

SACRED GEOGRAPHY OF DEOGHAR CITY

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Summary: Deoghar, also known as "Baidyanath Dham" or "Baba Dham," is a significant Hindu pilgrimage city in the Santhal Parganas division of Jharkhand, India, renowned primarily for the **Baidyanath Temple complex**, which is one of the twelve Shiva Jyotirlingas and one of the 51th Shakti Peethas in India. The name "Deoghar" translates to "abode of the Gods and Goddesses." The Sacred complex in Deoghar has been broadly discussed in its three aspects, namely sacred geography, sacred specialists and sacred performances. The nature and extent of transformation in the sacred complex have also been discussed. The sacred geography of Deoghar has been divided into sacred and secular zones.

Key word: Deoghar, Baidyanath Dham, Jyotirlinga, Sacred Complex, Sacred Geography.

1. Introduction: Deoghar, popularly known as Baidyanathdham is located in the demographically tribal dominated parts of Santhal Pargana Division in Deoghar district of Jharkhand state. Deoghar has been named after the home of Gods or Babadham. In Sanskrit other names like Baidyanath Dham or Harda Pitha or Ravaneshwar or Ravanvava are mentioned. The origin of Baidyanathdham is lost in antiquity. It has also been referred as Haritakivan, Ketakivan etc. in Sanskrit texts. The name Deoghar seems to be of recent origin and probably dates from the erection of the great temple of Lord Baidyanath. It stems from Devagriha the abode of God as referred earlier. Although the name of the builder of the temple is not traceable, certain parts of the front portion of the temple are said to have been built by Puran Mal, an ancestor of the Maharaja of Giddhour, in 1596. So far twenty six sacred centres have been constructed by different pilgrims, citizens and Pandas of Deoghar. Altogether ninety five sacred centres have been found at Deoghar.

Map of Deodhar Sacred City



2. The Sacred Geography of Deoghar: The Sacred Geography of **Deoghar** has been divided into sacred and secular zones on the basis of the predominance of the sacred and secular elements. The boundaries of the sacred zone, however, cut across municipal limits of **Deoghar** City. In other words, the boundaries of the sacred zone overlaps the boundaries of secular zone. The Sacred Geography of Deoghar covers Basukinath, too. There are two sacred sub-zones viz. Deoghar and Basukinath, which are further divided into a number of segments. The **Deoghar** sub-zone has been classified into Baidyanath, Harlazori, Rohini and Tapovan segments and Basukinath into Trikuti and Basukinath. Each segment in further

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divided into clusters which enshrine various sacred centres, In cluster old and new sacred centres are found. Old sacred centres are those which have textual reference. It is in this perspective that the sacred complex in Deoghar has been broadly discussed in its three aspects, namely sacred geography, sacred specialists and sacred performances. The nature and extent of transformation in the sacred complex have also been discussed. Under Sacred geography of Deoghar a lot of pilgrims visit several sacred places every years and occasion which is at a glance followings

SHRINGAAR: Shringgar is the evening decoration and ritualisik oderment of main deity. Lord Shiva. Which takes place after the temple reopens of 6 : 00 PM. This ritual called shringar puja involves decorating the shivlinga with sandalwood pass flowers and other sacred items before the evening Aarti. Shringaar of manokamina lingam which fulfills the desire of the devotee. Visiting Deoghar for mundan, birth child chhathi, cure of diseases success of election and various types purposes.



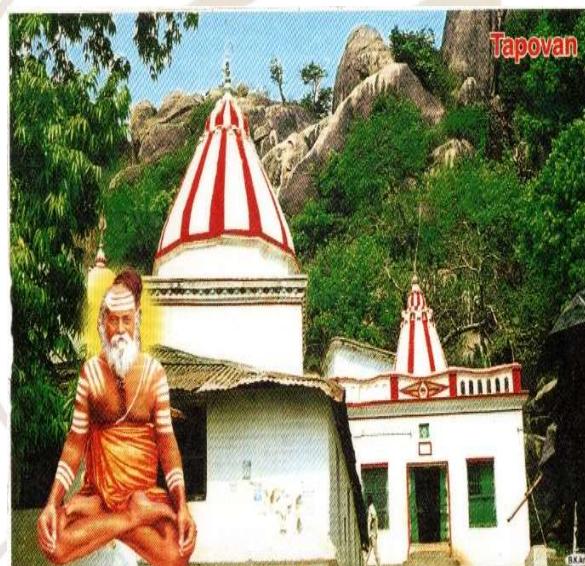
A. Shiv Ganga: **Shiv Ganga** is a sacred pond in Deoghar, Jharkhand, known for its deep mythological and religious significance, located just 200 meters from the revered **Baba Baidyanath Temple**, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas.



