

The Tale of Two Comunidades: A Socio-Historical Study on the Comunidade System of Aldona

A Dissertation for SOD: Dissertation in
Sociology Credits: 08 Submitted in partial
fulfilment of Master's Degree

MA in Sociology by
ALRIA MARIA D'SOUZA

21P024006

Under the Supervision of
NINOTCHKA MENDES
D.D. Kosambi School of Social Science
and Behavioural Studies
Sociology Programme



GOA UNIVERSITY
APRIL 2023



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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, “ The Tale of Two Comunidades: A Socio- historical Study on the Comunidade System of Aldona” is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Sociology Programme at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University under the Supervision of Ms. Ninotchka Mendes and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will be not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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Date: 21.04.2023

Place: Goa University

COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation report “The Tale of Two Comunidades: A Socio-Historical Study on the Comunidade System of Aldona” is a bonafide work carried out by Ms. Alria D’souza under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters in the Discipline of Sociology at the D. D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University.

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*With deep gratitude I
dedicate this work to each
and every gauncar of Aldona
who are proud of their land
and heritage*

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Undertaking this dissertation has been a truly life changing experience for me and it would not have been possible, without the support and guidance that I've received from many people.

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Alria D'souza

LIST OF MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Sr. No.	Name of the Picture and Map	Page No.
1.	Picture of a Khazan land of Goa, cultivated paddy field	23
2.	Picture of a bund	24
3.	Picture of a sluice gate	24
4.	Picture of Khazan land	25
5.	The Khazan land and Sluice gate that belongs to the comunidade in Carona of Aldona village	40
6.	Picture of Terxena land in Aldona	42
7.	Map of Bardez Taluka highlighting Aldona village	48
8.	Map of the Aldona Comunidade	49
9.	Picture of Comunidade Boa Esperenca	50
10.	Picture of Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona	50
11.	Picture of the stone at Uccassaim at the place where Cetano Francisco Soares was murdered	51
12.	Picture of the list of Vangads of Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona	51
13.	Manos/ Sluice gate at Coimavaddo Aldona	52

14.	Comunidade land of Aldona at Ganvar	52
15.	Manos/ sluice gate at Quitla Aldona	53
16.	Picture of Sluice gate at Quitla Aldona	53
17.	The area in the Comunidade where meetings are held	54

CONTENTS

	Declaration by Student	ii
	Completion Certificate	iii
	Dedication	iv
	Acknowledgement	v
	List of Maps and Photographs	vi-vii
Chapter I	Introduction	1-13
Chapter II	Communitade System of Goa: Organisation and Functioning	14-25
Chapter III	Socio- Historical and Demographic Profile of Aldona	26-33
Chapter IV	The Tale of two Communities: Conflict and Negotiation	34-44
Chapter V	Conclusion	45-47
	Appendix: Photographs	48-54
	References	55-56

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Comunidade system is the ancient surviving heritage institution of Goa. The first written documents about the existence of *ganvkaris* or later renamed as Comunidade in Goa, are found in 1054 A.D. No village in India has a long history of representation than that of Goa, a region whose villages are referred to in inscriptions dating from the twelfth century (Axelrod and Michelle, 1998, p. 440). The Goan villages are known today as Comunidades, a Portuguese word used throughout Goa denoting the joint ownership of the land by those believed to be heirs of the village founders or *gauncars*. The Comunidades are often portrayed as unique institutions of village organization compared to other regional systems of village structure in India (Axelrod and Michelle, 1998, p. 440). The Portuguese imperial document of 1526, the *Foral dos usos e costumes dos Gancares e Lavradores da Ilha de Goa e outras annexas a ella*, better known as *Foral of Afonso Mexia*. Also equated to the Magna Carta of people's rights, kept their customary privileges of leasing paddy fields and granting wastelands if they were to be used to cultivate betel trees. The same happened with the grants they gave to the village officers- priest, dancers of the temple, clerk, porter, washerman, shoemaker, carpenter, blacksmith, and renter- as payment for their services to the village. The taxes paid by each type of land- paddy fields, areca tree orchards, wastelands- were also preserved in conjunction with the principle that the *gauncars* should not pay more to the Portuguese king than they did to the previous ruler (Xavier, 2022, p. 46). Goa's greenery is praised and admired by everyone who visits the State. The Comunidade consists of most of the village land, *khazan* land, sluice gates, ponds, lakes etc.

Aldona is one of the 40 villages of Bardez Taluka, with two Comunidade associations. Specific rules of the *Foral dos usos e costumes*, were open to interpretations. For example, clause 17 stated that the *gauncars* could give those rights "to whom they want", paving the way for the entrance of other lineages into the *gauncaris*, as it was later witnessed in three villages of Bardez (Calangute, Aldona and Siolim) and one of Salcete (Raia) (Xavier, 2022, p. 53). In the Pre- Portuguese period, Comunidades were almost autonomous bodies which were self- sufficient, powerful and progressive. They were essentially agricultural associations. But, simultaneously, they were vested with several powers such as municipal, judicial, fiscal, and public welfare. The Comunidades were the village granaries and large cooperatives entrusted with the tasks of providing for their members' needs. It also protected the fields against the invasion of sea water, of opening and maintaining public roads, of setting up places for common use and wards for servants and artisans and supporting them so that they might serve the member of the community free of charge, etc.

According to one of the respondents, years ago, the Adil Shah of Bijapur ruled Goa. On the arrival of the Portuguese, everything changed. When the Portuguese arrived, they killed most of Adil Shah's men and decided to establish their empire in the East. The population of Goa was significantly less at that time, and everyone living in Goa belonged to the Hindu religion; therefore, the Portuguese mainly aimed to convert the local folks to Christianity. At that time, the Hindu folks of Goa considered the 'bhats' superior; therefore, the Portuguese sought to kill the Hindu 'bhats'. As people were very holy and God-fearing, the Portuguese knew that they would get convinced by them only in the name of religion. Even military force would not help but through religion the latter

agreed to whatever the Portuguese said and converted themselves to Christianity. As some refused to convert, the Portuguese used land as a means. Land was used as a medium to attract people to a new religion. In this way, Catholic converts were promised to be given land if they converted themselves to Christianity.

A *ganucar* told me that, the Comunidade mostly consists of people who belong to the Catholic faith, because it is said that these are the people who willingly converted themselves to Christianity on the pretext of getting land. Among the Hindus, it is the goldsmiths, and those who belong to the upper caste are a part of the Comunidade. As told to me, the goldsmiths have the privilege of becoming *ganucars*, only because they are said to hold the same position as the Brahmins. It was also told to me that the Portuguese never considered Goa, a colony but always considered it a part of Portugal. However, the Portuguese had developed their own framework towards Goa, its people and its land; therefore, they wanted the people of Goa to adapt to their lifestyle, tradition and culture. Henceforth, we see some of the fundamental works by the Portuguese on the Indian villages.

The village of Aldona is situated in Bardez taluka and is surrounded by islands. As a result, the land has many ponds, lakes and *khazan* lands. The *khazan* lands are said to be very fertile because of the salinity of the soil. The villagers practised a lot of farming activities and grew crops, as well as vegetables. It was one of the ways people earned their living in the olden days. In the olden days, people from Chorao, Chorjuem and Calvim (the three islands surrounding Aldona) travelled to Aldona through waterways by ferry, popularly known as the '*Gazoline*'. The people from these villages came every week to Aldona to do their weekly shopping.

On the other hand, Aldona is also known for its two comunidades. The reason for its two comunidades is said to be the caste system. It was told to me by one of the *gauncars* that the people of Aldona followed the caste system, which created a lot of differences among the people of the two caste groups. Due to the notion of purity and pollution based on the caste system, only Brahmins were allowed to enter. For instance, there is a Chapel in *Coimavaddo* (a ward in the village of Aldona), where only the Brahmins visit, offered their prayers, and have other services. This created injustice towards the people of the other caste groups; therefore, the lower caste people decided to have another Chapel of their own.

Aldona is mainly known for its peaceful atmosphere and its fertile land. Many of our Goan villages have unique identity characteristics, for instance, Saligao was known for sugarcane and foxes, Parra was known for its watermelons, Jua for ladyfingers, Moira for its bananas, in the same way Aldona was always known for its onions and chillies. Aldona, from the past was always known for its vast paddy fields, hills, plains, coconut groves, mango trees, and other trees. But, recently, we have seen that construction activities destroy all these. Paddy fields are left barren because of a lack of funds. Barren lands are turned into concrete jungles and are acquired by builders and non-locals.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to the writings of De Souza in his book 'The Last Prabhu' has mentioned the people of Goa. *Parashurama*, the Lord warrior with the axe, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu is credited with having reclaimed land from the ocean by shooting an arrow or

throwing his axe, depending on the version, into the ocean that, sent the water rolling back (De Souza, 2020, p. 112). His name, however, would indicate that an axe would be the preferred weapon used for the purpose. It was said that from Trihotrspura, Associated with modern-day Tirhut in upper Bihar, he brought Brahmins belonging to ten gotras and those who settled in sixty- six villages, called their settlement *Sasahti* or *Shat- sashti* meaning sixty- six that has now evolved to Salcete. Thirty other groups of families from Tirhut followed who settled in Tiswadi, which means thirty villages. The *Baradesh*, a settlement of twelve villages, today's Bardez, was settled later. The *Gauncaris* are said to be Goa's most ancient surviving heritage institutions since times immemorial (Monteiro, 2019, p. 28). De Souza, in his writings, has said that the members of the 4th vangad of Aldonas Comunidade are all descendants of a common ancestor who lived roughly 800 years ago or approximately around the year 1200 CE this ancestor was the founder of the 4th vangad. It is unknown when the chief *gauncar* of Aldona established the 1st vangad. Nevertheless, it is concluded that the village of Aldona was settled anywhere between 1400 and 1150 CE (De Souza, 2020, p. 133, 134) based on the most recent common ancestor. As said by De Souza, an *Adistani* Brahmin was selected to settle the village and was regarded as the *Chief gauncar* (De Souza, 2020, p. 134). In the case of Aldona, this *Chief gauncar* was a *Kamti* that has evolved to present day *Kamat*, an agriculturist with deep expertise in growing rice and other agricultural products. Through historical considerations and as suggested by Chandrakant Keni, it is probable that the chief *gaunkar* of Aldona came from *Saxtti*. The Comunidade is different from the 'Grampanchayat' prevalent in other parts of India (Monteiro, p. 99,100,101). The origins of this unique Goan institution have never been identified, as some historians say that this

