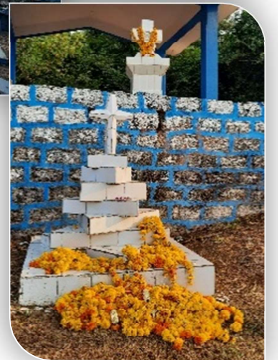
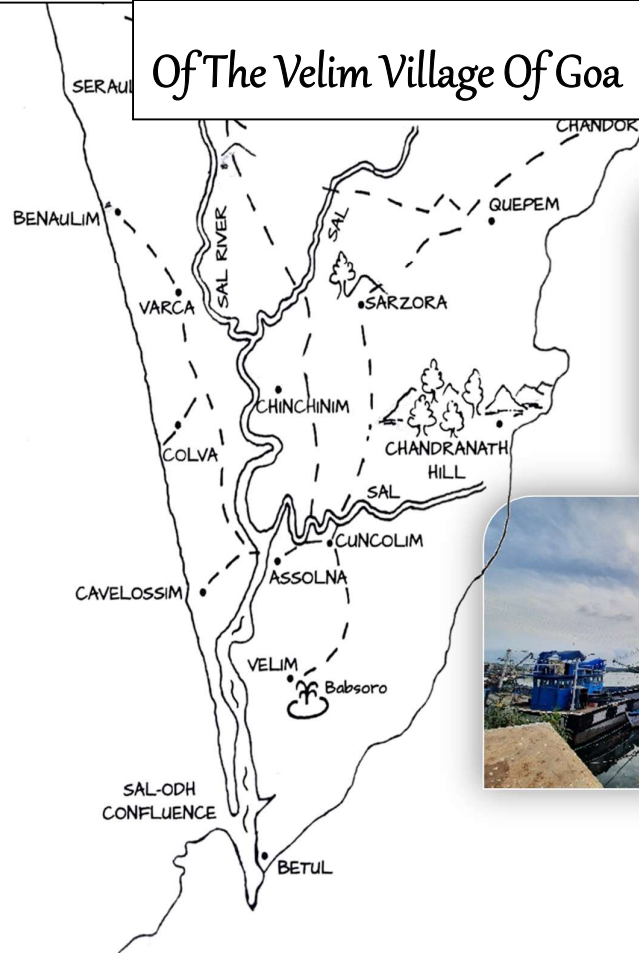




ARABIAN SEA

A Socio-Cultural History Of The Catholic Community

Of The Velim Village Of Goa



**A Socio-Cultural History of the Catholic Community
of the Velim Village of Goa**

A Dissertation for

Course code and Course Title: HIS 651: Dissertation

Credits: 16

Submitted in partial fulfilment of Master's Degree

in History

by

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, "A Socio-Cultural History of the Catholic Community of the Velim Village of Goa" is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Master of Arts in History at the D. D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University, under the Supervision of Prof. Dr. Pratima P. Kamat and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree 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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COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation report "A Socio-Cultural History of the Catholic Community of the Velim Village of Goa" is a bonafide work carried out by Ms. Falma Gomes under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History Discipline at the D. D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University.


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PREFACE

Nestled along the banks of the scenic River Sal, the village of Velim embodies a blend of traditional Goan heritage and contemporary dynamics. Steeped in Goan history and culture, the village boasts a rich and unique cultural tapestry woven within its boundaries by uncovering the threads of traditions that bind the inhabitants of the village together.

The Catholic community of Velim holds a significant place within the village's social and cultural landscape. The community has played a vital role in shaping the identity and traditions of the village. Rooted in the legacy of Portuguese colonization, Catholicism has left an incredible mark on the village, which is evident in its Churches, Chapels, Crosses, religious festivals and cultural practices.

Despite the challenges of modernity and changing demographics, the Catholic community of Velim continues to uphold its religious heritage. The dissertation aims to unveil the intricate layers of social, religious and cultural dynamics that shape this vibrant village community by shedding light on its contributions to the broader fabric of Goan society and beyond.

