravarṇana* (88 verses)

1 to 88– *Sadācāravarṇana*

1.   Religion and Geography

From the text, the religious landscape was observed. With that view, the *tīrtha*s mentioned in the text were studied. There are 108 *tīrtha*s in and around Vatsagulma and they are classified into three *āvaraṇa*s.

Here, the concept of geography of the *tīrtha*s is important. The locations of all the *tīrtha*s are noted in the following table. This text has an interweaving of religion and geography. Hence, these two points are not separately observed. There is an interlinking of these two in the following paragraphs of observations.

The following table shows the name of the *tīrtha*, the *āvaraṇa* of *tīrtha*, the deity which is worshipped there (if mentioned), the location of the *tīrtha* (if mentioned) and the reference to the *tīrtha* from the text. The three different tables show three *āvaraṇa*s (probably enclosures or circular arrangements of the sacred places with Vatsagulma in the centre). The significance of the *āvaraṇa*s will be discussed in the analysis.

List of the *Tīrtha*s in the First *Āvaraṇa* (total 29)				
Sr. no.	Name of the *tīrtha*	Deity	Location	Ref. *adhyāya*
1	Karuṇākūpa *tīrtha*	Śiva	Not mentioned clearly	9th
2	Karuṇeśvara *tīrtha*	-not clear-	Not mentioned clearly	9th

3	Vimala *tīrtha*	Śiva	SW of *kūpa*	10th
4	Cāmuṇḍā *tīrtha*	Cāmuṇḍā	NW to Vimala *tīrtha*	10.46
5	Madhyameśvara *tīrtha*	Śiva	North of Cāmuṇḍā *tīrtha*	11th
6	Nīlakaṇṭheśvara *tīrtha*	Śiva	NE of Madhyameśvara *tīrtha*	11th
7	Mallikārjuna *tīrtha*	Śiva in the form of a *liṅga*	South of Nīlakaṇṭheśvara *tīrtha*	12th
8	Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*	Viṣṇu in the incarnation of Nṛsiṁha	East of Mallikārjuna *tīrtha*	13th
9	Nandī *tirtha*	Śiva in the form of a *liṅga*	Ahead of Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*	14th
10	Puṣkara *tīrtha*	Śiva in the form of a *liṅga*	Ahead of Nandī *tirtha*	15th
11	Khaṇḍeśvarā *tīrtha*	-not clear-	West of Puṣkara *tīrtha*	15th
12	Datteśvara *tīrtha*	Śiva in the form of a *liṅga*	Not mentioned clearly	
13	Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*	Datteśvara	South of Karuṇeśvara *tīrtha*	16th
14	Gaṇeśa *tīrtha*	Karuṇeśa, Water body	Not mentioned clearly	18th
15	Suvarṇa *tīrtha*	Water body	East of Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*	18th
16	Parṇaśālā *tīrtha*	Water body	North of Suvarṇa tīrtha	18th

17	Karañja *tīrtha*	-not clear-	North-east of Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*	19th
18	Saubhāgya *tīrtha*	Water body	South of Karañja *tīrtha*	19th
19	Bhāṇḍa *tīrtha*	Water body	South/south-east of Saubhāgya *tīrtha*	20th
20	Tārā *tīrtha*	Water body	South of Mukhya, West of Bhāṇḍa *tīrtha*	20th
21	Cakra *tīrtha*	Water body	Not mentioned clearly	20th
22	Dhautapāpa *tīrtha*	Water body	Near to Cakra *tīrtha*	20th
23	Sūrya *tīrtha*	Water body	West of Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*	21st
24	Keśava *tīrtha*	Idol of Viṣṇu	North of Sūrya *tīrtha*	21st
25	Lakṣmī *tīrtha*	Water body	West of Keśava	21st
26	Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*	Water body	Not mentioned clearly	21st
27	Narasiṁha/ Alakṣmīharaṇa *tīrtha*	Water body	North of Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*	22nd
28	Candra *tīrtha*	Śiva in the form of a *liṅga*, water body	North of Narasiṁha/ Alakṣmīharaṇa *tīrtha*	22nd
29	*Tīrtha* as a source of Candrabhāgā river	Rivulet	At Candra *tīrtha*	22nd
List of the *Tīrtha*s in the Second *Āvaraṇa* (total 59)				
30	Padma *tīrtha*	Water body	West of Candra tīrtha	25th

31	Bāla *tīrtha*	Water body	North-east of Padmatīrtha	27th
32	Cakra *tīrtha*	Water body	South of Bāla tīrtha and south-east of Padma tīrtha	27th
33	Pāpapraṇāśana *tīrtha*	Water body	North of Padma *tīrtha*	28th
34	Brahma *tīrtha*	Water body	West of Candra *tīrtha*	28th
35	Janārdana *tīrtha*	Idol of Janārdana, Water body	North-west of Candra *tīrtha*	28th
36	Candrakūpa *tīrtha*	Water body	North of Candra *tīrtha*	28th
37	Muñjālaya *tīrtha*	Water body	East of Candrakūpa *tīrtha*	29th
38	Dharmakūpa *tīrtha*	Water body	North-east of Candrakūpa *tīrtha*	29th
39	Nārasiṁha *tīrtha*	Water body	South of Candrakūpa	29th
40	Vyāghra *tīrtha*	Water body	East of Candrakūpa and south of Śukla *tīrtha*	29th
41	Śukla *tīrtha*	Water body	North of Vyāghra *tīrtha*	29th
42	Maṅgaleśvara *tīrtha*	-not clear-	South of Śukla *tīrtha*	29th
43	Sarasvatī *tīrtha*	Water body	East of Maṅgaleśvara *tīrtha*	29th
44	Yamunā *tīrtha*	Water body	North of Sarasvatī *tīrtha*	29th

45	Kālañjara *tīrtha*	Water body	North of Yamunā *tīrtha*	29th
46	Gaṅgā *tīrtha*	Water body	South of Kālañjara *tīrtha*	29th
47	Koṭī *tīrtha*	Śiva in the form of a *liṅga*	East of Vatsāśrama *tīrtha*	29th
48	Hanumat *tīrtha*	Water body	South of Koṭī *tīrtha*	29th
49	Kālikā *tīrtha*	Water body	North of Hanumat *tīrtha*	30th
50	Kālikā *dvīpa* *tīrtha*	An elevated region	East of Kālikā *tīrtha*	30th
51	Bhadrakālī *tīrtha*	-not clear-	On Kālikā *dvīpa tīrtha*	30th
52	Gaṇeśa *tīrtha*	-not clear-	On Kālikā *dvīpa tīrtha*	30th
53	Kapileśvara *tīrtha*	-not clear-	On Kālikā *dvīpa tīrtha*	30th
54	Lokapāleśvara *tīrtha*	Śiva in the form of a *liṅga*	West of Kālikā *tīrtha*	30th
55	Aindra *tīrtha*	-Not clear-	Not mentioned clearly	30th
56	Yāmya *tīrtha*	-Not clear-	Not mentioned clearly	30th
57	Vāruṇya *tīrtha*	-Not clear-	Not mentioned clearly	30th
58	Kaubera *tīrtha*	-Not clear-	Not mentioned clearly	30th
59	Kauṇapa *tīrtha*	-Not clear-	Not mentioned clearly	30th
60	Kalyāṇa *tīrtha*	Water body	NW of Lokapāleśvara *tīrtha*	31st
61	Kapilā *tīrtha*	Water body	West of Kalyāṇa *tīrtha*	31st
62	Śṛṅgāravāṭikā *tīrtha*	*Balakeśvara liṅga*, water body	West of Kapilā *tīrtha*	31st

63	Lakṣmī *tīrtha*	Water body	West of Śṛṅgāravāṭikā *tīrtha*	31st
64	Caṇḍākūpa *tīrtha*	Well	West of Lakṣmī *tīrtha*	31st
65	Siddhālaya/ Pāpahara *tīrtha*	Water body	SW of Caṇḍākūpa *tīrtha*	31st
66	Karuṇā *tīrtha*	Water body	West of Pāpahara *tīrtha*	32nd
67	Yama *tīrtha*	Water body	North of Karuṇā *tīrtha*	32nd
68	Varāha *tīrtha*	-Not clear-	Not mentioned clearly	32nd
69	Kārttikeya *tīrtha*	Water body	Not mentioned clearly	32nd
70	Kapila *tīrtha*	Water body	Not mentioned clearly	32nd
71	Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*	Water body	West of Karuṇā *tīrtha*	32nd
72	Maṇināgāhvaya *tīrtha*	Water body	NW of Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*	32nd
73	Prathamadvādaśī *tīrtha*	Rivulet	Northeast of Maṇināgāhvaya *tīrtha*	33rd
74	Rāmeśvara *tīrtha*	Śiva in the form of a *liṅga*	East of Prathamadvādaśī *tīrtha*	33rd
75	Govindeśvara *tīrtha*	Water body	East of Rāmeśvara *tīrtha*	34th
76	Devī *tīrtha*	Idol of Devī, water body	In Govindeśvara *tīrtha*	34th
77	Bhairava *tīrtha*	Idol of Bhairava	West of Devī *tīrtha*	34th
78	Hanūmat *tīrtha*	Idol of Hanūmat	NW of Govindeśvara	34th
79	Agni *tīrtha*	Water body	East of Hanūmat tīrtha	34th

80	Kaubera *tīrtha*	Water body	West of Hanūmat tīrtha	34th
81	Nāga *tīrtha*	Water body	North of Hanūmat tīrtha	34th
82	Vāruṇa or Laṅkālaya *tīrtha*	Water body	West of the sacred place	35th
83	Yama *tīrtha*	Water body	Not mentioned clearly	35th
84	Kārttikeya *tīrtha*	Water body	Not mentioned clearly	35th
85	Liṅga *tīrtha*	Water body	Not mentioned clearly	35th
86	Dhārā *tīrtha*	Water body	Not mentioned clearly	35th
87	Agastya *tīrtha*	Water body	Not mentioned clearly	35th
88	Mārkaṇḍeya *tīrtha*	Water body	Not mentioned clearly	35th

List of the *Tīrtha*s in the Third *Āvaraṇa* (total 20)

Serial no.	Name of tīrtha	Deity	Location	Reference
89	Jalaśāyī *tīrtha*	Water body	Not mentioned clearly	36th
90	Vasiṣṭha āśrama *tīrtha*	Hermitage	North Border of the sacred place	36th
91	Pañcālaya *tīrtha*	Water body	South to the sacred place	37th
92	Reṇukā *tīrtha*	Idol of Reṇukā	East of Pañcālaya *tīrtha*	37th
93	Candrabhāgā *tīrtha*	Rivulet	In the *kṣetra* of sacred place	37th
94	Pūṣā *tīrtha*	Rivulet	In the *kṣetra* of sacred place	37th
95	Vatsarā *tīrtha*	Rivulet	In the *kṣetra* of sacred place	37th
96	Aruntudā *tīrtha*	Rivulet	In the *kṣetra* of sacred place	37th

97	Karuṇā *tīrtha*	Rivulet	In the *kṣetra* of sacred place	37th
98	*Tīrtha* in the form of Vatsarā-Praṇītā confluence	River	In the *kṣetra* of sacred place	37th
99	Praṇītā *tīrtha*	Rivulet	In the *kṣetra* of sacred place	37th
100	*Tīrtha* in the form of Candrabhāgā-Praṇītā confluence	River	In the *kṣetra* of sacred place	37th
101	Kaṇṭaka *tīrtha*	Rivulet	Outside the border of the sacred place	37th
102	Kuṇḍālaya *tīrtha*	Well	East of Kaṇṭaka *tīrtha*	37th
103	Tapovana *tīrtha*	Not clear	North of Kuṇḍālaya *tīrtha*	37th
104	Audumbara *tīrtha*	Not clear	Not mentioned clearly	37th
105	Pārāśara *tīrtha*	Not clear	East of Audumbara *tīrtha*	37th
106	Vṛddhapārāśara *tīrtha*	Not clear	South-east of Pārāśara *tīrtha*	37th
107	Ṛsyaśṛṅga *tīrtha*	Not clear	-Not mentioned clearly-	37th
108	Brahmakuṇḍa *tīrtha*	Not clear	In the middle of *tīrtha*	37th

III.4.1.b General Observations about the Vatsagulmamāhātmya

1. In the 39 chapters, 108 *tīrtha*s are mentioned. Three *āvaraṇa*s are mentioned. The first *āvaraṇa* has 29 *tīrtha*s, the second has 59 *tīrtha*s and the third has 20 *tīrtha*s.

2. Out of the 39 chapters, the first eight are written as background of the *māhātmya*. The actual description of the 108 *tīrtha*s starts from the 9th chapter. In that also, the mention of three *āvaraṇa*s is there in the 23rd chapter.

3. The first eight chapters mention only two significant *tīrtha*s in the vicinity of Vatsagulma and by which the place is identified. They are the *Padma tīrtha* and the *Karuṇeśvara mahādeva*.

4. Even the 13th chapter mentions the sacred places within the *āśrama* and outside the *āśrama*.

5. The names of *tīrtha*s are sometimes repeated. Hanumat, Nāga etc are mentioned more than once.

6. Tārā *tīrtha* mentioned in the 20th chapter receives no separate counting in the edition though almost 90 verses are attributed to a story related to it.

7. The description of the *tīrtha*s and stories related to it show an imbalanced distribution. The story of Nṛsiṁha appears in two chapters and the total verses allotted to the story are almost 225. However, some stories are told only in a few verses.

8. In the same Nṛsiṁha story, there is a mention that no pond or *kuṇḍa* was observed by Nṛsiṁha to clean his nails and thus he created a pond which later became famous as *tīrtha*.

9. VGM 15.28 mentions that the *tīrtha* by name *Puṣkara* will no longer be there in the *Kaliyuga*.

10. The edition has many grammatical and printing mistakes. *Aṣṭhāviṁśa* is mentioned instead of *aṣṭāviṁśa* in the beginning of the 28th chapter.

11. The main issues observed in the text are the poverty and the fear of *pātaka*s due to various reasons. *Daridraharaṇa tīrtha* has a detailed mention in the edition.

12. The *tīrtha* by name *Datteśvara* in the 14th chapter has no mention in the colophon of the chapter. The list of the *tīrtha*s in the edition includes it.

13. The 16th and the 17th chapters mention the story of *Dattātreya*. No *tīrtha* is dedicated to his name though in the story about *Daridraharaṇa tīrtha*, he is observed to give a jewel to the poverty hit Brahmin.

14. The *Karañja tīrtha* in the edition is not related to the *Ladache Karanje* in modern days. The similarity is clearly seen in the names.

15. The story of *Candra* and *Tārā* is narrated twice in the 20th and the 22nd chapters. The story in the 22nd chapter seems to be a sequel to the story in the 20th chapter.

16. Though the description of the hundred and eight places starts from the ninth chapter itself, the actual mention of the three *āvaraṇa*s is in VGM 23.1.

17. VGM 23.6 onwards, *adhyāya*s 24 and 25 entirely are dedicated to Dadhīci story. Around 300 verses are spent in depicting the story.

18. The 24th *adhyāya* mentions the *Satī vidhi* of the wife of Dadhīci in detail.

19. The 25th chapter concludes with the glory of *Padma tīrtha* and the 26th again starts with the same introduction.

20. The ancient political glory and importance of the place is not addressed anywhere in the text.

III.4.1c Glory of Vatsagulma

The entire text of the VGM is composed to state the glory of the place. However, we find some verses in the text itself, which state the importance of the place. The references are as under-.

तत् तीर्थं पुण्यभूतं च गोपितं भुवि शम्भुना ।

स्नानमात्रेण संसिद्धिं पापिनो यान्ति यत्र हि ॥९.१७२॥

In the VGM 9.172, the *Brahmarākṣasa* tells the Brahmin, that this meritorious sacred place on the earth is kept undisclosed by lord Shiva, wherein the sinful people attain freedom only by a bath.

वत्सगुल्मं परं क्षेत्रं यत्रास्ति करुणेश्वरः ॥९.१७५॥

The VGM 9.175 affirms that Vatsagulma is a great place, where there is *Karuṇeśvara*.

वत्सगुल्मं परं क्षेत्रं सर्वसिद्धिप्रदायकम् ॥१६.१०५॥

The VGM 16.105 states that the place of Vatsagulma is great and showers all the success.

व्रज त्वं वत्सगुल्माख्यं क्षेत्रं पुण्यविवर्धनम् ।

सिद्धिक्षेत्रे परामृद्धिं प्राप्स्यसे तीर्थसेवनात् ॥१६.१२७॥

The VGM 16.127 states that "you go to the sacred place named Vatsagulma, which increases the merit, wherein you will obtain a lot of prosperity by going to that place".

धराया मध्यभागे च क्षेत्रमस्त्यतिपावनम् ।

वत्सगुल्माख्यमीशेन करुणाख्येन धिष्ठितम् ॥२१.५४॥

The VGM 21.54 states that there is a very pious sacred place at the centre of the earth, which is named as Vatsagulma and inhabited by the god by name Karuṇa.

वत्सगुल्मं परं क्षेत्रं सर्वसिद्धिफलप्रदम् ॥२१.५६॥

The VGM 21.56 states that Vatsagulma is a great sacred place, which yields every type of success.

तस्मात् पुण्यतमं क्षेत्रं वत्सगुल्मं नृपोत्तम ।

सेवनीयं नृभिर्नित्यं वाराणस्या यवाधिकम् ॥२२.९८॥

The VGM 22.98 states that "therefore, o great king, the sacred place of Vatsagulma is the most meritorious, which is a bit greater than Vārāṇasī, should always be visited by the people."

शङ्खाकारमिदं क्षेत्रं प्राङ्मुखं पापनाशनम् ।

वामावर्तं परं चास्ति त्रिरावरणवेष्टितम् ॥२२.१००॥

The VGM 22.100 states that this sacred place is conch-shaped, facing the East and destroyer of sins. It has an anticlockwise curve and covered with three *āvaraṇa*s- layers or levels.

महापापहरं पुण्यं पवित्रं रोगनाशनम् ।

नान्यदस्ति धरादेशे क्षेत्रं तस्मान्महत्तमम् ॥२८.१३१॥

The VGM 28.131 states that - there is no place greater than that (Vatsagulma), which drives away big sins, generates merit, pious and destroyer of diseases.

मध्यदेशे परं क्षेत्रं वत्सारण्यमिति स्फुटम् ।

यत्र सन्निहितः शम्भुर्विश्वात्मा लोकभावनः ॥३०.३५॥

The VGM 30.35 There is a great region in the central region, called Vatsāraṇya (the Vatsa Forest), where the lord Śiva resides, protecting the worlds.

वत्सारण्यं शिवात्मकम् ॥३२.१६५॥

The VGM 32.165 states that- the forest of Vatsa is an abode of Śiva or an abode of pious things.

III.4.1d The *Stotra*s

The *stotra*s and the legends associated with the *tīrtha*s are the sources of Primary Data extracted from the text for the present study. Both these factors are the base for the further information which will be deduced from them.

First the *stotra*s are addressed. Being a text from Purana period, it addresses devotion from many angles. Devotion involves praising the god with the special description of his or her attributes. Following is the list of the deities, the devotee as the chanter of the *stotra*s and the reference number of

adhyāya for the same. There are fifteen *stotra*s in the text. All the *stotra*s with their meaning are given in the Appendix II.

1. Stotra of Viriñci chanted by Vasiṣṭha is seen in VGM 5.82 and 5.83. It is only two verses long. It is written in *anuṣṭup* metre.

<div align="center">देव देव नमस्तेऽस्तु... धर्मसङ्ग्रहम् ॥५.८२-८३॥</div>

2. Stotra of Vidhi is chanted by the gods from VGM 5.129 onwards. It is chanted in six verses. The metre is *upendravajrā* that can be beautifully chanted. It states the power of the creator of the universe to relieve the living beings from the fears.

<div align="center">त्वमादिदेवः... त्वामविदो यथार्थतः ॥५.१२९-१३४॥</div>

3. Stotra of Viṣṇu is chanted by the gods from VGM 6.18 to 6.30. The last verse is *phalaśruti*. These are total thirteen verses. Again, the verses from 33 to 37 are of *phalaśruti*. The reason for this distant *phalaśruti* is the statements of the narrator and the lord Viṣṇu, after which there is *phalaśruti*. The metre used in this *stotra* is *vasantatilakā* in most of the verses. There is a mention of all the incarnations of lord Viṣṇu. The writer calls it as *stavanāmamālā*- a garland of praising names. Thus, this could be the chanting practise of the devotees.

<div align="center">नो त्वां विदुर्देवगणा... त्वद्भक्तिभावितमनाः स हरे प्रयाति ॥६.१८-३०॥</div>

4. Stotra of Śiva by the gods is seen from VGM 7.32 to 7.52. It is a 21-verses long *stotra* that has been composed in the *anuṣṭup* metre. Again, the devotees are requesting lord Śiva to protect them from fears.

<div align="center">देवा ऊचुः । नमस्ते देवदेवेश... पाहि नो महतो भयात् ॥७.३२-५२॥</div>

5. Stotra of Pārvatī is chanted by the gods from VGM 7.53 to 7.59. It is a seven-verse long *stotra*. It is composed in *upendravajrā* and then *vasantatilakā.* The gods describe Pārvatī with many epithets. They praise her power to save the world. She is not fathomable by any of the gods or the devotees. The epithet *yoganidrā* is used for Parvati, indicating her characteristics of the *yoga* cult.

6. Stotra of Śiva by Vatsa is observed from VGM 8.49 to 8.62. It is composed in *anuṣṭup* metre. It is a fourteen-verse long *stotra*. The sage Vatsa is saluting the lord Śiva with various adjectives. It appears as a *pañcāśannāmastotra*- a *stotra* having fifty names of the deity. Generally, 12 or 108 or 1000 names of one deity are composed in one *stotra*. This *stotra* seems to be an attempt of doing that. The *phalaśruti* is written almost thirty verses apart.

नमः शिवाय महते भूतानां पतये... मूढा जन्ममृत्युजराकुलाः ॥८.४९-६२॥

Then after some verses, the *phalaśruti* is written in two verses.

त्वया मे... सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥८.९८॥

7. Stotra of Śaṅkara as Karuṇeṣvara by Vimala Brahmin is observed from VGM 10.33 to 10.36. It is only four verses long. It is composed in *anuṣṭup* metre. It states the unique nature of the lord that can be comprehended only by devotion.

अलौकिकगते शम्भो... नृणां नान्यसाधनैः ॥१०.३३-३६॥

8. Stotra of Cāmuṇḍā by Kṛṣṇaśarmā Brahmin is observed from VGM 10.98 to 10.102. Same stotra has several metres as *anuṣṭup*, *vasantatilakā*, and *bhujaṅgaprayāta*. The *stotra* refers to the killing of demons like *Caṇḍa*, *Muṇḍa*, and *Pracaṇḍa*.

आदिशक्ति महामाये... त्वदङ्घ्रिस्मृतिर्मुक्तिहेतुः ॥१०.९८-१०२॥

9. Stotra of Śaṅkara by Nīlakaṇṭha Brahmin is composed from VGM 11.39 to 11.46. This eight-verse long *stotra* is composed in *rathoddhatā* metre. All the adjectives used in these verses are in vocative case i.e., *sambodhanaṁ*. It describes the physical attributes of lord Śiva.

नीलकण्ठ उवाच । देवदेव गिरिजापते विभो... पदवीं निजां हर ॥११.४६॥

10. Stotra of Narasiṁha by Prahlāda is observed from VGM 14.9 to 14.20. This twelve- verse long *stotra* is composed in *aupacchandasika* metre. The devotee requests the god to forgive his father and attainment of a good consequence.

प्रह्लाद उवाच । नृहरे तव नामचिन्तनं... लभतां तथाप्यसौ ॥१४.९-२०॥

11. Stotra of Śiva by Nandī is observed from VGM 14.50 to 14.52. This 3-verse long eulogy is composed in *sragdharā* metre. This shows figures of speech like *Anuprāsa* and is attractive to listen to.

जय जय शिव शम्भो भीम... भो नमस्ते नमस्ते ॥१४.५०-५२॥

12. Lord Viṣṇu is praised by the Sun-God from VGM 21.69 to 21.72. In this three-verse long eulogy, the form of the Sun-God like the sacrificial fire is described.

नमो नमस्ते भवनाशनाय... सत्कर्मगते नमस्ते॥२१.६९-७१॥

13. Lord Viṣṇu is praised by the Brahmins from VGM 27.69 to 27.71. In this three-verse long eulogy, the devotees praise the lord Vishnu in *bhujaṅgaprayāta* metre.

नमो यज्ञरूपाय विश्वार्तिहन्त्रे... रक्षोऽग्रभीतेः स्वभक्तान् ॥२७.६९-७१॥

14. We come across only one line praise in VGM 29.14. It can neither be called a *maṅgala* nor a stotra. It is composed in *upendravajrā* metre.

नमोस्तु ते... विदधासि हंसि ॥२९.१४॥

15. Stotra of Śarva by Lokapāla is observed from VGM 30.45 to 30.54. This ten-verse long *stotra* has some verses in *anuṣṭup* metre and some in *śikhariṇī* metre, making it attractive to sing.

लोकपाला ऊचुः । नमस्तु वेदधाराय... नमः केवलमिदम् ॥३०.४५-५४॥

III.4.1e The Legends

The next important base for the data is the legends associated with the sacred places. There are 51 legends mentioned in the text. The following paragraphs discuss the stories in short. Their significance in various fields of study will be correlated in the paragraphs after that.

Legend 1: The very text begins with the story of the pious Vāsuki king and his chaste wife Kanakalekhā, in the city of Kanakādri in the country named Karṇāṭa. Once his wife dreamt of his body full of worms and was very unhappy on waking up. The King asked her the reason of her crying. She hesitantly explained it which made the King unhappy. After that, the King went hunting and was separated from his crew. He was searching for water. Incidentally he washed his face with water from a small pond. Then he met with his crew. His wife was surprised in the dream that the King's face lacked worms. Understanding the magical powers of the water in the pond, the King searched for it the next day. Unable to locate the pond, he came across a forest-dweller, who directed him to go to the hermitage of the sage Vasiṣṭha near Vatsagulma and narrated his despair to him. Then the sage told the King the theory of fruition (*karmavipāka*) and narrated the story of the previous birth of the King to him.

Legend 2: The story of the previous birth of the King Vāsuki is the story of Devaśarman from the region of Avanti and his wife Citrakalā. They had a son- the King Vāsuki in his previous birth. He lost his father at an early age and was looked after by a kind Brahmin. Once he stole the golden necklace of the wife of his *guru* and was cursed by her that his body will be full of worms. With repentance, the boy offered his body to the *triveṇī saṅgama* of Prayāga, because of which he was born as a King in his next birth. But, due to the curse of the wife of *guru*, his body was full of worms.

Legend 3: The sage Vasiṣṭha once practised penance in the Himalayas to please the lord Brahmā. When the sage asked about the sacred place on the

earth that fulfils the desires of people, the lord Brahmā told the sage about Vatsagulma. He affirms that Padma *tīrtha and Karuṇeśa* are the most famous among many sacred places near Vatsagulma. Lord himself told the sage that there are 108 sacred places in Vatsagulma and the river Praṇītā flows from the south of this region. The Lord vanished and the sage came to Vatsagulma for penance.

Legend 4: The place where the sage Vasiṣṭha practised penance, was covered with deep forest. In that a sage by name Vatsa was practising a deep penance. The entire world could feel the heat of the penance of the sage. All the sages went to lord Brahmā to tell this. The lord, with all the sages and the gods went to the lord Viṣṇu in Vaikuṇṭha. Then the lord Viṣṇu heard all the story and with all of them, went to the Kailāsa- the abode of Śiva. The lord Śiva with Pārvatī attentively heard everything and went to Vatsa Forest with all of them. Having reached the hermitage of Vatsa, lord Śiva and Pārvatī stayed there, and the rest of the gods and sages stayed out of the hermitage. Lord Śiva addressed sage Vatsa and felt the kindness about him. That kindness led to the tears flow from the eyes of the lord Śiva. That was how the Karuṇā *kūpa* was generated. Then the lord offered a boon to the sage. As a boon, the lord Śiva took the form of Karuṇeśvara and stayed there at the Karuṇā *kūpa*.