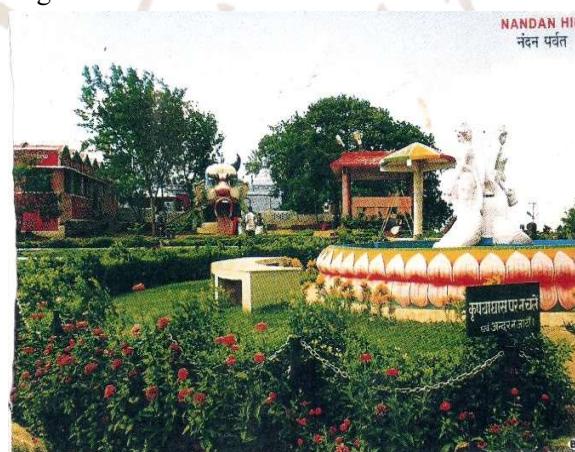
B. NAULAKHA MANDIR: Naulakha Mandir - 2 km from Baidyanath dham temple This Hindu temple buit by Rani charushila and named for its constution cost 9 lakh rupees Deicated to Radha- Krishna.

**TM**

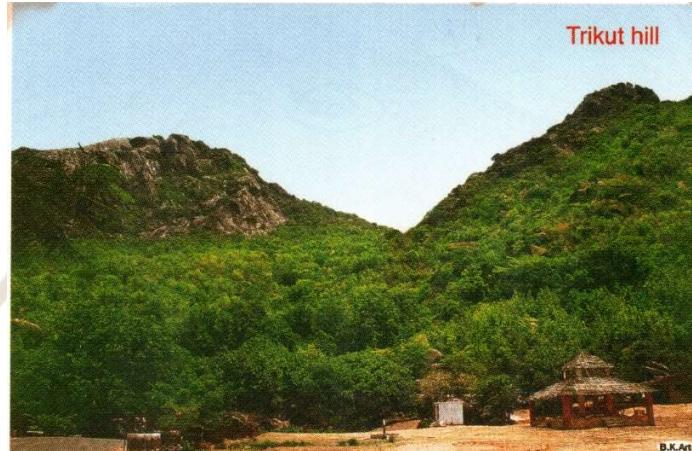
C. TAPOVAN: Tapovan - 10 km from Babadham various cave on this hill. Sage valmiki Balanand Brahanchri, also sage monkeykund and beautiful pond.



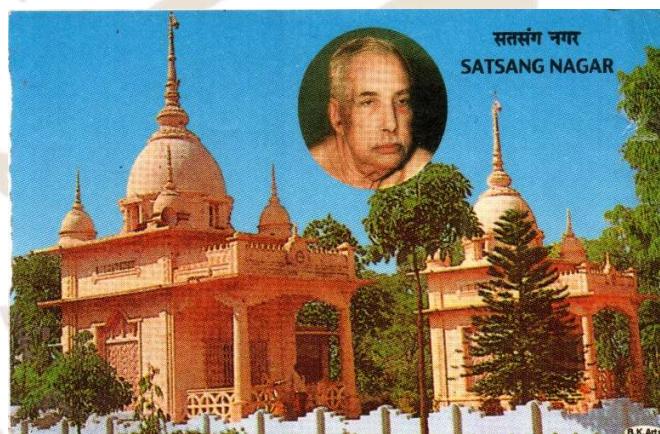
D. NANDAN PARVAT: Nandan Parvat - 3 km from Babadham Shiva Parvti, Ganesh and Kartik temple. Watertank sunrise sunset scene is very looking attractive here.



E. PAGLA BABA AASHRAM: Pagla Baba Ashram : Built by Lilanand Thakur Resident of Bangladesh Radha Krishna Idol.

F. TRIKUT HILL

G. Trikut Hill : Trikutachi Deoghar to Dumka way. There peak is symbol of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh

H. Satsang Nagar and Aashram

I. Satsang Nagar and Aashram – South west of Deoghar, betterment of humanity, established by Sri-Sri Ankulchandra Radhaswami sect.