Focusing on a specific village within Goa enables a more subtle understanding of the region's history and the unique experiences of its inhabitants. Therefore, exploring a social and cultural history of the Catholic community of the Velim village, offers several significant avenues of research. Firstly, it provides an opportunity to uncover the unique traditions, customs and practices of this community within the broader context of Goan society. Furthermore, Velim village specifically allows for micro level analysis, offering a detailed examination of how historical events, colonial legacies and contemporary influences have shaped the development of this community over time.

Moreover, examining the socio-cultural history of the catholic community contributes to deeper understanding of Goa's legacy, religious syncretism and post-colonial identity. Velim village is dotted with the historical landmarks, including churches, chapels and crosses, each with its own history to tell. Exploring these sites offers opportunities to delve into the village's past and its connection to broader historical narratives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with immense gratitude that I thank the Almighty God who blessed me with good health and thus permitted me to complete my dissertation. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my research guide, Prof. Dr. Pratima P. Kamat, for her guidance, support and expertise throughout the journey of completing this dissertation. Her most valuable suggestions and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping the outcome of this work. I am truly grateful for her unwavering support and answering all my queries and clarifying all my doubts and for going through my research drafts.

I gratefully acknowledge the help and assistance rendered by the library staff of Krishnadas Shama State Central Library - Panaji, Dr. Francisco Luis Gomes District Library - Navelim, Goa University Library – Taleigao Plateau and the Department of Archives, Government of Goa.

I am deeply thankful to all the Velim villagers for been cooperative with me and helping me in my research by sharing information about their culture, traditions, religious practices, and so on. I have to thank my mother, Aleciniha Duarte and my sister, Glancy Gomes who were a part of my journey during the research and accompanying me to do my fieldwork. Without their encouragement and support I would not be able to complete this work.

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation delves into the rich socio-cultural history of the Catholic community residing in the Velim village, located in the coastal state of Goa, India. The study begins by providing a historical overview of the village, tracing its origins from the ancient times to the Portuguese era to the present day. It explores the intricate interplay between religion, society and culture, by shedding light on how the Catholic community in Velim village navigated through various socio-political upheavals, including colonialism, Goa's struggle for freedom from colonial rule, and post-colonial developments.

The study examines the Catholic caste system and their traditional occupational activities. The study examines the diverse array of life-cycle rituals and traditions practiced by the villagers of Velim during birth, marriage and at time of death. It explores the role of these rituals in shaping individual and collective identities, fostering community cohesion, and expressing spiritual beliefs and values. The dissertation discusses the origin of the Churches, Chapels and Crosses of the Velim village and contributes to a deeper understanding of the village religious history and cultural heritage. Another important component of the dissertation is the documentation and analysis of the local feasts and festivals in Velim village and also of the syncretic practices among the villagers.

Keywords: Socio-Cultural History, Christianisation, Portuguese Colonization, Catholic community.

GLOSSARY

<i>Bamonn</i>	Christian high caste people
<i>Chaddi</i>	Christians claiming descent from the Hindu kshatriyas
<i>Chuvolio</i>	A sweet dish prepared by mixing wild beans, jaggery and coconut
<i>Comunidades</i>	Village Communities of Goa
<i>Confrarias</i>	Confraternities of the Christian community
<i>Divli</i>	An upright traditional brass lamp
<i>Doce</i>	Sweet dish prepared at the time of marriage
<i>Erss or Verss</i>	The Marriage Songs sung by the <i>Gawda</i> community
<i>Fugddi</i>	Community dance performed by the <i>Gawda</i> women
<i>Gaonkars</i>	Male descendants of the original settlers of the villages in Goa
<i>Kapod</i>	Type of cotton saree worn by the <i>Gawda</i> women
<i>Khell</i>	Performances on the three days of Carnival
<i>Khuris</i>	Holy Cross
<i>Ladainha</i>	The Litany of Our Lady
<i>Mand</i>	Community square used as a meeting place as also for socio-religious functions
<i>Mandkar</i>	The head of the village
<i>Maulam</i>	Lamp lit at the <i>mand</i>
<i>Soji</i>	Sweet dish prepared at the time of marriage
<i>Sutti</i>	The celebration on the seventh day after the child's birth