originated with the early settlers, the '*Gavada*' or '*Kol*' tribes. Afonso Albuquerque, in 1510, called the village administrative system '*Gaunpon*' Or '*Gauncarias*' and the original settlers or founder members of the village are known as '*Gauncars*'. In this system, the male heir of each '*vangod*' (clan) of the particular village organizes and manages all aspects of village life like farming, security, civic hygiene, social culture and religious activities. The income earned from agricultural produce, sluice gates or rivers, rent of hand carts (*Gado*), etc., is used to pay the government taxes, maintain Churches and temples, for common utility repairs and to pay village servants and artisans. The amount which remained after paying for all expenses was the profit- *Jonos*. This *Jono* (*Zonn*) was shared equally with the *gauncars* and all their living male heirs. This is the privilege and birthright of every *gauncar* and their male descendants – also called *Joneiro's*. These *joneiro's* (*Zonncars*) are permanent members of the Comunidade by birth. Besides, the share in the *Jono* is permanent, unchangeable and passed on exclusively through the male line. Only upper- caste Brahmins (*Bamon's*) and Kshatriyas (*Chardo/Chaddo*) could be the *gauncars* of the Comunidade, and only their male line could enjoy the privileges of *Zonn*. Lower caste Shudras (*Sudir*) and others lower in the caste hierarchy had no say in the Comunidade affairs. Moreover, De Souza, in his book 'The Last Prabhu' has said that Alan Machado's ancestors belonged to the 4th *vangad*. Still, it is known that he belongs to the 12th *vangad* from written records handed down to Alan by his ancestor and that the Macedo family name only appears in Aldona's 12th *vangad*. The only logical explanation for this situation is that the 12th *vangad* was not formed by a new settler invited by the Chief gaunkar Or the gram sanstha but is the branch of the fourth *vangad*. From this finding that we owe to genetics, we can also infer that the 6th to the 12th

vangads are branches of the first five namely the 6th and 9th *vangads* with the family name *Kamti* are branches of the 1st, 2nd Or 3rd, 7th, 8th and 12th *vangads* with the family name Prabhu of the 4th and 10th *vangad* with the family name Naik of the 5th. The owners of the 11th *vangad* were also said to belong to the Nail family. It is also said that Aldonas 2nd *vangad* is already extinct (De Souza, 2020, p. 135). The Desais of Aldona appropriated themselves of land, and the state representative tax collector or '*parpotdar*' was so focussed on collecting rent with a determination that the comunidades were compelled to sell off their common property to meet these demands. The village of Aldona is unique not only because its 11th *vangad* was misappropriated by a Portuguese Viceroy but also because, unlike all other Goan village associations or *gauncaris*, it is proud of two its comunidades: The *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona* consisted of 12 clans (*vangads*), 11 of Brahmins and one of the goldsmiths and the *Comunidade de Boa Esperanca*, made up of several *vangads* of *kulcharis* (servants at the service of the village), dividend holders (*zonnkars*) who belonged to the *Chardo* and *Sudra* communities. The latter are not original settlers of the village and, therefore, by definition, not considered the original *gaunkars* of the village. As the *kulcharis* rendered important service to the village, they achieved the status of *zonnkars*. The fight of the *Sudras* for equal status with Brahmins was bitter; one of the approaches used was to alter important documents. Given the bitterness, violence and irreconcilable differences between the Aldona Brahmin and Sudra dividend holders, there was a murder mentioned (De Souza, 2020, p. 139,140). In the book 'The Bardeskars: The Mystery of A Migration', Alphie Monteiro said that "Tombo de Aldona" are the revenue records of Aldona, which were translated from the original Goy Kanadi (Kannada) script by Gajanan Shantaram

Ghantkar. This includes the minutes of the meetings of Aldona *gauncars* from 7 December 1600 to 20 July 1605. The names of these *gauncars* indicate that these *gauncars* were first-generation Catholics, as their father's names are Hindu names. Rui Gomes Pereira In his book, 'Goa *gaunkari* The Old Village Associations- vol II' has said that, In the community of Aldona in Bardez, besides the *kulachars* who were all Brahmins, there were some members who were neither *gaunkars* nor *kulachars* as such. Still, they used to enjoy the rights of the latter. Some belonged to the Brahmin class while the others were *Sudras*. The former grouped themselves under the following categories: *Escrivaes do 1- Tombo*, *Escrivaes do 2 Tombo*, *Pandit*, *Godde*, *Munbre*. The latter, in turn, grouped themselves under the following: *Calvinkars*, *Sonarvaddo*, *Coca Mainavaddo*, *Bira*, *Cauxe*, *Buim*, *Ketri*, *Tari*, *Botto*, *Kambli* and *Ventio*. The members of the remaining four groups of the Brahmin class continue to be enrolled under the respective category, while the rest appear to be extinct. The *Sudras*, however, left their old community leaving behind the Brahmin members. The *Sudras* formed a new community that continues to enroll its members under *Calvinkars*, *Sonarvaddo*, *Mainavaddo*, *Cauxe*, *Tari* and *Batto*. The remaining categories of the *Sudra* class either disappeared or are mixed up with the *gauncars*, enrolled without reference to their category. Although the *pandits* are not *gauncars* and held equivalent to *kulachars*, they associate themselves with *Gaunkars Kamats* and *Zoishis* in the *Mazania* of the Goddess Shri Bhagvati, who shifted from Aldona to Candola of Ponda. The members of the *Sudra* class are also Mahajan of the said temple, and they use the surnames *Naik*, *Chari* and *Kambli* (Pereira, 1980, p. 40).

According to Angela Barreto Xavier, in her study "Village Normativities and the Portuguese Imperial order: The case of early modern Goa" reported that, the Christianization of the economy of power inside Goan villages was gradual, even if it had many administrative practices. However, a relevant change occurred in the decision-making process: *gauncars* who did not convert to Christianity could not vote for the *gauncars* at the time of electing them. Besides, they could not elaborate on the *nemos* (the written decisions). This excluded them from practising the Government of the communities. This study also aims to show the conversion to Christianity and the homogenization of Goa's inhabitants that became systematic, with dramatic consequences for the life of the villages.

Additionally, many laws were explicitly discriminatory to the non- Christians, which reduced their local power, social status and economic standing. Xavier has given an example of the paddy fields. Wherein, in the leases of the paddy fields of the villages, Christians had an advantage over non- Christians. These decrees and laws were among the many used to persuade the locals to convert to Christianity.

Paul Axelrod and Michelle A. Fuerch, in their study "Portuguese Orientalism and the making of the Village Communities of Goa", elucidate that the salient economic characteristic of the Comunidades in all parts of Goa is collective ownership by shareholders who divide the profits from the land. Until the Government sponsored the land reform in the year 1970, the Comunidades controlled most of the paddy land and cashew groves in Goa. Besides, it is stated that, the maintenance of the churches and temples in the Old Conquests was often done with the expenditure of the income from the Comunidades. This income was derived from lands known as *nomos* or *nomoshins*,

which were reserved for the temples' servants and under the control of the temples. Moreover, the income from the best lands was reserved for paying for the maintenance of the temple.

Maine (1890) and Marx argued that India's villages were continuations of the earlier Aryan communal or clan villages. Villagers, in this view, shared ownership of the lands and the agricultural products and their identities were embedded in essence with the clan and community. According to Maine, Indian rulers had rights only to a share of what was produced in Aryan India. While Marx placed Indian land, under the ultimate rule of the State, as it was the case for other Asiatic despots. The despotic State was an Islamic import. Marx and Maine mistook aristocratic land- holding villages for communal villages.

B.S. Shastri in his study, "Land- holdings under the Comunidades of Goa: An historical perspective" states that, there is an impression that all the land in Goa belonged to the comunidades at the time when the Portuguese took Goa and that these village communities were allowed to retain the communal ownership of land on the payment the quit rent which they used to pay to the erstwhile masters of Goa, the Adil Shah of Bijapur. It is a fact that the institution of comunidades in Goa is at least 1000 years old. The first evidence of its existence comes from an inscription of 1054 A. D, belonging to the reign of the Kadamba king of Goa, *Jayakeshi*. On the other hand, it was also seen that D.D. Kosambi also extensively wrote about the history of the comunidades.

Andre Beteille in his study, "Caste, Class and Power", discusses the class relations in the village of Sripuram in Tanjore in terms of the relationship between the

landowners, tenants and agricultural labourers and shows the changes that are taking place in the system of class relations. Beteille discusses the panchayats, community power structures and political parties as essential *loci* of power, and shows how the different structures interpenetrate. Beteille's work provides an exemplary instance of a power tussle among the caste groups.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. To know the social and demographic profile of Aldona.
2. To find out the similarities and differences between the *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona* and *Comunidade Boa Esperanca*.
3. To analyze the functioning of the two associations in the governance of land.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

This study is one of its kind, attempted to develop an understanding of the various sociological aspects of a Goan village. This study's basic idea is to understand Aldona's Comunidade system and its two associations. The methods adopted in this study were primarily participant observation, this gave me an opportunity to interact with the *gauncars* of both the Comunidade groups of the village of Aldona. This is a qualitative ethnographic study, which is conducted through an in-depth and unstructured interview method. Ethnography is a form of qualitative research method in which the researcher immerses himself in a particular social setting or community to observe and document their behavior and interactions. The word 'ethno' literally means culture, which aims at

documenting the culture of the people. It is more about studying people belonging to various groups or organizations. For instance, cultural groups, tribal groups, and so on.