Legend 5: The myth of Vedaśarmā Brahmin is told as a glory of the Karuṇā *kūpa*. Vedaśarmā, when meets a Brahmarākṣasa, comes to know about the previous birth of the Brahmarākṣasa as Muniśarmā Brahmin, who failed to do any merit and hence attained the form of Brahmarākṣasa. Vedaśarmā identified him as his ancestor and tried for his liberation by visiting Karuṇeśvara and practising the worship of the ancestors.

Legend 6: The glory of Vimala *tīrtha* is stated by this myth of Vimala Brahmin, who attains *Brahman* only after visiting the sacred place of Vatsagulma.

Legend 7: The famous myth of Śumbha and Niśumbha demons getting killed by Cāmuṇḍā is narrated in length. It created the Cāmuṇḍā *tīrtha*.

Legend 8: The myth of Vedaśarmā Brahmin with ill-behaviour is narrated here, who attains *sāyujya mukti* mere by drinking water of Karuṇā *kūpa*.

Legend 9: The sages go to lord Brahmā in Satyaloka and request him to preach them about time. On this, Lord Brahmā suggested to read Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa and due to that the treatises like Nārada Saṁhitā were composed. The formation of Madhyarekhā from Laṅkā to Meru is also mentioned, where Vatsagulma is one of the locations.

Legend 10: It is about the glory of Nīlakaṇṭheśvara *tīrtha*. A Brahmin named Nīlakaṇṭha performed a penance at the place and created one Śivaliṅga there. Lord Śiva appeared before him and blessed him.

Legend 11: It is about the glory of Mallikārjuna *tīrtha*. A King by name Kṣemakara asked sages about the means of liberation. On this the sages preached him about the importance of *tīrtha*s in attaining the liberation. Many sacred places are enumerated here. The King, along with his wife visited various sacred places. Here, the names of twelve Jyotirliṅgas are mentioned. The pilgrimage of the King was incomplete due to his ill health which made him very sad. Thus, he established a Śivaliṅga and worshipped the lord. He attained liberation by the favour of lord Śiva. The place became famous as Mallikārjuna *tīrtha*.

Legend 12: It is a very popular story of Nṛsiṁha and Prahlāda. At the end of the story, Nṛsiṁha created a pond of water to clean his nails. That became famous as Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*.

Legend 13: It is about the glory of Nandī *tīrtha*. At this place, Nandī performed penance for lord Śiva and created one *liṅga* with his name. Hence the place got this name.

Legend 14: It tells the story about Puṣkara Brahmin, who performed penance and created a pond. That became famous as Puṣkara *tīrtha*.

Legend 15: It is narrated for the glory of Khaṇḍeśvara *tīrtha*. A Brahmin named Mandara acted unrighteous. He established physical relation with a *śūdra* woman and produced a son. When he repented and performed penance, one mystique inquired about his past life. He confessed all his ill behaviour to the mystique. Then the mystique preached him *śivātmaka vidyā* and sent him to Vatsagulma. According to the orders of the mystique, the Brahmin after coming to Vatsagulma and bathing in Padma *tīrtha*, established one *liṅga* of Śiva. He chanted that Mantra near that *liṅga*, due to which he attained *sāyujya mukti*. The place where his sins were destroyed, became famous as Khaṇḍeśvara *tīrtha*.

Legend 16: This is the glory of Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*. It is about a poor Brahmin Dharmadatta, who goes to sage Mārkaṇḍeya to ask the reasons of his poverty. That time, the sage narrated him his previous birth. His sinful actions in the previous birth made him poor in this birth. As a remedy, the sage told him to go to Vatsagulma. Dharmadatta went to Vatsagulma and practised penance for three years. Then he came across a mystique named Datta. He told him that he lived at Kṛṣṇāmalakī kṣetra in Siṁhādri mountain. He gave a jewel to the Brahmin, and his poverty vanished. Thus, the *tīrtha* became famous as Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*.

Legend 17: This is a famous story of sage Māṇḍavya and his wife. At the end of this story, the birth of Datta is narrated.

Legend 18: This appears in the text as the glory of Gaṇeśa *tīrtha*. It is the famous story of birth of Gaṇeśa from the sweat of Pārvatī. At the end of story, it is told that Gaṇeśa visited Vatsagulma and practised penance for lord Śiva, hence the name.

Legend 19: This is narrated for the glory of Suvarṇākhya *tīrtha*. It is also a popular story, where the Fire-God eats the semen of lord Śiva. He was impregnated by that. He took away the foetus by the orders of lord Brahmā, whose part became gold, and part fell in the Gaṅgā. By that, Kārttikeya was born. The sin attained by Fire-God was wiped by donating gold in Suvarṇākhya *tīrtha*, hence the name.

Legend 20: The famous story of the gods and demons churning the ocean is told here. The sequel of the story is the story of marriage of Alakṣmī and sage Uddālaka. When the sage abandoned her, lord Viṣṇu married her and made her stay on the Pīpal tree. The *tīrtha* is famous for destroying one's poverty.

Legend 21: This is the glory of Karañja *tīrtha*. There was a Brahmin lady by name Karañjā whose husband was Dhaneśvara. Once he bit her up while she advised him to perform some pious deed. She left the town and came to Vatsagulma. She performed penance of lord Śiva and attained liberation. The place where she attained the liberation, is called Karañjā *tīrtha*.

Legend 22: The story is narrated for the glory of Saubhāgya *tīrtha*. There was a pious Brahmin by name Haridatta in Kaulapura, who had a faithful wife named Sunandā. The astrologers on her birth predicted that she would be a widow by the age of twelve due to her sins in previous birth. She was married at the age of eight years. She went to the sage Gautama, who told her to go to Vatsagulma and bathe in Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*. She acted accordingly and her husband was saved from the death and lived long.

Legend 23: The story is about the glory of Bhāṇḍa *tīrtha*. There was a fallen Brahmin by name Bhāṇḍa. He liked gambling and always was in the company of bad people. Once he was cheated by his fellow gamblers and ran away to the forest. He incidentally came to Vatsagulma and stayed near Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*. He was liberated from that place, hence the name.

Legend 24: This is a famous Puranic story of the moon and the Tārā and their illegitimate son Budha. The impurity caused in the body of Tārā was cleaned by the waters in the pond, south of the Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*. Hence that place became famous as Tārā *tīrtha*.

Legend 25: This is a legend for stating the glory of Cakra *tīrtha*. The place got its name because lord Viṣṇu killed demons with his Cakra and cleaned it here in a pond. Hence the place was named as Cakra *tīrtha*.

Legend 26: This is about Dhautapāpa *tīrtha*. In ancient times, when a sinful Brahmin lady by name Nāminī came to Vatsagulma and stayed there, all her sins were wiped away. Hence the place got its name.

Legend 27: This is about Sūrya *tīrtha*. In ancient times, lord Brahmā created various living beings, and asked the Sun to look after them. The Sun being very bright, was not tolerated by the people. Lord Brahmā was angry with the Sun and cursed him for lesser brightness. On pleasing, lord Brahmā told the Sun to go to Vatsagulma and perform penance there. The Sun practised penance for ten thousand divine years and then saw lord Viṣṇu in front of him. He requested the lord for brightness and the place got its name. According to this legend the Sūrya *tīrtha* has an idol of Viṣṇu.

Legend 28: This is about Keśava *tīrtha*. A Brahmin residing at Vatsagulma worshipped Keśava every day. Once he met with a demon while going for a worship. The hand of the demon burnt as he touched the Brahmin. By the mere touch of that Brahmin, the demon could recall his previous birth. In the

previous birth, the demon was a born in an elite Brahmin family but always condemned the Brahmins. Hence, he was reborn as a demon. The demon demanded the merit of one day of worship to the Brahmin and with that, he was liberated and went to Vaikuṇṭha.

Legend 29: This is about Candra *tīrtha*. The same story of the moon and Tārā appears here again. The moon affected by *kuṣṭha* due to the sin, came to Vatsagulma and created a pond, on the bank of which he practised penance. Karuṇeśvara was pleased by his penance and offered him relief from disease. He himself stayed there in the form of a *liṅga* and the pond became famous by the name of the moon. This is the origin of Candrabhāgā river.

Legend 30: This is narrated for the glory of Padma *tīrtha*. Here, we find that the famous myth of sage Dadhīci is elaborately told. His pregnant wife took out the foetus from her womb and practised Satī. Later, the foetus was fed on the fruits of Pippalī and came to be known as Pippalāda. The gods threw their weapons made from the bones of Dadhīci in the Padma *tīrtha*.

Legend 31: This is about a Brahmin, name untold, who lived on the banks of Narmadā. He used to bathe in Narmadā and boast about it. He attained the birth other that a human because he did not show devotion towards the gods and the *tīrtha*s.

Legend 32: This is about a rich and generous Vaiśya by name Dharmagupta and his unfaithful wife Guhā. The myth is narrated as a glory of the Padma *tīrtha*. She was young, behaved freely, and had an extramarital affair. She had an illegitimate son by name Vibhāvasu. Even after her son was born, she continued meeting her lover. Once, Dharmagupta caught her red-handed and beat her up. Even then, she did not leave her lover. Instead, they both planned to kill of her husband and abandoning the city. Their plan succeeded and they went to some other city leaving the small child behind. Incidentally, the lover was killed by a tiger in the forest, and she was left alone to go to a brothel.

Their son was raised up by his uncle. He fought with his uncle when he was young and left the home only to get that same city and the brothel of his mother. Unknowingly, they had physical relation and later when the whole story was told, both repented a lot. As an expiation, they tried to burn themselves in the fire, but were half-burnt due to rain. They had decayed and half burnt bodies which were pacified by a continuous bath in Padma *tīrtha*.

Legend 33: This is the glory of Bāla *tīrtha*. A couple, whose children were short-lived, stayed in the north of Vatsagulma. After that, their son was born healthy and lived long.

Legend 34: This is narrated as the glory of Cakra *tīrtha*. The seven sages, who were practising sacrifice, faced an obstacle by the demon Sumālī. The demon was killed by lord Viṣṇu with his Cakra, hence the name.

Legend 35: This is the glory of Pāpapraṇāśana *tīrtha*. It is about siblings by name Brahmadatta and Gautamī. They committed the worst sins which demanded the hardest of punishments. They met with a sage who gave them a ring with some hidden letters on it. The place where their sin would be nullified, they would see the letters. They reached Vatsagulma and could see the letters on the ring. They chanted that Mantra and attained went to heaven after death.

Legend 36: This is the glory of Brahma *tīrtha*. Lord Brahmā created a daughter while he created the whole world. He became lustful about her and persuaded her in a wrong manner. The sin that the lord gained because of this was wiped away when he visited the Vatsa Forest, and bathed in a pond, hence the name.

Legend 37: This is about Janārdana *tīrtha*. In the past, the sage Vaikhānasa worshipped an idol of Janārdana. Once, his idol was robbed by the thieves. He

prayed to lord Janārdana and requested to show his four-handed form. That idol was properly erected at the place, and hence the name.

Legend 38: It is about the glory of Candra *kūpa*. This is a famous myth of Dakṣa and his daughter Rohiṇī. Her husband, the moon, was cursed by his father-in-law- Dakṣa- for his biased behaviour towards his other wives, his other daughters. The moon experienced the decay of his body and was cured only when he visited Padma *tīrtha* and bathed in it, hence the name.

Legend 39: It is about the glory of Vyāghra *tīrtha*. A righteous Brahmin by name Kṣemamūrti worshipped lord Śiva every day. Once while he was worshipping, a tiger came there and tried to grab him. That time the Brahmin remembered the lord with all his might. The lord appeared there and killed the tiger with his trident. On the request of the Brahmin, the lord Śiva stayed there in the *liṅga* form, hence the name.

Legend 40: This is about the glory of the Maṅgaleśvara *tīrtha*. In ancient times there was a Brahmin by name Gobhila. He was always under debt. On the suggestion of sage Bharadvāja, he went to Vatsagulma and worshipped Maṅgaleśvara to become free from debt.

Legend 41: This is about the glory of Koṭī *tīrtha*. In ancient times, when lord Śiva had visited Vatsagulma to meet sage Vatsa, the *Koṭī tīrtha*s (a crore of *tīrtha*s) in all the three worlds came there and stayed there by the orders of lord Śiva, hence the name.

Legend 42: This is the glory of Hanūmat *tīrtha*. It is the famous myth about Añjanī and Vāyu and their son Hanūmat. Hanūmān once visited Vatsagulma for penance, hence the name.

Legend 43: This is about the glory of Lokapāleśvara *tīrtha*. In ancient times, the demons troubled all the protectors of the eight directions. They took

refuge of lord Brahmā. He advised them to undergo penance in Vatsagulma. With the penance, the *Lokapāla*s pleased lord Śiva and he appeared there in the form of a *liṅga*. The fruit of bathing in this pond is liberation as told in the text.

Legend 44: This is about the glory of Balakeśvara *tīrtha*. There was a king by name Balaka and his wife Prabhā. He behaved indecent with women. Once he was looted by the enemy. He ran away in the forest and reached the hermitage of sage Atri. He was advised by the sage to go to Vatsagulma and practise penance of lord Śiva. He created a *liṅga* of lord Śiva and pleased the lord. The lord offered him a boon, after which he went to his city.

Legend 45: The glory of Siddhālaya *tīrtha* is narrated here. There was a widow by name Druhiṇī from the Yāyāvara family. Once while her eight-year-old son was playing with his friends, he saw some *siddha*s with their strange attire. His friends ran away on seeing the unknown *siddha*s, but Sunanda was confident enough to face the *siddha*s. He saluted them and they blessed him. He told them about his mother and him. His sweet and mature talk made the *siddha*s shower their favour on him and they initiated him. They also initiated his lamenting mother, and both attained liberation there, hence the name.

Legend 46: The glory of Maṇināgāhvaya *tīrtha* is narrated by this popular myth of Vinatā, Kadrū, the snakes, and the eagle. The story ends with the snakes obtaining the Sañjīvaka jewel, where the *tīrtha* of the name Maṇināga became popular.

Legend 47: This is narrated for the glory of Prathamadvādaśī *tīrtha*. The gods were eager to see the river Karuṇā who had gone to *Pātāla*. The gods requested lord Viṣṇu to show them the river. The gods and the lord went to Vatsagulma. They practised a fast on Ekādādaśī and were awake throughout

the night. The next day, the river appeared for the first time, and everyone could see her. The place got the name as Prathamadvādaśī because of this.

Legend 48: This is an entire story of lord Rāma, told to narrate the glory pf Rāmeśvara *tīrtha*. While going southwards in search of Sītā, he came to Vatsagulma, stayed there for one night, and prepared one Śivaliṅga for worship.

Legend 49: This is told for the glory of Govindeśvara *tīrtha*. A Brahmin by name Govinda was not ready to marry and once visited the sage Vibhāṇḍaka. On his instructions, he came to Vatsagulma, and prepared a stone idol of goddess Ekavīrā. The goddess appeared before him after one year, and offered *siddhi* to him, and hence the name.

Legend 50: This is told for the glory of Laṅkālaya *tīrtha*. It is the narration of the story of Rāvaṇa's family- the Pulastya family. It is narrated that the *yakṣa*s residing at Laṅkā could not find resort anywhere. Lord Śiva kept them as his *gaṇa*s at a place which later became famous as Laṅkālaya *tīrtha*.

Legend 51: This is the narration of the glory of Pūṣā *tīrtha*. The damsel by name Pūṣā was sent by lord Indra to obstruct the penance of sage Vasiṣṭha. She failed in it and was cursed to become a river. Later, on requesting for a counter curse, she was told that she would be liberated after meeting with the river Praṇītā.

With the data extracted from the *stotra*s and the legends, various facets of culture can be deduced. The text is a typical Purana *māhātmya* literature. Thus, it provides many points to weave the cultural and religious landscape of the region. The religious life of people from Puranic period consisted of performing of various rituals near the water body, donation of various things at the sacred place, meditating upon the name of the deity, performing rituals for ancestors and some special rituals at some places.

In addition to that, Geographical data were collected from the text which proved to be significant for many points like religious landscape and

the economic factors that may have helped the region of ancient Vatsagulma to flourish. For this, the following base data were gathered from the text.

List of the *Tīrtha*s in the First *Āvaraṇa*			
Seria l no.	**Name of *tīrtha***	**Rituals to be performed (if mentioned)**	**Ref *adhyāya***
1	Karuṇākūpa *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation, worship of ancestors, plunging of *kuśagranthi* when *darśa* on Monday	9th
2	Karuṇeṣvara *tīrtha*	---	
3	Vimala *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation, *liṅga* worship	10th
4	Cāmuṇḍā *tīrtha*	Holy bath, *darśana* of *devī*, drinking the water from *kūpa*, *Śārada navarātra*, *homa*, donation, pilgrimage	10.46
5	Madhyameśvara *tīrtha*	---	11th
6	Nīlakaṇṭheśvara *tīrtha*	*Darśana* of *liṅga* on *Śanipradoṣa*	11th
7	Mallikārjuna *tīrtha*	*Darśana* of *liṅga*, pilgrimage	12th
8	Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*	Holy bath on Saturday, *darśana*	13th
9	Nandī *tīrtha*	Holy bath on Sunday on *Caturdaśī*, donation	14th
10	Puṣkara *tīrtha*	Holy bath in the month of *Kārttika*, donation, *japa*, holy bath on full moon, donation of single colour cow with a calf to Brahmin, donation of gold, grains to a Brahmin who knows Vedas	15th

11	Khaṇḍeśvarā *tīrtha*	*Darśana*, worship	15th
12	Datteśvara *tīrtha*	---	
13	Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation, *japa*	16th
14	Gaṇeśa *tīrtha*	---	18th
15	Suvarṇa *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation	18th
16	Parṇaśālā *tīrtha*	Holy bath on Saturday	18th
17	Karañja *tīrtha*	Holy bath	19th
18	Saubhāgya *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation, drinking of water	19th
19	Bhāṇḍa *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation, *japa*	20th
20	Tārā *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation	20th
21	Cakra *tīrtha*	---	20th
22	Dhautapāpa *tīrtha*	Stay for one day	20th
23	Sūrya *tīrtha*	Holy bath on Sunday with *darśa*, donation of gold	21st
24	Keśava *tīrtha*	Everyday worship	21st
25	Lakṣmī *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation	21st
26	Lakṣmī Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation	21st
27	Narasiṁha/ Alakṣmīharaṇa *tīrtha*	Holy bath	22nd
28	Candra *tīrtha*	Holy bath	22nd
29	*Tīrtha* as the source of Candrabhāgā river	---	22nd
List of the *Tīrtha*s in the Second *Āvaraṇa*			

30	Padma *tīrtha*	Holy bath at dawn, Holy bath on *tiṣya*	25th ,26th
31	Bāla *tīrtha*	Holy bath	27th
32	Cakra *tīrtha*	Holy bath and donation	27th
33	Pāpapraṇāśana *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation, *japa*	28th
35	Janārdana *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation, *haridarśana*, worship	28th
36	Candrakūpa *tīrtha*	Holy bath	28th
37	Muñjālaya *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation	29th
38	Dharmakūpa *tīrtha*	Holy bath, drinking of water	29th
39	Nārasiṁha *tīrtha*	Holy bath	29th
40	Vyāghra *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation	29th
41	Śukla *tīrtha*	Holy bath	29th
42	Maṅgaleśvara *tīrtha*	*maṅgalavrata*, *darśana* on Tuesday *pañcamī*	29th
43	Sarasvatī *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation, *japa* of 7 crore *mahāmantra*	29th
44	Yamunā *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation	29th
45	Kālañjara *tīrtha*	Holy bath, drinking of water	29th
46	Gaṅgā *tīrtha*	Holy bath	29th
47	Koṭī *tīrtha*	Holy bath, offering of *pavitra* on the *Śukla Caturdaśī* of *Śrāvaṇa* month	29th
48	Hanumat *tīrtha*	Holy bath, *japa* of *Hanumat mantra*	29th
49	Kālikā *tīrtha*	Holy bath, *japa* of *mantra*, donation of gold, cow, and blanket	30th
50	Kālikā *tīrtha*	8 *pradakṣiṇā*	30th

51	Bhadrakālī *tīrtha*	---	30th
52	Gaṇeśa *tīrtha*	---	30th
53	Kapileśvara *tīrtha*	---	30th
54	Lokapāleśvara *tīrtha*	Holy bath, *darśana*, chanting of Vedas, Purāṇas, and *rudrasūkta*, *abhiṣeka* in the month of *Śrāvaṇa*, worship with *pañcāmṛta*, chanting of *mantra*, worship on the Monday of *Śrāvaṇa* month, *mahāpūjā* with 16 *upacāra*s, pilgrimage in the month of *Śrāvaṇa*	30th
55	Aindra *tīrtha*	---	30th
56	Yāmya *tīrtha*	---	30th
57	Vāruṇya *tīrtha*	---	30th
58	Kaubera *tīrtha*	---	30th
59	Kauṇapa *tīrtha*	---	30th
60	Kalyāṇa *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation	31st
61	Kapilā *tīrtha*	Donation of cow	31st
62	Śṛṅgāravāṭikā *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation	31st
63	Lakṣmī *tīrtha*	Holy bath on the dawn of Tuesday	31st
64	Caṇḍākūpa *tīrtha*	Holy bath, *darśana* of *devī*	31st
65	Siddhālaya/ Pāpahara *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation	31st
66	Karuṇā *tīrtha*	Holy bath	32nd
67	Yama *tīrtha*	Holy bath	32nd
68	Varāha *tīrtha*	---	32nd
69	Kārttikeya *tīrtha*	---	32nd
70	Kapila *tīrtha*	Holy bath	32nd

71	Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha*	Holy bath	32nd
72	Maṇināgāhvaya *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation, *darśana* of *Nāgeśvara*, holy bath on *pañcamī* of *śrāvaṇa* or *mārgaśīrṣa* month, *śravaṇa* and chanting the *māhātmya* of Maṇināgāhvaya *tīrtha*	32nd
73	Prathamadvādaśī *tīrtha*	*Darśana*	33rd
74	Rāmeśvara *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation, *japa*	33rd
75	Govindeśvara *tīrtha*	Holy bath	34th
76	Devī *tīrtha*	Holy bath, 8th 9th 14th day, *Maṅgalavāsara*, *bhojana* to Brahmin and to married women	34th
77	Bhairava *tīrtha*	*darśana*	34th
78	Hanūmat *tīrtha*	---	34th
79	Agni *tīrtha*	---	34th
80	Kaubera *tīrtha*	---	34th
81	Nāga *tīrtha*	Holy bath, donation	34th
82	Vāruṇa or Laṅkālaya *tīrtha*	---	35th
83	Yama *tīrtha*	Holy bath	35th
84	Kārttikeya *tīrtha*	Holy bath	35th
85	Liṅga *tīrtha*	Holy bath	35th
86	Dhārā *tīrtha*	Holy bath	35th
87	Agastya *tīrtha*	Holy bath	35th
88	Mārkaṇḍeya *tīrtha*	Holy bath	35th
List of the *Tīrtha*s in the Third *Āvaraṇa*			

Serial no.	Name of tīrtha	Deity	Ref
89	Jalaśāyī *tīrtha*	Holy bath	36th
90	Vasiṣṭha āśrama *tīrtha*	Holy bath	37th
91	Pañcālaya *tīrtha*	Holy bath	37th
92	Reṇukā *tīrtha*	Holy bath, pilgrimage in *Caitra* month	37th
93	Candrabhāgā *tīrtha*	Holy bath	37th
94	Pūṣā *tīrtha*	Holy bath	37th
95	Vatsarā *tīrtha*	Holy bath	37th
96	Aruntudā *tīrtha*	Holy bath	37th
97	Karuṇā *tīrtha*	Holy bath	37th
98	*Tīrtha* in the form of Vatsarā-Praṇītā confluence	Holy bath	37th
99	Praṇītā *tīrtha*	Holy bath	37th
100	*Tīrtha* in the form of Candrabhāgā-Praṇītā confluence	Holy bath	37th
101	Kaṇṭaka *tīrtha*	*Snāna*	37th
102	Kuṇḍālaya *tīrtha*	Holy bath on *Nārakī Caturdaśī*	37th
103	Tapovana *tīrtha*	---	37th
104	Audumbara *tīrtha*	---	37th
105	Pārāśara *tīrtha*	---	37th

106	Vṛddhapārāśara tīrtha	Holy bath	37th
107	Ṛṣyaśṛṅga tīrtha	---	37th
108	Brahmakuṇḍa tīrtha	Holy bath	37th

The next point in the religious landscape is the mention of *mahāpātaka*s and *upapātaka*s. The very beginning of the text is the mention of *mahāpātaka* committed by the king Vāsuki in her previous birth, because of which his entire body is full of worms. Thus, the concept of *pātaka* and *karmavipāka* is addressed together. Many *tīrtha*s in the text are addressed as wiping away the sins. The waters in the *kuṇḍa* are portrayed as wiping away the sins. The *pātaka*s which are mentioned in the text are from *mahāpātaka* and *upapātaka*- both the categories.

The next concept in this regard is the theory of *karmavipāka*– the fruition of actions. These are the rules by which one can decide which actions would lead one to the sins and which would lead one to the merits. This idea is purely based on the religious concepts of the Puranic period[2]. The VGM 4th *adhyāya* describes this concept in detail. The king Vāsuki asked the sage Vasiṣṭha, "Why there is disparity observed in human beings as they are born rich or poor? Please explain it to me." On this, Vasiṣṭha explains the *karmavipāka* theory. He explains, "A human being is born tied with the deeds in his earlier births. If the earlier life showed the best, the medium and the lower actions, their fruition is observed by different stages of the human beings. The agitation in this birth is caused by the theft or violence in earlier birth; the happiness in this birth is caused by the kindness in the earlier birth etc."

This detailed explanation of the *karmavipāka* theory is then linked to the glory of *tīrtha*s. The sage's affirmation for the importance of *tīrtha*s caused the king to enquire more about the majestic nature of the *tīrtha*s. Then

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[2] See RHAI, Vol.2, page no. 143.

the sage explains the four types of *tīrtha*s as *daiva*, *mānuṣa*, *ārṣa*, and *āsura*. The story proceeds further to the glory of Vatsagulma.

There is mention of one of the horrifying hells-*kumbhīpāka*- one of the twenty-eight *naraka*s (hells) in the ninth *adhyāya*, wherein a *Brahmarākṣasa* narrates the sufferings in the hell. This supports the theory of *karmavipāka*.

कुम्भीपाकभवं दुःखं भुक्तं चिरमनेकधा ।

ततोऽवीचिं महाघोरं निरयं प्रापितो भटैः ॥९.९८॥

This hell is intended for the cruel people, who kill innocent animals and birds for their own food. Since such cruel people are roasted in *Kumbhī*-fire- the hell is named like this. Big vessels full of boiling oil are kept there and the servants of Yama push the sinners into them. One who had killed an animal will be kept in the boiling oil for as many years as the number of hairs the animal killed by him had on its body.

The text mentions the glory of other famous *tīrtha*s like Gautamī *tīrtha* and the Oṅkāra *tīrtha*. These are on the banks of Godavari and Narmada sequentially. The rituals to be performed on these banks are mentioned. Reference of Nārada Saṁhitā for the knowledge of time is observed in VGM 11.16. It is stated as-

ततस्ते मुनयः सर्वे वेदाङ्गं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।

अवलोक्य स्वयं चक्रुः संहिता नारदादयः ॥११.१६॥

It means- "Then all those sages, keenly observed the Vedāṅgas with their eyes of knowledge and wrote the treatises like Nārada etc". This is written with reference to the Madhyameśvara *māhātmya* in the Vatsagulma. The concept of time was not precisely known by the ancient people, that is why the sages preached about time to the people. This will be discussed further in the chapter of analysis.