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Portugal was the first European country to establish its colonial presence in India and the last to leave its shores. The Portuguese navigators ventured into the South Atlantic and the Indian Oceans in search of “Christians and spices.”¹ Since ancient times, Goa was under the control of Hindu and Muslim dynasties but in 1510, it was conquered by the Portuguese Governor, Afonso de Albuquerque, from the Adilshah of Bijapur.² In 1543, the Portuguese annexed the territories of Bardez in the North and Salcete in the South from the Adilshah of Bijapur. These three territories of Ilhas, Bardez and Salcete were later designated as the *Velhas Conquistas* or the ‘Old Conquests’ of the Portuguese in Goa.³

In the sixteenth century that the religion of the king ought to be the religion of his subject was the predominant view of the Europeans.⁴ The king of Portugal asserted that conversion to Roman Catholicism was the prime duty, therefore the Church played a significant role in the conversion drive.⁵ The Church work was closely associated with the missionary agents and their activities. The missionaries or the Religious Orders constituted the backbone of the conversion drive.⁶ The priests of the Religious Orders

¹ Pratima Kamat, *Farar Far: Local Resistance to Colonial Hegemony in Goa 1510- 1912* (Panaji: Institute Menezes Braganza, 1999), 38.

² V. T. Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu Part I, Goa* (Panaji: Gazetteer Department, Government of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu, 1979), 140.

³ Kamat, *Farar Far: Local Resistance to Colonial Hegemony in Goa 1510- 1912*, 24.

⁴ Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu Part I, Goa*, 153.

⁵ Délio de Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry: Goa Under Portugal 1510-1610* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2002), 8.

⁶ de Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry: Goa Under Portugal 1510-1610*, 14.

who landed in Goa in the sixteenth century undertook the task of converting Goans to Christianity. The Franciscans were the first ones to come to Goa towards the end of 1517. They were followed by the Jesuits in 1542 and the Dominicans in 1548. The Augustinians and the other missionaries came much later.⁷ With the arrival of the Jesuits in Goa, the conversions of Goans to Christianity increased rapidly. In 1560, the territory of Salcete was allocated to the Jesuits for the purpose of evangelisation.⁸

The word culture is derived from the German word *kultur* or *cultur* encompassing a way of life and all facets of human life such as anthropology, ethnology, history, language, literature, habits and traditions. The pre-Portuguese culture of Goa was a product of its long interesting history, the result of being under the sway of various Hindu and Muslim dynasties. The pre-Portuguese culture was a fusion of Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Islamic influences. It was different from the Western culture and in some ways superseded the culture of the West.⁹

After the Portuguese conquest of Goa, they brought their own culture with them. Several factors were responsible for spreading the Portuguese culture in Goa and the formation of Goan identity. The most important factor is the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church played a significant role in Goa not only in spreading a new belief but also in shaping the Goan identity and spreading the Portuguese culture.

⁷ Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu Part I, Goa*, 154.

⁸ Olivinho J. F. Gomes, *The Religious Orders in Goa XVIth – XVIIth Centuries* (Chandor: Konknni Sorospot Prakashan, 2003), 130.

⁹ Fatima da Silva Gracias “The Impact of Portuguese Culture on Goa: A Myth or A Reality” in *Goa and Portugal Their Cultural Links*, ed. Charles J. Borges and Helmut Feldmann (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1997), 41.