There are so many pilgrim center under sacred geography of Deoghar which has importance of tourisms geography are following:-

- (i) **Rikhia yogashram:** Established by swami satyanand saraswati.
- (ii) **Maa Shitla Temple :** Beautiful shrines believed among the pilgrim the incurable diseases are cured worship at this site with respect and devotion
- (iii) **Hathi Pahar:** Elephant shape hill
- (iv) **Ajgaibinath Mandir :** Temple and mosque are together – it is also called secular zone
- (v) **Kundeshwari** - Navgraha Temple 1 km from chandi hill.

3. Social Interactions : Pandas of Deoghar are organised Bhaiyaro or Gotiyaro which indicates lineage or Vansa. The number of the families has considerably increased since they first came to Deoghar. For instance, Aambari and Lohabari, the two original families of Maithil Pandas of Deoghar, have now grown into forty eight and thirty families respectively. All families belonging to a lineage do not always form a happy kinship. More often than not they fall into professional rivalries. But on social and ceremonial occasions like marriage, birth, death they come together and express their kinship ties by exchange of gifts. All Pandas are related to one another within their caste groups which they recognize as Munch Dadhi Ka Sambandh a kind of kinship bond which obliges male members to shave off hair and moustaches in case of a death occurring within that kinship group. Exchange of gifts and visits are associated with prestige. Those who do not follow this rule of kinship are subjected to social criticism.

Priest craft has been kept the bond of territorial and sub- caste difference. Panda of three caste groups i.e. Maithil, Kanyakubj and Chakravarty, consider themselves as one and, emotionally, as relatives. Professionally, Pandas form a homogeneous community but they do maintain their identity in their customs, residence, style of life and different rights over Baidyanath temple. The members of each of upjati have limited social inter- course with the member of the other than their own upjatis. There are representatives from each upjati in the Dharmarakhni society according to their population. Except Maithils others don't have the right to become the Sardar Panda of Baidyanath. Like Maithils, Chakravartys also claim to be older and professionally superior to Kankubjs at Deoghar. Earlier, Kankubjs had limited social relationship with Maithils and Chakravartys. Neither Kanyakubjs were invited by Maithils and Chakravartys nor were the Kankubjs invited by them but are now inviting Maithils and Chakravartys and are also being invited by them. Socially the Pandas of Deoghar interest on the basis of their caste identification.

3.2 Panda-Jajman Relationship: The very term Panda indicates the individual or the community having a good number of Jajmans, The three upjatis of Pandas, i.e. Maithil, Chakravartys and Kankubjs, have Jajmans, Since Maithils are more in number their Jajmanika geography is vast.

Maithils, Kankubjs, and Chakravartys are first, second and third in the matter of the total number of Jajmans and Jajmanika geography. They have their jajmans in Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and in other countries of Asia where Hinduism is practised. Jajmans who are unable to come here annually send their Daxina. It reflects their contribution in uniting and bringing Jajman of different nations on a common platform. Profession of priest craft has given these three upjatis "Pandas a ground on which they enter into a traditional relationship with their Jajmans. Pandas have a twofold relationship with their Jajmans. First, when a Panda visits his Jajmans and, second, when Jajmans undertake pilgrimage to Baidynathdham. This relationship has been practised since the immemorial and it is traditionally transferred from one generation to another, by both. The Panda Jajman relationship will be broadly discussed under two categories, i.e. Panda undertaking Jajmanika tour and Jajmans undertaking pilgrimage to Deoghar. First we will discuss Panda pilgrim interactions at Deoghar.

3.3 panda- Guru Relationship: Guru is he who gives training in sacred activities and teaches sacred texts. He commands high respect in the community. Pandas seek his guidance at the time of entering the profession of a priest, i.e. at the time of Upnayan. Gurus play an important role in their life. They can be classified into three categories: (i) initiation Guru, (ii) Kul Guru, and (iii) Purificatory Guru.