Then in the twelfth *adhyāya*, in a dialogue between Kṣemakara king and the sages about the liberation of the living beings, the sages state the four ways for liberating the living beings, namely *ijyā*, *dāna*, *tapas*, and *tīrtha*.

ईज्या दानं तपस्तीर्थं चतुष्टयमिदं नृप ।

धर्मावयवभूतं तत् सेवनीयं सदा बुधैः ॥ १२.२१ ॥

It means that- "O king, these four- sacrifice, donation, penance, and the sacred place- should be included as a part of the religion". Thus, the king was advised to visit the sacred places to attain the merit.

The manner of practising penance is stated in fifteenth *adhyāya* in the story of Puṣkara Brahmin. Puṣkara here also means a waterbody. Five types of Puṣkara are stated here, and the best among them is stated here. Many donations are mentioned at Puṣkara which will lead to merit. There is a mention of it getting vanished in the sinful period.

गुप्तामेष्यति क्षिप्रं तिष्ये पापमये युगे ॥ १५.२८ ॥

Mṛtasañjīvanī vidyā is known to Śiva in 18th *adhyāya*, with the help of which he relives the son of Pārvatī.

The *nāmasraj* is mentioned in 21st *adhyāya* for the lord Śiva. There are a few mentions of *nāmamālā* or *nāmasraj*. Those are mentioned for Śiva and Viṣṇu both. This seems to be a regular practise in the Puranic religion.
In the 22nd *adhyāya*, the *puruṣamedha* is mentioned, in the end of which, there is an appearance of Praṇītā river. Such rise of the river from the sacrifice is specially mentioned in this text for this river only.

A typical late mediaeval ritual like Satī is described from VGM 24.70 onwards. It is the story of Dadhīci *ṛṣi*, who saved gods by giving their weapons the strength of his bones. But, as he lost his life due to this, his wife cursed the gods. Because she was practising the ritual of Satī, her curse was powerful, and the weapons of the gods lost their strength. After describing the story in detail, the writer states the Satī ritual elaborately, in about twenty-one verses from VGM 24.70 to 24.90. Before that, there is condemning of the life of the widows in about twelve verses. Then, the praise of Satī ritual follows in about eighteen verses. The entire 24th *adhyāya* is important from this point of view, which is available in Sanskrit for the readers in the Appendix III.

The 29th *adhyāya* mentions the Maṅgaleśa *tīrtha*. It is significant because it frees the devotees from debt. The Maṅgala planet or the Mars is indicated by the word.

कुजवारे महाराज पञ्चमी यदि जायते ।

मङ्गलेशं तदा पश्येत्सुखभोगी भवेन्नरः ॥ २९.४४ ॥

A remedy for a common man to get rid of the loan is the holy sight of Maṅgaleśa on Tuesday if it is the fifth day of the month.

The same *adhyāya* mentions the chanting of Mantra of Sarasvatī for seven crore times at the Sarasvatī tīrtha.

This *adhyāya* also has the description of Koṭi *tīrtha*. One is advised to make a *pavitra* from the grass blades and offer it to the Koṭīśa.

श्रावणे मासि शुक्लायां चतुर्दश्यां निशामुखे ।

पवित्रं तन्तुभिः कार्यं कोटीशे तत्समर्पयेत् ॥ २९.५९ ॥

It means that one should make a *pavitra* from the threads (of cotton) and offer it to the Koṭīśa on the fourteenth day in the rising fortnight of Śrāvaṇa month.

2. Language

The language of the text can be variously studied. The language in general, the correct forms, the understanding of the writer about the Sanskrit language, the various metres used in the verses, are some of the points that will be studied under this category. General observations about the linguistic features are as follow.

1) The words or the derivations which would be incorrect according to Pāṇinian rules of grammar are used at number of places These cases are as under:

i. यस्त्विदं पठते भक्त्या त्रिकालं नियतात्मना ॥८.९९॥- There should have been *parasmaipada* ending for the verb instead of *ātmanepada* ending used here.

ii. शिवस्य कृपया तेऽद्य कानिचित् कथ्यते मया ॥९.६॥- Here there should have been the plural form *kathyante* instead of the singular form *kathyate*.

iii. Improper use of the suffix *ktvā*. There should have been *lyap*. It was proper in metre with *lyap*. तत्स्थानमपि **सन्त्यक्त्वा** गतः सारस्वतं पुरम्॥१५.५८॥– Here, instead of सन्त्यक्त्वा, the writer could have used सन्त्यज्य. This would also fit in metre. Similarly, in the verse अरण्यमिलितं वारि **संस्मृत्वाथ** शुभप्रदम् ॥३.८३॥, instead of संस्मृत्वाथ, the writer could have used संस्मृत्याथ.

iv. In the verse पथि **पृष्टस्** पापिष्ठः कृपाकुलिचेतसा॥१५.४२॥, it must have been *pṛcchan* as a correct form of *śatṛ* suffix.

v. The improper use of *lyap* ending is also seen. There should have been the *ktvā* ending instead of this *lyap* ending. However, in most of the cases the breach of rules of metre could have taken place. Therefore, the writer may have chosen the wrong form over the correct use of metre. A few examples are as follows:

अमलैरम्बुभिः पूर्णां लिङ्गं **स्थाप्याथ** तत्तटे ॥१०.२५॥

इत्युक्त्वा तत्र तान्**पूज्य** हिरण्यवसनैर्द्विजान् ॥१९.६०॥

उपास्य विधिवत्सन्ध्यां सूर्यं सौरेण **पूज्य** च ॥२५.७८॥

vi. There are some typographical errors as well. For example, in the verse

बाढमुत्त्वाथ मां शुद्रः पोषयामास नित्यशः॥१५.६५॥, the word must have been

शुद्रः instead of शूद्रः.

vii. Some wrong forms were observed as follows:

नास्ति सैन्यं न मे राज्यं कथं रक्ष्यामि वो धनम् ॥२३.४१॥ It should have been रक्षामि.

धर्मो गृहीणां परमो नित्यं भवति शोभनः ॥१८.१७६ ॥ It should have been *gṛhiṇāṁ*.

2) Frequent use of this word *daridrin* is found in this *adhyāya*. See, for example, the following verse:

न च मां कश्च जानाति दरिद्रिणमकिञ्चनम् ।

न वा ददात्यृणं मह्यं निर्धनाय कदाचन ॥१६.१५॥

The *taddhita* affix *ṇini* is joined here to the word *daridra*. This word is not found commonly in Sanskrit.

3) The use of a compound word is observed in the VGM 18.31 as पार्वतीशिवौ. Here, the rule *alpāctaraṁ* of *dvandva* compound is violated. The compound should have been शिवपार्वत्यौ according to the rule of Pāṇini.

4) The use of some unusual words which seem to be perfectly derived with the rules of grammar. For example, while describing the spot of *sindūra* on the forehead of the queen of Vāsuki, the author says-

सिन्दूरतिलकं भाति प्राचीबिम्बमिवोष्णगोः ॥१.३९॥

Here the word उष्णगु means the Sun. This word is not commonly used in Sanskrit. It is not mentioned in the *Amarakośa*, the *Medinīkośa* and the *Halāyudhakośa*. Another example is as under.

मित्रोदयाद्यथा फुल्लं कञ्जं निशि मुकूलितम् ॥८. ४०॥

The word *kañja* is not mentioned in *Amara kośa*. But we can find it in *Medinī kośa jānta-varga* 4th verse. The word is frequently found in *stotra*s or other Puranic literature.

5) The influence of Marathi language can be again observed in the VGM in some phrases which seem to be the exact translation of the Marathi phrase.

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योऽसि सोऽसि नमस्तुभ्यं पाहि नो महतो भयात् ॥७.५२॥

योऽसि सोऽसि न मे चिन्ता नमस्तेऽस्तु सदाशिव ॥ ८.६८ ॥

</div>

The phrase योऽसि सोऽसि seems to be very close to Marathi expression- तू जो आहेस तो आहेस. It was easily avoidable phrase in Sanskrit with यः कोऽपि त्वमसि. It was not probably used as it was misfit in the metrical system.

6) In the verse तद्ऋषीणां वचः श्रुत्वा परं भयमुपाययुः। सेन्द्राः समुनयः शीघ्रं कथयितुं विधिं ययुः ॥५.१२५॥, the metre *anuṣṭubh* seems to be broken. We can find a few more examples like this the text of VGM.

7) Sometimes the words have been altered to fit into the metre. For example, the word *vidyādhara* should be used instead of *vidyādhra* in the following verse-

<div align="center">

सुपर्णाः किन्नरा नागा विद्याध्राश्चाप्सरोगणाः ।

स्वानि स्वानि सुयानानि समारुरुहुरुद्धटाः ॥८.८॥

</div>

8) The next feature is the use of words which are probably not there in the ancient Sanskrit. They indicate the influence of prevalent local language on them, i.e., Marathi. For example,

<div align="center">

एकदान्तःपुरे राजा मञ्चकस्थां निजाङ्गनाम् ।

</div>

महाविभवसम्पन्नां हावभावसमन्विताम् ॥ १.४९ ॥

The word *hāvabhāva*, here, needs an attention. Such words were listed from the text and their origin was searched in the dictionaries. The words that caught the attention were- *hāvabhāva, kalevara, caritra, lāvaṇya, āgraha*, and so on. From that, the word *hāvabhāva* and *kalevara* were thoroughly studied. Then some phrases were also observed as under.

i. साधुं हि **वचसा गृह्णात्यतः** स्वल्पचरो भवेत् ॥ १३.५० ॥

It means, "A man who catches a good person in words, has a short life". It is like Marathi construction of phrase- शब्दात पकडतो. Instead of this, the writer could have used some other verb that meant to look down upon someone, like *avamanyate*.

ii. कथं ते **मत्करे यान्ति** वदोपायं महामते ॥ १३.६८ ॥

It means, "O wise one, tell me, how can they come in my hands?" Again, the influence of Marathi phrase is observed- माझ्या हातात कसे

येतील? Instead of this, the writer could have used some other verb that meant to control someone. For that, the *cvi* form could have been the solution, like *vaśīkaroti*. Moreover, the grammar rule for *gativācaka* goes with *dvitīyā* is not observed here. Instead, the writer has used *saptamī vibhakti*.

iii. **ककारादिक्षकारान्तान्यनवेक्ष्य** हरिं पठन् ॥ १३.११० ॥

It means, "(Prahlāda) while studying the letters from *k* to *kṣ* (thought of) only Hari." The Marathi alphabet is distinctly mentioned in this verse, while describing the education of Prahlāda. This is a peculiar feature of the Marathi alphabet. The Sanskrit alphabet never commenced traditionally from *k* and ended with *kṣ*.

iv. **उत्थितं मे मनोऽनर्थाद्देहगेहादिलक्षणात्** ॥ १९.२२ ॥

Influence of Marathi is clearly observed in this phrase. The Marathi parallel phrase to this is माझे मन– यावरून उठले आहे. The writer could have used the verb *ram* for indicating the same meaning.

v. अद्य **त्वद्धस्तजो मृत्युर्मम** श्रेयस्करो भवेत् ॥१९.२४॥

Influence of Marathi is clearly observed in this phrase. The Marathi parallel phrase to this is तुझ्या हातून मरण आले तरी माझे कल्याण होईल. An alternate phrase could have been used as *tvatkāraṇo mṛtyurapi śreyaskaraḥ*.

9) Some verses were observed with a wrong metre, as-

क्षेत्रे पवित्रे मम भक्तदत्तया नीतोऽसि रे मन्दर शुद्धतामिह ॥

त्वं विद्यया भर्जितकर्मबीजया सायुज्यतां मेऽनर्घं याहि सत्वरम् ॥१५.१११॥

This *indravajrā* metre is incorrectly used here. It has one extra syllable in the last *caraṇa*.

प्रत्यहं ये समीक्षन्ति शिवलिङ्गं महत्तरम् ।

अन्ते प्रयान्ति ते नाकं **न ते नित्यगामिनः** ॥१६.७९॥

This *anuṣṭup* metre is incorrectly used here. It has one less syllable in the last *caraṇa*.

10) Some passages with good linguistic characteristics will now be mentioned in the following paragraphs.

i. VGM 1.33- 44, has a description of the beauty of the queen Kanakalekhā. It matches with the similar descriptions in the classical literature. Vasantatilakā metre is suitable for this kind of description. Following are the Sanskrit verses describing the beauty of the Queen with their meaning.

तस्य भार्या प्रिया रामा लोपामुद्रेव सद्गुणा ।

अनसूयेव साध्वी सा शाण्डिलीव प्रियव्रता ॥१.३३॥

पतिं विनान्यं पुरुषं नैव मेने शचीव सा ।

सर्वत्र चपला पत्यौ स्थिरा श्रीरिव माधवे ॥ १.३४॥

सदा स्वपतिना युक्ता उमेव सुत शम्भुना ।

एवमादिगुणौघेन जिताः सर्वा वरस्त्रियः ॥ १.३५॥

सौन्दर्यजलधिः साक्षाल्लावण्यभरनिर्भरा ।

रूपं तस्यास्त्वनिर्देश्यं रतेरिव महामते ॥ १.३६॥

सा सुन्दरी महाभागा सर्वलक्षणलक्षिता ।

सूक्ष्मस्निग्धालकाकान्तशिरस्का चारुवेणिका ॥ १.३७॥

सीमन्तेन विराजन्ती द्यौर्वियद्गङ्गया यथा ।

अर्धचन्द्रसमं भालं बिभ्रती तिलकाङ्कितम् ॥ १.३८॥

सिन्दूरतिलकं भाति प्राचीबिम्बमिवोष्णगोः ।

नयनाभ्यां विराजन्ती मीनाभ्यामिव जाह्नवी ॥

तिलपुष्पनिभा नासा सरला नयनान्तरे ॥ १.३९॥

राजते राजकान्तायाः कान्तचित्तविमर्दिनी ।

कपोलश्रुतिसम्पन्ना बिम्बोष्ठी मन्मथाङ्कुरा ॥ १.४०॥

सुस्मिता सुदती शान्ता सुबाहुयुगला सती ।

घनपीनोन्नताभ्यां च कुम्भाभ्यामानताङ्गका ॥ १.४१॥

गुच्छभारातिशुभ्राभ्यां वल्लरीव नृपाङ्गना ।

गम्भीरनाभिसंयुक्तवलित्रयसमुद्भता ॥ १.४२॥

कटिं बिभ्रती देवी तनुमध्या मनोहरा ।

मृदुभ्यां श्रोणिपार्श्वाभ्यामूरुभ्यां च मनोहरा ॥ १.४३ ॥

जघनाभ्यां तथा पद्भ्यां कोमलाभ्यां सुशोभना ।

एवं सुरूपसम्पन्ना शुशुभे दिव्यदर्शना ॥ १.४४ ॥

The translation of these verses is as under- "His dear beautiful wife was virtuous like Lopāmudrā. She was loyal like Anasūyā and chaste like Śāṇḍilī. Like Śacī, she did not ever think of any man other than her husband. She was stable with her husband like goddess Lakṣmī is with Viṣṇu. O son, she always accompanied her husband like the goddess Pārvatī is with Śiva. By all these virtues, she had surpassed the other wives. She was a sea of beauty and full of the excellence of beauty. O wise one, her beauty could not be described. The beautiful, the lucky one, full of all the good signs, had a beautiful head with nicely pleated silky and soft hair. She looked beautiful with parting of hair, like the heaven looks beautiful with the Gaṅgā in it. She had a semi-circular forehead with a *tilaka*. The *tilaka* of *sindūra* looked beautiful like the Sun's disc in the east. She looked beautiful due to the pair of eyes, like the Gaṅgā with two fish. Her straight nose between the eyes resembled the flower of *tila*. She looked beautiful as the wife of the king, who stole the King's heart. Her cheeks were beautiful, her lips resembled the *bimba* and she was the initiator of love. Her smile was lovely, her teeth were beautiful, she was calm and had a beautiful pair of arms. She was slightly bent due to the heavy, big, and raised breasts. The wife of the King was like the creeper with two pearl necklaces. She had a deep navel and three- fold of skin. The attractive queen, who had a beautiful waist, wore the waist band. She was attractive due soft buttocks and thighs. She had two soft calves and feet. In this way, the beautiful and divine Queen looked gorgeous".

ii. The next description of this sort is the description of city of Kṣemakara king. It can be found in VGM from 12.3-8.

पुरा विन्ध्यगिरौ चासीन्नगरं भीषणाभिधम् ।

बहुलोकसमाकीर्णं रम्यहर्म्यविचित्रितम् ॥१२.३॥

वीथीचतुष्पथयुतं हट्टवीथिमनोहरम् ।

सौधराजिविराजन्तं वप्रप्राकारमण्डितम् ॥१२.४॥

स्तम्भस्कन्धमनोहारि वलभीहस्तिसुध्वजम् ।

तोरणैर्गोपुरैरम्यं चातुर्वर्ण्यविभूषितम् ॥१२.५॥

चन्द्रिकाट्टाकालिकास्वन्तर्लीनकेकीगुणावृतम् ।

नदत्पारावतकुलैराकुलं सारिकारवैः ॥

वैदघोषैश्च सर्वत्र नादितं मङ्गलस्वनैः ॥१२.६॥

वाद्यध्वनिसमुद्घुष्टं सदोत्सवयुतं महत् ।

उद्यानोपवनारामैराचितं सर्वतोदिशम् ।

नर्मदाजलकल्लोलैरुत्सिक्तं परितो नृप ॥१२.७॥

स्नानदानजपासक्तनरनारीगणान्वितम् ।

एवमादिगुणोपेतं... ॥१२.८॥

These verses can be translated as under. "In the ancient times, there was a city by name Bhīṣaṇa on the Vindhya Mountain. It was crowded with many people, beautified with nice houses, full of main roads and squares, attractive due to roads leading to markets, beautified with multi-storeyed buildings, decorated with ramparts and walls, attractive due to support-pillars, having nice flags of elephants

89

and calves, beautiful due to arches (*toraṇa*s), decorated with four colours, inhabited by flocks of peacocks residing inside multi-storeyed buildings, echoed by chirping flocks of pigeons, munias and also the Mantras of sacrifice."

iii. In the 12th *adhyāya* when the King dies, his Queen cries, and laments there. There is *Vilāpa* to add to the Karuṇa rasa to the story. Various Vilāpa are famous in the Sanskrit literature. This genre of *vilāpa* is well written in the text. Following are the verses of this *Vilāpa* with their meaning.

हा नाथ नाथरहितामहितास्त्वदीया मां त्वत्प्रियां यदि नयन्ति नयं विहाय ।

तत्केवलं तव यशो हि हतं हता स्यां तेषां चये त्वयि गते हरणोद्यता ये ॥१२.१०१॥

कान्ताद्य किं निजजने बत वच्मि गत्वा न त्वामहं क्षणमरिन्दम हातुमीशा ।

दैवेन किं विहितमद्य ममाल्पभाग्याद् दुःखं प्रवासजनितं वनितास्वसह्यम् ॥१२.१०२॥

हा हन्त हन्त जननी न पिता न बन्धुर्नो वा सखी परिजनो न समीपवर्ती ।

को मां सभाजयति दुःखपरम्पराभिर्व्याप्तां प्रवासपतितां च पत्या विहीनाम् ॥१२.१०३॥

हा किं करोमि परिदुःखशुचाभितप्ता सप्ताश्ववहस्तकलितेव सरिन्निदाघे ।

भर्तुः कथं स्वजनहीनमिदं प्रवासस्थानं वसामि वसनाशनमार्गहीना ॥१२.१०४॥

नानाविधं भवसुखं तव देहसङ्गाद्दुक्तं तथापि न कदाचिदहं हि भोक्ष्ये ।

एवं विलप्य सुचिरं परमार्तरूपा नेत्राम्बुसिक्तहृदया सदया पपात ॥१२.१०५॥

The translation of these verses is as follows. "O master! If your bad wishers, having abandoned the good behaviour, take your wife left alone without her husband, then your fame will be at stake. I will be destroyed when you are gone and the group of people inclined to destroy, approaches. O the killer of the enemies! After going to the relatives, what should I, your wife, would tell them? I am not able to leave you even for a second. What has the destiny done today to me due to my ill-fate and has

given me the despair caused in the travel and intolerable for the women? Alas! There is no mother, no father, no relative or no friend near me. Who will help me, when I am facing a series of calamities, amid my travel and without the husband? What should I do when I am burning with a deep sorrow, like a river in the summer dried by the sunrays? O husband! How should I stay in this travelling place when I have no clothes, food and lost? I have enjoyed a variety of worldly pleasures, which I will never enjoy now." Lamenting thus for a long time, she fell pitifully looking in a bad condition and her chest wet with the tears from her eyes.

iv. In the VGM 31ˢᵗ *adhyāya*, while stating the glory of Siddhālaya *tīrtha*, Druhiṇī is seen lamenting her son's sudden disappearance. A mother lamenting for her son's death is really heart-touching. This is the second *Vilāpa* in the text. Its verses and meaning are as under.

<div align="center">

हे बाल हे विमल हे शशिकान्तवक्र हे मामनार्यवदिहाद्य विहाय कस्मात् ।

यातोऽसि रे बत शुभां जननीमनन्यां भिक्षाशनैरहह दुःखमयो वियोगः ॥३१.११३॥

हा हन्त मां परमकोमलवाग्विलासैर्नित्यं सुनन्द परिनन्दयसि स्वगेहे ।

कस्त्वां विना विविधचाटुवचोभिरन्तर्व्याप्तां त्वदाधिनिचयैः परिसान्त्वयेन्माम् ॥३१.११४॥

त्वं प्राणदोऽसि मम तात सुखस्य हेतुस्त्यक्ष्यामि जीवितमिदं नियतं त्वदर्थम् ।

इत्थं विलप्य करुणं परमार्तरूपा मूर्च्छामवाप महतीं सहसा पपात ॥३१.११५॥

पुनः सञ्ज्ञामवाप्योच्चै रुरोदात्मजमानसा ।

हा पुत्र सुत हा तात हा मम प्राणरक्षक ॥३१.११६॥

त्वां विना न च जीवामि पद्मिनीव जलं विना ।

तवास्यं सुनसं चारु दन्तपङ्क्तिविराजितम् ॥३१.११७॥

संस्मृत्य परितश्चेतो दुनोत्यङ्गविघातवत् ।

</div>

सुकुमार शुभाचार मम वाक्यकरामल ॥३१.११८॥

यदि ते कोमलं चारुदेहं नेक्षेऽहमाशु वै ।

तदावश्यं करिष्यामि स्वदेहस्य विहिंसनम् ॥३१.११९॥

इति शोकातुरा दीना विलाप परमाङ्गना ।

पुनर्मूच्छाहता राजन्द्रुहिणी पतिता भुवि ॥३१.१२०॥

The translation of these verses is as under. "O kid! O the pure one! O the moon-faced! Why have you left your only mother like a bad boy to go with those who beg for alms? The separation is causing pain. O Sunanda! In our house, you always please me with your very sweet words. Who else will console me when my mind is full of various sweet talks and the accumulation of your grief? O dear! You are a life giver and the reason of my happiness. I will give my life for your life." Having lamented pitifully in a bad plight in this manner, she fainted and fell on the ground. On gaining consciousness once again, she cried in a high pitch thinking about her son. "O son! O boy! O dear! O the protector of my life! I will not live without you, like a lotus does not live without water. My heart cries with pain like the loss of a body part, having recollected your beautiful face, which has a lovely nose, adorned with good teeth. O the soft one! O good behaving! O the one who obeys my words fully! If I do not see your beautiful body in some time, then I will certainly kill myself." O king, in this way, the lamenting, helpless lady Druhiṇī lamented and once again fell on ground.

11) The next linguistic feature is the *subhāṣita*s (good sayings) in the text. They are of mixed nature. They praise the good people; they condemn the poverty. They state the importance of company of the good people. In general, they appear in the stories as the support of the main point of discussion. They are listed below with their meanings.

चिरं न साधुना स्थेयं खलस्याग्रे स पापदृक् ।

साधुं हि वचसा गृह्णात्यतः स्वल्पचरो भवेत् ॥१३.५०॥

The good person should not stand in front of the bad person. He has a sinful eyesight. He grabs the good person with his words. Therefore, one should be with less people.

सतां शुभं दर्शनमेव तत्फलं चलत्यघं सङ्क्रमति स्वयं शिवम् ।

पापार्तितापानलमञ्जसा पुनः सुशीतलं चैव वपुर्हि जायते ॥१५.८०॥

Darśana of good people is auspicious. Its consequence is that the sin goes away, and the pious thing lingers on its own. The body, which was earlier like fire of sins and despair due to sins, again becomes very cool.

सुरापगा पापमपाकरोत्यलं निशाकरस्तापमरं हरत्यहो ।

दैन्यं सुरद्रुश्च विनाशयत्यलं सर्वं हरत्याहितसाधुसङ्गतिः ॥१५.८१॥

The Gaṅgā takes away all the sins, the moon quickly drives away the heat, the divine tree takes away all the poverty, the company of good people drives away all these.

धन्या धनवतां दारास्तद्वाक्यपरिपूजकाः ।

अधनं नैव मन्यन्ते नपूंसकमिवाङ्गनाः ॥१६.१३॥

Those wives of the married people who obey the, are great, because they never consider the poor as impotent.

अदत्तदोषेण दरिद्रता स्याद्दरिद्रिणा च क्रियते हि पापम् ।

पापे न तस्यास्ति शुभं कदाचित्पुनर्दरिद्री नृषु जायते सः ॥१६.२७॥

There will be poverty due to the fault of not giving. The poor does the sin. There is no benefit in the sin. He once again becomes poor in the people.

Dāridrya-nindā (Condemning of poverty) is found in VGM 16.29-31.

दरिद्रस्य गृहं शून्यं निरुत्सवममङ्गलम् ।

सुहृदो न समायान्ति न द्विजा कामपूरकाः ॥१६.२९॥

नातिथिर्न च भिक्षार्थी तस्मात्तज्जीवितं वृथा ।

शुष्कवृक्ष इवाभाति वने द्रुमलताकुले ॥१६.३०॥

वृथा मनोरथास्तस्य समुद्यन्ति लयन्ति च ।

वृथोत्पन्नौ विलीनौ च विधवायास्तनाविव ॥१६.३१॥

The house of a poor is empty, and inauspicious without festivities. The friends, the Brahmins, the guest, the beggar, do not come to fulfil the desires. Therefore, his life is in vain. He appears as a dry tree in the forest full of trees and creepers. His desires rise and vanish in vain, like the two breasts of a widow exist for no reason and vanish for no reason.

देवद्रव्यं गुरोर्द्रव्यं द्रव्यं विप्रस्य ये नराः ।

हरिष्यन्ति च लोभेन दरिद्रास्ते भवन्ति हि ॥१६.५५॥

The people who will greedily rob the wealth of the gods, the wealth of the preacher, (the wealth) of the Brahmin; they will become poor.

स्त्रीत्वाच्च प्रकृतिः स्त्रीणां स्त्रीभिरेव हि गृह्यते ।

अतस्सान्त्वयितुं योषां प्रेषणीया पतिव्रता ॥१७.५९॥

The nature of the women is understood only by the women due to womanhood. Therefore, one should send a loyal wife to console a woman.

वृथोद्यमो वृथा नीतिर्वृथा बलापराक्रमौ ।

वृथा विद्या वृथा बुद्धिः प्रतिकूले विधौ नृणाम् ॥१८.१४४॥

The industriousness is in vain, the common sense is in vain, the knowledge is in vain, the wisdom is in vain, when the destiny is not favourable to the men.

अजाश्वौ मुखतो मेध्यौ गावो मेध्यास्तु पृष्ठतः ।

ब्राह्मणाः पादतो मेध्याः स्त्रियो मेध्यास्तु सर्वतः ॥२०.६९॥

The mouths of goat and the horse are pure, the backs of the cows are pure, the feet of the Brahmins are pure, and the entire body of women is pure.