Religion and society are inseparable like the two sides of a coin. Imagine a society without religion and a religion without any followers. The Goan society in fact was essentially a Hindu society with its rigid caste system, rituals and sacrifices. However, the Portuguese led a ferocious iconoclastic campaign against the Hindu religion and culture. They not only destroyed the Hindu images and monuments but in an obvious manner systemically replaced them with Catholic ones.¹⁰

Velim, formally known as *Velliapura*, is a village located in Salcete *taluka*. The etymology of the village can be derived from two words, *vell*, which means shore and *halli* means village, coming together to form Velim, also known as a village with a seashore. The village shares its borders with Cuncolim, Assolna, and Ambelim on one side, and the River Sal on the other. The village is divided into different wards such as Naik-Caiero, Ubdando, Silvas, Mascarenhas, Golleaband, Porobus, Nagdolim, Goenchembhatt, Cumbeabhatt, Gorcomorod, Carxeta, Cutbona, Caroi, Sibrete, Tollecanto, Baradi, Zaino/Olizaino.¹¹

The population of the Velim village primarily consists of Roman Catholics, with a small number of Hindus and Muslims. The Catholic *Gawda* community forms the majority in the village. The other castes found in this village are Catholics *Bamonn* (Brahmins), *Chaddi* (Kshatriyas), and *Sudir* (Shudras). The traditional occupations of the villagers are fishing, toddy-tapping, coconut-plucking and agriculture. Nowadays, most Catholics have given up their traditional occupations and many youngsters have

¹⁰ Alexander Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Engagements in Goa: Religion, Colonialism and Modernity* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan Private Limited, 2014), 40.

¹¹ Isidore Domnick Mendis, "Keeping Decades of Tradition Alive," *The Times of India*, February 24, 2020, 5.

sought employment overseas. The people of Velim often refer to themselves as *Vellikar* or *Velimcar*.

The village has two parish churches, one with St. Francis Xavier as its patron, located in the Ubdando ward of Velim, and the other dedicated to St. Roque located in Tollecanto. The village has many chapels and crosses. There are also *rakhnneachea khuris* in Cumbeabhadd, Nagdolim and Goenchembhatt. The village has two educational institutions, St. Xavier's High School and St. Rock's High School. As per the population census of 2011, the village had a population of 5,955 residents of which 2,805 were males and 3,150 were females, making up 1,536 families.¹²

From 1575 to 1583, the villages of Cuncolim, Ambelim, Assolna, Veroda and Velim were in a state of unrest. The Jesuits, who were granted the territory of Salcete as a mission field for Christianisation, led to the destruction of temples and severely curbed the *gaonkari* rights of the Hindus. In 1583, there was a rebellion in these villages where in the *gaonkars* killed the priests and their companions.¹³ After the revolt, the Portuguese invited the *gaonkars* at the fort of Assolna for parleys. However, they were killed by the Portuguese and the government confiscated all the village property which also included lands up to Betul. These lands were handed over to Dom Pedro de Castro who in turn passed them over to the Paulista fathers (Jesuits). In 1585, the villagers of Velim were converted to Christianity.¹⁴

The Portuguese policy of evangelisation caused profound changes in the Goan society. The people who were converted offered resistance to the Portuguese policy of

¹² Census of India, *District Census Handbook South Goa: Village and Town wise Primary census abstract (PCA)* (Goa: Directorate of Census Operations, 2011), 74.

¹³ Kamat, *Farar Far: Local Resistance to Colonial Hegemony in Goa 1510- 1912*, 55.

¹⁴ Apolinario Cardozo, *When Goa Celebrates* (Panaji: Dalgado Konknni Akademi, 2022), 292.

evangelization through syncretic practices. Syncretism is a blending of religious ideas and practices by means of which either one set adopts more or less thoroughly the principles of another or both are amalgamated in more cosmopolitan and less polytheistic shape.¹⁵ Syncretism means a reconciliation between the old and the new customs, practices and religious beliefs.¹⁶

Syncretism is a good example about the survival of the local traditions and rituals despite several decrees against them. Syncretism has produced a common meeting point between the Hindu and Catholic communities of Goa in the matters of devotion and ritualistic practices. Syncretic practices are common amongst the Catholic *Gawda* community of Velim and Baradi especially on the occasion of the festive *mell*.