The respondents were selected with the help of snowball sampling method. The study was further carried out by an unstructured interview method. In this process, I interviewed nine *gauncars*. Five of these nine *gauncars* belonged to the *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona* and four belonged to the *Comunidade Boa Esperanca*. This also included the President of *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona* and the President of *The Comunidade Boa Esperanca*, the Ex-President of *The Comunidade Boa Esperanca* and the attorney of *The Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona*.

CHAPTERISATION SCHEME

This study consists of five chapters. It begins with the introductory chapter, which includes a review of the comunidade system of Goa. It also provides us with brief information of the village of Aldona and the reason for the village to have two Comunidade groups.

While the second chapter titled as, 'Comunidade system of Goa: Organization and Functioning' highlights the organization, functioning and role of the Comunidade. Further, the same chapter focuses on the duties and privileges of the *gauncars*, the functioning of the shareholders, the classification of the members of the Comunidade/*gauncars* and their role.

The third chapter is titled 'The social-historical and demographic profile of Aldona', where the geographical and historical setting of Aldona and the social and demographic profile are discussed. This chapter mainly focuses on the establishment of

Aldona, its flora, fauna, historical establishments, its people and the past and present situation of the village.

Moreover, the fourth chapter is titled "The Tale of two Comunidades: Conflict and Negotiations. This chapter, through narratives, sheds light on the land and caste conflict, the reason for Aldona to have two Comunidade groups, the land management, the members and the vengods they belong to, the rules, rights and functioning of the two comunidade groups, the similarities and differences between the two comunidade groups and the governance of land between the two groups.

Furthermore, the fifth chapter is the 'Conclusion', which briefly summarises the entire topic.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNIDADE SYSTEM OF GOA: ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONING

From ancient times, land management in Goa was governed by a pre-ancient system known as the *gauncari*. Comunidade is a private village organization in Goa having absolute land ownership rights or supreme power and functioning independently as a self-governing establishment or cooperative (Dsouza, 2020, p.1). In the book 'The Bardeskar's the Mystery of a Migration', Alphie Monteiro has compared a Comunidade to a village assembly (Gramsanstha), a unique social regulatory feature found in Goa. This system is unknown to other parts of India and the world. In the Comunidade, also known as the *Gramsanstha*, land ownership is placed with the village and not with the individual (*ibid*). Comunidade is a Portuguese term for *gauncari* system of Goa (Dsouza, 2020, p. 1). *Gauncari* is a Konkani term, a combination of two words, namely 'Gaun' (also *Gaon* or *Ganv* in Konkani), which means village and 'cari' means association (*ibid*), which means village association. At the same time, these village associations were unique in their structure, as the land was owned communally by the original settlers. Another term in Konkani used for *Gauncari* is *Gaunponn*. 'Gaun' means village and 'ponn' means an organization (*ibid*.) In a Comunidade, a *gauncar* is a co-owner of its assets (*ibid*). Goan Catholics take great pride in calling themselves 'zonnkars' of their respective villages (Comunidade). In the olden days, the ancestors of these *gauncars* made regular trips to Goa through dangerous jungles to collect the 'zonn' and to register the names of their male offspring (Monteiro. A, 2020, p. 99). The 'zonn' is the dividend (from surplus revenue) available for payment among the components after meeting all expenditures and considered a type of payment for common service and other

purposes provided to the *gauncar* (Dsouza, 2020). Bernardo Elvino De Souza's book 'The Last Prabhu' says that the villages of Goa were said to be settled by following a very accurate process. This was mainly done by an experienced and knowledgeable elder, an Adistani Brahmin, who was selected to sort out the village. This Adistani Brahmin of the village then established the first *vangad* or clan of the village and was regarded as the *Chief Gauncar* (De Souza, 2020, p. 134). Regarding the Comunidade system of Goa, Aldona is exceptional as it has not one but two Comunidade groups, where one was named '*Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona*', and the other was called '*Comunidade Boa Esperança*'. In contrast, the other village Comunidades is said to have just one Comunidade association (Monteiro. A, 2019, p. 50).

The Comunidades are agricultural associations constituted by a certain number of members (original) settlers of lands. Land, primarily comprised of paddy fields, sluice gates and other unfertile lands that belonged to these associations, is utilized jointly by a third force or by the members themselves (Almeida, 2013, p. 40, 41). The agricultural associations, known as Comunidades, have resulted as a natural process and unconstrained tendency of the people when the inhabitants, harassed by the misfortunes and anxious for a better life, came down from the western coast of Ghats. And cultivated the abandoned lands and began their exploitation to produce, at least, the needful to satisfy their hunger needs, through common efforts, by helping, benefiting and suffering together, as if the common welfare was in sight. In the beginning, these families might have come down as far as the so-called '*old conquests*', which were appropriate for the development of agricultural activities due to the proximity of rivers. These agricultural associations or *gauncari*, later renamed as Comunidades by the Portuguese,

underwent modifications with time. It was seen that the governing authorities of Goa had to pay for the consequences, whereas it was the very Goans that enacted laws on the Comunidades.

The Charter, *Foral* of 1526 enshrined the uses and customs of the *gauncars* along with farmers in the Islands of Goa (*Foral de usos e costumes dos gauncares e lavradores das Ilhas de Goa*) was the first Portuguese legislative document that began to interfere in the Comunidades affairs. By 1880, existing already, many loose legislative laws after the publication of the Charter, it was sought to codify the existing one with the necessary modifications, it being worthy of note the norms were made compulsory, the payment of tax to the Government was known as *foros* (the former *coxi- vorodo*), and that established the registration, measurement and demarcation of the cultivated fields. Subsequently, it was published in the rule of 1882, based on the decree of 1880, wherein it mentioned the measure which changed the various alienable claims such as *tangas*, *melagras*, *arequeiras*, etc. into shares of only one type, having a nominal 2. value of Rs. 20/-. In 1904, a new code was published which agreed with the exigencies of the time, established the equality of '*culacharins*' and '*cuntocares*' (outside shareholders) with the *gauncaris* to the lease of the plots belonging to the Comunidades.

In 1938 it was promulgated by the then Governor General Jose Cabral, Diploma No. 1035 of 23 December, it was ordered the direct cultivation by the tenant, of the paddy fields of the Comunidades and abolished the system of idoneous guarantee, imposing heavy fines upon those that dedicated to the activity of leasing out their fields to sub- tenants. In terms of this diploma, the tenancy of the paddy fields was granted to those who last cultivated the fields directly, as long as they agreed to pay the rent fixed in

the advertisements, whereby the future crop production represented the very guarantee of the Comunidade. In view of all these numerous disperse diplomas and constant petitions to the Governor General, be it from the Juntas of Comunidades or be it from the farmers, it was compiled into one diploma, all the legislative laws relating to the Comunidades, known as the Code of Comunidades, dated 15 April, 1961. In this Code, it was re-established that the system of leasing out the paddy fields by public auction with the aim of correcting the assessment of the production of each Comunidade, which at times showed to be high and at other times quite low. It also maintained the system of limiting the number of plots to be leased, according to the farmers family members, and it also prohibited any exploitation by ways of sub-tenancy or partnership. Finally, in 1964, the so-called The Goa, Damn and Diu Agricultural Tenancy Act, 1964, considered a Diploma of the Land Reform in Goa, was introduced. This Act contains a series of legal disposition, applicable both to the Comunidades as well as to the private owners. It was aimed for the security of the tenancy contract, fixation of the rent to be paid and the fulfilment of other duties and privileges, as well as a guide for solving the conflicts between the concerned parties.

At present, 224 Comunidade are spread over the Districts of Goa, which are found distributed according to the Talukas. (Almeida, 2013, p. 41-48). The members of the Comunidades can be classified in three categories that is *jonoeiros*, shareholders and participants. The *jonoeiros* are the descendants of the original *gauncars* by direct line and the male descendantse, whatever their number, one they attained a certain age, which vary according to the Comunidades. Whenever a particular Comunidade showed any net annual income available, the *jonoeiro* when it may be the case, has the right to

receive some amount of it, known as "*jono*", this right being inalienable, personal, and being effective from the date of his inscription in the Comunidade as *jonoeiro*. The distribution of the *jono* can be made either 'per capita' or '*per stirpes*'.

According to Pereira Rui Gomes, in his book "Gaunkari the Old Village Associations" has said that, in the system of division *per stirpes*, the surplus of the land was divided by the number of *vangods* and then sub-divided amongst their branches and finally by the members of families which constitute the branches. Thus, he stated an example of a family comprising four members, including a father and three sons, the share allotted to the family is divided into four equal parts. The second membership included those of shareholders; they are the ones that hold the Comunidades shares registered on their own name and which are transmissible and alienable. The quantity of a shareholder of a Comunidade comes into force from the date of inscription of the share in his name. Whenever any Comunidade shows a net income for distribution, each share is entitled to a quota, known as a dividend. The participants are those entitled to a certain amount of the Comunidades net income, whatever its nature and denomination. The quality of being a participant member is effective from the date of the member's inscription as a participant. Their number is quite limited. Besides the above three categories of members of Comunidades, there are the '*jonoeiros*- shareholders', who are simultaneously *jonoeiros* and shareholders. Among the participants, in certain Comunidades, members such as *culacharins* are the associates admitted, subsequently, in the Comunidades by the *gauncars*. There are also the '*pensioners*' who receive pensions such as '*acas*', '*formas*', '*votonas*', '*tainatas*' etc... and the '*vangores*', these being the groups of persons belonging to the same family branch. All these members were

entitled to a share in the net income of the Comunidade. Additionally, they also had to discharge other duties and privileges such as;

1. To take part, discuss and vote in the meetings of the Comunidade.
2. To be elected or appointed for any posts in the Comunidade.
3. To cover up the deficit.
4. To hold meetings in the administrative bodies.
5. Inspect the income and expenditure statements and the estimates of production for less.
6. To appeal against the resolutions taken for the Comunidade.
7. To denounce all and any irregularity verified in the affair of the Comunidade.