तीर्थे गुरौ द्विजे देवे गणके भेषजे मनौ ।

याद‍‍ृशो युज्यते यस्य भावस्ताद‍‍ृक् फलं भवेत् ॥२६.२१॥

Whatever feeling one holds about the sacred place, the preacher, the Brahmin, the god, the astrologer, the medicine, and the Mantra; that type of consequence one would obtain.

षड्विधः प्रीतिभावोऽस्ति दानादानमयस्तथा ।

गुह्याख्यानं च प्रश्नश्च भोज्यभोजनसङ्गतः ॥२६.१६८॥

The affection is six-fold- donation, accepting the donation, narration of the secrets, asking a secret, giving food, and accepting food.

कामक्रोधौ तथा लोभस्त्रयो नरकहेतवः ।

महापापकरा ह्येते तस्मादेतांस्त्यजेत्सुधीः ॥२७.२९॥

The three reasons of going to hell are the lust, the anger, and the greed. These cause a great sin. Hence, the wise must abandon them.

More to add in this regard, the last two entire *adhyāya*s are *sadācāravarṇanaṁ*, which can be categorised as the good sayings. The moral values of the ideal society are preached through those two *adhyāya*s. Those clearly indicate the description of the *varṇa* and *āśrama*

system. They describe in detail the duties a person must perform in all his four *āśrama*s.

3. Society

The reflection of the society from the text is mixed. It is primarily a depiction of a Puranic period society. Therefore, the people are found to go on pilgrimage, bathe in holy waters, and worship the god. Besides that, the social life which is reflected from the text is about the householders and their family. Almost all the stories are told with the main character as a Brahmin. Almost all the Brahmins are shown as pious.

III.4.1f Portrayal of Women

The text at many places discusses the duties of the women, their dos and don'ts. Some faithful and some unfaithful women are portrayed in the text. Many a times the format of the myth is that the sinful woman repents and frees herself at the end by good behaviour. Overall, the women are respected in the text.

III.4.1g The Measurements

The measurements of distance in the ancient time are observed. They are *gavyūti*, *kiṣku*, *yojana*, *krośa* and *hasta.* Other units of measurements which are used are time measurement. They are basically referred to as *kalpa* and *divya ahan*. Then some measurements of weight are used, like *yava* and *guñjā*. The mention of *niṣka* is found as a currency.

III.4.2 The Field Visits

The next primary source are the field visits. The field visits to Washim were conducted on fifth and sixth January 2023. They were primarily done for observation of the present day Washim and the small village of Kāṭā, wherein the inscription on the pedestal of the idol of Śakti is observed.

General observation about the Washim was that it was a medium sized city in the eastern Maharashtra. It is well connected with roads to the rest of

the state. As regards the presence of numerous water bodies in the vicinity of Washim, one can refer to the ample availability of ground water and water aquifers in the region, tapping of which was meant significant to the ancient people. Thus, the rituals were interwoven around the waterbodies so that they remain protected.

The significant places which were visited on the field and observations there are as under.

1. Padmatīrtha: It is the most sacred pond in the Washim city. It is situated in the south of the old or the main settlement of present-day town[3]. As mentioned in the critical edition of the VGM, it has eight corners. They are still visible from the image of the google maps. Even on the field, the photograph shows that the Padma Tīrtha even today, has eight corners and fairly good quality of water. The original Sanskrit text mentions it as situated in the deep forest. Obviously in modern times, there is no forest cover at all. But the locality of Padmatīrtha is not very crowded. It is situated on the open ground in modern times. It is a well-kept pond with a small temple in the middle of it, built on a raised jetty like structure. It was observed that the temple in the middle of the pond is built recently, in the year 2003, when the total temple complex was renovated by Shri Padmatīrtha Mandir Jirnoddhar Samiti, Washim[4].

The board at the temple also states that the silt from the pond was removed in 2015. The present temple in the centre of the pond on a raised jetty certainly is a recent construction, i.e., after 2003, as the send edition of the book in 2003 shows the photograph with no raised jetty. There was a paved path to access the temple in the centre of the pond, but the jetty was not raised. This is the modern condition of Padma tīrtha.

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[3] Plate V- Satellite Image of Padmatīrtha
[4] Plate VI- Padmatīrtha Past and Recent Photograph

Plate V - Satellite Image of Padmatīrtha

Image courtsey: Deshpande 2003 (1951)

Plate VI - Padmatīrtha Past and Recent Photographs

2. **Balaji Mandir-** It is the most well-kept temple in the town. The idol of Janārdana is found here, which is being worshipped from last almost 250 years. The information that could be gathered from the site is as follows.

On the 15[th of] August 1777, on the thirteenth day of Srāvaṇa in the rising fortnight, the people who were about to bury a Rajput woman, found the idols of Srī Bālājī and others, in the area nearby Shri Chandreshvar temple. That region belonged to Nagpurkar Bhosale. The Sardar of Bhosale Sarsenapati Bhavanipant Kalu was residing at Mehkar at that time and was about to leave for the battle at Bengal. He came to know about the idols. He came to Washim and vowed to Vyaṅkaṭeśa that. "I will construct your big temple of s at Washim if I win the Bengal battle." He succeeded due to the favour of Balaji. He started the construction of the temple on the sixth August 1778, thirteenth day of rising fortnight of Śrāvaṇa and completed on the twenty second August 1783, on the tenth day of waning fortnight of Śrāvaṇa. On that day, the worshipping of the idols with *prtāṇapratiṣṭhā* was carried out. In 1937 C.E., Shri Krushnarav Yashavantrao Balu constructed the grand pandal for gathering by the artist from Calcutta.

One finds this living temple in modern Washim, with hustle and bustle of the devottees.

3. **Ram Mandir-** It is a modern temple with the idols of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā, Bharata, and Shatṛghna and Māruti in front. The old idols are only of Ram and Sītā, which are again seen at the back[5].

4. **Daridraharana Talav-** It is located to the south-east of Padma *tīrtha*. It is a well-kept tank with some beautification in the form of lights[6].

5. **Datta Mandir on the banks of Daridraharaṇa talav-**It is a modern temple on the banks of the tank. It has a specially made meditation place.

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[5] Plate VII- Ram Mandir photograph
[6] Plate VIII- Daridraharana Talav and Datta Mandir

Plate VII - Ram Mandir Photograph

- **Plate VIII - Daridryaharana Talav**

6. Dev Talav- It is located near Ram Mandir. It is quite a big tank, now closed for the visitors. One can see it from outside.

7. Khaṇḍeśvara- It is amid the populated area, in a house. From outside, it seems to be crumpled[7].

8. Kaṇṭaka *tīrtha* at Kāṭā village- This is a site in the north of Washim. The Brahma Kuṇḍa is seen in the *tīrtha*, which is one of the *tīrtha*s. There is a temple of Śiva and Śakti here, which seems to be modern in its outer form. The sculptures belong to Rāṣṭrakūṭa period. Inside we can find on the pedestal of the idol of Śakti, an inscription from the Yadava period. It reads as-

१. ओं स्वस्ति स्र सकु १२२७ विस्ववसु सवसरे : जादौ

२. राजा रामदेओ उजमढ भगतुअ राजा रामदेओ

३. कावंदेवचा माहादेओ अरुआरु--:

This inscription was first brought to light by D.B Mahajan in 1939 CE[8]. It has been inscribed on the pedestal of the idol of the goddess which is 1.75 feet long and two feet broad. The idol above the pedestal is 1.3 feet in height and easily movable. The inscription is in three lines and the last line is incomplete[9]. The inscription means that it was inscribed in *śaka* year 1227 in the Vibhāvasu Saṁvatsara while the King Ramdev ruled. This is important to prove that the settlement at Vatsagulma was prominent in the mediaeval times.

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[7] Plate IX- Khaṇḍeśvara Mandir
[8] See Tulpule 1963:244
[9] Plate X- Inscription at Kāṭa
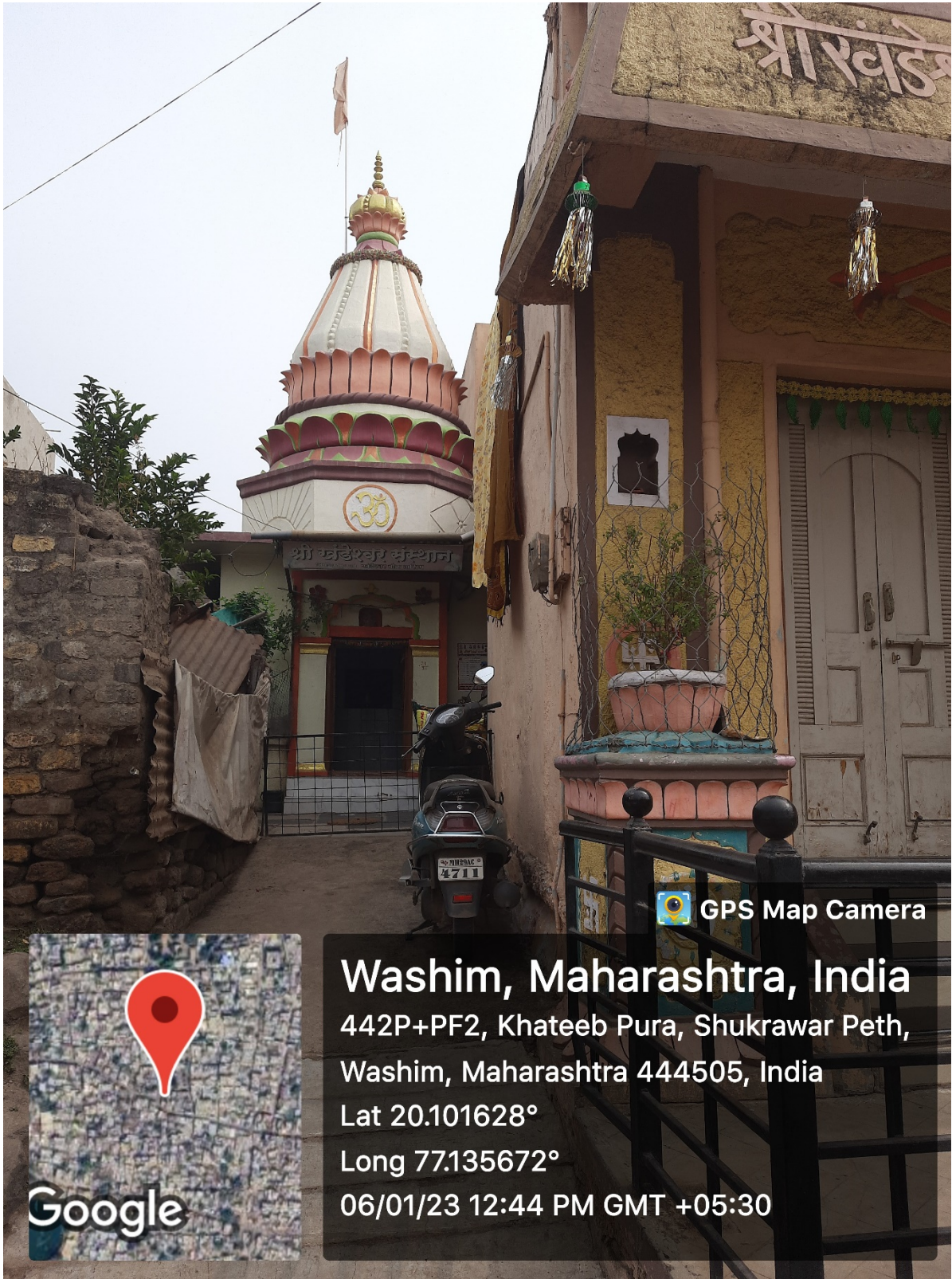
Washim, Maharashtra, India

442P+PF2, Khateeb Pura, Shukrawar Peth, Washim, Maharashtra 444505, India
Lat 20.101628°
Long 77.135672°
06/01/23 12:44 PM GMT +05:30
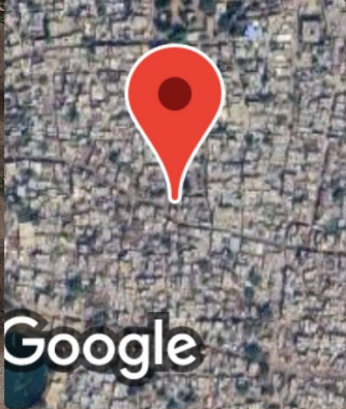
Plate IX - Khaṇḍeśvara Mandir

Plate X - Inscription at Kāṭa

One more important aspect of this temple is the presence of *pañcamukha śivaliṅga* in it. It is beautifully carved in stone. All the five faces are clearly visible[10].

III.4.3. Observations From the Secondary Source
III.4.3a The Inscriptional Evidence
The reference material used for this was Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum (volume 5) by V.V. Mirashi on the Vākāṭakas. He has put forth all the copper plates and inscriptions of the main branch of the Vākāṭakas, their feudatories; the copper plates and inscriptions of the Vatsagulma branch and their feudatories available to him at the time of compilation of the volume.

After Mirashi, there is no significant work that will tell us about the inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas. Thus, for this study, the work of Mirashi is referred to. There are two inscriptions of the Vatsagulma Branch

1. Bāsim Plates of Vidhyaśakti II
2. India Office Plate of Devasena

There are three inscriptions of the Ministers and feudatories of the Vatsagulma branch.

1. Ajanta Cave Inscription of Varāhadea
2. Ghaṭotkacha Cave Inscription of Varā
3. Inscription in Ajanta Cave no. 17.

III.4.3b The Archaeological Evidence
The archaeological evidence is significant in case of Washim because the text of the VGM is a Pauranic text. The two small excavations were carried out in the Washim area, first by Dr. A. P. Jamkhedkar in 1990-91 and the second by Dr. Sali in 1994-95. The results from these excavations were observed and studied to know the antiquity of Washim.

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[10] Plate XI- *Pañcamukha Śivaliṅga* at Kāṭa

Plate XI - *Pañcamukha Śivaliṅga* **at Kāṭa**

Chapter IV

ANALYSIS

Chapter IV
ANALYSIS

IV.1. Prologue

The data necessary for the analysis in Cultural Studies are complex. The researcher has observed the data under two headings as- Primary and Secondary, but for a better understanding of the culture of the text, the analyses will be done in a cohesive manner.

The researcher has used a descriptive and historical approach for the analysis. For that, numerous books, articles, dictionaries, and thesaurus were referred to. Generally, the cultural studies of any text involve a thorough analysis of the material culture reflected from it. Usually, the material culture includes the mentions of flora and fauna, the means of transportation, the clothes, the food, the utensils, the ornaments, the beautification methods, the techniques of war, the weapons, and many more.

Surprisingly, there are very few mentions of this material culture in the text. The researcher tried searching for them in the mentions of individual worship and the offerings made in it. But there are no mentions of favourite flowers of any deity, or the ritual of *prasāda* in the text. The pilgrims are mentioned to travel to Vatsagulma on their feet. Hence the means of transportation are not mentioned. While describing the forest around the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha in the VGM 2.35- 37, some commonly found trees are mentioned. There is no depiction of animal life in the text. Owing to these factors, the researcher has omitted the points like flora and fauna, daily life, means of transport, attires and ornaments etc., which are otherwise considered to be the important points while a conducting a cultural study of an ancient text. The study of the VGM was conducted by collecting the details about the following points.

1) Religious Landscape
2) Linguistic Characteristics
3) Social Beliefs and Customs

4)   Inscriptional Evidence

5)   Archaeological Evidence

Following this sequence in the previous chapter, the analysis is now being presented in the following pages.

IV.2. Religious Landscape

The text is a Purāṇic period text. Therefore, the attributes of Purāṇic religion were first understood. The Purāṇic religion shows a difference of worshipping practises than the earlier Vedic religion. Owing to that, the religious features from this text were studied. The presence of 108 *tīrtha*s in the area is the main feature of the text. But not only that, the concept of *pātaka*s, *karmavipāka*, and the rituals performed at the *tīrtha*s are mentioned in detail in the text. The analyses of all these points will be now stated sequentially.

As the primary data for religious landscape, the chapter-wise details of the VGM, and names of *tīrtha*s as per *āvaraṇa*s were used. The chapter-wise details show an uneven distribution of verses in the *adhyāya*s. There are minimum 60 and maximum 215 verses in the *adhyāya*s. First to eight *adhyāya*s are used as a foundation to state the glory of the place. Ninth to thirty sixth *adhyāya* and twenty-three verses from the 37th *adhyāya* describe the 108 *tīrtha*s. Therefore, from total 4795 verses, only 3322 verses are ascribed for the description of 108 *tīrtha*s. Thus, roughly each *tīrtha* should have been described in thirty verses on an average. But it is not the case with the actual distribution of verses.

Moreover, these 108 *tīrtha*s are placed in three *āvaraṇa*s. The first *āvaraṇa* has 29 *tīrtha*s, the second- 59, and the third has the remaining twenty *tīrtha*s. The text supports the arrangement of *āvaraṇa*s in the following verses-

त्रीणि चावरणान्यस्मिन्क्षेत्रे सन्ति शुभप्रदे ।

तेषु तीर्थानि ते वच्मि शतान्यष्टोत्तराणि च ॥२३.२॥

प्रथमावरणे तीर्थान्येकोनत्रिंशतिश्च ते ।

कथितानि महीजाने द्वितीयावरणं श्रृणु ॥२३.३॥

षष्टिस्तीर्थानि राजेन्द्र कथयामि शुभानि ते ।

एकोनविंशतिं चान्त्ये कथयिष्ये यथामति ॥२३.४॥

एवमष्टोत्तरशतं तीर्थजातं नरर्षभ ।

वत्सगुल्मं परं क्षेत्रमाश्रित्य परिवर्तते ॥२३.५॥

The meaning of these verses is as under- "There are three *āvaraṇa*s in this pious sacred place. I will narrate 108 sacred places from those. In the 1st *āvaraṇa*, there are twenty-nine which I have narrated. O King, now listen to the second *āvaraṇa*. O great King, I will tell you sixty sacred places which are meritorious. In the end, I will narrate the nineteen according to my understanding. O great King, in this way the total of the sacred places is one hundred and eight. They are in the great sacred place of Vatsagulma".

The total verses allotted for the twenty *tīrtha*s in the third *āvaraṇa* are only about twenty-three, with an average of about 1.25 verses to each *tīrtha*. On the other hand, the description of the 59 *tīrtha*s in the second *āvaraṇa* is stated in about ten *adhyāya*s i.e., in about 1284 verses, with an average of about 21 verses for one *tīrtha*. In that also, we find an uneven distribution of verses for every *tīrtha*.

The researcher has tried to analyse the reasons behind this uneven distribution of verses. The first few *tīrtha*s have been described in detail and thoroughly, with a myth ascribed to almost each *tīrtha*. (It will be discussed later in the paragraphs about myths and legends). Two main reasons would be as follows:

1) The composer of the text wants to focus on only some sacred places and not all of them. Only the *tīrtha*s with importance according to the composer are described in detail and in a greater number of verses.

2) The composer wants to attain the number 108. He seems to aim at the number 108 rather than the significance of the *tīrtha* or the legend attached to it.

The names of the *tīrtha*s are adopted mainly from the names of *tīrtha*s from more famous places, i.e., the sacred places in the vicinity of Vārāṇasī, Prayāga etc. Some places are named after some deity because that deity had visited the place. For example, the Sūrya *tīrtha*, the Tārā *tīrtha*, the Nṛsiṁha *tīrtha* and so on. Some names are assigned to the *tīrtha* because of the magical power the *tīrtha* showed for the devotee. For example, *bāla tīrtha*. The reasons for assigning names to some *tīrtha*s are very common and easily inferable. For example, the worship of *liṅga* at Khaṇḍeśvara leads to destruction (*khaṇḍa*) of sins. Hence the place gets the name. Such reasons are found to be very naive, and they seem to convince the innocent devotees.

The 26th *adhyāya* is not addressed by any name. The *adhyāya* consists of description of glory of Padmatīrtha, Kalivarṇana, and two legends about Padmatīrtha. However, the colophon only reads-

श्रीपद्मपुराणे वत्सगुल्ममाहात्म्ये पद्मतीर्थोपाख्याने... नाम षड्विंशोऽध्यायः ॥

It means- "This is the twenty sixth chapter entitled ... in the *upākhyāna* of Padmatīrtha in the Vatsagulmamāhātmya in Shri Padma Purāṇa".

The blank space is left by the editor of the published book. It may either be present in the manuscript to which he has referred, or he was unable to decipher the exact reading. But the researcher could not confirm the exact reason due to unavailability of the manuscripts of VGM for the present study. The *adhyāya* could have been named as *Kalivarṇana* (the description of Kali).

Out of the 108 *tīrtha*s, twenty-two are clearly devoted to lord Śiva. Nine are devoted to Viṣṇu. Around five are famous for the worship of the goddess. Some are devoted to the *Lokapāla*s. Out of the five sects popular in the Purāṇic period, these three are mentioned clearly in the text. The remaining two are not elaborately mentioned in the text, though one *tīrtha* is allotted to each of them.

Almost thirty *tīrtha*s are named based on the name of a common devotee like Karañjā *tīrtha* or based on the magical powers of the *tīrtha* like the Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*.

Thus, the researcher has noticed an unequal distribution of verses and analysed the names of the *adhyāya*s.

Some discontinuity is observed in VGM 34.82 and 34.83. The description of Devī *tīrtha* ends in VGM 34.81 and next two verses appear from nowhere. They are about reciting the *devī sūkta* in the temple of Govindeśvara in the Śarat season. The verses that follow them are about Hanumat *tīrtha*. In map of Washim, the Chamunda Devi Temple is seen in the south of the Govindeśvara Temple. There may be a tradition to recite this *devī sūkta* in the temple of Govindeśvara in the Śarat season. It should be cross-checked with a proper ground survey.

प्रदक्षिणानमस्कारैस्तमर्चयति यो नरः ।

स याति नितरां देही भैरवस्य सलोकताम् ॥३४.८१॥

शरत्काले महापीठे गोविन्देश्वरसंज्ञके ।

देवीसूक्तं जपेद्यस्तु तथा चैत्रे सुशोभने ॥३४.८२॥

तस्य देवी प्रसादाय स्वरूपं दर्शयेदिह ।

स्तोत्रमन्त्रादिपाठस्तु तत्क्षणाद् सिद्धिदो भवेत् ॥३४.८३॥

Moreover, the scrutiny of manuscripts can resolve this repetition and discontinuity in the text. Again after a few verses the *adhyāya* ends with the mention of Govindeśvara.

The 36th *adhyāya* begins with the talk of Vasiṣṭha, stating that he has narrated the sacred places from the second *āvaraṇa* and now he is starting with the sacred places in the third *āvaraṇa*. However, the last *tīrtha* from the second *āvaraṇa* is the actual first in the third *āvaraṇa*. If we consider this, then only the division and tally of the number of verses matches. The *tīrtha*s should

be 29 in first *āvaraṇa*, 60 in the second and the remaining 29 in the third. However, this number does not match if the 60th *tīrtha* in the second *āvaraṇa*, i.e., 89th in total count is considered in the second *āvaraṇa*. It must be calculated in the third *āvaraṇa*, which does not match with the text.

In the available published edition of the text, the author has done an important attempt to identify and locate all the 108 sacred places mentioned in the text. That attempt is an inspiration for the researcher for mapping the sacred places traceable today. The editor has not focussed on this minute details about the arrangement and numbering of the sacred places. However, his attempt to identify all the sacred places is noteworthy. All the *tīrtha*s are not the actual sacred place. Sometimes, they are rivers, sometimes confluence of rivers and in some identification, they are the wells in the courtyard of a farmer. That identification shows that the second *āvaraṇa* especially is a very small region, most of which surrounds the *Padma tīrtha*. Thus, the question arises, was the area that much important for the outsiders? What was the purpose of telling and narrating the glory of the place which was tiny as compared to Kashi or Vrindavan?

The researcher could find some answers to these questions. This text, being a very localized in nature, provides assurance for the faith of the people in its vicinity about its glory. The devotees having fears about diseases, and poverty mainly, approach the wisemen in society. The wisemen want the devotees to remain in the local region and offer their devotion to the god. Hence, they must have come up with the idea of the majestic nature of the sacred place. Numerous stories that are narrated in the text are many a times not new. In fact, those stories are famous.

A collection of eight *tīrtha*s (*aṣṭatīrthī*) is a popular Purāṇic concept. It is a small part in the bigger area of the sacred place. It is mentioned in the VGM mentioned in VGM 20.111 and 20.118. It shows the desire of the writer to match the arrangement of the sacred places with that from the famous *māhātmya*s, like Kashi or Vrindavan. The author tries to attain the level of those famous and big sacred places.

The rituals that are performed at the sacred place will now be analysed. Generally, the temple traditions in the Purāṇic period are elaborate. The priest is the messenger of the devotee to the god. He performs the rituals for the devotee, offers the message of the devotee to the god, and receives *dakṣiṇā*-honorarium from the devotee for doing the rituals.

The text of the VGM mentions this tradition at some *tīrtha*s, though not for all the *tīrtha*s. The individual worship is observed more in the text. The devotee is asked to perform a pilgrimage of the region and visit the temples for the holy sight of the god. Generally, in the mediaeval period, the apparatus of the worship, i.e., the flowers, the *prasāda*, other offerings to the priest and his family are not elaborately mentioned in the text. The individual devotee is advised in the text to bathe, donate, and meditate upon the name of the deity. Some places expect the ritual of worshipping the ancestors (*śrāddha*). At some places the rituals of donation are thoroughly explained.

Kane (1941: 837) states that the donations are eulogised since the Vedic times. He defines *dāna* as "cessation of one's ownership over a thing and creating the ownership of another over that thing". He also states that the acceptance may be mental, physical, or vocal[1].

Various *dāna*s were prevalent in the Purāṇic period. Some of them are mentioned in the text of the VGM. They are cow, gold, and blankets mainly. According to Kane (1941: 847), the donation of cow and gold is among the best *dāna*s stated from the Purāṇic period. On this background, the donations in the text were analysed.

A particular reference must be made of donation of *Kapilā* cow in the 31st *adhyāya* in the description of the *Kapilā tīrtha*. The whole ritual of cow donation is explained in detail in almost ten verses. The verses before and after, describe the consequence of the cow donation in that sacred place. Those verses are like the guide of cow donation ritual. The detailing of identification of *Kapilā* cow, bathing her and adorning her before donation is explained. Then, the instructions for the priest are given with *mantra* to be chanted by him. The other donations mentioned are sometimes the donation of gold, and

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[1] Refer to HoD Vol II. Chapter XXV page 837 onwards for more on *dāna*.

donation of a blanket. The cow donation is emphasised because of the pious nature of the cow and the merits that are gained by that donation are the best. The usefulness of cow in terms of milk is non debatable. Though the religion in the text is Purāṇic in nature, the rituals involve the ritual of *homa*. That needs a high quantity of milk and ghee both. That may be the reason why the cow donation must have been emphasised.

Now the *mahāpātaka*s and *upapātaka*s will be discussed along with the *karmavipāka* theory. Monier Williams (1970(1899): 617) defines *pātaka* as "that which causes to fall or sink." He also notes that this word was used in the MB and the Manusmṛti equivalent to sin, crime, loss of caste. The *mahāpātaka*s enlisted in most of the *Dharamaśāstra* texts are *brahmahatyā* (killing a brahmana), *gurutalpagamanaṁ* (establishing physical relationship with the wife of *guru*), *surāpāna* (drinking of liquor), and *suvarṇasteya* (theft of gold). Various *prāyaścitta*s- expiations- are narrated to nullify the sin caused by these, which mainly involve twelve years of exile in forest and a difficult penance. The text of VGM refers almost to all the *pātaka*s enlisted in the other Purāṇas. The expiations told for them do not indicate those told in the other scriptures. The mere action of bathing in the water body at the sacred place is the expiation for almost all the sin caused by the *mahāpātaka*s. Such is the majesty of these sacred places. The theft of gold was the *mahāpātaka* done by the king Vāsuki, due to which his body was full of worms. The mere washing of his body parts with the waters at Padmatīrtha freed him from the worms. Thus, even the greatest sins were washed by the majestic powers of the waterbodies present in the sacred places. This shift in the expiations is observed in this text towards simpler and easier forms of expiations. The easy act of bathing will wipe away the darkest sin. Hence, the punishment for even serious offences in the Purāṇic period is just bathing in holy waters and wiping it out.