Mell in Konkani means a gathering of people who walk in procession from their ward to other wards.¹⁷ The *mell* was performed by the *Gawda* community who were converted to Christianity during the Portuguese rule. The Holy Cross of Baradi (Baradkarincho Khuris) is a syncretic version of the Baradkarin, the female deity of the Hindu tradition which is sacred to the *mell* celebration.¹⁸ *Mell* is closely connected with Hindu customs and rituals.

In Goa, the cultural practices of the Christians also influence the Hindus. Some Hindus attend Christian religious ceremonies and festivals not only out of mere curiosity but with devotion. Some Hindus after conversion took Christian names which

¹⁵ Pratima Kamat, "Konkan Conquered for Christ by Priests of the Society of Jesus." in *Indo-Portuguese Encounters: Journeys in Science, Technology and Culture*. Vol. 1, ed. Lotika Varadarajan (New Delhi: Indian National Science Academy, 2006), 47.

¹⁶ de Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry: Goa Under Portugal 1510-1610*, 297.

¹⁷ Sushila Sawant Mendes, "Mell of Velim, Ambelim and Assolna: A syncretic representation of identity." *The Navhind Times*, March 05, 2023, 2.

¹⁸ Maria Bernadette Gomes, "*Ethnomedicine and Healing Practices in Goa (The Kunnbi Case)*" (PhD diss., Goa University, 1993), 33-95.

were given to them by the Portuguese. The traditional wards of Velim were Naik (now Caiero), Porobus (Mascarenhas) and Sawants (Mendes).¹⁹ In Goa, every village is associated with one or several village gods who are commonly seen as the founder, ancestor, protector and the members of the village community. Sometimes the deity and the place is identified with each other.²⁰ For instance, Baradi was named after the Baradkarin deity of the Hindus.²¹

Identification of the Research Problem

Society forms the basic social unit, therefore it is important to study and understand the society and its culture. The conquest of Goa by the Portuguese and the conversion of Goans to Christianity led to considerably impact the Goan society and its culture. The present dissertation on the Velim village of Salcete *taluka* focuses on understanding the socio-cultural history of the Catholic community of the village. Before understanding the social and cultural aspects of the village, it is important to know the pre-Portuguese history of the village. Therefore, an attempt has been made to briefly discuss the influence of the Shilaharas with regard to the Valipatana port and Kadambas with regard to the Raya inscription. The study examines, the Velim village under the colonial rulers with reference to the revolt of 1583 and the *comunidade* system. The study deals with the advent of Christianity in the village and examines the different castes among the Catholic community and their occupational activities. The study focuses on the rituals and traditions of the Catholic *Gawda* community. The study discusses the origins and the architectural style of the local churches. It also discusses

¹⁹ Mendes, “Mell of Velim, Ambelim and Assolna: A syncretic representation of identity.”

²⁰ Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Engagements in Goa: Religion, Colonialism and Modernity*, 83.

²¹ Tensing Rodrigues, “Mysterious Baradi.” *The Navhind Times*, October 16, 2022.
<https://www.navhindtimes.in/2022/10/16/magazines/panorama/mysterious-baradi/>.

the origins of the chapels and crosses of the village and examines the historical content of feasts and festivals celebrated by the villagers. The dissertation discusses the syncretic practices among the villagers of Velim with special reference to the festival of *mell*.

Objectives of the Study

The present dissertation has been conceptualized to study a socio-cultural history of the Catholic community of the Velim village of Goa with the following objectives:

- To study the historical background of the Velim village of Goa.
- To analyze the etymological roots of the village and its wards.
- To discuss the advent of Christianity in the village.
- To provide insights into the socio-cultural life of the Catholic community of the village.
- To document the socio-religious customs and traditions of the villagers.
- To document and analyze the local occupational activities of the Catholic community in Velim.
- To study the origin of the churches, chapels and crosses of the village.
- To document and critically examine the feasts and festivals celebrated by the local Catholic community.
- To document and study the feasts of *rakhnneachea khuris* of Cumbeabhadd, Nagdolim and Goenchembhadd.
- To document and analyse the syncretic practices among the villagers of Velim with regard to *mell* celebration.