The voting system in the management of the Comunidades affairs would differ from Comunidade to Comunidade, according to the identity of the topic to be discussed. With regards to the *jonoeiros* the voting is done as per each head and with regards to the shareholders, in case the topic is to be decided by representation, then it is considered by the number of shares held by each shareholder, if the voting is done per head. (Almeida, p. 52, 53). The location of the Comunidades concerning where the rivers are located is an essential attribute. In many cases, there are Comunidades, which have irrigation facilities. Even after being productive enough, they still have to bear expenses for preserving the bunds, dams, ditches, sluice gates, ponds, etc. While there are other Comunidades, being located in the interiors and not being so productive, do not need heavy expenditure (Almeida, 2013, p. 60).

According to Pereira Rui Gomes in his book "Gaunkari the Old Village Associations" (Vol II) has said that, the rules for the constitution of the managing board of the communities were framed for the first time in the year 1854. They maintained the old customary practices and ordered that the *Institutos Organicos* of each community would be followed. The new enactment, which would be applied as supplementary law to all the communities, were said to contain the following basic principles:

1. Each *vangod* would elect its representatives.
2. The managing board would be held as constituted, when the minimum number of representatives of each *vangod* and the minimum number of the total demanded by the respective *Instituto Organico* were present.
3. The minimum number for the formation of the quorum would be five. As a result, if a community was constituted of less than five *vangods* and if it was the custom to elect one representative for each *vangod*, they would be elected further, as many members were necessary to complete the number of five.
4. The *gauncars* residing in the respective village would be preferred to the non-residents.
5. The non- *gauncars* would be elected to the managing board jointly with the *gauncars* only in communities where such a custom prevailed.
6. In the absence of *gauncars* the management would pass onto the other members. Those having greater rights would be more eligible in each category.

According to Pereira, in the 18th century, the communities were deprived of the right to institute judicial proceedings, without prior authorization from the Government.

In 1854 such restriction was imposed on the *gauncars* regarding their community rights. The *Regulamento* (control by means of rules) 1882 ended the few existing powers.

I was informed that, *foro* is a form of ground rent, charged in the Comunidade system by the comunidade members, of collective land ownership in Goa. In some villages there were *nomoshins* who paid the *foro*. The meaning of the word *nomoshin* is unknown, but as an example given by Pereira Rui Gomes, the *nomoshins* of Borim village of Ponda taluka paid the *foro*. It is said that, according to the tradition, the *foros* had been established because of evaluating the *nomoshin* as its income was said to exceed the remuneration that was agreed upon. Therefore, the *foro* is said to be the excess. Besides the *nomoshins*, communities sometimes paid to some of their servants and to the servants of the village temple, they gave a fixed pension in cash, known as *vonton*. In Borim village of Ponda taluka, the *Bhat* (priest), the *modvoll* (the washerman), the *malo* (barber) enjoyed the *nomoshin*, while the *vinani* (blacksmith) simultaneously received a fixed pension under the title of *inam* or *vonton* (prize).

The community of Amona of Bicholim pays a similar pension to the *mhars* (harijans) of Bordem; at Usgao the same is given to the *malos* (barbers). At Sirvoi of Quepem the barbers receive pension as *gramkorch* and at Sheldem of the same taluka, *gramkorch* is paid to the *kulkarnis* wherein, many other communities receive *vonton*. The community of Bandora instituted an annual pension in favour of the musicians of the temples and of the *katkars*. The others enjoying these pensions were the *pernis* at Cola of Canacona, the *tashildhars* of Loliem, the *Brahmin* bearer, the *raiss* of the Muths of Partagale and *Gokarn* in Gaundongrem, the *Brahmin* bearer of Cokiprasad at

Nagorchem-Palolem, and the *bavins* (*devadasis*) in Vainguinnim of Bicholim and in almost all the communities of the Ponda taluka.

According to Paul Axelrod and Michelle A. Fuerch (1998), "Portuguese Orientalism and the making of the Village Communities of Goa" states that the Sahyadri Khanda made several points about the origins of the village communities that provide clues about one indigenous perspective on the Comunidades.

The indigenous village communities of Goa known as *gauncari* who were villagers or co- owners maintained *khazan* infrastructures for their annual food produce. The *Khazan* lands are reclaimed from the river or the sea. The bunds protected the agricultural fields and adjoining villages from tidal flow. The *Khazan* lands have three main features: the sluice gates, *poim* (ponds) and bunds. These *Khazans* are the cultural landscape of Goa's villages. The *Khazan* lands function as useful agro-ecosystems and agro-economic systems. The outer embankments protect the *Khazan* lands from saline water intrusion, at high tides the sluice gates permit only the volume of water which could be stored in backwaters and other channels. At low- tide this water could be made to drain out and while draining the fish gets trapped in a gill-net attached to the sluice gate. Besides, micro irrigation ponds are useful for the production of winter crops of vegetables and legumes. Moreover, the *Khazan* lands act as anti- flood system- terminal recipients of coastal watersheds. These act as temporary storm water storages during the South- West monsoon. This helps in partial recharge of the depleted aquifers. While, monsoon- freshwater flow leaches out excess salt from the cultivable area, permitting cultivation of salt- tolerant rice varieties. The references of old '*Khazan*' lands are found in land grants of ancient rulers of Goa the Bhoja kings, such as Prithvimalla Varman

(*Kapoti* Khazan and *Pukkoli* Khazans of Divar island) which were dated back to 400AD, Anirhjitvarman of Markaim- Ponda, dated back to 500 AD. The first places of *khazan* lands brought under cultivation in Marcaim village of Ponda taluka by 'Maddo' and 'Pay' were named as '*Maddyache mulak*' and '*Payche- mulak*'. The village communities, *gauncars* or *comunidades* had appointed voluntary bodies called '*bous*' for specific tasks related to Khazan land protection. Besides, the king had appointed revenue and land tax collectors called '*Bhojakas*' and '*Ayukatas*' to mobilize the revenues from khazan land production. (Kamat. N. M, 2004). It is said that, the *Comunidade* associations had a direct aim to maintain the public works, this is because their revenues were directly dependent on the agricultural, horticultural and fish produce of the lands and water bodies that they oversaw and collectively claimed.

Photograph 1: Picture of a Khazan land of Goa, cultivated paddy field



Source: <http://www.goachitra.com/goa.html>

Photograph 2: Picture of a bund



Source: <https://www.teriin.org/article/goa-village-strives-protect-fast-vanishing-khazans>

Photograph 3: Picture of a sluice gate



Source: <https://www.teriin.org/article/goa-village-strives-protect-fast-vanishing-khazans>

Photograph 4: Picture of khazan land



Source: <https://www.teriin.org/article/goa-village-strives-protect-fast-vanishing-khazans>

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL-HISTORICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF ALDONA

Aldona is a village in the Bardez Taluka of Goa known for many prominent things. Aldona is located at $15^{\circ}35'23''$ N $73^{\circ}52'24''$ E at an average elevation of 19 metres (62 ft). Aldona as a village consists of 16 wards, while Bodiem and Danua are the two wards separated from the main village by the Mapusa river and now are a part of the Tivim constituency. According to the Census data of 2011, the average literacy rate was 79 per cent, which was higher than the national average of which approximately 49 per cent were males and 51 per cent were females. At the same time, 9 per cent of the population was under seven years of age. Aldona is a village surrounded by loads of greenery.

Nevertheless, it is concluded that the village of Aldona was settled anywhere between 1400 and 1150 CE. But there are no historical data to validate this dating of the Aldona village. The most recent common ancestor (TMRCA) is based on mutation rates on each chromosome based on past experience, and this information can vary. Therefore, Aldona was not part of the twelve villages of Bardez to be occupied by the initial settlers of Goa who accompanied Parashurama. It was during the rule of the Kadambas that the ruler, wishing to consolidate his power in the northern part of Goa, gifted agricultural land to an Adhistani Brahmin from Saxtti, where the Kadambas and the *gram sansthas* were already very well established, to settle what became the village of Aldona. It is a village filled with luscious green fields and rivers on all sides. The small jungles in the Aldona village are also home to many birds and small animals like Porcupines, snakes,

crocodiles, ant eaters, monkeys and so on. Three islands surround Aldona; Calvim, Chorjuem and Choraio, from which Calvim and Chorjuem are a part of the Aldona constituency. Agriculture was the primary economy. There were no formal schools or industries; therefore, a man had to live from the produce of the land or farming. The ancestors of Aldona practised agricultural activities for their survival. Aldona is filled with Khazan lands that were once cultivated and produced a good yield. People still grow crops like vegetables, onions, chillies, and beans, also known as '*vaingan*'. *Vaingan* is the cultivation of Rabi crops cultivated in the winter season. Crops grown in the *vaingan* consist of Paddy crops.

Baba Borkar has suggested that the word comes from the Sanskrit words '*Hal*' (plough) and '*Drove*' (cone) (De Souza, 200, p.132). The former is plausible because Aldona was settled as an agricultural village. Author Maria Aurora Couto, a resident of Aldona, attributed the name of the village to *Haldi* or turmeric (*ibid*, p.132) The village of Aldona is known for the quality of its chillies and onions but not turmeric. According to Father Francisco Xavier Vaz has attributed the name of Aldona to *Vhadd- dhan* meaning great and abundant ("*vhadd*") wealth or riches ("*dhan*") (*ibid*, p.133) The village of Aldona the St. Thomas church which was built in the year 1595 at the cost of the village and also has a temple which is dedicated to Shri Bhagvati (*ibid*, 200, p. 152,153.) The village also has a fort which is said to be of the Portuguese era while the locals say that the fort is much older. It is said that it was originally constructed by the Desai's of Sankhali before it went to the Bhosle's of Sawantwadi (Goyal A, 2016.) This initiation of Aldona is believed to be at least 2000 years old and comprises of around 16 wards. Aldona is an exceptional village with two comunidades (village communities or

ganvcar). Following endless fights for almost four centuries culminating in the comunidade's bifurcation into two associations- *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona*, which consisted of the Brahmins, including goldsmiths and the *Comunidade Boa Esperanca* of the *Chardo* (Kshatriya) and Sudra castes. Aldona is a multi-religious village composed of people of various religions, mainly including Christians, Hindus and Muslims. The main Church is dedicated *São Tomé*, which means St.Thomas. Aldona has three Chapels: St. Rita de Cascia in Carona, Nosa Senhora de Piedade in Quitla and Mãe de Deus in Chorjuem.