The *karmavipāka* theory explained by the sage Vasiṣṭha is typically found in the Purāṇic texts. It is a way to find out the reasons of one having or not having certain things in this birth. It is a very popular theory in the Purāṇic period, which entirely relies on the *adṛṣṭa*- the unseen- reasons of one's good

or bad conditions. This is the highlight of the text where the king Vāsuki finds answer to his body being infected entirely. These kinds of explanations in the text lead the loser or the sinner to perform better things. These better actions will lead the devotee to attainment of merits and in turn cause the better conditions in the next birth.

The same *adhyāya* mentions the avīci hell. Viṣṇu Purāṇa 2.6 mentions twenty-eight names of hells. They are-1) Raurava, 2) Sūkara, 3) Rodha, 4) Tāla, 5) Viśasana, 6) Mahājvāla, 7) Taptakumbha, 8) Lavaṇa, 9) Vilohita, 10) Rudhirāmbhas, 11) Vaitaraṇi, 12) Kṛmīśa, 13) Kṛmibhojana, 14) Asipatravana, 15) Kṛṣṇa, 16) Lālābhakṣa, 17) Dāruṇa, 18) Pāyavāha, 19) Pāpa, 20) Vahnijvāla, 21) Adhaśśiras, 22) Sandaṁśa, 23) Kālasūtra, 24) Tamas, 25) Avīci, 26) Śvabhojana, 27) Apratiṣṭha, 28) Aprāci. The hell called Avīci is described in the 8.22 of the Devī Bhāgavata as- "The people who stand false witness, who take false oath and false name are led to this hell. These people will be sent to the hell of *Avīci* by the Yama's soldiers. They will push that person from the top of a mountain which is a hundred *yojana*s high. The *Avīci* is always surging and ebbing like the ocean-waves. When sinners fall in it, their bodies will be crumbled to pieces. A new body takes over their life. The sinner will again and again face these horrible punishments while in *Avīci*."

These sufferings in the hell have been mentioned in detail, as they would generate fear of these kinds of punishments and will drive away people from doing the wrong and sinful things.

The mentions of other popular *tīrtha*s like Gautamī and Oṅkāra indicate that they are known better to the audience or the devotees. Gautamī *tīrtha* is the River Godāvarī and Oṅkāra is one tīrtha on the River Narmadā. These two are mentioned because in the southern India, the clusters of *tīrtha*s are found at these two places[2]. Thus, the comparative study of these *māhātmya*s may lead to some common tales and patterns in these kinds of texts.

The Nārada Saṁhitā is a treatise stating the astrological concepts in the ancient India, known as *jyotiṣaśāstra*. It covers various topics in 35 *adhyāya*s,

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[2] See Dange (1987: 767) (part III).

which mainly deal with the concepts of time. This is considered as an ancient treatise on this subject, and it is obvious that the writer of the VGM mentions this in revered manner. However, the meridian of the world that passes through Vatsagulma is mentioned in the Karaṇakutūhala- dated to 1183 C.E. Thus, there is a possibility that the text of VGM was written after that date. As discussed in the introduction, there is no evidence of the glory of Vatsagulma in the period between 7th to 9th century of C.E. But later, this glory was retrieved by the people and 12th century of C.E. onwards, we again find the mention of Vatsagulma. Thus, this may help in dating of the text.

The sages while stating the four pillars of religion include the *tīrtha* as one of them. It clearly shows the shift in the rituals in the religious life of the people. However, inclusion of the sacrifice as the first unit indicates that there is a desire to link the Vedic rituals to the Purāṇic rituals. A combination of both these rituals is stated as the units of religion.

The appearance of the Praṇītā river from the sacrificial ritual seems to be a special feature of the text. Praṇītā has been identified as Painganga and mentioned clearly on the published book of the VGM (Deshpande 1951: 162). The entire sacred place of the Vatsagulma is situated in the basin of Painganga[3]. The other rivers which are the source of water to the people staying at Vatsagulma fall in the Painganga basin. Thus, the only river whose divine origin is discussed in the text is Praṇītā. From this, we understand the practical viewpoint of the writer and the reasons because of which a river becomes important in a certain region.

The mention of a typical late mediaeval ritual like Satī reflects upon the date of the text. Mehendale (2001: 157) gives the historic account of this ritual. According to him, the ancient Vedic rituals had a hint at Satī ritual, but no one can ascertain the Satī ritual in the Vedic times. Moreover, before 10th century C.E., the books on the social conduct, the *smṛti*s state the ritual of Satī not as the first option, but a secondary option to the death of the husband of a married woman.

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[3] Plate XII- Painganga basin and Washim

Amravati

Akola

Buldana

Washim

Yavatmal

Hingoli

Parbhani

Layers

Washim City

Other Districts

Painganga Basin

Washim

N
W   E
S

0   10   20   30   Km
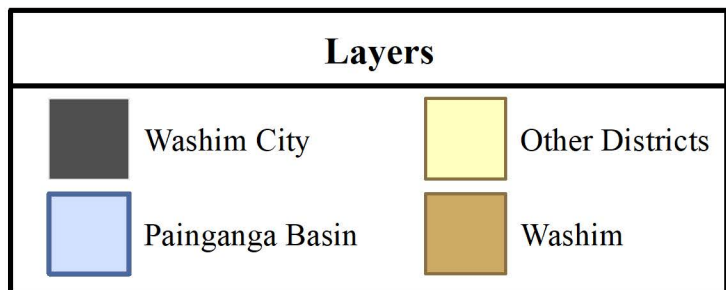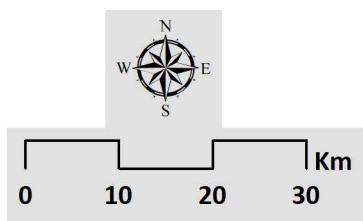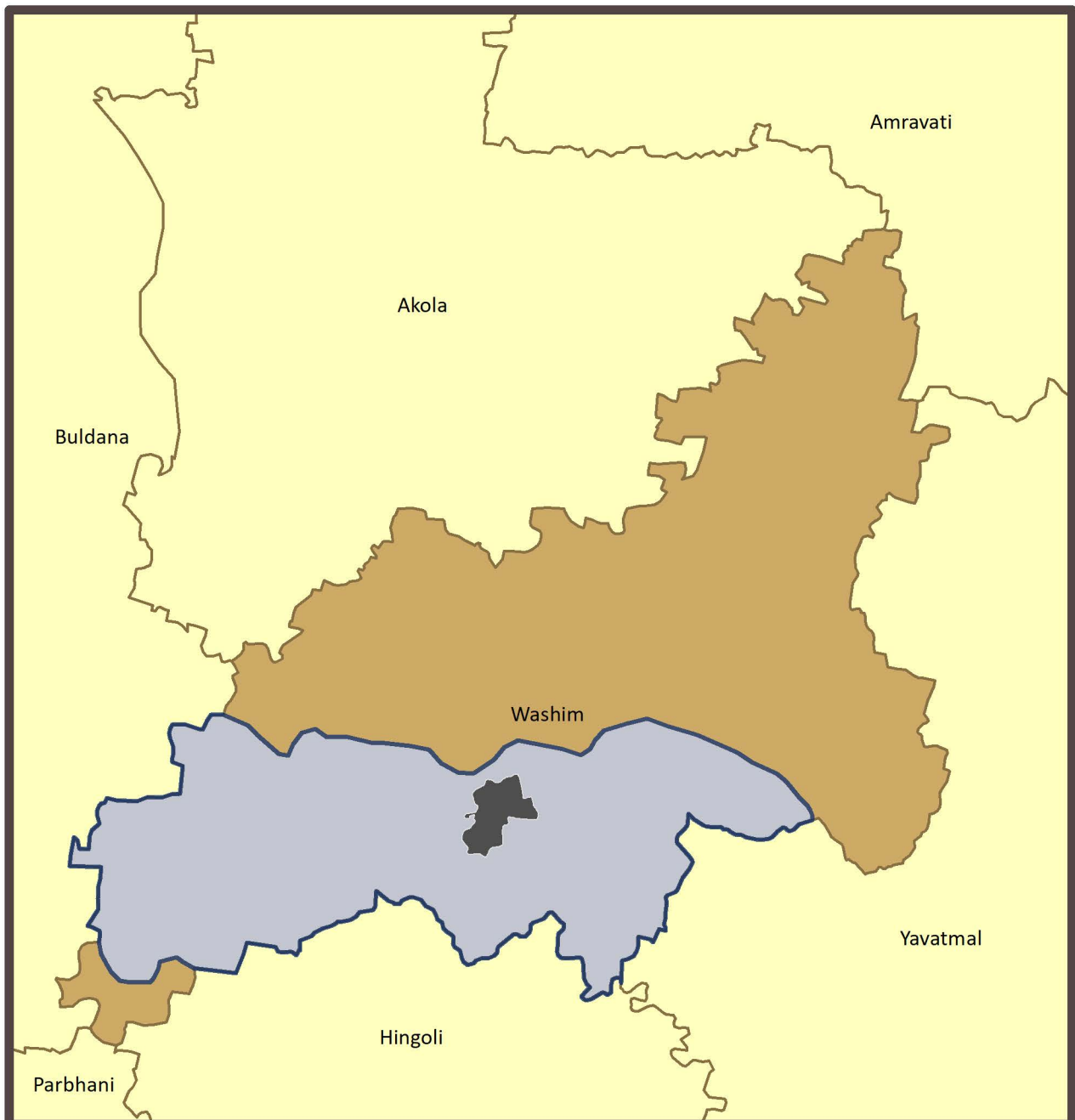
Plate XII - Painganga Basin and Washim

On this background, the text of VGM describing the ritual of Satī in so much detail arises doubts about its antiquity. The text cannot belong to a period prior to 10th century C.E. The mediaeval and late mediaeval texts mention the practise of Satī. In the text, the pregnant state of the wife of Dadhīci is a noticeable thing. The pregnant widow was never advised to practise this ritual. Thus, she removed her foetus and kept it under the *Pippalī* tree nearby. The reason behind this whole disgusting description can be the necessary praise of the prevalent ritual of Satī.

The material evidence for this practise is the presence of Satī *śilā*- the stone depicting the ritual of Satī. The published book in 1951 C.E. mentions the presence of such Satī stones around Padmatīrtha. But the researcher could not find those in the field visits. They may have been moved to some other place or must have been used for building the houses in vicinity. Moreover, the legend mentions the loss of power of the gods' weapons due to the curse of Satī. This may have been indicated because the writer's intention is to imbibe the importance of the ritual of Satī.

The Karañja *tīrtha* is confused with a town by name *ladache karanje* in the *Laad Karanja* taluka of Washim district. The history of the town shows co-existence of the Jains and the Muslims primarily. The mention of this place in the VGM is also not very detail. There is no story associated with it. It is a possibility that the tirtha was deliberately added in the list to show the Hindu religious affiliation of the place.

Another explanation is that this *tīrtha* and the *ladache karanje* are separate locations. There is mere similarity in names. This is a better argument because the Karañja *tīrtha* is described near the Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha* in the first *āvaraṇa*, which is very close to main town of Washim and the place *ladache karanje* is about 60 km from Washim.

One more serious problem faced by the people in the region at the time of the text is that of debt. The worship and chanting of Mantra of *Maṅgaleśa* is the solution narrated to free oneself from the debt.

The mention of chanting the mantra of Sarasvatī for seven crore times indicates the rising importance of the mantra-chanting. The chanting of these

mantras along with the worship of *yantra* is a usual practise till date. The writer here, however, does not mention the *yantra* worship. He only states chanting of mantra.

Offering the *pavitra* to Koṭīśa indicates the ritual. Here, the meaning of the term *pavitra* is to be considered as a thread (made up of cotton or silk) to be used on certain religious occasions. For relating this ritual on the ground, an intensive field work must be done, and the record of rituals practised at the site should be studied.

The religious sects mentioned in the text will now be analysed. The main sects reflected from the text are Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava. The Śaiva devotees are seen to prepare *liṅga*s for themselves. There are some mentions of the lord Śiva himself appearing in the *liṅga* form. From the *pañcamukha śivaliṅga* found at Kāṭā village, the worship of *mukhaliṅga* of the lord Śiva seems to be popular. But the text has no mention of the *mukhaliṅga*.

The lord Viṣṇu's ten incarnations or *avatāra*s is the popular notion in the Purāṇic texts. The text of the VGM mentions all of these in flow or in the *stotra*s, but only the incarnation of Nṛsiṁha is emphasised in the legend of Prahlāda and Hiraṇyakaśipu. The late mediaeval god Janārdana, i. e., Bālājī is mentioned as the lord Viṣṇu in the text.

A special mention of the sect of the *siddha*s must be done here. The legend about Siddhālaya *tīrtha* in the 33rd *adhyāya* states the *Siddha*s, their strange clothing, and how all the people ran after seeing them. Only Sunanda, the son of Druhiṇī, faced them and chatted with them. They were surprised to see his courage and initiated him. This myth is important in a sense that the *siddha*s are addressed, and the actual method of their primary initiation is narrated.

Here the word *siddha* should be analysed. Joshi (1979: 37) states that there were three types of popular *siddha*s in the ancient India, namely, Bauddha *siddha*, Nātha *siddha* and in the southern India- Śaiva *siddha*s. According to him, the *siddha*s are the experts in the extra-worldly practises, and magical powers. They are supposed to be the masters of the extra-human spirits like *śākinī* and *ḍākinī*. Among the three *siddha* sects the Nātha *siddha*s

tried for the social upliftment and gained respect. Their *sādhanā* included mainly the practise of Haṭhayoga.

From the myth of Sunanda, we come to know about the initiation of the boy by the *siddha*s. The question can be raised whether the initiation was so simple.

If one relates this mention of *Siddha*s in the 33rd *adhyāya* with the Nātha Sampradāya, then their *khecarī mudrā* is mentioned here. According to Dhere (2019: 110), the initiation of the *Nāthī*s was the *upadeśa* by *guru*. The relation between the Nātha Sampradāya and other prevalent *Sampradāya*s in Maharashtra was good. They always praised each other. Dhere (2019: 115) further states that the Nātha Sampradāya in its initial stages lacked the element of devotion, which was added later by Nivṛtti and Jñānadeva. The mention in the text of VGM is as under:

सुनन्दभक्तिसन्तुष्टास्तस्यै दद्युः शुभां गतिम् ।

सापि सिद्धकरस्पर्शात्तत्क्षणात्खेचरी ह्यभूत् ॥ ३१.१३३॥

It means- "They (the *Siddha*s) were pleased by the devotion of Sunanda and liberated the mother of Sunanda". However, the devotion of Sunanda is not narrated in the text. Later it is stated that Druhiṇī – the mother- attained the form of Khecarī- the lady who moves through the path of sky. It may be inferred that the Nath sect was that much popular in the region around Vatsagulma, and the women were also initiated.

The same *adhyāya* states that the people who will take a dip in the waters of the Siddhālaya *tīrtha* continuously for one year, will attain the form of *Siddha*s. It seems to be an easy way of becoming a *Siddha*. This belief indicates either simplification of the *Siddha* powers or ignorance about the *Siddha* powers. Thus, the sacred place mentioned in the text can be linked to the popularity of the *siddha*s and curiosity about them.

The 33rd *adhyāya* in the VGM mentions the sacred place called Prathamadvādaśī. The name of the place is different. There is a legend related to it. The details in the chapter mention that when the gods saw the river first

appearing on the earth from Pātāla, they celebrated it. For this they have used the word *vṛṣa*. The word *vṛṣa* nowhere means a religious festival. The author has stated this meaning in the footnote.

Here the *Dvādaśī* is mentioned as important when it is with Śravaṇa Nakshatra. Three holy baths are mentioned here. One bath on *Śayanī ekādaśī*- Shukla Paksha Ekadashi in the Aṣāḍha month, second on the *Parivartinī* ekādaśī Bhadrapda month rising fortnight 11th day, and the third on Bodhinī ekādaśī - Shukla Paksha Kārttika ekādaśī. These baths are important as they indicate the sleep, mid-sleep, and end of sleep of lord Vishnu. It is noteworthy that the rituals of *ekādaśī* are related to lord Viṣṇu. But, here in this context, the lord Vishnu is said to prepare a Śivaliṅga. This is mentioned because the writer intends to show co-existence of Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavism. He wants to show harmony in them to drive away the conflicts in the sects.

The classification of *tīrtha*s has been suggested by some Purāṇas. Many famous places have same names for the *tīrtha*s in its area[4]. The Brahma Purāṇa (70.16) states four types of *tīrtha*s- *daiva* (divine), *āsura* (pertaining to the *asura*), *ārṣa* (pertaining to the sages), *mānuṣa* (pertaining to the humans). The text of the VGM also mentions this classification in 4.128. The verse is as under.

दैवानि मानुषाणीति तथार्षाणि परन्तप ।

आसुराणि च तीर्थानि जातानि क्षितिमण्डले ॥४.१२८॥

It means, "O the slayer of the enemies, the *tīrtha*s are *daiva*, *mānuṣa*, *ārṣa*, and *āsura* on the earth's surface". However, in the actual mention of the 108 *tīrtha*s, the writer does not mention any classification of the *tīrtha*s.

There is also a concept of five altars which is observed in the Indian subcontinent. Prayāga is the middle altar, Gayā is the eastern altar, the river Virajā is the southern altar and the altar on the west is Puṣkara[5]. The place of Vatsagulma may be observed in the southern altar.

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[4] See Dange 1987: 761 part III.
[5] See Dange 1987: 767 part III.

IV.3. Linguistic Characteristics

Based on the observations of the linguistic characteristics, the following points can be analysed.

First step was the analysis of some of the words. The word *hāvabhāva* was searched for its origin. The Monier Williams dictionary does not include it.

The word *bhāva* must have been joined to it in later period to mean the gestures and expressions on the face. The scriptorium at the Deccan College lists many meanings of this word with a slight difference of shade. It is interesting to note that the earliest reference of this word has been listed from the Śiva Purāṇa around 1000 C.E. The use of such words may throw light on the date of the text.

The incorrect forms used in the text reflect the scholarly level of the writer. The easily avoidable corrections are also not thought of, which indicates the hurried nature of the manuscript. The inaccuracy of metrical composition can be linked to the less knowledge of the writer about the subject. Same can be the case of the inaccurate compounds at some places.

The influence of Marathi words and phrases can be attributed to the acquaintance of the writer with the local language Marathi. It also suggests the lack of special training of Sanskrit composition of the writer. While stating this, the researcher is aware that there are some beautifully composed paragraphs in the text. Also, some scholarly words are used in the text. This leads to the possibility of more than one writer of the text. As the published edition does not include the name of the writer or the date of the manuscript, it is difficult to decide whether the text has been composed in passages and later joined in the form of a bigger text.

About the word *daridrin*, Monier Williams (1970: 470) states that the use of this word is found in the Siṁhāsanadvātriṁśikā (a mediaeval Sanskrit text) a compilation of thirty-two stories. He does not note its use in earlier literature. This reflects the mediaeval nature of the language of the text.

Linguistically beautiful passages are not in a large number in the text. They are basically narrated for the beauty of the Queen Kanakalekhā, the

description of the city of Kṣemakara King, and the two *vilāpa*s- one by a wife and one by a mother. The writer in these passages has tried to use various figures of speech like simile (*upamā*) and alliteration (*anuprāsa*) that add beauty to the description. The narration seems apt in the flow of the story. They are not very long passages, but they succeed in their purpose of establishing the feeling in the situation.

The description of Kanakalekhā is a typical description of any beautiful lady in the Sanskrit literature. A faithful and beautiful wife is portrayed by her description. The narration of the city of Kṣemakara King is a description of a prosperous city in the ancient times. It matches with any other narration of a city in classical Sanskrit literature. This description must have been done to imbibe the greatness of the King, as to he hailed from such a prosperous city and even then, gained peace at Vatsagulma.

The two *vilāpa*s are beautifully written in the metres that match with the feeling of sorrow in them. Both are composed in Vasantatilakā metre. The last five verses of *vilāpa* by mother are composed in *anuṣṭup* metre. They successfully describe the emotion of separation of their dear ones.

The good sayings or the *sadācāravarṇanaṁ* chapters at the end of the text indicate that the text is not a mere *māhātmya* text. It has some other aim also. That aim can be inferred as preaching the people. The subject matter of the good sayings is stating the *varṇāśramadharma* for the masses. It matches with the aim of the Purāṇic literature to re-establish the Vedic religion.

The entire linguistic style of the text matches with the *pravacana* or *kīrtana* style. The text must have been read and preached at different *tīrtha*s mentioned in the text. Or there is a chance of existence of this text in Marathi language also. Owing to this, the researcher tried to gain information in the study visit. But no Marathi version of the text was reported from the site.

Now the analysis regarding the *stotra*s will follow. The total number of stotras identified from the entire text is 15. One each for Lokapāla, Cāmuṇḍā, Pārvatī, two for Vidhi, six for lord Śiva and four for lord Viṣṇu. The linguistic expression of this *stotra*s is good. The numerous expressions and adjectives used for the deity convey the exact expected meaning. The language is not

ornate. In fact, the influence of the local language is observed at some places. This point will be discussed in detail in the analysis of the linguistic characteristics. Generally, the *stotra*s are in minimum of five verses, and with the statement of the fruit of the chanting. Here, the eulogical verses range from minimum one verse to maximum of twenty verses. Only some *stotra*s have *phalaśruti*. Though, the *stotra*s lack the technical ideal nature, they support the devotion in the mind of the devotee towards the deity on consideration. The noticeable point is that, out of 108 *tīrtha*s, very few are mentioned along with the *stotra* of the deity. Only nine *stotra*s out of fifteen are a part of the stories told as the glory of the *māhātmya*. The remaining six are from the first 8 *adhyāya*s, where lord Śiva, lord Viṣṇu, and lord Brahma are equally praised. There seems to be a deliberate attempt to show the harmony between the followers of Śaivism and the Vaiṣṇavism. It is the peculiar characteristic of the later Purāṇic texts, wherein the Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva sectarian treatises are written. To avoid conflict between the two sects, such deliberate attempts were made to create harmony and minimize the friction between the two sects.

The *stotra*s of *devī*s, be it Pārvatī or Cāmuṇḍā are an attempt to please every sect. The philosophy of each sect as gleaned from each of the *stotra* is a part of the late mediaeval period. There is no *stotra* which is written to preach the philosophy. The adjectives are easy and the *stotra*s can be sung easily. They give the devotee a tool to chant the name of the deity they cherish the most. The various metres used in the *stotra*s are attractive and suffice the meaning of the words. At the same time, we find a glimpse of the scholarly attitude of the writer in placement of the words and the meters used.

There seem to be some fears which are repeatedly daunting upon the devotees. They praise the lord most of the times to cure them from the skin diseases, and free them from poverty. These worldly affairs seem to be the focus point of their chanting and prayers. Very rarely the chanting of a *stotra* is done to attain the liberation.

The *stotra*s composed in the text are nowhere called as *pañcaka* or *aṣṭaka*. The writer may not have intended to write a *stotra*, though it is called one. The eulogy written in this text can be termed as *stuti* and not *stotra*.

Moreover, the usual pattern of the *stotra* with *phalaśruti* in the end is hardly observed in these *stotra*s.

Now the analysis of the myths and legends in the text will be done. This is always challenging. The text of the VGM is full of legends. Almost all the fifty-one legends are associated with one or the other *tīrtha*. The first story of Vāsuki King is the common thread all over the text. It is narrated to emphasise the importance of theory of fruition (*karmavipāka*). Then the next three legends state the importance of the two most important places in the area- the Padma *tīrtha* and the Karuṇā *kūpa*. The first eight *adhyāya*s are used as the background of the text and stating the importance of only two *tīrtha*s out of 108. These two are again enumerated in the list of 108 from the ninth *adhyāya* onwards. This clearly suggests that the original intention of the writer was to state the importance of only two prominent *tīrtha*s, but later, the concept of 108 significant sacred places placed in three *āvaraṇa*s was adopted and hence the text of elaborate 39 *adhyāya*s was composed. The co-existence of the followers of the Śiva and the Viṣṇu clearly indicates the need of harmony in them as suggested by the text. Then the rest of the legends and the text can be viewed and analysed as a typical structure of the *māhātmya*. The language, however, is not found very much different in the first nine *adhyāya*s and the rest of the text.

The importance of performing meritorious deeds in one's life is emphasised by almost all the stories.

The majestic nature of Vatsagulma is narrated by the story of Vimala Brahmin, Nāminī lady, the legend of Tārā and many more.

The myth about Cāmuṇḍā *kūpa* indicates an easy way of cleaning one's sins. It is noteworthy that the place where Cāmuṇḍā temple is in modern Wasim also, is one of the sites of archaeological excavations. It surely indicates the presence of the mound of ancient settlement.

The legend about Madhyameśvara *liṅga* is about the ancient knowledge about time. It states the locations through which Madhyarekhā passes. The researcher has attempted a map of Madhyarekhā passing through

Vatsagulma[6]. The mention of ancient knowledge of time and a significant place in that regard certainly gives importance to Vatsagulma. It is noticeable that the treatise that assigns this importance to the place belongs to 12th century C.E., and not before that.

From the legend about Mallikārjuna *tīrtha*, we get to know the names of twelve Jyotirliṅgas. This is a well-established later Purāṇic concept, found in Śiva Purāṇa also[7]. It is important to analyse this, because the writer is aware of the twelve Jyotirliṅgas and three of them are very near to them, i.e., in Ghṛṣṇeśvara near Verul, Nāganātha near Auṇḍhe and Vaidyanātha in Paryalī. But, here in this myth, the Mallikārjuna is given importance. It is noteworthy that Mallikārjuna, located at Śrīśaila in present Andhra Pradesh, was very much famous for numerous Tantric cults in the medieval period according to Dhere (2019: 21). That may have caused the writer to give importance to Mallikārjuna *tīrtha* and establish one *tīrtha* of the same name in the vicinity of Vatsagulma.

The famous legend of Nṛsiṁha and Prahlāda is explained in detail in two *adhyāya*s. This shows how popular it must be. The cult of Nṛsiṁha was a popular cult of the Vākāṭakas[8] and hence, many Nṛsiṁha shrines are found around Nagpur and Ramtek, even in modern era. This may be the reason that this story is narrated in detail and in all possibly descriptive manner.

The researcher could visit Khaṇḍeśvara during the field visit, to find it a small temple, now in a household. Such an importance to such small temple confirms that the *māhātmya* is highly localised in nature.

The story of Māṇḍavya and his wife is apparently told to tell the birth of Datta. However, the duties of a chaste woman are elaborately told in the legend. Thus, the purpose of telling this popular story can be inferred as imbibing the duties of a chaste woman and glorifying her servitude towards her husband.

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[6] Refer to Plate II- Meridian Indicating Vatsagulma
[7] See Joshi (1965: 685).
[8] See Jamkhedkar (2021: 25).

The legend of the Fire-God being impregnated seems to be strange. It has some wild ways of aborting the foetus. This indicates that the abortions may be common by such uncivilised manner in the period of text. Its linkage to donation of gold is not very justifiable but may indicate the gain of the Brahmins by someone else's despair. This gave way to the malpractices by the Brahmins in Purāṇic period and the innocent devotees fell prey to those.

There are numerous times when the deeds in the previous births are narrated. Most of the legends appear in the text to affirm the fruition theory.

Almost all the stories are of Brahmins. This may be so because the text was composed by a Brahmin. All the stories emphasise the importance of pious behaviour and chastity. It is depicted that the sins are driven away when one visits the sacred place.

The legend for the Bhāṇḍa *tīrtha* is the glory of Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha*. Such ambiguity in description highlights that Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha* was more popular than the Bhāṇḍa *tīrtha*.