Literature Review

There are remarkable writings on the themes of conversion and syncretism during the Portuguese rule in Goa. Some writers have even contributed significantly to study of Velim village with regard to its etymology, architecture of its churches and *mell* celebration of Baradi. Information relevant to the study has been examined from this vast body of literature. So, a selective review of literature is done pertaining to the socio-cultural history of the Catholic community of the Velim village of Goa.

Gazetteer of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu: Part 1: Goa deals with the general history of Goa. It gives information about the ancient and the medieval rulers of Goa. It also focuses on the Portuguese conquest and the spread of Christianity in Goa. The book examines the different castes of the Catholic community along with their religious organizations and customs and rituals.²²

Anant Kakba Priolkar in his book titled, *The Goa Inquisition: Being A Quatercentenary Commemoration Study of the Inquisition in India*, examines the policies of religious bigotry and proselytism followed during the time of Inquisition in Goa. He provides a broad idea about the organisation and procedures of the inquisition. He also discusses the evolution of the policy of religious persecution adopted by the Portuguese. In the book the author provides insights into the various measures undertaken by the Portuguese rulers with regard to the Christianisation and Lusitanisation of the local community.²³

²² Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu Part I, Goa*.

²³ Anant Kakba Priolkar, *The Goa Inquisition: Being A Quatercentenary Commemoration Study Of The Inquisition In India* (Panaji: Rajhauns Vitaran, 1961).

The book, *Religion and Empire in Portuguese India: Conversion, Resistance, and the Making of Goa*, written by Ângela Barreto Xavier, focuses on the territories of the *Velhas Conquistas* or ‘Old Conquests’ of Portuguese Goa. In the book, the author deals with the methods of conversion adopted by the Portuguese to convert local population to Christianity in Goa. She emphasis on the strategies adopted by the Jesuits to convince the local population of the Salcete *taluka* for conversion. She mentions about the acquisition of properties and the collection of revenues by the Jesuits in the villages of Velim, Cuncolim, Assolna, Ambelim and Veroda. The author recollects some moments that led to conflicts between the colonists and the colonised in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She discusses the political situation of the Salcete *taluka* in the second half of the sixteenth century, particularly in Cuncolim and the surrounding villages.²⁴

Joseph Velinkar in his book titled, *India and the West: The First Encounters*, discusses the geographical boundaries and the Portuguese conquest of the Salcete *taluka*. The author deals with advent of Christianity and the construction of churches in the different villlages of the Salcete *taluka*. He also discusses the different methods of conversion undertaken by the religious missionaries.²⁵

Pratima Kamat, in her book, *Farar Far (Crossfire): Local Resistance to Colonial Hegemony in Goa 1510- 1912*, emphasises the popular reaction to the Portuguese policy of evangelization in the sixteenth century by focusing not only on the direct resistance in the form of boycott of taxes and the use of violence but also resistance

²⁴ Ângela Barreto Xavier, *Religion and Empire in Portuguese India: Conversion, Resistance, and the Making of Goa* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2022).

²⁵ Joseph Velinkar, *India and The West: The First Encounters* (Mumbai: Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture, 1998)

through syncretism and collaboration. In the book she has mentioned about *mell* festival as a syncretic practice among the Catholic *Gawda* community of Baradi.²⁶

The book, *Hindu-Catholic Engagements in Goa: Religion, Colonialism, and Modernity*, by Alexander Henn examines the engagements between Hindus and Catholics in Goa through coexistence and syncretism. He speaks about the fierce iconoclastic campaign against the Hindu culture which led to the destruction of Hindu temples, shrines and images and suppression of its rituals and customs. He also discusses the similarities and affinities among *ganvdevata* or village gods of Hindus and patron saints of Goan Catholics. The author explores various Hindu and Catholic wayside shrines in Goa.²⁷