The St. Thomas Church is an inspiring historical landmark of Aldona. It was built in 1595 on a plateau on the cascading banks of the Mapusa River. The feast of St. Thomas is celebrated every year on the third Saturday after the Easter Sunday. The Church is adorned with a biblical mural representing symbolic biblical meaning and grand statues. There is a legend associated with the treasures of the Church. As a gesture of thanking the patron of the Church upon their intercessions being met, the devotees would often donate jewellery to the Church. However, it is said that the Church was often robbed off these jewels. Just like most of Churches, the graveyard gate of the Church has the words engraved in Konkani which reads "*Aiz maka, falia tuka*", which means 'Today for me, tomorrow for you', which is a reminder of our mortality. Aldona is also the home of the Catholic Patriarch of the East Indies, and Archbishop of Goa Daman Diu and India, Filipe Neri Antonio Sebastião do Rosário Ferrão on 20 January 1953 in Santarxette Aldona. The village has four schools, one higher secondary school, a health centre, a police outpost and a market for the needs of the people.

The village also has the Lions Club of Aldona which meets to the needs of the local Communities. The Lions Club of Aldona was founded in 1917 and were best known for fighting blindness. While today they volunteer for many other community projects, including caring for the environment, feeding the hungry and aiding the seniors and disabled. The foundation helps communities suffering from natural disasters by providing them with immediate help and medical aid. While today, the Lions club of Aldona is more concerned about garbage management. The volunteers have conducted rallies to create awareness of the ill effects of using plastic and the need for environmental protection. The village also has the Owl House, which is a community service aimed at providing skill support individuals and families with neurological issues. Aldona also has a Asilo at Mainavaddo, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary Home for the aged, which was started back in 1872. While the medical needs of the inmates, for more than 50 years, were tended to by Dr. Filipino Lobo.

Aldona is well known for its two bridges, one connecting Calvim and the other to Chorjuem. The cable bridge, or the Chorjuem bridge is Goa's first cable bridge and therefore hold a special place in the memories and hearts of the people of both villages as it connects them. It is a bridge which provides astonishing and mesmerizing greenery cascading through the Mapusa River. The Calvim bridge is yet, another bridge which was built with a tragic story attached to it. The tragedy occurred when a bus transporting four school children and two elders sank in the river. This tragedy forever left a lasting impression on the people, and a plaque on the bridge still shows the names and photos of the deceased, showing respect to the souls lost. The bridge was inaugurated on 13 October, 2013.

Aldona, attracts tourists primarily for its fort which is located in Chorjuem. The fort was built in 1705, by Caetano de Melo e Crasto the Portuguese Viceroy. It was under the control of Portuguese India from 1705-1961. This fort is said to be a unique piece of architecture, a square structure with four tiny towers on all four corners of the fort look more like frontiers. Inside the fort there is a chapel which is dedicated to St Anthony. The engraved gate shows us that the Portuguese built the fort during their rule. But, locals do not agree to this and say it is much older. The original construction is assigned to the Desai's of Sakhali before bartering it to the Bhosle's of Sawantwadi. It is believed that, local laterite stone has been used, which makes the fort look even older. A small hint of Islamic architecture lies in the four tiny corner towers. The most fascinating part inside the Fort lies in the cove, which consists of four wide ramps in all four corners that leads to the roof, this connects the fort to all the four ramps. These ramps were thought to be used to roll down supplies and other heavy goods or to take animals to the top. It is said that though this fort is not a big structure it was mostly use for defence, as an outpost to keep an eye on surroundings or invaders. It was said that, in the early 1800's, the fort was also used as a military school and in this way, it had a battery of four guns for its defence. The fort guarded the town of Chorjuem and therefore there was harm caused to the village. The fort discontinued its functioning after the success of Novas Conquistas, this is because it had lost its purpose as a border defence. A shrine is dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua in the fort's entrance. The Parish Church of Aldona maintains this shrine and is regularly patronized and renovated. It is often seen that devotees of St. Anthony visit the shrine every Tuesday to offer prayers.

Prof. Edward J. Soares the first principal of St. Thomas School way back in 1923 has is a statue in the village square. He founded the St. Thomas' High School in 1923. This educational institution was later separated into boys' and girls' high schools. This is one of the most unique things that has never happened before, where an educationist is honoured in such a way. The Rosa Mystica Convent at Cottarbhatt, Auxillium Convent at Carona and Mae de Deus High School in Chorjuem are among the other Government and private institutions. 'Caritas' a charity home started a bold project in the field of education by starting up the St. Bridget's Vocational Institute for women. Aldona is also proud of Damaciano Fernandes, popularly known as the father of Konkani Romantic Literature, and is the author of the famous '*Julus Patxai*'. With more than a fair share of doctors, professors, lawyers and engineers, Aldona has many priests and nuns who spread the good news all over Goa and the world. Besides, it was also told to me that Aldona had three Bishops, two Provincials and a Rector.

Aldona is known for celebrating two famous feasts in the year, one of which is the *Choranche* feast and *Konsanche* feast. While with the Hindu folks the yearly Bhagwatis *palki* draws a lot of people to the village. The '*Choranche fest*' or 'Robbers feast' is celebrated with a very significant story behind it. The Choranche fest is celebrated on 29 October annually. A band of robbers had crossed the Chorjuem ferry to loot and plunder the Church. Having broken the main door, they entered in and tried opening the iron safe while the plan didn't work out their way they planned to enter the sanctuary but were petrified to find, according to eye witness, an angelic figure with a drawn sword blocking the entrance. Meanwhile, the villagers, hearing the alarm, gathered with spades, bamboos, sticks, and brooms to meet the invaders. On attempting to flee

they were pelted with stones from all directions. 16 were killed, four were taken as prisoners and the rest drowned while attempting to escape. The 'Choranche feast or 'Robbers festival is celebrated in commemoration of this unique event. The Chapel of Our lady of Piety was established in Quitla in 1800. The Mae de Deus chapel was established in Chorjuem in 1855 and the St, Rita of Cascia chapel was established in Carona in 1865. The *Konsanche fest* is the harvest festival which is celebrated with great pomp. It is celebrated in the month of August, when new grains are formed, called *konxeo* in the local language. According to oral history and as written by DeSouza in his book "The Last Prabhu",2000, Shree Bhagvati, one is the goddess Parvati, consort of Lord Shiva, was the main temple located in Cottarbhatt. While Bhootnath, Sidhnath and Fulnath were subsidiary deities. Another, temple which was dedicated to Dadd stood in Quitla, the Rvalnath temple was situated in Calvim, the Narayan temple in Carona and the Santeri temple was located in Santarxette from which the name of the ward was derived, as told to the author by Hector Fernandes a *gauncar* of Aldona. The locals of Aldona celebrated all other festivals irrespective of their caste or religion. San joao, Christmas, Eid, Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali are some of the occasions the locals of Aldona celebrate unitedly. The locals visit each other on the occasions of Christmas and Ganesh Chaturthi. While, the parish of Aldona organizes special programmes for non- Catholics during the Advent season. Besides, on 24 June Aldona witness's youth of all religions celebrating *san joao* at the nearest *pois* also known as lakes.

Aldona also has a number of grounds for Sports and Recreation activities. Quitla Mini stadium, Chorjuem Ground, Calvim ground, Behind the St, Thomas Girls' School

and the Ganvar playground for the people of Carona. A mini stadium also exists at Quitla. Besides the youth of Aldona today, have access to gyms.

The village has produced a number of notable Goan personalities as well. These include singer-tiatrist Alfred Rose, Joseph Couto, archbishop of Karachi, Pakistan, Late Ferdinando Fonseca, auxiliary bishop of Bombay, Filipe Neri Ferrão, archbishop of Goa and Daman, Late Alban Couto, former chief secretary and author, Padma Shri awardee Maria Aurora Couto among many more. Alfred Rose was a Goan tiatrist who was known as one of the most singers and composers of Konkani songs. He is believed to have song or composed or maybe both over 5000 songs during his career.

CHAPTER IV

THE TALE OF THE TWO COMUNIDADES: CONFLICT AND NEGOTIATION

LAND AND CASTE CONFLICT

The land management associations of Aldona comprise two Comunidade groups. The division of the Comunidade of Aldona began in 1921. In the early 20th century, a person named Custodio Caetano Fernandes, along with his father, Roque Pascoal Fernandes approached the comunidade of Aldona and made a claim, asking his right to be registered as a recipient of dividends from the communally administered village land as he had turned 13. The comunidade defended its claim saying that since Brahmin *gauncars* were of the class of masters, administrators and governors they had more rights, while as the Sudras belonged to the class of servants they did not have any rights. Bento Sertorio Mascarenhas, advocate for the Comunidade of Aldona, published a defence of the Comunidade's position, citing that only the Brahmins had the Right to Administer the Comunidade of Aldona. In response to this, Jose Baptisto Caetano Vaz, in 1930 appealed to the Portuguese Government to uphold his plea as a representative of the Shudras of Aldona and asked the Government to provide a law that would protect him and his caste members from becoming victims of the Brahmins of Aldona and asked Justice for Custodio Fernandes who asked for his right to be registered as a recipient of the *dividends* from the communally administered villager land as his son had turned the age of 13.