The legend of Tārā has a reference of aborting a foetus. This is the second reference of abortion in the text. This may be a usual practise in those days which is reflected in this.

The myth about Janārdana *tīrtha* indicates a four-handed idol of Janārdana. It is now kept in Balaji Temple at Washim. It states greatness of merit attained by worshipping Keśava.

Repetition in the names of *tīrtha*s is found at some place. This indicates the loose composition of the text. The writer has struggled for attaining the sacred number 108 and seems to repeat the names.

Some names of *tīrtha*s are commonly found in other sacred places also. Those may have been given here to show their affiliation with the more popular sacred places.

The legend of Sūrya *tīrtha* affirms the relation between the Sun and the lord Viṣṇu once again. The place has the name of the Sun and the idol of Viṣṇu.

The legend of Candrabhāgā river is important from the geographic point of view. It states the origin of the river and its confluence with Praṇītā

river, which is also called Vṛddhagaṅgā in the text. It is stated that it meets with Gautamī, Pūṣā and Candrabhāgā. The same legend ends with the mention of shape of *tīrtha*. The researcher has tried to locate these rivers on map. The shape of the *tīrtha* is also analysed and mapping the shape was tried. The mention of shape of *tīrtha* as a *vāmāvarta* conch multiplies its meritorious nature. This type of conch is used for making a sound at the beginning of any ritual.

The legend of Dadhīci needs a special attention. First, it is elaborately narrated in two long *adhyāya*s. Then, the ritual of Satī is elaborately described. The emphasis on this ritual suggests that it may was in practise in the period of writing this text. This suggests the later Purāṇic period of writing of the text, that is, only after 8th century C. E. when then practise of Satī was popularised in the higher caste. This point was previously analysed in the religious landscape.

The legend of the Brahmin living on the bank of Narmadā ends abruptly. The purpose of telling it might be only to emphasise the importance of chanting the Mantra of Śiva or Viṣṇu.

The story of an unchaste woman Guhā reflects the plight of the unfaithful wives and their families. It must have been told to imbibe that the wives must be loyal and faithful, otherwise they attain a lot of sin.

The myth about Bāla *tīrtha* reflects that the only remedy for any problem is a stay at the sacred place and holy bath. This adds to the majestic powers of the *tīrtha*.

The 25th and the 34th legend are about Cakra *tīrtha* and glorify the Cakra of Viṣṇu for destroying the troublesome demons. The repetition of the names of the *tīrtha*s suggests that the manuscripts must be revisited and studied carefully. This may be the overlapping portion from the manuscripts, about the same *tīrtha*. It is interesting to note that these two, though have the same name, are placed in two separate *āvaraṇa*s.

The myth about the Siddhālaya *tīrtha* is a significant myth. The son was initiated without permission from his mother. They were not asked

whether they wanted to be initiated. Various other factors regarding this myth are discussed in the paragraphs about religious landscape.

The myth of the snakes and the eagle is narrated in an elaborate manner. The reason may be that it is a popular myth and conveys the attainment of a jewel to fulfil one's desires. It also conveys importance of fulfilling one's duties towards mother.

Prathamadvādaśī myth is significant from the geographic point of view. The river may have stopped flowing for some or the other reason. The myth may be an indicator to her reappearance on the earth. Moreover, it tells the importance of *ekādaśī*- the eleventh day of the fortnight. It is significant that a *māhātmya* text showing affiliation to lord Śiva, describes the importance of *ekādaśī*. The reason may again be inferred in the harmony of these two sects.

The presence of the whole of Rāma story in the text can be linked to the affirmation of dutiful behaviour, and the ideal life, suggested by lord Rāma.

The Ekavīrā myth indicates the presence of Devī or Śākta cult in the region. The Govindeśvara is a famous temple even today with the *liṅga* and the idol of goddess.

The myth of Rāvaṇa may have been told to focus the elite family background of the demon. But it is not connected to Rāma in the text. On the other hand, the origin of the *gaṇa*s of lord Śiva is narrated.

The myth of the Chandrabhaga River again must be checked on the geographical account. Chandrabhaga and Praṇītā meet even now. The researcher has attempted to map the flow of two rivers and their confluence[9].

IV.4. Geographic Information

The next important analysis is about the sites and locations of the sacred places. The writer of the VGM knows the other famous *tīrtha*s around it, like Viraja (Lonar), Mahīkhala (Mehekar), and Kṛṣṇāmalakī (Mahurgad) and

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[9] Plate XIII- Chandrabhāgā and Praṇītā Confluence

123

R. Chandrabhaga

Washim

Hingoli

Rajgaon

204

217

204

N
W E
S

0   2   4   6   Km
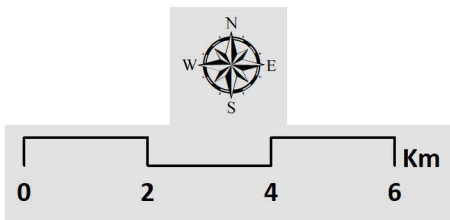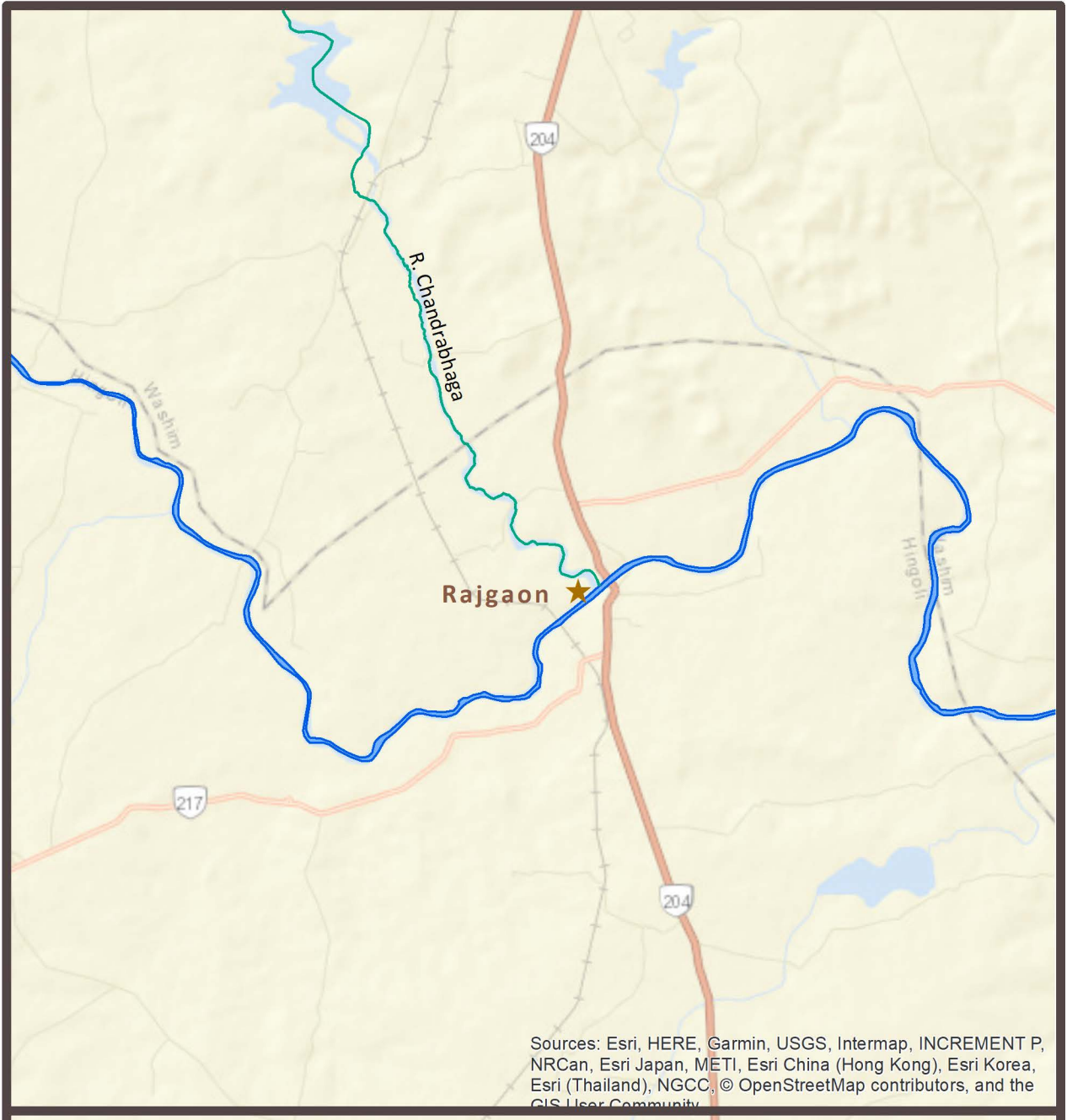
Layers

● Places   ■ Praṇītā

— Rivers

Plate XIII : Chandrabhaga and Praṇītā Confluence

mentions them in 1.10. For those, the other *sthala māhātmya*s are found. All these are local texts glorifying a place.

The writer of the text sometimes clearly mentions the distance of a sacred place with reference to the earlier place with measurements and directions. The researcher has tried to map some of these places according to the description given in the text. The earlier published edition had a separate appendix that included the identification of the sacred places. The writer of the book failed to locate all the places on the ground. He had categorised them in 1. Well-known 2. Unknown, and 3. Vanished. With that information in hand, the researcher tried to locate some of the places on ground in her field visit. But due to a dense population and settlement in modern times, it was hard to locate even those places which were identified by the writer in 1951 CE. Thus, the researcher has taken help from Google Maps and has tried to prepare the maps of locations of some of these places.

Some *tīrtha*s from all the *āvaraṇa*s were identified and mapped separately. As regards the distances of the sacred places from each other or from the Padma tīrtha, the most prominent sacred place in the area, the concept of *āvaraṇa* can be explained[10][11]. The 3rd *āvaraṇa* seems to be the farthest from the main settlement of Vatsagulma[12]. The 59 *tīrtha*s in the 2nd *āvaraṇa* seem to be almost next to each other, and the importance given to them is not clearly fathomable. Many of the sacred places from the total 108 are not identifiable on the ground. The researcher has also tried some mapping of some of the sacred places.

IV.5. Social Beliefs and Customs

The diseases faced by the common people as gleaned from the text are mainly skin diseases- *kuṣṭha*s. The Padma Purāṇa- to which this text shows affiliation- in detail describes the types of skin diseases and their probable causes[13].

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[10] Plate IVX- *Tīrtha*s in the 1st *Āvaraṇa*
[11] Plate XV- *Tīrtha*s in the 2nd *Āvaraṇa*
[12] Plate XVI-*Tīrtha*s in the 3rd *Āvaraṇa*
[13] See Dange 1987: 438 Vol. II.

Layers

★ Places

— Rivers

☐ Washim City

Place Legend
1 : Karuneshvar
2 : Madhyameshvar
3 : Khandeshvar
4 : Daridryaharana

Plate XIV - Tīrthas in the First Āvaraṇa

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Plate XV - Tīrthas in the Second Āvaraṇa

Layers

★ Places

— Rivers

☐ Washim City

20°10'N

20°5'N

20°N

Kondala Zamre

Washim

Panchalegaon

Pardi Asra

Bramha

Ansing

R. Adana

R. Pus

R. Chandrabhaga

R. Painganga

77°5'E   77°10'E   77°15'E   77°20'E

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

N
W   E
S

0   4   8 Km

Plate XVI - Tīrthas in the Third Āvaraṇa

The names of *tīrtha*s are suggestive of the important problem of poverty faced by common people at that time. The freedom from poverty is emphasised more than thrice as the consequence of visiting the place, making it an important social problem.

Overall portrayal of society from the text is poor, innocent, and highly practising rituals from Purāṇic period.

IV.6. The Inscriptional Evidence

The ancient Washim, i.e., Vatsagulma was known from the inscriptions and copper plates of the Vākāṭakas. It was the capital city of the Vākāṭaka kings. V.V. Mirashi has an entire volume of Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum (volume 5) on the inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas. He has deeply studied and surveyed all the copper plates and inscriptions of the main branch of the Vākāṭakas, their feudatories; the copper plates and inscriptions of the Vatsagulma branch and their feudatories. He has also provided translations of all. All those are enough to show that the Vatsagulma branch of the Vākāṭakas did flourish for almost three hundred years in the area. Their religious affiliation was purely Vedic, and they carried out several sacrifices. Theirs was a good rule that pleased the subjects. All these and other explanations help the enthusiast to understand the religious affiliation of the people in the area. That must have helped the writer of the text of the VGM to find 108 *tīrtha*s in such a small area.

IV.7 The Archaeological Evidence

The archaeological excavations help the researchers dive deep into the past. The deeper layers in the excavations indicate the more ancient period of settlement. This evidence is significant in case of Washim because the text of the VGM is a Pauranic text. The political affiliation of the ancient Vatsagulma was with the Vākāṭakas, who are not at all mentioned in the text. Hence, the actual sequence of settlement around Washim will surely help in the decision about the antiquity of the text. The archaeological evidence works hand in

hand with the inscriptional evidence and the textual evidence to give us a clear picture of the cultural landscape of the area.

The two small excavations in the Washim area are a source of evidence for this region[14]. The first small excavation was conducted in the Fukatpura area of Washim in the season 1994-95. It did not bring into light any grand structure, but evidence was older and more significant. One idol of Umāmaheśvara was found in the excavation, which proved to be a pre-Rāṣṭrakūṭa sculpture[15]. It also brought into light a plan of an oval shaped temple, a Śiva temple, where a brick structure was clearly visible. The size of the bricks matched with those from the period of the Vākāṭakas. There was a small hoard of coins and two clay moulds for the coins. Hence, it was concluded that the temple structure belonged to one of the most ancient temples of the Vākāṭakas, from 355-400 C.E. in the period of Vindhyashakti II[16].

The second excavation done at the Lal Deul area in the same season 1994-95, brought out a plan of an old temple, which resembled a star-shape and had smaller bricks. From other material found from the layer and vicinity, it is thought to be a temple of goddess. It has a water body in the western part. Thus, this evidence generated from the excavations prove that the Vākāṭaka period was a flourishing period in this area. The temples which are now found in the locality, however, are Rāṣṭrakūṭa or modern temples.

To sum up the analysis, the writer seems to have worked very hard to match with the number 108 of the *tīrtha*s. He has compiled some very famous legends and some totally new legends to state the glory of the sacred places. He is successful in imbibing the magnanimity of the place.

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[14] Refer to Plate IV-Excavation Sites in Washim.
[15] See Jamkhedkar (2021: 98) for details.
[16] See Jamkhedkar (2021: 100) for details.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

Chapter V
CONCLUSIONS

V.1. General Conclusions

The researcher, at the start of the study of the text, expected the mention of the ancient ruling dynasty in the region, i.e., the Vākāṭakas in the text, because the name Vatsagulma in history is associated with the Vākāṭaka dynasty. But to her surprise, she has not found a single reference of the Vākāṭakas in the text. Very few kings are mentioned in the text. The main story, that encompasses all the *adhyāya*s, is about the King Vāsuki. The name Vāsuki is related only to the king of serpents in the Purāṇas (Mani 1975: 838). The reference of this King is not found in the Purāṇas elsewhere. The King Vāsuki here does not indicate any relation with the serpents. The text refers to Vatsagulma as Vāsukipura in *tretā yuga*. But the mention of Vāsukipura in the Purāṇas is again found only with reference to serpent King Vāsuki. Therefore, the King Vāsuki in the text seems to be an imaginary name.

The narrative style of the text matches with that in the Purāṇic literature. From the mentions of rituals in the text, it is evident that the priests had gained a lot of importance. The preparation of Śivaliṅga by any individual is the evidence of individual worship. However, there is no mention of multiple Śivaliṅga prepared and offered to the lord. Also, the absence of reference of *pañcamukha śivaliṅga* in the text and occurrence of it on the ground makes the researcher conclude that the tradition has not been noted in the text.

All the effort of doing the pilgrimage of the 108 *tīrtha*s is mostly for the materialistic gain as the demands or the wishes of the common devotees are mostly materialistic. The common people seem to be afraid of diseases, especially skin diseases like eczema etc. Also, they are facing a lot of poverty. The area covered by all these 108 *tīrtha*s is not more than twenty sq. kms. Such high number of sacred places in such small region categorises the text as the localised *māhātmya*.

The deity Dattātreya at Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha* is mentioned additionally with the *tīrtha.* Else one separate *tīrtha* could have been allotted to his name. This additional mention suggests that Dattātreya may have been more popular in the region. The writer wants to take an advantage of the more popular deity in the region to establish the *tīrtha*.

Some legends that are narrated in length suggest that the intention of the writer is something different than just stating the ritual. By these long and already known Purāṇic stories, the writer is stressing the importance of numerous good qualities in a man i.e., generosity, philanthropy, servitude towards the master and parents etc.

From the depiction of women in the text, it can be concluded that there were less educated women. Nowhere there is a mention of a learned woman. On the other hand, there is a mention of abortion of foetus in the text in three incidences. Also, the woman's servitude towards her husband and her duties as a wife are focussed in the text.

Thus, it can be concluded that the text intends to focus more on ideal married women, and not their education. Moreover, the tradition of Satī is clearly stated. It is clearly the indicator of dependency of women on the males in the society. The portrayal of the society is patriarchy. Though all these references are from the myths, it overall indicates the plight of women.

V.2.   About the Manuscripts of the VGM

In the introduction, the researcher has stated the need to obtain the manuscripts from which the available edition was prepared. A complete study of this text is not possible without that. The interpolated parts may be identified from the manuscripts. Many linguistic features need an attention of the researchers. By doing so, it can be observed if there are smaller versions of the same text available. The name of the scribe can be traced if present anywhere in the manuscripts.

V.3. Dating of the VGM

The first and foremost conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that the text belongs to later Purāṇic period, The language of the text has a clear influence of a Marathi language. It most probably belongs to the later mediaeval period. This is supported by the problem of finding Vatsagulma as a *tīrtha* in the mediaeval literature. The researcher has tried to obtain the mention of the name in various books and treatises which enlist *tīrtha*s. Like *tīrthavivecanakāṇḍa* of *Kṛtyakalpataru* of Lakṣmīdhara, but it was not found. The absence of it from the any recension of Padma Purāṇa was anticipated, as it was a highly localised text.

V.4. Writer of the VGM

A thought has been given by the researcher as to who would have written the text of VGM. The occasionally changing style of the text has made the researcher think whether there was one or more writers of the text. The writer or writers of the VGM had a sound knowledge of geography of the region. They have cleverly interwoven the sanctity of the places and the geographic speciality of the sacred place.

The writers have an intention to imbibe good qualities in the society. They also want a connect with the Vedic religion. Hence, the legends and the *stotra*s are composed that give a good foundation to the religious life of people. There may be some sect that deliberately promoted Śaivism in the region. There may be a sect that worked for harmony among the Śaiva sect and the Vaiṣṇava sect. There is ample evidence in the text to show that the Śaiva sect dominated the region. But there is portrayal of Viṣṇu as a deity and some *tīrtha*s are also seen named after Viṣṇu. Many deities are mentioned in the text, along with Śiva and Viṣṇu.

The problems with which the devotees come to the sacred place seem to be worldly. Very few mentions are there about attaining the liberation-*mukti*. The very first story of King with which the text begins, has the King suffering from the skin disease. He wants to find the solution for this and accidently obtains the pond that cured his skin disease. So, it can be concluded

that the focus of the text is helping the common devotees in lessening their despair.

The loose style of narration of the text suggests its similarity with the *pravacana* tradition. At the time of the composition of the text, the priests must have preached the text stating the glory to the locals. The researcher also proposes that the text was popular in Marathi language also and it was preached in the local language. The researcher proposes that the composers of the text followed the *kīrtana* and *pravacana* tradition.

V.5. Scope for Further Study

The cultural studies of the *māhātmya* texts are carried out infrequently. There is ample scope in this area of research if the researcher has a multidisciplinary approach.

As regards this text, the study of the linguistic characteristics of the text can gain a new dimension if the Marathi version of the text can be found. Even if the manuscripts from which the available edition was prepared can be obtained, the study of the text will have a new light.

Jamkhedkar (2021:98) opines that the localised texts like this need a deeper study for smaller and localised problems, which will help in building a bigger picture of the ancient society and its culture.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Washim in Gazetteer

History

Washim is a place with antiquity and according to some scholars, it is the place where Vatsa rishi performed penance and where many Gods came to bless him as a result of which it came tone known as Vatsagulma. Its mention as Vatsagulma is traced in Padma Purana, In the Treta yuga, the second age, this country was a part of the Dandakaranya, or Dandaka jungle, and the rishi Vatsa had his ashram hermitage, here; his religious merit acquired by austerities, was such that consternation spread through the world; rivers ran dry and trees were withered, and even the gods were afraid. They came, therefore in a body to Basim and took up a temporary residence at various places within a radius of 5 miles from the town. Shiva, alone, whose devotee Vatsa had proclaimed himself, went directly to the rishi whom he found absorbed in penance. At the sight of his virtue Shiva was so much overcome that he wept, and the tears filled a dry well at his feet and flowed forth as the river Karuna; then he promised to grant any boon Vatsa might ask for. The latter asked that Shiva should remain for ever at the rishi's abode to save his worshippers from affliction. Shiva granted this, and his Linga, remained there in consequence. Then the other gods appeared in a single gathering (gulma) and promised to stay in their divine essence, ansharupa, at the various places at which they had halted; and so, the neighbourhood is called 'Vatsa Gulmachi Pacha Koshi,' the Five Kos of the Vatsa Gathering, and is considered a kshetra, sacred area. About the origin of the name Bashim or Washim the old Gazetteer has given the following information. A poor Brahman orphan was protected by a learned member of the caste, but after some time Stole a necklace belonging to his protector's wife. In the morning when she bewailed her loss he repented and sought to restore the necklace but could not find if. Meanwhile the woman laid on the unknown thief the curse that he should suffer from a loathsome disease and his body should be covered with insects, upon which the boy went to Prayāga Tirtha (Allahabad), did penance for the

theft, and threw himself into the holy Ganga. On account of the religious merit, thus gained, lie was born again as a son of the king of Kanakadripura in the Karnataka, when he was given the name Vasuki in course of time, he both married and succeeded to the throne but presently his wife Kanakalekhā discovered that when he was asleep at night his body was infested with maggots. One day when shooting he washed his hands and face in a small and dirty pond, and that night so much of his flesh remained wholesome. He and his wife sought the pool again, here in Vatsaranga, but could not find it. They went to Vasiṣṭha rishi and told none about it, whereon he related the story of the king's previous life and of the religious importance of Vatsagulma Kshetra and showed them the pool. This was the Padma Tirtha, and Vasuki first bathed and was wholly cleansed and then took up his residence near the spot. The new town was called Vasuki-Nagara, but became corrupted into Washim, or Bashim. This derivation of the place name is fantastic, Washim is derived from Vatsagulma, the capital of a branch of the Vākāṭakas which is known as the Vatsagulma branch of the Vākāṭakas. The existence of this branch of the Vākāṭakas was unknown until the discovery of the Washim plates in 1939. The founder of this family was Sarvasena mentioned in the Washim plates as the son of Pravarasena I. Sarvasena made Vatsagulma i.e. Washim, the capital of his kingdom. In course of time the place became a great centre of learning and culture. It was, however, known as a holy place long before it became the capital of Sarvasena who flourished in the period circa A. IV 330-355. He was followed by Vindhya-shakti II. The. Washim plates, which brought existence of this branch to notice for the first time, are dated in the 37th regnal year of Vidhyashakti II. They were issued from the royal capital Vatsagulma. Vindyasena or Vindhyashakti was succeeded by his son Pravarasena II. A Fragmentary inscription issued by Devasena who succeeded to the throne in circa A. D. 450 was issued from Vatsagulma which shows that the city continued to be the capital of the branch to the last. In the time of Harisena, the son of Devasena, it became the capital of a vast empire comprising a large part of the Deccan. Thus, it can be said that it was a royal seat of the Vatsagulma branch of the Vākāṭakas from A. D. 330 to 500 when the son of

Harisena whose name is not known succeeded to the throne in 500 A. D. A reference to Washim is found in Kāvyamīmāṁsā by Rājaśekhara, the celebrated poet and dramatist of the Yāyāvara family who flourished from 875 to 925 A. D. He has mentioned therein Vatsagulma as situated in Vidarbha. But even earlier references to Vatsagulma or Vatsa-gulma are found in Mahabharata and Kamasutra, which in their present form are assignable to a period before the age of the Vākāṭakas. The Karpuramunjari, a play written by Rājaśekhara and staged at Kanauj under the patronage of the Gurjara-Pratiharas also mentions it as situated in the Daksina-patha (Deccan). Vachchhoma (Vatsagulma) was the name of the Prakrit style current in Vidarbha. Washim is derived from Vachchhoma the Prakrit name of Vatsagulma. The Sanskrit treatise Vatsagulmamāhātmya also gives traditional information about this town.

During the middle of the 18th century Washim was the famous centre of cloth production along with Balapur. It is clearly brought out by one of the articles of the treaty of Kanakpur entered between Janoji Bhosle and the Peshwa Madhav Rao after the battle between the two in 1769. The article states that the Bhosles should send annually to the Peshwa cloth manufactured at Washim and Balapur worth Rs. 5,000. A mint was also in existence at Washim. The town was looted by the Pendharis in 1809 along with some other places in Berar.

When in 1768-69, the Peshva attacked the Bhosle, his army had come from Aurangabad through the pass to Washim from which place it moved forward on its expedition. Afterwards it was decided that the Peshva Madhavrav and Janoji Bhosle should meet at Washim and accordingly the terms of the treaty were finalised there, and the treaty was signed at Kanakpur. The temple of Balaji at Washim was constructed by Bhavani Kalu who was the Divan of Sabaji Bhosle.

It may, however, be noted that before the establishment of the Vakataka rule with Washim as their capital, the place was an important centre from the religious point of view, and it even now contains many old temples and tirthas which are revered by the people.

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Appendix II

*Stotra*s in the text with their reference number and their meanings

1. Stotra of Viriñci chanted by Vasiṣṭha- VGM 5.82 and 5.83. It is only 2 verses long.

देव देव नमस्तेऽस्तु त्वया सर्वमिदं ततम् । त्वं गतिः सर्वभूतानां तापहर्ता जगन्मयः ॥५.८२॥

यज्ञानां तपसां चैव फलदोऽसि सदा नृणाम् । ब्रूहि कारुण्यतो मह्यं पृच्छते धर्मसङ्ग्रहम् ॥५.८३॥

Meaning- O god, salute to you. You have expanded this entire (world). You are the resort of all the living beings, you take away the sufferings and you are the world. You always yield consequence to the people for their sacrifices and penances. Please narrate to me the gist of *dharma* with compassion, as I ask you the same.