The book, *Conversions and Citizenry: Goa Under Portugal 1510-1610*, written by Délio de Mendonça presents an insight into the affairs of conversions. He discusses the different agents of conversion and the methods and institutions adopted by them during conversion. He has also analysed decrees and privileges in favour of converts that attracted Hindus to conversion and prevented them from returning to the Hindu religion. He also discusses the survival of pre-Christian customs, habits and religious practices in the life of the new converts.²⁸

Ethnography of Goa, Daman and Diu by A. B. de Bragança Pereira gives information about the location, boundaries, river systems and geology of Goa. He has classified castes among the Catholic community into *Bamonn*, *Chaddi*, *Sudir*, *Gawdas*

²⁶ Kamat, *Farar Far (Crossfire): Local Resistance to Colonial Hegemony in Goa 1510- 1912*.

²⁷ Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Engagements in Goa: Religion, Colonialism and Modernity*.

²⁸ de Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry: Goa Under Portugal 1510-1610*.

or *Kunnbis*, *Mahars* and *Chamars*. The book also deals with the material and social life of the Catholic community of Goa.²⁹

The book, *Goa*, written by Olivinho J. F. Gomes, provides an insight into the physical environment and the historical background of Goa. The author has discussed the Portuguese conquest of Goa and its aftermath. He discusses the caste structure among the Goan Christian community and their socio-religious customs and rituals. He has briefly described the feasts and festivals celebrated by the Catholic community in Goa.³⁰

The book, *Village Goa: A Study of Goan Social Structure and Change*, by Olivinho J. F. Gomes, portrays the social dynamics of life in rural Goa. The author provides insight into a Goan village of Chandor. In the book the author discusses the physical environment and the historical background of the village. He mentions about the caste structure and the rituals and traditions followed by the people during marriage. He discusses the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the village and emphasises on the different sacraments, feasts and festivals among the Christians in the village.³¹

The book, *The Cultural History of Goa From 10000 B.C. – 1352 AD*, written by Anant Ramkrishna Sinai Dhume, provides an overview of the cultural history of Goa.

²⁹ A.B. de Bragança Pereira, *Ethnography of Goa, Daman and Diu*, trans. Maria Aurora Couto (New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 2008).

³⁰ Olivinho J. F. Gomes, *Goa* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2004).

³¹ Olivinho J. F. Gomes, *Village Goa: A Study of Goan Social Structure and Change* (New Delhi: S. Chand and Company Pvt Ltd, 1987).

The author discusses about the origin of different castes such as *Gawda*, *Kharvi*, *Chaddi* and others.³²

The book, *Goa: A Social History (1510-1640)*, written by P. D. Xavier, deals with the social history of the three *talukas* of the ‘Old Conquests’ of the Portuguese namely Ilhas or Tiswadi, Bardez and Salcete. The author has analysed the social structure of sixteenth century Goa based on the classification of the people, their privileges and duties and their mutual relations. He has also noted the changes brought about by the various Portuguese policies and actions. He discusses the various aspects of interaction between the Church and the society in the sixteenth and seventeen centuries.³³

George M. Moraes in his book titled, *The Kadamba Kula: A History of Ancient and Mediaeval Karnataka*, gives a brief description about the rule of the Kadamba dynasty. The chapter dedicated to Jayakeshi I, mentions the Raya (Goa) *viragal* stone inscription that records Velliapura, identified by scholar as present day Velim, as the southern administrative headquarters of the Kadamba kingdom.³⁴

Maria Bernadette Gomes in her PhD thesis, *Ethnomedicine and Healing Practices in Goa (The Kunbi Case)*, provides a brief description about the village of Baradi. She discusses the economy, food, marriages, birth and death rituals of the people of Baradi. She also attempts to study *mell* as an important festival of the Gawda community in the village.³⁵

³² Anant Ramkrishna Sinai Dhume, *The Cultural History of Goa From 10000 BC – 1352 AD* (Panaji: Broadway Book Centre, 1985).