The Comunidade refused, invoking a law which allowed only Brahmins, the Scribes to be registered when they were 12, but required the Shudras to be registered at 19. Custodio Fernandes took his case to Court in Mapusa. The Comunidade defended its claim saying that since the Brahmins were of the class of Masters, Administrators, Governors they had a Prior Right, while the Shudras were of the labour class. Conflicts between Brahmins and Shudras intensified and the Comunidade of Aldona split into two. Caetano Francisco Soares, a lawyer from Aldona, grandfather of (Joao Damasceno Soares/grand daughter-in-law Amelia Alvares Soares of Santerxette, Aldona) was shot dead one evening on 13 November, 1921 at Ucassaim whilst returning home from Mapusa. The Shudras thought that Caetano Soares had influenced the judge in the case in Mapusa which the Brahmins won. A sharpshooter was brought from Bombay who hid in the bamboo grove in Ucassaim and assassinated our grandfather Caetano Francisco Soares. The assassin got a life sentence. But the case was taken to the Supreme Court in Lisbon, Portugal where the Shudras won the case. The Comunidade of Aldona was divided into two associations. A memorial still stands on the spot in Ucassaim where he was shot. In the year 1921 a lot of chaos took place which couldn't be brought under control because people of the two caste groups where the members were more interested in taking revenge which caused a lot of problems and separations.

In the official Gazette of 1924- No. 88 Article 2- The two comunidades to which the previous article refers shall have the following names: *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona* and *Comunidade da Boa Esperanca de Aldona*. According to the Article 5 of the official Gazette of 1924, each comunidade shall have its private clerk, with salary as may be fixed by the Government.

From the time of the separation till now, the Comunidade of Aldona has had two separate Comunidade associations. However, with the consent of the Government the members of *Comunidade Boa Esperanca* tried to unite the Comunidade as one group, but due to misunderstandings and no cooperation from the members of the other groups that is *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona*, there has been no progress even after successive meetings and deliberations to unite it into one. But today, the unity between the members of the two groups doesn't make a difference to the members to divide it into two. A *gauncar* also stated that, "as we all are united now and as long as there are no conflicts we would prefer the comunidade to be the way it is. A *gauncar*, who belongs to the *Comunidade Boa Esperanca*, said it is shameful to have two comunidade groups among all the other comunidades of Goa. This is because the separation which was created back then creates a different understanding in the minds of the people of the other villages. Although, the members of *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona* and *Comunidade Boa Esperanca* are united today, people think that there still are conflicts between the members. There were times when massive problems and misunderstandings took place between the two groups' members. But, today it is seen that the members of both groups are friendly and discuss their issues with each other. One of the *gauncar* also stated that, "in the end we are brothers and we need to be there for each other, therefore it's better we keep aside all these misunderstandings and live in unity".

An aged *gaunkar* of the '*Fraternal*' mentioned that the Panchayat didn't have any rights in the early years but the comunidade had rights over the village. The comunidade consists of original inhabitants of the particular area therefore it is said that an individual doesn't need to have any qualification to be a member of the comunidade,

as it gets carried on in the family through the patrilineal bloodline. If an individual's father was a gaunkar, he also became the gaunkar of the village. The brahmins of Aldona, being enjoyed the status of higher caste, were said to have 56% rights of the land while some 44% went to the other castes. This mainly happens through patrilineal lineage. Therefore, today the fraternal is said to have thousands of *gaunkars*, where some reside in the village while some reside elsewhere but visit the village once a year, when it is time to collect the *zonn*. In such a way the strength of the comunidade group differs over time. But as told to me by the President of *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona*, today the Fraternal has around 2000 members while the President of the *Boa Esperanca* has said that their group consists of around 800 members. In order to be a member of *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona* one has to be 11 years of age and to be a member of the *Boa Espersnca* one has to be 19 years of average till the year of 1909. Each *gauncar* belongs to a particular vangod in both the comunidade groups. The *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona* has 12 vangods and *Comunidade Boa Esperanca* has seven. As said by De Souza in his book "The Last Prabhu" (2020) that the gauncars of *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona* constitute 12 *vangods*, of which the 11th is of goldsmiths and the remaining are Brahmins. However, *Kulacharis* were said to be the village servants. Moreover, Brahmins were the clerks of the first and the second record, pundits, goddess, *mumbres* and *kulacharis* proper, who could bid independently in the auctions. Chardos (1st, 2nd, 3rd) and Sudras (1st *calvinkars*, *sonarvadde*, *cocas*, *maindavaddes*, *biras*, *cauxes*, *buins*, *ketrys*. *Tarys*, *botts*, *kamblis*, *ventios* and non-converts) who neither had voting rights nor a voice in the gauncari.

RULES, RIGHTS AND FUNCTIONING OF COMUNIDADE FRATERNAL DE ALDONA AND COMUNIDADE BOA ESPERANCA

Both the comunidade groups are said to share equal rules as put forth by the Code of Comunidade. The administration process of the Comunidade takes place with the administrator, at the top which further consists of the President, the Chairperson and the attorney with a substitute for each of them. The members of the fraternal association conduct their meetings on every Sunday to discuss their issues. It was also said that they have four annual meetings in a year. There are occasions when meetings are held for the members of both the groups. As stated by a *gauncar*, the members of either groups sometimes attend the meetings held by the other, this is to keep track of whether the members of the group are conducting any illegal activities. It was also said by a *gauncar* that if the members of both the group's don't stay strong then non-*gauncars* could take advantage of the situation and could take ownership over the land. Due to the pandemic of covid 19, the Presidents of both groups have said that no auctioning activities were held for the last two years. Besides the *gauncars* were also not given the *zonn* for the last two years due to less income. Both groups' *gauncars* are said to get Rs. 200/- as *zonn*. The President of the Fraternal Mr. Bocarro also said he's trying his best to raise the amount of *zonn* for the members of Comunidade de Fraternal. Due to a lack of infrastructure and men, little activity is being conducted on land. Therefore, the members are not able to collect much of the revenue. Out of the 11 sluice gates the Comunidade Fraternal is said to have only three, while Comunidade Boa Esperanca has managed to get just one of it while the rest are not claimed yet. It was also told that the money from any of the auctioning activities or from the rent of the Khazan lands a part of it was given

to the St Thomas Church and the Bhagvati temple. The *Fraternal* and *Boa Esperanca* are said to have their areas to govern, while there are some areas of land they share and the revenue distributed. The *zonn* of the fraternal is collected and distributed separately, while *Boa Esperanca* has it separately while the amount got through *zonn* got by each group is also separate and the amount is different. When the auctioning is conducted it is said to be conducted with the *gauncars* itself but due to less income in the comunidade both the groups have started accepting outsiders as well. The *Gauncars* follow all the rules of the comunidade as put forth by the Code of Comunidade.

The Official Gazette of 1924- No. 88 Article 2 states that the '*Khazans*' along with their uncultivated lands, named: *Bodiem, Cumbonem, Tolodem, Danua, Arvicho- aco-Vão xeta Culaco, Gutcoi, Udoi, Mossolcantor, Ranoi* and *Carona*. The paddy fields with their uncultivated lands: *Conduxeta, Deusavadi Quirna, Culaca Manxelaguim dando and Tarachem Batta, Mosson Xetichia garaveli buim, Mazorllem gallum and Luis Goimchea garaveli buim, Gopalachem Gallum, Ranoy Caronavelo Sorvo, Muddo and Dando em Tolondem, Caronavelem vissol, Novo lanco de Rama Tollem, Rama Tollea vellem quirna, Tollem Gallum, Amteacho Sorvo, Sanvorchem Gallum, Borchem bata, land boroda Ramtoleavellem Quirna, land borodda Pazregallum and Terreno de Borodda Naicavadea Vissol Sorvo*, etc. The uncultivated lands named; *Gutcoichem moroda, Devereavoili mudichem Paixem, Osrancha Sorvo, Galchi Mudi, and Deveneaveli mudi*. The sluice gates; *Danua, Gutcoi, Udoi and Mossol cantor* all belong to the Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona.

While the Article 3 of the official Gazetteer of 1924- allotted *Comunidade de Boa Esperanca de Aldona*, the *khazans* along with their uncultivated land names;

Quindabatta and Calvim, Ambecantor, Nivim, Donacho Dante, Gauncasana, Zovoleasana, Zambulchi Canturli and Vantsuo. The paddy fields which are uncultivated lands, *Voddachem Gallum, Panare Galum, Paulo Pereiricha Garaveli buim, Gauncasana manxellaguim vodlo mando, Vatevelo mando and arealaguim mando, Caronavelo Hor, Estevam Souza*cha garaveli buim and *Antonio Lobachea garaveli buim* and *Cristovam*, etc. The uncultivated lands; *Vissolochem Muddechem moroda, Sonotem velem vissol, Dandeachi Mudi, Devenea galvachi Muddechem Palxem, Gamavadeaveli Coud* or 1st part of *Devemgalvachi mudi*, 2nd part of *Devemvalvachi mudi*, *Cureachi mudi*, 1st part of *Xetichea Galvachi mudi*, 2nd part of *Xeticha Galvachi mudi* and *Tele Galvachi Mudi* above *Casre Galum*. The *Comunidade de Boa Esperanca de Aldona* were allotted sluice gates of *Nivim, Doneacho Dante* and *Zambulchi Canturli*.