2. Stotra of Vidhi is chanted by the gods- VGM 5.129-5.134. It is chanted in 6 verses.

त्वमादिदेवः परिपूर्णसत्त्वस्त्वया ततं विश्वमिदं विभाति ।

त्वदाज्ञया देवमनुष्यतिर्यग्दैत्याश्च धर्मं विचरन्ति नित्यम् ॥१२९॥

त्वत्सत्त्वयोदेति लयं प्रयाति स्थितिं भजत्याशु करोति धर्मम् ।

जगत्तमोभूतमिदं महात्मन्न त्वां विजानाति गुणैर्विनष्टम् ॥१३०॥

त्वमेव सर्वस्य निदानभूतस्त्वत्तः समस्तं प्रभवत्यनन्तरम् ।

स्वयं त्वया पालितमात्मयोने मा हिंसितुं भविता तस्य देव ॥१३१॥

त्वमादिमध्यान्तपरावरेषु व्याप्य स्थितस्तेषु न सज्जते भवान् ।

यथा जलस्थं नलिनीदलं जले त्वलिप्तमेवं जगति प्रभो त्वम् ॥१३२॥

कर्ता प्रपाता जगतस्तु हर्ता त्वमस्य मायागुणकर्मयोगैः ।

स्वयं त्वमात्मन्यभिदत्तदृष्टिः सुखेषु दुःखेषु न तेऽस्ति चिन्ता॥१३३॥

त्वया कृतं त्वां न वेत्ति तत्त्वतस्तवास्य विश्वस्य बभूव चान्तरम् ।

अतो जगद्रक्ष महाभयाद्विभो नमोस्तु ते त्वामविदो यथार्थतः॥१३४॥

Meaning- You are the primary god. You are full of strength. This world, expanded by you, looks beautiful. The gods, humans, extra-humans, and demons always perform *dharma* by your order. O great souled, this world, filled with darkness, rises because of your power, is destroyed (because of your power), runs in stability and performs *dharma*. It does not comprehend you with no attributes. You are the primary cause of everything. Everything is born from you afterwards. O the one in the form of *ātman*, o god, please do not destroy whatever you have created. You are covered the beginning, the end, and the middle. But you do not get attached to any of those. O lord, you are untouched like the leaf of lotus in the water. Due to *māya* and the collective attributes and actions, you are the generator, and the destroyer. You have focussed your site on the inner soul. You do not think about the happiness or unhappiness. That which you created yourself, cannot comprehend you. Therefore, protect the world from the great fear. Salute to you. We obtained you in your true nature."

3.   Stotra of Viṣṇu is chanted by the gods- VGM 6.18 to 6.30. The last verse is *phalaśruti*. These are total 13 verses. Again, the verses from 33 to 37 are *phalaśruti*.

नो त्वां विदुर्देवगणा न वेदा नो दानवा दितिसुता न च योगिनस्ते ।

भक्ताः कथञ्चिदपि तेऽन्वहमीड्य भक्त्या ज्ञानेन वा विदुरनन्यगतेन नाथ॥६.१८॥

त्वं केवलं गुणमयैरपि रूपभेदैरुत्पादयस्यखिलमत्सि च पासि विश्वम्॥६.१९॥

मायामयं विफलमाशु विनाशमत्त्वं ज्ञात्वा प्रपञ्चमपि ते भजने प्रवृत्ता ।

हित्वा सुखं सुतकलत्रहिरण्यरूपं वैराग्यभावरसिका हृदि चिन्तयन्ति॥६.२०॥

योगेन भक्तिनिवहेन च योगिनस्त्वां ज्ञानेन सर्वसुखदेन मुकुन्द नित्यम् ।

त्वं जीवभावगतिमुग्रफलां न वेत्सि प्रीणासि कर्मफलमङ्ग ददासि सर्वम् ॥६.२१॥

या ते जडा जननमारणहेतुभूता माया प्रभो विषमवर्णगुणानुरूपा ।

व्याप्तं त्वया जगदिदं न च वेत्ति किञ्चित् सम्मोहितं भ्रमति भूतपते प्रपञ्चे ॥६.२२॥

त्वत्पादपद्मभजने विमुखा नरा ये कुर्वन्ति दुष्कृतमहो न च शं लभन्ते ।

संक्लिश्य जन्मसु पुनः पुनरत्र मर्त्या नित्यं रमारमण ते परितश्चरन्ति ॥६.२३॥

संसारसक्तमनसामिह दुर्लभस्त्वं श्रीवासुदेवभजतां सुलभोऽसि विष्णो ।

तस्मादिमे मुनिवराः सकलं विहाय त्वामेव चेतसि धिया नितरां भजन्ति ॥६.२४॥

स्वर्गस्थिताः सुरवराः सुखभोगलुब्धाः त्वामम्बुजेक्षण तथा न भजन्ति नित्यम् ।

तेनैव दुःखगतिमच्युत ते लभन्ते धन्या नरा भुवि भजन्ति हरिं सुरेभ्यः ॥६.२५॥

हे देव हे भुवनसुन्दर दीनबन्धो नाथाब्जहस्त कमलाप्रिय दानवारे ॥६.२६॥

वैकुण्ठभक्तजनवल्लभ शार्ङ्गपाणे पद्मालयार्चितपदाम्बुज कंसशत्रो ।

दामोदराच्युत मुकुन्द गदाधराच्य नारायणासुरविमर्दन भूतनाथ ॥६.२७॥

श्रीवासुदेव शरणागतपालनाद्रिनाथात्मजाप्रियसुहृत्तम वन्द्यपाद ।

हे मत्स्य कूर्म धृतयज्ञवराहरूप श्रीनारसिंह शरणार्थद वामनेश ॥६.२८॥

हे जामदग्न्य रणपण्डित रावणारे श्रीराम कंसदलनक्षम कृष्ण नाथ ।

हे बौद्ध बुद्धिजनकाखिलधर्ममूल कल्के विकल्परहिताहितमित्रतुल्य ॥६.२९॥

इत्थं सदा पठति यः स्तवनाममालां तं नोपसर्पति कदाचिदघं मनुष्यम् ।

नित्यं पवित्रतनुरुत्तमलोकमन्ते त्वद्भक्तिभावितमनाः स हरे प्रयाति ॥६.३०॥

Meaning- The groups of the gods, the Vedas, the sons of Danu and the sons of Diti do not comprehend you. O master! Every day the devotees worship you with devotion or knowledge and understand you, not by any other means. By your mere form, made with qualities, you generate, enjoy, and protect the entire world. The people who enjoy being detached, understand the worldly existence as full of *māyā*, fruitless and destroyable and incline to serve you. They abandon the pleasure in the form of sons, wife and the gold and think deeply about you. O Mukunda! The devotees always think about you with *yoga*, devotion, and knowledge that yields all the pleasures. You do not understand the strong results of the actions of the living beings. O dear one! You please everyone and give the entire fruit of actions. Your *māyā* is confusing, cause of birth and death and capable of describing the opposite qualities. O the master of the living beings, you encompass this entire world. It is confused and does not understand anything, still it moves. The people who are not interested in serving your lotus-like feet, perform sins and do not attain wellbeing. O the husband of Lakṣmī! The mortals suffer in many lives and always move around you. O Viṣṇu! You are difficult to attain by those who are attached to the worldly matters. You are easily attained by those who serve Vāsudeva. Therefore, these great sages abandon everything and worship you deeply. O the lotus-eyed! The great gods in the heaven, who are inclined towards the comforts, do not worship you in that manner. O Acyuta! Because of that only, they attain the sorrowful condition. The lucky people on the earth worship Hari than the gods. 'O god! O the beautiful one in the world! O the friend of the helpless! O mater! O the lotus-handed! O the husband of Lakṣmī! O the one with the water of donation! O the one dear to the devotees in Vaikuṇṭha! O the bearer of Śārṅga in hand! O the one whose lotus like feet are served by Lakṣmī! O the enemy of Kaṁsa! O Dāmodara! O Acyuta! O Mukunda! O the best Gadādhara! O Nārāyaṇa! O the destroyer of demons! O the master of the living beings! O Vāsudeva! O the protector of those who find resort in you! O the friend of the husband of Pārvatī! O the one with respectable feet! O Matsya! O Kūrma! O the one in the form of a Yajñavarāha! O Nārasiṁha! O the one who yields the fruit to those who take his resort! O

the god in the form of Vāmana! O the son of Jamadagni! O the expert warrior! O the enemy of Rāvaṇa! O Śrīrāma! O Kṛṣṇa who can kill Kaṁsa! O master! O Bauddha! O the origin of all the religions arising from knowledge! O Kalki! O the one without any alteration! O the one comparable to a friend!' The man who always recites this kind of series of names, is never touched by sin. His body is always pure and in the end his mind is full of your devotion. O Hari! He moves forward.

4.   Stotra of Śiva by the gods- VGM 7.32 to 7.52.

देवा ऊचुः।

नमस्ते देवदेवेश नमस्ते जगदीश्वर॥७.३२॥

नमस्ते जगदाधार जगद्रक्षामणे शिव। त्वमेव सर्वभूतानां शास्ता त्वत्तो न चापरः॥७.३३॥

सृष्टिस्थितिविनाशानां कारणं त्वमुमापते । आदिमध्यान्तशून्यस्त्वं गुणैर्जगदहर्निशम्॥७.३४॥

सृजस्यवसि हंस्यग्रे त्वमेकोऽसि न कश्चन । शक्तित्रयं पुरोत्पाद्य मायागुणसमन्वितम्॥७.३५॥

तेन विश्वं त्वया नाथ निर्मितं कल्पनामयम् । मायावशास्त्वसङ्गोऽसि भुक्तभोगो जहासि ताम्॥७.३६॥

तस्याः स्वरूपतः सर्वं सृज्यते स्थिरजंगमम् । सुखदुःखमयं नित्यं क्लेशकर्मपरं जगत्॥७.३७॥

त्वं भिन्नोऽसि महादेव तस्माद्विश्वान्निरामयः । षडूर्मिरहितः शम्भो त्वं जगत्पासि नित्यशः ॥७.३८॥

स्वप्रकृतिसमुद्भूतैर्गुणैर्भासि गुणात्मकः। तत्त्वतो निर्मलः शान्तो गुणातीतोऽसि शङ्कर॥७.३९॥

आत्मारामो निरातङ्को निर्ममो मोहवर्जितः । निरञ्जनो निर्विकारो निर्विकल्पो निरन्तरः ॥७.४०॥

जगदन्तर्गतोऽसि त्वं नैव दृश्यो जनेन च । विश्वभावन विश्वेश विश्वकामप्रपूरक॥७.४१॥

त्वं क्षितिर्धारणाशक्तिर्जलं जीवनमुत्तमम् । दाहकोऽसि सबाह्यान्तः प्राणिनां पालको ह्यसि॥७.४२॥

वायुस्त्वं जगतः प्राणः सदा ह्यन्तर्बहिश्चरः । आकाशरूपो जगतामवकाशप्रदो ह्यसि॥७.४३॥

सूर्यरूपधरस्त्वं हि प्रकाशयसि चित्कालम् । शीतदीधितिरूपेण जगदाह्लादयस्यलम्॥७.४४॥

यजमानतनुस्त्वं च सर्वस्यान्नप्रदो भवान् । एवमष्टतनुः शम्भुः पालयत्यखिलं विभुः॥७.४५॥

योगिनस्त्वां हृदाकाशे धिया पश्यन्ति नित्यशः । न ते क्षमास्तया द्रष्टुं यथाऽस्माभिरुदीक्षितः॥७.४६॥

सदा चञ्चलमानस्का विषयग्रस्तबुद्धयः । न त्वां जानन्ति देवेश कामलोभपरिप्लुताः॥७.४७॥

पिता माता सुहृद् भ्राता ज्ञातिगोत्रं सखा गुरुः । द्रविणं धाम सर्वं च त्वमेवासि च नः प्रभो॥७.४८॥

त्वत्तो नाभ्यधिकः कश्चित् कुतोऽन्यस्त्वत्समोऽस्ति वा । भेदाभेदपरिभ्रान्त्या मायया मोहितं

जगत्॥७.४९॥

तेन त्वां तत्त्वतो वेत्ति न शिवं शिवदं परम् । न कर्मणा न सन्तत्या न दानेन सदाशिव॥७.५०॥

निःश्रेयसपदं देवं विदुस्त्यागेन नो हर । त्वत्कृपालेशलभ्येन ज्ञानेन गतहेतुना॥७.५१॥

भक्त्या चानन्यया देव विदुस्त्वां त्वत्परायणाः । योऽसि सोऽसि नमस्तुभ्यं पाहि नो महतो भयात्

॥७.५२॥

Meaning- The gods said, "O the great god of the gods, salutations to you. O the master of the worlds, salutations to you. O the support of the world, o the jewel of protection of the world, o Śiva, salutations to you. You are the ruler of all the living beings. There is no one superior to you. O the husband of Umā, you are the reason of generation, stability, and destruction. You are the beginning, the centre, the ending, and the emptiness. With the *guṇa*s, you generate, protect, and destroy the world every day. You are the only one in front, and no one else. O master! In ancient times, having generated three Śaktis in the form of *māyā* and *guṇa*s, you have created the world full of ideas with that. You are under the control of *māyā*, you are uninterrupted, and you leave her when you have enjoyed the pleasures. By her nature only, all the stationary and moving things are generated. The entire world is full of happiness and distress and always gives hardship. O Mahādeva! You are

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different than that world and without distortion. O Śambhu, you are devoid of six desires. You always protect the world. You appear to have *guṇa*s due to the *guṇa*s generated by your nature. O Śaṅkara! You are pure by nature, peaceful, and beyond the *guṇa*s. You have a beautiful inner principle, you are devoid of confusion, you are selfless, you are devoid of greed. You are the Supreme Being. You are formless. You are beyond alteration. You are continuous. You have entered inside the world and never seen by people. O the creator of world! O the master of the world! O the fulfiller of all the desires! You are the earth. You are the power of retention. You are water. You are the best life. You are burning from outside and inside. You are indeed the protector of the living beings. You are the wind- the life of the world. You always move internally and externally. You are in the form of sky. You are the one who gives space to the world. You bear the form of the Sun and enlighten the inner self. You please the world with the moon. You are the body of the host. You give food to everyone. In this way, Śiva in the eight forms protects the entire earth. The *yogi*s always see you in the space of the heart. They are not able to see you like we see you. O god! The people who are always unstable and have their intellect full of lust, do not comprehend you as they are full of desires and greed. O lord! You are our father, the mother, the friend, the brother, the relative, the family, the friend, the preacher, the wealth, the lustre, and everything. There is no one greater than you and like you. The world is confused due to *māyā* because of the jumbled difference and non-difference. That is why the devotee understands you in depth. There is nothing more auspicious or yielding auspicious. O Sadāśiva! O Hara! You- the giver of *niḥśreyasa*- can be understood not by action, not by progeny, not by donation and not by knowledge. O god! The devotees fathom you by the knowledge gained by your small favour and your undistracted devotion. Whoever you are, salutations to you. Protect me from great fear.

5.   Stotra of Pārvatī by the gods- VGM 7.53 to 7.59

त्वमादिशक्तिः परमात्मशक्तिः सायुज्यमुक्तिर्भवती प्रवृत्तिः ।

संसारमूर्तिर्नन्तकामपूर्तिस्त्वं पापतापार्तिहरैषशक्तिः ॥७.५४॥

मायेति केचन जनाः प्रवदन्ति देवीं स्वाहां स्वधां च मनुजाः पितृदेवतृप्तिम् ।

योगात्मिकामखिलयोगिजनाश्च यां वै तां त्वां नताः स्म महतोऽद्य भयाच्च रक्ष ॥७.५५॥

दिव्ये निदानमसि सर्वचराचरस्य त्वं ज्ञानदाऽसि कृतिनां स्वसुखाप्तिहेतुः ।

विद्या त्वमस्यखिलबोधकारी वरिष्ठे नौर्भक्तसङ्घतरणाय भवाम्बुधौ त्वम् ॥७.५६॥

न त्वां हरिर्न च हरो न विधिर्न चान्यो वेत्ति स्वयं त्वमसि सर्वकलाप्रकाशा ।

नान्ये विदुः सुरवराः पतगाश्च नागा मर्त्याश्च देवि मुनयो विदितार्थसारा ॥७.५७॥

त्वं केवलानुभवभक्तिमताऽसि गम्या नम्याऽसि जीवनिकरैरजिते नताः स्मः ।

भद्रे शिवे भगवति त्रिजगत्पवित्रे नित्ये निमग्नमहिमेऽनिमिषार्चिताङ्घ्रे ॥७.५८॥

नारायणानुभविते ऽम्भसि योगनिद्रे सन्निद्रिताऽङ्डमतीनिह जीवनीये ।

त्वं वै समस्तजगतां परमार्तिहन्त्री गौरि प्रसादसुमुखी भव रक्ष चास्मान् ॥७.५९॥

Meaning- You are the primordial power, you are the great power of the Supreme Being, you are the *sāyujya* type of liberation. You are the initiator. You are the incarnation of the world. You are the completion of desire for those who are saluting. You are the power that drives away the sin and the sufferings. All the yogic people call the goddess in the form of *yoga* as *māyā*. Some people call the sufficer of the ancestors and gods as *svāhā*, *svadhā*. We are saluting you who is in that form and protect us from great fear. O the divine one! You are the primary cause of all the moving and non-moving world. You give knowledge to those who act, and you are the cause of obtaining happiness. O the greatest one! You preach everyone. You are a boat to cross the group of the devotees in the ocean of world. The lord Viṣṇu, the lord Śiva, the lord Brahmā or any other one does not understand you. You bring all the arts in light. O goddess! The other great gods, the birds, the

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serpents, and the mortals who know the essence of principle, do not comprehend you. You are fathomed only by the one who only believe in experience and full of devotion. O the non-conquerable! You are worthy of salutations by the groups of living beings. We salute you. O Bhadrā! O Śivā! O Bhagavatī! O the pious one in three worlds! O Nityā! O the one whose greatness is covered! O the one whose feet are worshipped by the gods! O the one practising *yoganidrā* in the water affected by Nārāyaṇa! O the one who revitalises those sleeping fools! You are the destroyer of the great sorrow of all the worlds. O Gaurī! You become pleasant faced and protect us.

6.   Stotra of Śiva by Vatsa- VGM 8.49 to 8.69

वत्स उवाच-

नमः शिवाय महते भूतानां पतये हर ॥८.४९॥

नमो वेदान्तवेद्याय वेदाधाराय शङ्कर । ज्ञानैकलभ्यवपुषे नमस्ते ज्ञानचक्षुषे ॥८.५०॥

नमस्त इषवे देव नमस्ते रुद्रमन्यवे । बाहुभ्यां ते नमस्तीव्र नमो नित्याय मीढुषे ॥८.५१॥

हिरण्यबाहवे शम्भो हिरण्यवपुषे नमः । अनादिनिधनानन्त शक्तयेऽनन्तमायिने ॥८.५२॥

अनन्तगुणरत्नाय पार्वतीपतये नमः । नमो निर्गुणरूपाय मायया गुणरूपिणे ॥८.५३॥

मायामयाय शर्वाय मायाविग्रहधारिणे । अमायिने नमस्तुभ्यं लीलया विश्वकारिणे॥८.५४॥

अरूपबहुरूपाय रूपातीताय ते नमः । निर्मलाय नमस्तुभ्यं भक्तिगम्याय ते नमः ॥८.५५॥

करुणेशाय नाथाय नमः कारुण्यवारिधे । चित्रप्रपञ्चदूराय प्रपञ्चातीतमूर्तये ॥८.५६॥

संसारसारसत्त्वाय नमः संसारघातिने । अद्वैतामृतबोधाय बोधगम्याय ते नमः ॥८.५७॥

नित्यानित्यस्वरूपाय सर्वविग्रहधारिणे । पञ्चेन्द्रिययस्वरूपाय पञ्चतन्मात्ररूपिणे ॥८.५८॥

पञ्चप्राणपरेशाय पञ्चावयवसाक्षिणे । पञ्चवक्त्र नमो नित्यं व्याप्यव्यापकरूपिणे॥८.५९॥

क्षित्यादिपञ्चभूतानां चेतनागुणकारिणे । साक्षात् त्वं सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपोऽसि जगन्मय ॥८.६०॥

जीवभावत्वमापन्नो न जीवसुखदुःखभुक् । भूतैर्न ज्ञायसे नाथ स्वभ्रमभ्रान्तचेतसैः ॥८.६१॥

नानायोनिगता जीवाः स्वस्वकर्मफलाशिनः । न त्वां विदुरजं मूढा जन्ममृत्युजराकुलाः ॥८.६२॥

देहगेहसुतवित्तकलत्रचित्तवञ्चितविनष्टबुद्धयः ।

दानमानपरिवर्द्धितमोहास्त्वत्स्मृतिं जहुरुमाधवबालाः ॥८.६३॥

सर्वज्ञाननिधे शम्भो समस्त्वं सर्वजन्तुषु । वैषम्यं त्वयि देवेश नास्ति भूतपते मनाक् ॥८.६४॥

तथाऽपि भजतां प्रीत्या वर्तसे प्रेमकातरः । त्वन्मनास्तत्त्वतो वेत्ति ज्ञाननिष्ठो न चान्यथा ॥८.६५॥

ब्रह्मादयो न ते तत्त्वं जानन्ति परमार्थतः । मादृशास्ते कथं वेत्ति पारं गुणमयस्य च ॥८.६६॥

योऽसि सोऽसि न मे चिन्ता नमस्तेऽस्तु सदाशिव । निर्द्वन्द्वास्तु सदा भक्तिर्मम त्वच्चरणाम्बुजे

॥८.६७॥

न नाथामि पदं विष्णोर्न विधातुर्न वज्रिणः । न सार्वभौमतां नाथ नामरत्वं च दुष्करम् ॥८.६८॥

त्वां साक्षात्कर्तुमीशान यत्नस्तपसि मे कृतः । तपसा दर्शनं प्राप्तं तव तीव्रेण शङ्कर ॥

कालेन बहुना कामश्चिन्तितः पूर्णतां गतः ॥८.६९॥

Meaning- Vatsa said, "O Hara! Salutations to Śiva- the great master of the living beings. O Śaṅkara! Salutations to the one who is understood by Vedanta and the base of Vedas. Salutations to him whose form is comprehended only by knowledge and whose eye is in the form of knowledge. Salutations to the anger of the Rudra. O the sharp one! Salutations to you with two arms. Salutations to the eternal one. O Śambhu with the golden arms! Salutation to the one with golden body. O the one with no beginning, no death, and no end! (Salutations) to the strength and the magic of the endless one. Salutations to the jewel of endless qualities and the husband of Pārvatī. Salutations to the one

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in the abstract form and to the one in the concrete form due to *māyā*. Salute to you- full of *māyā*, to Śarva, to the one who bears the outer form due to *māyā*, to the one devoid of *māyā* and to the one who has created this world easily. Salute to you who is formless but is seen in various forms and is beyond the form. Salute to you who is without dirt and to the one who is understood by devotion. Salute to the kind god, the master and to the ocean of kindness, to the one distant from the beautiful world and whose form is beyond the world. Salute to the one with the strength of the world and the destroyer of the world. Salute to you who preaches the elixir of non-dualism, who is fathomable only by knowledge, who has the *nitya* and *anitya* forms, who bears all the forms, who has the form of five sense organs, who has the form of five elements, who is the great master of five *prāṇa*s, who is the onlooker of five limbs. O five-faced! Always (salute to) the one in the form of *vyāpya* and *vyāpaka*; to the one who generates the quality of liveliness in the elements like the earth etc. O the one in the form of the world! You are really in the form of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. You have attained the form of the living beings, but you do not experience the happiness and sorrows of the living beings. O master! The living beings whose minds are confused, do not understand you. The living beings who are seen if different births, who consume the consequence of their own action; those fools do not understand you as they are confused by the birth, the death, and the old age. O the husband of Umā! Those innocent ones whose intellect is destroyed due to body, house, son, money, wife, and mind; whose confusion has increased due to donation and respect; abandon your impressions. O Śambhu, the treasurer of all knowledge! You think equally for all the living beings. O the great god! O the master of the living beings! There is not a slight inequality in you. Even then you mad due to affection in case of people who are affectionate about you. The person who has his mind in you, or a knowledgeable person understands you, not anyone else. How can someone like me understand your form as you are full of *guṇa*s? Whoever you are, you are like that. I do not worry. O Sadāśiva, salutations to you! May my devotion towards your lotus-like feet always be in harmony. I do not wish for the position of lord Viṣṇu, not of the creator or not of Indra. O master! Neither

do I wish for the sovereignty, nor for the difficult immortality. O Īśāna, I have tried hard to penance for your actual sight. O Śaṅkara, due to the severe penance, I have seen you. The desire for which I had wished, has become complete after a long time".

Then after some verses, the *phalaśruti* is written in two verses.

त्वया मे यत् कृतं स्तोत्रं महापातकनाशनम् ॥८.९७॥

ज्ञानसारमिदं नाम पवित्रं भुवि दुर्लभम् । त्रिकालं यः पठेन्नित्यं सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥८.९८॥

Meaning- "The *stotra*, which I have composed for you, which takes away the sin, is pious, the gist of knowledge and rare on the earth. The one who chants it thrice a day, is free from all the sins".

7.   Stotra of Śaṅkara as Karuṇeśvara by Vimala brahmin- VGM 10.33 to 10.36. It is only 4 verses long.

विमल उवाच-

अलौकिकगते शम्भो सर्वज्ञ करुणेश्वर । इन्द्रियाणामधिष्ठातर्नमस्तुभ्यममायिने॥

नित्यानन्दस्वरूपाय सदा शान्तस्वरूपिणे ॥१०.३३॥

योगिने ज्ञानगम्याय परमार्थस्वरूपिणे । एकस्त्वं न द्वितीयोऽसि नानात्वं मूढकल्पना ॥१०.३४॥

शुक्तौ रौप्यभ्रमो यद्द्रज्जौ सर्वपरिश्रमः । तद्वन्मिथ्याभ्रमो नाथ त्वयि विश्वस्य केवलः ॥१०.३५॥

न तर्कैरवगम्योऽसि नागमैर्न प्रदर्शनैः । भक्त्या केवलया गम्यस्त्वं नृणां नान्यसाधनैः ॥१०.३६॥

Meaning- Vimala said, "O Śambhu! O the one in the extra-worldly form! O the knower of all! O the kind god! Salute to you- the supporter of the sense organs, to the one without *māyā*, to the one who always has the form of eternal happiness, to the one who is in the form of peace, who is a *yogin*, who is understood by knowledge, the one who is in the form of great principle. You are the one. You have no second form. Multiplicity is a foolish idea. O master! The only false illusion of the world in you is like the illusion of silver in case of a pearl, like the illusion of a snake in case of a rope. You are not understood

by the logic or the scriptures or the extravaganza. The people can know you only by the devotion, and not by other means".

8.   Stotra of Cāmuṇḍā by Kṛṣṇaśarmā Brahmin- VGM 10.98- 10.102.

द्विज उवाच-

आदिशक्ति महामाये चामुण्डे मुण्डघातिनि । नमस्तुभ्यं जगन्मातर्भक्तानामभयप्रदे ॥१०.९८॥

शुम्भासुरवधोद्युक्ते निशुम्भवधकारिणि । सर्वदैत्यकुलाराते नमोऽनन्तवरप्रदे ॥१०.९९॥

मातर्नमामि गिरिजे वरदे वरण्ये शर्वप्रिये प्रणमतामनिशं शरण्ये ।

दुर्गे भवार्णवनिमग्नगतेऽन्नपूर्णे कात्यायनि प्रतिपदं कुरु मेऽनुकम्पाम् ॥१०.१००॥

यदा चण्डमुण्डप्रचण्डादिदैत्यैः कृतोपप्लवे देवमर्त्येषु चण्डि ।

तदा तान्निहत्याशु सर्वत्र सर्वे सुरा मानवाः स्वस्थचित्ताः कृतास्ते ॥१०.१०१॥

तथैवात्र ये त्वां भजन्त्येवव भक्त्या प्रपन्नानये लब्धकामान् कुरुष्व ।

निदानं नतानां भव त्वं न चान्या भवानि त्वदङ्घ्रिस्मृतिर्मुक्तिहेतुः ॥१०.१०२॥

Meaning- The brahmin said, "O the primordial power! O Mahāmāyā! O Cāmuṇḍā! O the destroyer of Muṇḍa! O the mother of the world! Salute to you! O the resort of the devotees! O the one inclined to kill demon Śumbha! O the killer of Niśumbha! O the enemy pf entire family of demons! O the giver of endless boon! Salutations. O mother! O Girijā! O Varadā! O the best one! O Śarvapriyā! O the constant resort of those who bow down! I salute. O Durgā! O the resort of those who are drowned in the ocean like world! O Kātyāyanī! Show kindness to me at every step. O Caṇḍī! When the demons like Caṇḍa, Muṇḍa and Pracaṇḍa etc created a havoc amongst the gods and the humans, that time you made all the gods and humans calm by killing them instantly. In the same way, fulfil the desires of those who worship you devotedly. You be

the primary cause of the polite ones. No other can do that. O Bhavānī! Meditating upon your feet is the cause of liberation".