3.4 Panda- Purohit Relationship: Hindu need assistance of a Brahmin in performing any ritual. Pandas of Deoghar are firstly Hindu and then Panda. Being Hindu they naturally seek the assistance of a Brahmin in performing any ritual. There are few Maithils and Kankubjs, not from Panda family, who assist and guide pandas in the performance of rituals. A panda consults a purohit at the time of a Jajmanika tour, Upnayan, marriage, death, etc. and Satyanarain Katha on any festival day. There is nothing like annual or monthly daxina for the purohit. They are paid at the end of a ritual. Though both are Brahmin purohit never eats with his Jajman. By having Purohit, Pandas enter the double jajmans relationship that is host of their

purohit. These families have specialised themselves in Purohit (guiding Jajmans in performing various rituals) and it is their primary source of livelihood.

3.5 Panda- Gumasta Relationship: Most of the pandas appoint Gumastas for professional assistance. Gumasta is he also works as a general assistant of a Panda. He assist him in the profession of priest craft as also in the domestic affairs particularly in marketing. Pandas have two kind of relationship with their Gumastas, i.e. (i) Master- servant relationship, and (ii) Partner relationship. A Gumasta is employed on monthly or annual wages to assist a Panda in helping and guiding Jajmans. He addresses the Panda as Malik. He also gets money from his Malik's Jajmans for his services. Relationship of a partner with a Gumasta is recent development for his services. Relationship of a partner with a Gumasta is a recent development due to the present not-so-good economic conditions of the Pandas who are unable to maintain a paid Gumasta. The Gumasta takes half of the total daxina from Panda for assisting him in helping and guiding a Jajman.

3.6 Panda- Pawaniya Relationship: Those who get Pawana (ceremonial gift) for their valuable services to Pandas rendered during different ceremonies are called Pawaniyas. They get their Pawana (Customary payment and remuneration) either in cash or in kind. Ceremonies like Chhatthi, Upnayan, Marriage, etc. cannot be performed without their services. Pandas have a certain relationship with the Pawaniyas. Pawaniyas come from different castes and render their caste services. Following are the Pawaniyas of the Pandas of Deoghar.

4. The Sacred performances: The Sacred performances at different sacred centres of Deoghar are numerous. They may be discussed here under live broad headings, i.e. Daily Sacred Performances, Monthly Sacred Performances, Annual Sacred Performances, Sacred Performances, connected with Kanwar and Sacred Performances connected with vows. We will mainly discuss here the Sacred Performances observed in the Baidyanath cluster. However, references to the sacred Performances at other sacred centers of Deoghar have also been made, whenever necessary.

4.1 Sarkari Puja: It is one of the Daily Sacred Performances by the management in the Baidyanath cluster. It is the first Sacred Performances by the day. Traditionally, first of all the Sardar Panda worships Lord Baidyanath, no Pilgrim or devotee is allowed to worship him, and that's why it is known as Sarkari Puja.

4.2 Shrawan: Shrawan is an important month for Deoghar. Pilgrims from all over the Hindu world come to worship Baidyanath. Pilgrims in their thousands pour in touching the peak on every Somwari (Monday) of the Shrawan month. Pilgrim believe that Baidyanathdham is an important place of pilgrimage during the month of Shrawan and will earn special merit by worshipping Baidyanath in this month. About a hundred pilgrims were interviewed at random during Shrawan and the first half of Bhadon on the basis of an observation schedule and interview guide. The annual sacred performances of the Pagla Baba Ashram begin from Jhulan Ekadashi of Shrawan and end on Janamshthmi in Bhadon. Disciples of the Ashram also worship Baidyanath in the Baidyanth Cluster.

The number of beggars also increases during Shrawan. They reported that they go to Gaya in Ashwin and to Rajgir, Varanasi, Haridwa, Ayodhaya, Mathura, etc. during the pilgrims season of the respective places. They move from one place to another because pilgrims need beggars to give alms after performing a ritual and accordingly beggars earn religious merit of pilgrimage by visiting different sacred centres. Pilgrims after worshipping Baidyanath go to worship Basukinath. Kanwarias (Pilgrims with Kanwar) also bring Kanwar for Basukinath. Athgauna pilgrims (Pilgrims from nearby villages) first of all worship Basukinath and then go to Baidyanathdham. Santhals, Perghas, Dhanuks and Domes of Athgauna also worship Basukinath. Domes simply bow their heads at the main gate of the temple. Santhal, Pergha and Khateri pilgrims and devotees are found more in Basukinath the Deoghar. Unlike Deoghar no annual sacred performances are performed by the management of the Basukinath temple at Basukinath. Here, the temples remain open for pilgrims and devotees till 9 p.m. Thereafter Srinagar is performed and the sacred centre of Basukinath remains open for Srinagar Darshan till 11.30 p.m. The doors of the temple are opened at 3.30 in the morning. The influx of pilgrims to Basukinath is great, it wears a fair-like

look. To give it colour a few cosmetics, toys, sacred articles stalls are erected. A miniature in the month of Shrawan to entertain pilgrims and devotees. The theatre company generally stage religious dramas.