Photograph 5: The Khazan land and Sluice gate that belongs to the comunidade in Carona of Aldona village



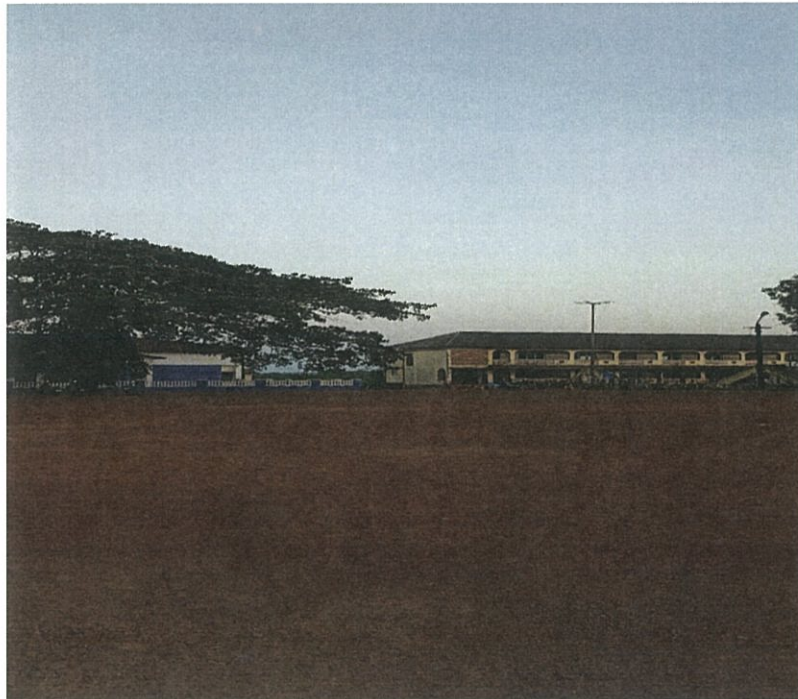
Source: Photograph by the researcher

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO ASSOCIATIONS

Concerning the revenue collected, it is said that before they did get revenue from the *khazan* lands but now as most of the lands are taken away they don't get any revenue from there. They only get their revenue from the three sluice gates under the fraternal group and some kiosks and small carts on the Comunidade land. The revenue collected is used for building up the sluice gates, paying the administrator, paying lawyers for various cases and other purposes in case of any emergencies while some amount is kept to pay the *zonn*. The two Comunidade are said to be identical in their own way and there is no similarity or difference because as it is they follow the rules under the code of comunidade. The auctioning of the sluice gates and other comunidade land is done only among the *gaunkars*; no outsiders are allowed to participate. The Fraternal can auction only the sluice gates and *khazan* lands which is in their power and the auctioning mainly takes place on the basis of the tides. Usually outsiders aren't allowed to conduct any kind of fishing or any kind of other activities on the comunidade land but there were instances where the *gaunkars* gave outsiders to conduct certain activities just to get extra money but this didn't continue for a long time. Aldona has its comunidade lands spread all over the area where there are some places where the fraternal and *boa esperanca* jointly share the land like the '*terxena*' and so on. The *Terxena* is a flat barren land which cannot be used for cultivation, therefore this land is given to the *fabrica*. Besides, any activity that takes place in Aldona is organized on this land; however, this land is jointly used by the members of both the comunidade groups and was asked not to distribute it to any of the groups as a separate. It is the same land on which both the

comunidade groups have their respective offices. In such a way both the comunidade groups and the Church *fabrica* can have access to this land. Both the comunidades have the right to the well existing in the land of the *Terxena*, being stratified by them according to the percentage established, the expenses which might be incurred with the same well. The *terxena* land which is jointly owned by both *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona* and *Comunidade Boa Esperanca*. The *terxena* land is shared with the Church for processions that are held on certain occasions and so on.

Photograph 6: The picture of the *Terxena* land



Source: Photograph by the researcher.

It is noticed that there are a number of changes with the comunidades with regards to the land, distribution of *zonn* and so on. The main things discussed in the meetings is mainly about land encroachment. This is primarily because a lot of land is

encroached by non-local without the knowledge of the *gaunkars*, discussions with regards to the building of bunds, clearing the sluice gates and so on is also done. When asked if the members ever thought of changing their group it was said that no one ever thought of doing that, maybe before it happened but today no one wishes to do so because members of both the groups enjoy equal rights. The main issue faced by the members of both the comunidades today is land encroachment which is quite disturbing to the *gauncars* of Aldona, and it is also seen that the *gauncars* themselves sell the land sold to these outsiders. It is said that in many instances, vacant area belonging to the comunidade is encroached for unnecessary activities without the knowledge of the *gauncars*. The case of Sainagar is another thing which was discussed by saying that land was being occupied by non-locals from which the comunidade have benefitted nothing. That's what that area is known as Sainagar. It was said that collective land ownership management of land is a good thing and has to continue because people can carry out various activities and keep up to their traditions. In this way people are encouraged and somehow people are also said to have a relationship with their land. The Bhatkar *mundkar* system still takes place but it is said that it's not that favourable. Land taken away by the *mundkars* years back even after filing it in the court has still not been fought for. It is said that the act of 1961 was still better than the tiller act of 1964 because the tiller got some right over the land in this process. When both the comunidades have to meet for a joint session to decide the matters of common interest, this is held at the primary school of Aldona. The *Boa Esperanca* also state that they did come up with the decision to unite the two groups, but due to hesitations from the other group, it was always left on hold. The process of uniting these two groups needs to be done by the

Government itself and therefore, a lot of legal procedures need to be followed for the same. But in today's situation there has not been problems or conflicts among the members of the two groups therefore they are fine with the decision of having the groups the way they are. The President also stated that there are 800 active members in the *Boa Esperanca* group today. While the President Mr. Melvin Fernandes says he's still trying hard to get the rest of the sluice gates as well.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, no auctioning activities were conducted and the *khazan* lands were also left uncultivated and were destroyed because of the growth of mangrove trees, because which there is no revenue available. It was also stated that certain lands of the village are under the guidance of the forest department, where the Mamlatdar needs to take care of the funding and other expenses. The Mamlatdar having the *khazan* lands under its control doesn't provide any funds to carry about any types of agricultural activities. Because of this, the land is left barren and the gaonkars are left helpless, which has led to the growth of mangrove plants. The *gauncars* are still working hard to get the land under their control so that atleast some kind of agricultural activities can be conducted by them. The areas of Calvim, Carona are full of such Khazan lands which are left destroyed only because there is no one to fund for the agricultural activities and also because of the growth of mangrove plants which cannot be destroyed in today's time.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study primarily aimed to enquire the factors which led to the formation of two Comunidade associations in Aldona village of Bardez Taluka. This investigation has made me realize the exact cause of the dispute between the two Comunidade groups, which is not really known either by the *Gauncars* themselves or the villagers of Aldona.

Firstly, I have discussed the comunidade system of Goa as a whole. The history of its origin, the organization and functioning of the comunidade system in Goa from the pre-Portuguese, the ramification brought by the Portuguese, along with the changes observed in the post-liberation period were discussed. I have also shed light on the social, demographic, geographical and historical setting of the Aldona village. While speaking about the village, I have also focused on the important places, personalities and auspicious occasions that take place in the village. Secondly, while studying the Comunidade of Aldona, I have tried to study the two groups and the reason for the two groups to be formed. Although the answers were different from one respondent to the other, the analysis helped me to draw a conclusion. The experience of conducting and interviewing people was eccentric, which enhanced my knowledge to know more about my own village Aldona.

Besides, after a discussion with the members, I have also got to know the functioning of the two comunidade associations. The number of people each group consists of, the process of becoming a *gauncar*, the auctioning, the zonn and so on. In such a way, we also get to know that there are many factors responsible for the separation

of Aldona Comunidade into two factions based on caste. During my study, I also observed that the present members of *Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona* and *Comunidade Boa Esperanca* are not enemies but help each other and still share a good bond, irrespective of the group or caste they belong to. As said by Dirk Kempthorne, "This is the way federal land management should work. Cooperation, not confrontation, should be the hallmark of conservation efforts".

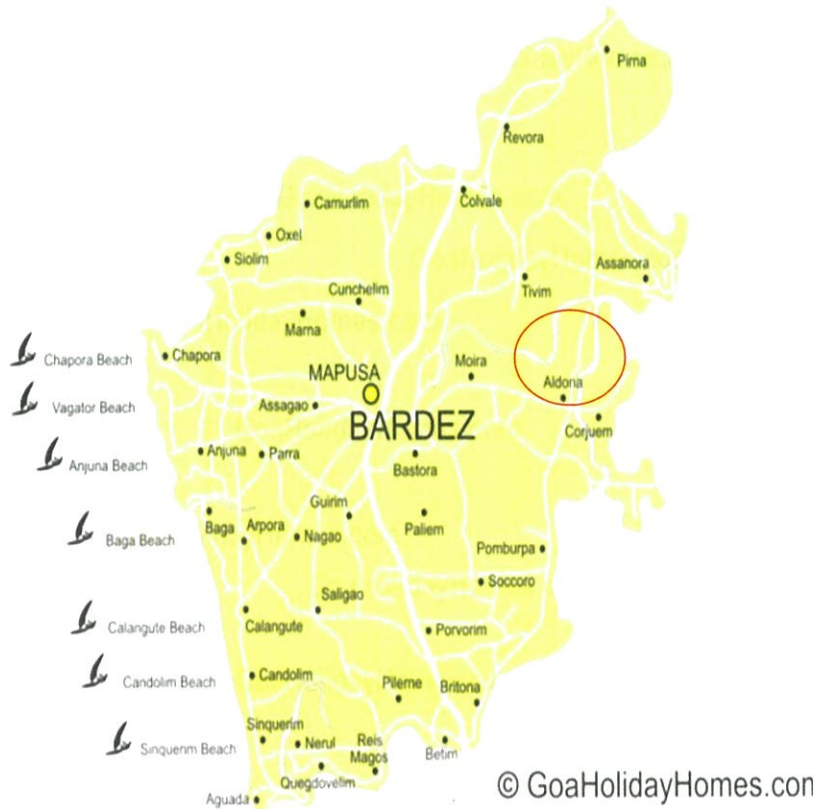
Moreover, not knowing the exact reason and the history, the answers from each of the members kept differing, which made me consult related literature on the caste conflict and the split of the Aldona comunidade. Through this study, I have also tried to bring out the ways by which the two were formed, how the people belong to a particular *vangod* and so on. I have also studied which areas come under which comunidade and the ways by which the members collect their income. *Zonn*, common land shared, similarities and differences, and their functioning are some things I have captured in this study.