9. Stotra of Śaṅkara by Nīlakaṇṭha brahmin- VGM 11.39-11.46

नीलकण्ठ उवाच ।

देवदेव गिरिजापते विभो भस्मभूषिततनो सदाशिव ।

कामदाहकर कामपूरक प्रार्थितार्थद परार्थदायक ॥११.३९॥

नागभूषण नगात्मजाप्रिय क्षेमकारक जगत्त्रयात्मक ।

भाललोचन विषादनाद्भुतक्रीडनार्दितचराचर प्रभो ॥११.४०॥

चन्द्रचूड मृड मारमर्दन स्वार्थपण्डित वृषेन्द्रवाहन ।

वामदेव भव भर्ग शङ्कर त्र्यक्ष रक्ष जगदाकुलं भयात् ॥११.४१॥

पापशातन विपद्विनाशन श्रीविवर्धन विकल्पभेदन ।

मन्दबोधकर भूतभावन श्रान्तविश्रयण पाहि मां शिव ॥११.४२॥

दानवान्तकर दोषहारक श्रीसमर्पक मनोभवान्तक ।

देवदानववरिष्ठ कण्टकच्छेदकार्तिहर पाहि मां शिव ॥११.४३॥

भूतनाथ भवभीतिभञ्जन भ्रान्तिमारण भवाब्धितारण ।

खानिलानलजलावनिरविक्षीणदीधिtitतनो शिवाव माम् ॥११.४४॥

मङ्गलं शिव इति प्रभो नु ते नाम भक्तजन पापमोचकम् ।

तारकं दुरितगोत्रभेदकं को न ईरयति वाचि दुर्लभम् ॥११.४५॥

त्र्यक्ष वीक्ष्य कृपया निजं जनं दुर्गतं जगति कर्मभावितम् ।

मामनागसमनन्यमानसं प्रापयाशु पदवीं निजां हर ॥११.४६॥

Meaning- Nīlakaṇṭha said, "O the god of the gods! O the husband of Girijā! O the master! O the one whose body is adorned with the ashes! O Sadāśiva! O the one who burnt the cupid! O the fulfiller of desires! O the giver of the desired things! O the giver of the great things! O the one adorned with a snake! O the beloved of the daughter of the mountain! O the one who creates a well-being! O the one in the form of three worlds! O the one with an eye on the forehead! O the poison-eater! O the one who has destroyed the moving and non-moving world with his incredible dance! O Prabhu! O the one with a moon on the head! O Mṛda! O the killer of the cupid! O the scholar of the knowledge about soul! O the one having a seat of a bullock! O Vāmadeva! O Bhava! O Bharga! O Śaṅkara! O the three-eyed! Protect the world from fears. O the destroyer of sins! O the destroyer of the calamities! O the multiplier of the wealth! O the destroyer of duality! O the preacher of the dumb! O the past and present! O the resort of the tired ones! O Śiva! Protect me! O the slayer of the demons! O the sweeper of *doṣa*s! O the one like prosperity! O the killer of Cupid! O the greatest among the gods and the demons! O the destroyer of the hurdles! O the one who drives away despair! O Śiva! Protect me. O the master of the living beings! O the breaker of the fear of the world! O the destroyer of illusions! O the boat of the ocean-world! O Śiva having the body as the sky, the wind, the fire, the water, the earth, the Sun, and the moon! Protect me. O master! Your pious name frees the devotees from sins. Who will not utter it which is the protector, and destroyer of the sins? O the three-eyed! O Hara! Having glanced at your own man, i. e., me. Who has no other resort than you, who is in calamity and is tied in the world with *karman*, quickly take me to your own place".

10.   Stotra of Narasiṁha by Prahlāda- VGM 14.9 to 14.20

प्रह्लाद उवाच ।

नृहरे तव नामचिन्तनं भविनां सिद्धिकरं निरन्तरम् ॥

यदि जन्मसु चार्जितं महत्सुकृतं तत्सुफलं नृणां भवेत् ॥१४.९॥

न तवास्ति सखा न वा रिपुर्भगवंस्त्वं गुणसङ्गवर्जितः ।

विषमा तव भूतसङ्गता ननु माया परितो दुरत्यया ।

अत एव तया विमोहितो न भजत्यन्यविलोचनो हि सः ॥१४.१०॥

समता तव यद्यपि प्रभो न च वैषम्यलवो हि कुत्रचित् ।

गुणतो जनता जडा हरे विषमं पश्यति न समं कदा ॥१४.११॥

खमरुज्जलनाम्बुमेदिनीसमवायेन शरीरमन्दिरम् ।

परिनिर्मितमत्र ते कला विशति प्राणपरा विशेषतः ॥१४.१२॥

सहसानुसमं हि चेष्टते जगदेतत् खलु जीवमालया ॥१४.१३॥

यदि वात्र दिवानिशं मुदा रमते केवलमिन्द्रियानुगम् ।

बहुदुःखपरम्परा न तं परितः क्लेशसहं जहाति वै ॥१४.१४॥

मलिनत्वमुपैति कर्मणा धनदारात्मजगेहहेतुना ।

कुरुते विविधं फलेच्छया परितः संशयहेतुमीहते ॥१४.१५॥

अभिमानमदात्तचेतनो न च ते नाम गृणात्यहो जडः ।

न तवाङ्घ्रिसरोजसेवया हरते स्वां जडतामतर्किताम् ॥१४.१६॥

भजताभयं ददासि भो इति मत्वा भजने गतं मनः ।

मम देव गुरुद्रुहानुगं न च तद्दोषफलं भजत्यहो ॥१४.१७॥

अखिलानि हिनस्त्यघानि वा तव नामस्मृतिरत्र केवला ।

सकलेन्द्रियहेतुसेवनान्महदेनः क्षणतोऽपि नश्यति ॥१४.१८॥

अपराधिजनं बतानतं स्वहिताचारविचारविच्युतम् ।

तव भक्तमितो हि रक्ष मां नय तात मम मुक्तिमुत्तमाम् ॥१४.१९॥

हर मे भवबन्धनं पितुः न च किञ्चिदिहास्ति साधनम् ।

अमुना तव हेलना कृता गतिमिष्टां लभतां तथाप्यसौ ॥१४.२०॥

Meaning- Prahlāda said, "O Nṛhari! Uttering your name always yields success for the mortals. If there is a big merit earned by the people in many births, it will be fruitful. You have no friend and no enemy. O Lord! You are devoid of the attachment of qualities. Your *māyā* attached to the living beings is around everywhere, uneven, and unavoidable. Only because of this, the person confused by that is carried away and he does not see anything else. O Lord! Even when there is equality and no inequality is observed, the dumb subjects due to qualities, perceives everything as unequal, and not equal. The body-temple is well created by the mixture of sky, wind, fire, water, and earth. Your part in the form of life enters it specially. By the succession of the living beings, this world works in harmony. Even then it engrosses itself happily day and night and follows only the sensory organs. A series of deep sorrows does not abandon him as he tolerates the sufferings. (A man) attains impurity due to wealth, wife, son, house. Due to the desire of consequence, he feels doubtful. The ignorant one, due to the pride, does not utter your name. He does not drive away his own illogical ignorance by the service of your lotus-like feet. By thinking that you give refuge to those who praise you, my mind is busy praising you. O Lord! I do not experience the ill-consequence of *gurudruha*. All the sins are destroyed only by remembering your name. Even the great sin is destroyed in one moment caused by all the sensory organs. O Father! Protect me, your devotee, who is at fault, polite, deviated from his own beneficial behaviour and thoughts and offer me the highest liberation. Take

away the worldly ties of my father. There is no instrument for that. He has dishonoured you. Still, he may progress on the desired path".

11. Stotra of Śiva by Nandī- VGM 14.50 -14.52

जय जय शिव शम्भो भीम भर्ग त्रिनेत्र जय जय करुणेश स्फूर्तिद् श्रीमहेश ।

हर मृड भव गङ्गागौरीकान्तार्तिहन्तर्जय जय नतदत्तार्थाद्य मामीश पाहि ॥१४.५०॥

जय जय शितिकण्ठ ज्ञानद ज्ञानगम्य प्रिय समुपनयाद्य स्वं पदं मामितोऽग्र्य ।

विविधिमतिविनिष्टं स्वार्थपुष्टं सुनष्टं क्षणमिह भवदुःखं को नु सह्येन्निकृष्टम् ॥१४.५१॥

निखिलभुवनपाल श्रीमहाकाल काल श्रितजनपरिपाल स्वामिविघ्नेशबाल ।

रिपुदमनकराल क्षेमदारातिकूलं झटिति नय सुदूरं भो नमस्ते नमस्ते ॥१४.५२॥

Meaning- Victory to Śiva! Victory to Śambhu! Victory to Bhīma! Victory to Bharga! Victory to Trinetra! Victory to Karuṇeśa! Victory to Sphūrtida! Victory to Maheśa! Victory to Hara! Victory to Mṛda! Victory to Bhava! Victory to the husband of Gaṅgā and Gaurī! Victory to the destroyer of sufferings! Victory to the one who gives the objects of desire to the person who has bowed down! O master! Protect me. Victory to Śitikaṇṭha! Victory to the one who gives knowledge! Victory to the one who is fathomed by knowledge! O dear one! Take me to your place from here onwards. Who can stand up the sorrow of the world which ha been destroyed by various thoughts, which is nourished by selfishness, and which has been destroyed? O the protector of all the worlds! O Śrīmahākāla! O Kāla! O the protector of the refuged people! O the one whose son is the destroyer of the calamities! O the ferocious one in suppressing the enemies! Take away the calamity on the wellbeing and the family! Salutations to you! Salutations to you!"

12. Viṣṇu is praised by the Sun-God- VGM 21.69 - 21.72.

रविरुवाच-

नमो नमस्ते भवनाशनाय नमो नमस्ते सुरनायकाय ।

नमो नमस्ते रिपुमारणाय नमो नमस्तेऽखिलपालनाय ॥२१.६९॥

रमापते सर्वजगन्निवास दयानिधे सर्वसुखैकहेतो ।

त्वमेव चादिर्न तवास्ति चान्तस्त्वमेव सर्वस्य निदानमाद्यम् ॥२१.७०॥

अणोरणीयान्महतो महीयांस्त्वमेव ते पादयुगं नमामि ।

त्वं यज्ञरूपोऽखिलयज्ञभोक्ता फलप्रदाता तपसां त्वमेव ॥२१.७१॥

सत्वानुकूलं किल कर्म कार्यं नृभिर्न चान्यत्तमसाऽभिभूतम् ।

सत्कर्मणा त्वं निजभक्तगम्यस्ततो हि सत्कर्मगते नमस्ते ॥२१.७२॥

Meaning- The Sun-God said, "Salutations to you- the destroyer of the cycle of the births! Salutations to you- the leader of the gods! Salutations to you- who kills the enemies! Salutations to you- who protects everyone! O the husband of Ramā! O the one residing all over the world! O the ocean of kindness! O the cause of all the comforts! You are the beginning. You have no ending. You are the primary cause of everything. You are smaller than the atom and bigger than the big ones. I salute to your pair of feet. You are the form of sacrifice. You are the consumer of the fruit of all the sacrifices. You are the only giver of fruit of the penances. The people should carry out the actions which show the features of *sattva* and not those which show the features of *tamas*. You are understood by your devotee by good deeds. Therefore, O the one giving fruit to the good things, salute to you!

13. Viṣṇu is praised by the brahmins- VGM 27.69 - 27.71.

नमो यज्ञरूपाय विश्वार्तिहन्त्रे सुरेशाय दिव्यात्मनेऽचिन्त्यधाम्ने ।

महादैत्यगोत्रच्छिदे धर्मगोप्रे प्रवक्रे श्रुतीनां नमस्ते नमस्ते ॥२७.६९॥

हरे मापते भक्तचिन्त्येष्टदात्रे जगन्मङ्गलायात्तहस्तारये च ।

स्वमायाविलासार्थमेतत्समस्तं स्वयं पालयित्रे नमस्तेऽस्तु विष्णो ॥२७.७०॥

निदानं प्रपञ्चस्य मुख्यं त्वमेव जनो रक्षितस्त्वां विनाऽन्यं न याति ।

अतः कारणात्त्वां भजामः समन्ताद्द्विभो रक्ष रक्षोऽग्रभीतेः स्वभक्तान् ॥२७.७१॥

Meaning- Salute to the one in the form of sacrifice; to the destroyer of the sorrows of the world; to the King of the gods; to the lustrous one; to the one with infinite brightness, to the slayer of the big family of demons, to the secret keeper of *dharma*, to the orator of the Vedas, salute to you, salute to you. O Hari! O the husband of Lakṣmī! Salute to you- the giver of the desired things to the devotees, to the one having the wheel in hand for well-being of the world, to the one who is protecting all this for the extravaganza of own *māyā*. O Viṣṇu! Salute to you. You are the only main primary cause of this world. The man protected by you does not go to anyone without you. Therefore, we worship you wholeheartedly. O Lord! Protect your devotees from all sides who are frightened of the ferocious demons".

14. We come across only one line praise in VGM 29.14. It is neither a *maṅgala* nor a stotra.

नमोस्तु ते शङ्कर शान्तमूर्ते शिवापते सर्वगते पवित्र ।

नतावने पावन धावमानस्त्वं पासि सर्वं विदधासि हंसि ॥२९.१४॥

Meaning- Salute to you O Śaṅkara! O having a peaceful form! O the husband of Lakṣmī! O omnipresent! O pious one! O the protector of the devotee! O purifier! Running, you protect everything, stabilize, and destroy.

15. Stotra of Śarva by Lokapāla- VGM 30.45 - 30.54.

लोकपाला ऊचुः ।

नमस्तु वेदधाराय वेदगर्भाय ते नमः। नमस्ते ज्ञानसाराय ज्ञानदात्रे नमो नमः ॥३०.४५॥

सृष्टिस्थितिविनाशानां हेतवे गुणमूर्तये । नमोऽनन्तशरीराय पशूनां पतये नमः ॥३०.४६॥

नमस्ते भूतनाथाय विभूतिधवलाय च । पञ्चवक्राय देवाय त्रिनेत्राय नमो नमः ॥३०.४७॥

नमः कर्पूरगौराय दशहस्ताय ते नमः । त्वं यज्ञस्त्वं तपः सर्वं सत्कर्म त्वं सदाशिव ॥३०.४८॥

सर्वेषां फलदाता त्वं सर्वान्तर्यामिणे नमः । सर्वलोकमयः शम्भो सर्वदेवमयाय च ॥३०.४९॥

नमस्तुभ्यं विरूपाक्ष विश्वमूर्ते नमो नमः ॥३०.५०॥

त्वमर्कस्त्वं चन्द्रस्त्वमसि जगतामन्तरचरः समीरस्त्वं वह्निर्जलमसि नभस्त्वं वसुमती ।

त्वमात्मा देवानामसुरमनुजानां पतिरसि प्रियोऽसि त्वं नान्यस्तिसृषु गुणवृत्तिष्वभयदः ॥३०.५१॥

त्वदन्यः को मारं दमयितुमजस्त्रं प्रभुरभूत् त्वया दत्तं सर्वो भजति सुखदुःखादिकमपि ।

त्वमम्बा सर्वेषां परमजनकस्त्वं जनिमतां सुहृद् बन्धुर्वित्तं त्वमसि परमं दैवतमहो ॥३०.५२॥

न ते कश्चिद्धन्यः परमपुरुषस्त्वं पशुपते हरिस्त्वत्सेवातो जगदवनहेतौ प्रभुरभूत् ।

विधिर्विरंवारं तव चरणसंसेवनतया सृजत्यद्धा लोकान्हरति निमिषात्तानपि हरः ॥३०.५३॥

अतस्त्वन्नः सर्वास्तव चरणपद्येष्ववनतान् स्वभक्तानस्मान्वै निजकरुणया पाहि शिव ते ।

स्तुतिः स्तोता स्तव्यस्त्वमसि न च स्तव्यस्तवनकृत्ततस्तुभ्यं कुर्मः स्मरहर नमः केवलमिदम्

॥३०.५४॥

Meaning- The Lokapālas said, "Salutations to the support of the Vedas. Salutations to you, who is made of Vedas. Salute to the essence of knowledge. Salute to the giver of knowledge, to the purpose of the creation, stability, and destruction, to the incarnation of qualities. Salutation to the one having an

endless body. Salute to the King of the animals. Salute to the Lord of the living beings and to the one who is white because of ashes. Salute to the three-eyed god. Salute to the one who is white like the camphor. Salute to you having ten hands. You are the sacrifice. You are the penance. O Sadāśiva! You are all the good actions. You give fruit to everyone. Salute to you, who is inside everyone. O Śambhu! All the worlds is your form. Salute to the one made up from all the gods. O Virūpākṣa! O Viśvamūrti! Salutations. You are the Sun, you are the moon, you move inside everyone in the world. You are the wind. You are the fire. You are the water. You are the sky. You are prosperous. You are the soul of the gods. You are the Lord of demons and the humans. You are favourite. There is no one like you giving resort in all the three *guṇavṛtti*. Who else other than you could control the cupid? All the people go through whatever happiness or despair you give to them. You are the mother of all. You are the great father of all the life-bearers. You are the friend, the relative, the money and the great god. You do not bow down to anyone. O the master of the animals! You are the great man. Because Hari served you, he was able to protect the world. Due to serving your feet again and again, the Creator indeed creates the worlds. And even Lord Hara destroys them in a moment. O Śiva! Therefore, protect us- all your devotees- bowed on your feet, with your compassion. The praise, the bard and the subject of praise is you. You are not the composer of the praise. Therefore, O the killer of the cupid! That is why we bow down to you".

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The 24th *adhyāya* from the VGM Stating the Ritual of Satī.

सन्निधं भर्तृमरणं ज्ञात्वा तत्स्त्री पतिव्रता । अनश्नती तदा तिष्ठेत्तत्समीपं धृतव्रता ॥ २४.७० ॥

विहाय ममतां सर्वां देहगेहसुतात्मिकाम् । दानानि विधिवद्द्द्याद्द्विप्राणां भोजनानि च ॥ २४.७१ ॥

सौभाग्यवस्तुजातं च स्त्रीभो दद्याद्यथविधि । उत्क्रान्तसमये धेनुं दद्याद्द्विप्राय दक्षिणाम् ॥ २४.७२ ॥

यमद्वारे महाघोरे दुस्तरामकृतात्मभिः । नदीं वैतरणीं तर्तुमस्याः पुच्छावलम्बनात् ॥ २४.७३ ॥

गोमयेनोपलिप्तायां भूमौ कुशतिलान्क्षिपेत् । धौतवस्त्रान्वितायां च तं निधाय स्वबन्धुभिः ॥ २४.७४ ॥

सुस्नाता वनिता तस्य धौतवस्त्रावृता सती । सौभाग्यद्रव्यसंयुक्ता सर्वाभरणमण्डिता ॥ २४.७५ ॥

न दीना नान्यचित्ता सा न चैवाश्रुमुखी शुभा । सङ्कल्प्य सकलं देहं विष्णवे भर्तृरूपिणे ॥ २४.७६ ॥

आदिदेवो जगन्नाथो वासुदेवो दयानिधिः । सम्मुखोऽस्तु परं चान्ते भर्तुश्च मम चैव हि ॥ २४.७७ ॥

इत्युक्त्वा जलमादाय पुनश्चैव हरिं स्मरेत् । अनेन प्रीयतां देवो देहदानेन मापतिः ॥ २४.७८ ॥

भर्तृरूपी शुभाँल्लोकान्पतिर्यातु मया सह । तज्जलं निक्षिपेद्भूमौ सतिलं कुशसंयुतम् ॥ २४.७९ ॥

नान्यद्वाक्यं ततो ब्रूयाद्येन शोकादिकं भवेत् । रामनामजपासक्ता प्रतीक्ष्य मरणावधिम् ॥ २४.८० ॥

गतप्राणं च तं ज्ञात्वा नाश्रुबिन्दुमुखी सती । पाणावग्निं समुद्दीप्य पितृलिङ्गैश्च मन्त्रकैः ॥ २४.८१ ॥

घृताक्तान्तण्डुलांस्तस्मिन्वह्नौ च जुहुयात्स्वयम् । ततः प्रेतानुगा यानैः पद्भ्यां वा प्रेतभूमिकम्

॥ २४.८२ ॥

नानावादित्रघोषेण यातु शीघ्रं निजालयात् । चितां तत्र विधायाशु सुस्नातापि पुनर्जले ॥ २४.८३ ॥

स्नात्वा सर्वं स्वदेहस्थं मण्डनादि धृतं पुरा । विसृज्य भूमौ तं प्रेतं स्नाप्योद्धृतजलैः शुभैः ॥ २४.८४ ॥

गन्धमाल्यैरलङ्कृत्य चितायां स्थापयेदथ । धर्मशीलां च संस्थाप्य सिन्दूराक्तां सुशोभनाम् ॥ २४.८५ ॥

स्वदेहत्यागजं पापं तस्यां दृषदि विन्यसेत् । तावद्वैधव्यता नास्ति नाशौचं च न चाशुभम् ॥२४.८६॥

यावच्छीलां धर्मवतीं नार्चयन्ति पतिव्रताः । अर्चितायां तु शीलायां वैधव्यं लभते वधूः ॥२४.८७॥

ततोऽग्निं स्वयमुद्दीप्य चितायां परिकल्पयेत् । तं च वह्निं परिक्रम्य नमस्कृत्य च देवताः ॥२४.८८॥

संप्रविश्य चितां भूप रामनामपरायणा । स्वप्यात्तद्वामभागे च रचयेत्काष्ठसञ्चयम् ॥

पुत्रो वा गोत्रजो वापि वह्निं चैव प्रदीपयेत् ॥२४.८९॥

एवं या व्रजते नारी भर्त्रा सह पतिव्रता । तस्याः पुण्यं नृपश्रेष्ठ वक्तुं देवो न चाशकत् ॥२४.९०॥

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A CULTURAL STUDY OF THE VATSAGULMAMĀHĀTMYA

A Thesis submitted to
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Under the Board of Arts and Fine Arts Studies

by
Dhanashree Nikhil Shejwalkar
(Registration No. 00119004704)

Under the Guidance of
Dr. Ambarish Vasant Khare

Shri Balmukund Lohia Centre of Sanskrit and Indological Studies

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80_Recommendation

CONCLUSIONS

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General Conclusions

The researcher, at the start of the study of the text, expected the mention of the ancient ruling dynasty in the region, i.e., the Vākāṭakas in the text, because the name Vatsagulma in history is associated with the Vākāṭaka dynasty. But to her surprise, she has not found a single reference of the Vākāṭakas in the text. Very few kings are mentioned in the text. The main story, that encompasses all the *adhyāya*s, is about the King Vāsuki. The name Vāsuki is related only to the king of serpents in the Purāṇas (Mani 1975: 838). The reference of this King is not found in the Purāṇas elsewhere. The King Vāsuki here does not indicate any relation with the serpents. The text refers to Vatsagulma as Vāsukipura in *tretā yuga*. But the mention of Vāsukipura in the Purāṇas is again found only with reference to serpent King Vāsuki. Therefore, the King Vāsuki in the text seems to be an imaginary name.

The narrative style of the text matches with that in the Purāṇic literature. From the mentions of rituals in the text, it is evident that the priests had gained a lot of importance. The preparation of Śivaliṅga by any individual is the evidence of individual worship. However, there is no mention of multiple Śivaliṅga prepared and offered to the lord. Also, the absence of reference of *pañcamukha śivaliṅga* in the text and occurrence of it on the ground makes the researcher conclude that the tradition has not been noted in the text.

All the effort of doing the pilgrimage of the 108 *tīrtha*s is mostly for the materialistic gain as the demands or the wishes of the common devotees are mostly materialistic. The common people seem to be afraid of diseases, especially skin diseases like eczema etc. Also, they are facing a lot of poverty. The area covered by all these 108 *tīrtha*s is not more than twenty sq. kms. Such high number of sacred places in such small region categorises the text as the localised *māhātmya*.

The deity Dattātreya at Daridraharaṇa *tīrtha* is mentioned additionally with the *tīrtha*. Else one separate *tīrtha* could have been allotted to his name. This additional mention suggests that Dattātreya may have been more popular in the region. The writer wants to take an advantage of the more popular deity in the region to establish the *tīrtha*.

Some legends that are narrated in length suggest that the intention of the writer is something different than just stating the ritual. By these long and already known Purāṇic stories, the writer is stressing the importance of numerous good qualities in a man i.e., generosity, philanthropy, servitude towards the master and parents etc.

From the depiction of women in the text, it can be concluded that there were less educated women. Nowhere there is a mention of a learned woman. On the other hand, there is a mention of abortion of foetus in the text in three incidences. Also, the woman's servitude towards her husband and her duties as a wife are focussed in the text.

Thus, it can be concluded that the text intends to focus more on ideal married women, and not their education. Moreover, the tradition of Satī is clearly stated. It is clearly the indicator of dependency of women on the males in the society. The portrayal of the society is patriarchy. Though all these references are from the myths, it overall indicates the plight of women.

About the Manuscripts of the VGM

In the introduction, the researcher has stated the need to obtain the manuscripts from which the available edition was prepared. A complete study of this text is not possible without that. The interpolated parts may be identified from the manuscripts. Many linguistic features need an attention of the researchers. By doing so, it can be observed if there are smaller versions of the same text available. The name of the scribe can be traced if present anywhere in the manuscripts.

Dating of the VGM

The first and foremost conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that the text belongs to later Purāṇic period, The language of the text has a clear influence of a Marathi language. It most probably belongs to the later mediaeval period. This is supported by the problem of finding Vatsagulma as a *tīrtha* in the mediaeval literature. The researcher has tried to obtain the mention of the name in various books and treatises which enlist *tīrtha*s. Like *tīrthavivecanakāṇḍa* of *Kṛtyakalpataru* of Lakṣmīdhara, but it was not found. The absence of it from the any recension of Padma Purāṇa was anticipated, as it was a highly localised text.

Writer of the VGM

A thought has been given by the researcher as to who would have written the text of VGM. The occasionally changing style of the text has made the researcher think whether there was one or more writers of the text. The writer or writers of the VGM had a sound knowledge of geography of the region. They have cleverly interwoven the sanctity of the places and the geographic speciality of the sacred place.

The writers have an intention to imbibe good qualities in the society. They also want a connect with the Vedic religion. Hence, the legends and the *stotra*s are composed that give a good foundation to the religious life of people. There may be some sect that deliberately promoted Śaivism in the region. There may be a sect that worked for harmony among the Śaiva sect and the Vaiṣṇava sect. There is ample evidence in the text to show that the Śaiva sect dominated the region. But there is portrayal of Viṣṇu as a deity and some *tīrtha*s are also seen named after Viṣṇu. Many deities are mentioned in the text, along with Śiva and Viṣṇu.

The problems with which the devotees come to the sacred place seem to be worldly. Very few mentions are there about attaining the liberation-*mukti*. The very first story of King with which the text begins, has the King suffering from the skin disease. He wants to find the solution for this and accidently obtains the pond that cured his skin disease. So, it can be concluded

that the focus of the text is helping the common devotees in lessening their despair.

The loose style of narration of the text suggests its similarity with the *pravacana* tradition. At the time of the composition of the text, the priests must have preached the text stating the glory to the locals. The researcher also proposes that the text was popular in Marathi language also and it was preached in the local language. The researcher proposes that the composers of the text followed the *kīrtana* and *pravacana* tradition.

Scope for Further Study

The cultural studies of the *māhātmya* texts are carried out infrequently. There is ample scope in this area of research if the researcher has a multidisciplinary approach.

As regards this text, the study of the linguistic characteristics of the text can gain a new dimension if the Marathi version of the text can be found. Even if the manuscripts from which the available edition was prepared can be obtained, the study of the text will have a new light.

Jamkhedkar (2021:98) opines that the localised texts like this need a deeper study for smaller and localised problems, which will help in building a bigger picture of the ancient society and its culture.

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