

Name of the element- Pandharpur Wari

Region- Maharashtra

Brief Description-

The **Pandharpur Wari** is a centuries-old, inclusive foot pilgrimage celebrated annually in Maharashtra, India, embodying the principles of the 13th-century **Bhakti movement**. It is a living tradition that unites over **800,000 Warkaris**—devotees of Lord Vitthala and Goddess Rukmini—from across castes, genders, and communities, in a collective expression of devotion and spiritual egalitarianism.

The pilgrimage involves walking over **230–250 kilometers** from Alandi and Dehu to the Vitthala temple in Pandharpur during the Hindu months of **Ashadha and Kartik**. Warkaris chant devotional songs (abhangs), perform kirtans, play traditional instruments like chiplya and ektari, and participate in rituals such as **ringan** and **phugdi**, turning each step into a spiritual act. Their simple attire and humble conduct reflect the movement's emphasis on inner transformation, humility, and service.

Uniquely, the Wari is not focused solely on reaching the temple; rather, **the journey itself is the act of devotion**. Most pilgrims do not enter the temple but consider the walk and the community experience to be spiritually fulfilling.

The pilgrimage is deeply **sustainable and non-invasive**, with temporary communal spaces transforming and reverting without permanent infrastructure. Villages en route provide hospitality, and Warkaris reciprocate by cleaning the areas before departing, reinforcing community bonds and shared responsibility.

Rooted in oral traditions, inclusive values, and environmental harmony, the **Pandharpur Wari** is more than a religious event—it is a vibrant **cultural festival** and a profound expression of **human dignity, equality, and spiritual unity**.