Furthermore, the Goa Restriction on Transfer of Agriculture Land Bill 2023, a bill introduced by the Government of Goa in its legislative, states that this bill imposes restrictions on the agricultural lands to non-agriculturists. The main goal for the introduction of this bill (now an act) was to promote and increase agricultural activities in the State. But the villagers of Aldona have tried to oppose this bill for quite some time. The main reason for the *gauncars* of Aldona to oppose this bill is that Aldona as a village has many *khazan* lands which were not cultivated due to less funds by the Government, while today the villagers say that when the land was needed to be funded, it was

neglected by the Government as a reason of which today these lands have been left barren and have got disrupted with the interference of Mangrove plants. On the other hand, through shops and kiosks, the *gauncars* could earn some funds and would be able to make up for the lands revenue. The decision made by the Government has left the *gauncars* tensed and disappointed, while many of them are against the bill that is passed. It is also seen that many of the villages have lost their comunidade lands in the process of encroachment of land by outsiders and construction lobbies. In this way, the *gauncars* lost their rights over their ancestral land.

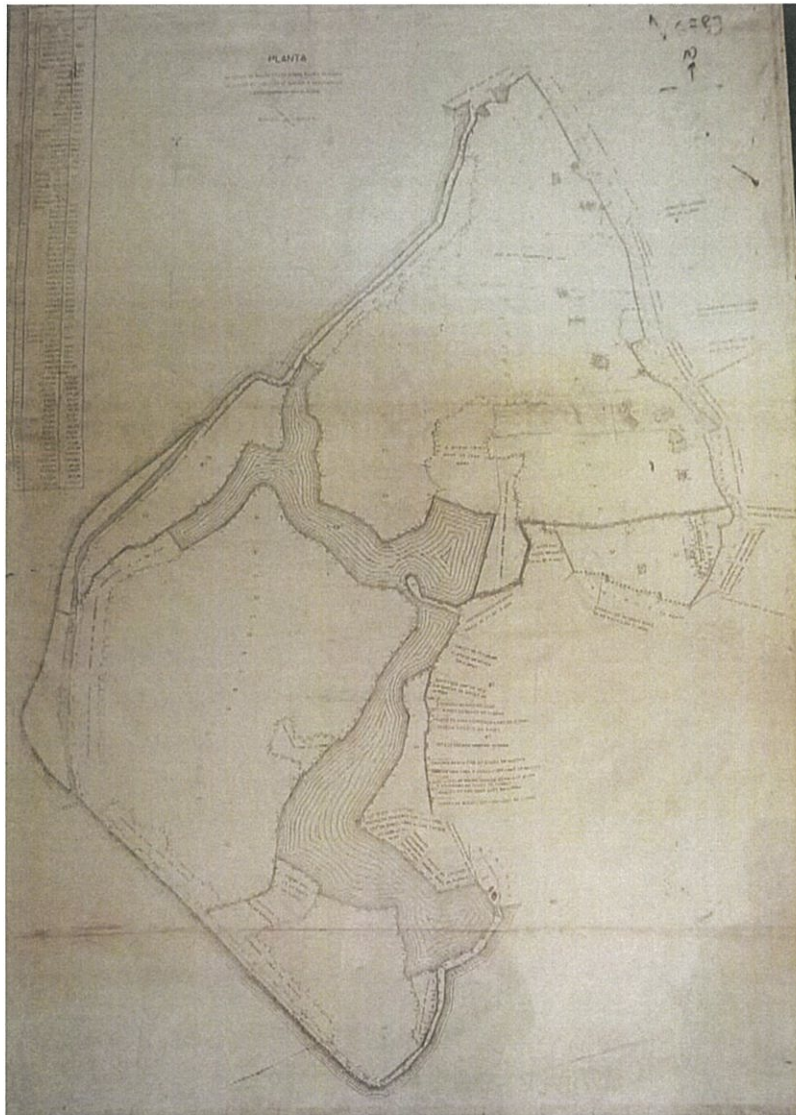
APPENDIX: PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 7: Map of Bardez Taluka highlighting Aldona village



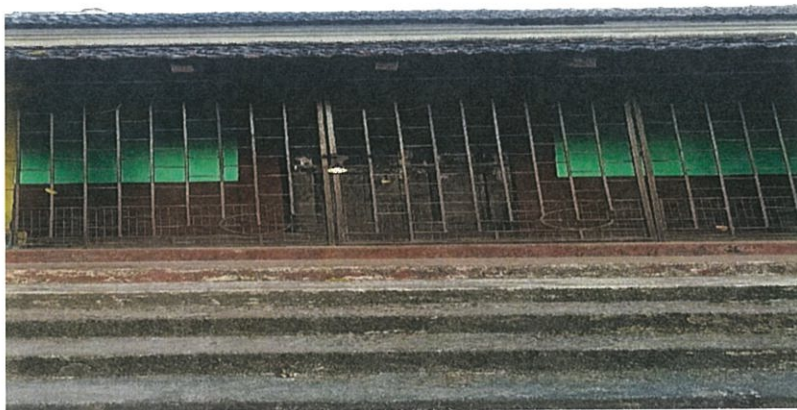
Source: <https://goemkarponn.com/restricted-water-supply-to-bardez-taluka/>

Photograph 8: Map of the Aldona Comunidade



Source: photograph by the researcher

Photograph 9: Picture of Comunidade Boa Esperenca



Source: photograph by the researcher

Photograph 10: Picture of Communnidade Fraternal de Aldona



Source: Photograph by the researcher

Photograph 11: Picture of the stone at Uccassaim at the place where Cetano Francisco Soares was murdered



Source: photograph by the researcher

Photograph 12: Picture of the list of Vangads of Comunidade Fraternal de Aldona

COMMUNIDADE FRATERNAL DE ALDONA								
VANGADS								
Afonso 3, 12	Lima 10							
Aldoncar 11	Lobo 3, 4, 6							
Alvares 9	Lourenco 3							
Bocarro 9	Louzado 5							
Carvalho 5	Macedo 12							
Camotim 9	Mendes 8							
Castelino 9	Mendonca 5							
Chatim 11	Menezes 5							
Conceicao 5	Moniz 4							
Correia 5	Noronha 4, 5, 9							
Comelo 9	Ouvides-xete 11							
Costa 1	Pinto 4, 5							
Couto 1	Rego 5							
Coutinho 9	Rocha 3, 11							
Cruz 4	Rodrigues 4							
Cunha 4	Sa 5, 6							
Drago 6	Siqueira 5, 9							
Faria 4	Soares 5, 9, 12							
Fernandes 4, 7, 9	Souza 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12							
Ferrao 3	Tavora 1							
Fonseca 5, 9	Vas 5							
Gama 5	Xete 11							
Gouveia 5								
<table border="1"> <tr> <th>INTERESSADOS</th><th>ESCRIVAS</th><th>CULACHARIM</th></tr> <tr> <td>a) Godde, Lobo b) Humbre, Pousinho, Cardozo, Nobrega or Nobres, Silva, Sousa c) Pandit, Nazare, Santos</td><td>Escritas do primeiro tombo - Sequiera Escritas do Segundo Tombo - Sacardando, Soares, Tocaano (extinto), Batista (extinto)</td><td>Miranda, Mesquita, Morais, Pereira, Sequiera, Souza</td></tr> </table>			INTERESSADOS	ESCRIVAS	CULACHARIM	a) Godde, Lobo b) Humbre, Pousinho, Cardozo, Nobrega or Nobres, Silva, Sousa c) Pandit, Nazare, Santos	Escritas do primeiro tombo - Sequiera Escritas do Segundo Tombo - Sacardando, Soares, Tocaano (extinto), Batista (extinto)	Miranda, Mesquita, Morais, Pereira, Sequiera, Souza
INTERESSADOS	ESCRIVAS	CULACHARIM						
a) Godde, Lobo b) Humbre, Pousinho, Cardozo, Nobrega or Nobres, Silva, Sousa c) Pandit, Nazare, Santos	Escritas do primeiro tombo - Sequiera Escritas do Segundo Tombo - Sacardando, Soares, Tocaano (extinto), Batista (extinto)	Miranda, Mesquita, Morais, Pereira, Sequiera, Souza						

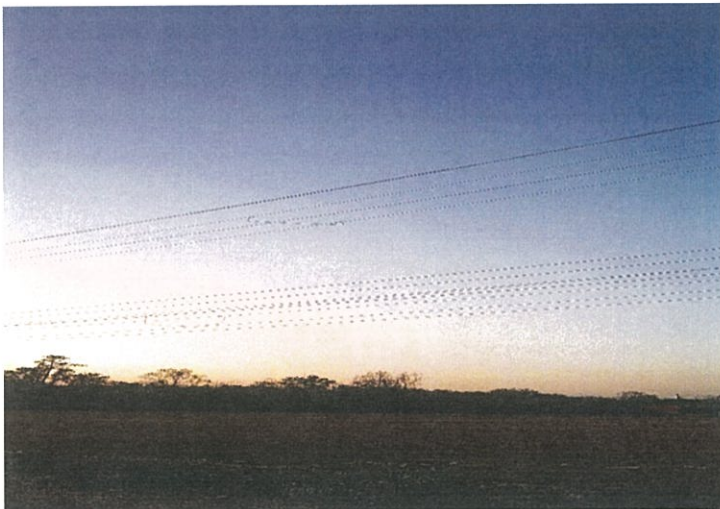
Source: photograph by the researcher

Photograph 13: Manos/ Sluice gate at Coimavaddo Aldona



Source: photograph by the researcher

Photograph 14: Comunidade land of Aldona at Ganvar



Source: photograph by the researcher

Photograph 15: Manos/ sluice gate at Quitla Aldona



Source: photograph by the researcher

Photograph 16: Picture of Sluice gate at Quitla Aldona



Source: photograph by the researcher

Photograph 17: The area in the Comunidade where meetings are held



Source: photograph by the researcher

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