4.3 Shivratri: Shivratri is one of the Annual Sacred Performances by the management of Baidyanath and Basukinath temples and also by pilgrims and devotees. It is celebrated throughout the Hindu world on the fourteenth day of the Phalgum Krishna paxsh believing it to be the consort night of Lord Shiva. It is also celebrated as the Gaddi day (throne day) of the Sardar Parida of Deoghar. He sits on the Gaddi of the Baidyanath temple only once in a year, on this day. A kingly chair is decorated and the Sardar Panda sits on it before performing the marriage and Srinagar of Baidynath. His courtiers also take their respective seats and salute the Sardar Panda. Conventionally, the Sardar Panda is not allowed to sit on this Gaddi on any other day. It is said that one of the Sardar Panda's ancestors became blind by violating this convention.

Shivratri is socially important for the Pandas of Deoghar because they don't solemnize marriages of their daughters or sons before shivratri in the belief that they are the servant of the Baba and so they should solemnize their marriages only after the marriage of their master.

Different traders from different parts of the country come to sell a variety of products. A few stalls only Mauri (marriage cap) since it is a special offering of Shivratri. These stalls wear the look of a fair. Pilgrims from all over the Hindu world come to worship Lord Baidyanath during Shivratri. Most of the pilgrims either bring Ganga Jal with themselves or purchase at Deoghar to offer to Baidyanath. Generally, pilgrims offer Mauri through Sikdar. In some case Mauri is offered after fulfillment of a vow. Also, vows are generally taken on this day for trouble-free and happy marriages of daughters and in some cases for sons also. Sarkari Puja is performed earlier than on normal days and the temple remains darshan. All the articles of a Khachiya which are offered to Lord Baidynath are also offered to Basukinath and these articles are handled by the temple management. They go to thief priest of the temple. Most of the pilgrims come here after worshipping Baidyanathjee. Shivratri is aslo performed as one of the annual sacred performances at Deo Sangh. Ashramites and other disciples who flock here from all over the country perform Sadhana for a fortnight similarly Shivratri is performed as part of annual sacred performances at other sacred centres of Deoghar.

4.4 Basant Panchmi: Basant Panchmi, an annual sacred performance, is also known as Sri Panchami and Basant Panchami. The influx of pilgrim. The influx of pilgrims increases at this time. The following table given the approximate nubers of pilgrims who came to Deoghar in the festivals of sawan of Bhasant Panchami :-

Year	No. of Pilgrims during Basant Panchami
1990	265090
1995	251540
2000	243050
2015	54.19 lacs
2020	Covid pandemic
2025	50 lacs above

Source : Temple management Baba Dham

5. Conclusion: The Sacred complex in Deoghar has been broadly discussed in its three aspects, namely sacred geography, sacred specialists and sacred performances. The nature and extent of transformation in the sacred complex have also been

discussed. The sacred geography of Deoghar has been divided into sacred and secular elements. The boundaries of the sacred zone, however, cut across municipal limits of Deoghar town. In other words, the boundaries of the sacred zone overlap the boundaries of the secular zone. As mentioned earlier the sacred geography of Deoghar covers an area of twenty-nine miles which includes Basukinath.

In each cluster old and new sacred centres are found. Old sacred centres are those which have textual references. There are twenty-nine sacred centres in the Baidyanathjee cluster of which only two, i.e., Baidyanath and Parvatee, have reference in the Shiva Puran. The sacred centres have been constructed by the generious pilgrims, devotes and the sacred specialists of Deoghar. In one cluster both vegetarian and non-vegetarian deities have been accommodated, i.e., in the Baidyanathjee cluster the Baidynath sacred centre is vevetarian whereas in the Parvatee, Tara, Kali, etc., are non-vegetarian. The sacred centres have also been discussed in terms of pilgrim patronage.

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