³³ P.D. Xavier, *Goa: A Social History (1510-1640)* (Panaji: Rajhauns Vitaran, 1993).

³⁴ George M. Moraes, *The Kadamba Kula: A History of Ancient and Mediaeval Karnataka* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1931), 181.

³⁵ Gomes, “*Ethnomedicine and Healing Practices in Goa (The Kunbi Case)*,” 33-95.

The books, *Goa: Its Tryst with Trade*³⁶ and *Tarini and Tar-Vir: The Unique Boat Deities of Goa*,³⁷ written by Pratima P. Kamat present an excellent example of syncretism in the southern Goan village of Baradi which is centred on the inter-faith worship of the Santa Khuris and the Baradkarin Saibin.

Charles J. Borges in his book titled, *The Economics of the Goa Jesuits, 1542-1759: An Explanation of Their Rise and Fall*, provides a deeper insight into the activities of the Goa Province of the Society of Jesus until its collapse in 1759. The chapter dedicated to AVC (Assolna, Velim, Cuncolim) Native Resistance, deals with the various methods of acquisition of property by Jesuits in the villages of Salcete particularly in Assolna, Velim and Cuncolim.³⁸

Saxtticheo Igorzo (Churches of Salcette, Vol II), written by Moren de Souza, focuses on the historical churches of the ‘Old Conquests’ in Goa. In the book, the author discusses the etymology of the word Velim and of the other villages of South Goa.³⁹

Books written by Nascimento J. Mascarenhas, titled *Follow Me* (Vol III),⁴⁰ and that of José Lourenço titled *The Parish Churches of Goa*⁴¹ deals with the origin and the

³⁶ Pratima P. Kamat, *Goa: Its Tryst with Trade* (Panaji: Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2009).

³⁷ Pratima P. Kamat, *Tarini and Tar-Vir: The Unique Boat Deities of Goa* (Panaji: Goincarh (Goa Institute for Culture and Research in History, 2008).

³⁸ Charles J. Borges, *The Economics of the Goa Jesuits, 1542-1759 An Explanation for Their Rise and Fall* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1994).

³⁹ Moren de Souza, *Saxtticheo Igorzo* (Goem: Borea Jezuchi Bazilika, 2005).

⁴⁰ Nascimento J. Mascarenhas, *Follow Me: Parish Priests of the Parishes of Salcete and Mormugão* (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2010).

⁴¹ José Lourenço, *The Parish Churches of Goa: A study of façade architecture* (Margao: Amazing Goa Publications, 2005).

architectural design of the Church of St. Francis Xavier in Velim and St. Roque Church in Tollecanto.

Bernadette Gomes in her article titled, “Re-Entering the Global Gateway,” provides insight into the history of Baradi and Velim villages. In the article the author discusses the legends and myths associated with the origin of the Baradi Cross and the churches of Velim and Tollecanto.⁴²

Savio Rodrigues in his book titled, *Jesuit Heritage in Goa*, provides a glimpse into the building activity of the Jesuits in Goa. In the book, the author gives information about the St. Francis Xavier Church of Velim village.⁴³

When Goa Celebrates, a book written by Apolinario Cardozo, demonstrates the different festivals, traditions and rituals pertaining to all communities of Goa. In the book, the author gives information about the scenic villages of Baradi and Velim. He discusses the origin and the legends associated with the famous miraculous cross of Baradi and the *matievoilo rakhnneacho khuris* of Goenchembhatt. The book also reflects on the social and religious aspects of these two crosses.⁴⁴

The book, *Goa: Hindu Temples and Deities*, written by Rui Gomes Pereira mentions about the ancient temple of Beiradi (Bharaddi) in the Velim village. The author noted that the old *gaonkars* in the Velim village used surname such as Prabhu and Naik.⁴⁵

⁴² Bernadette Gomes, “Re-Entering the Global Gateway.” *Goa Today Articles on Villages of South Goa*. Compiled by. Maria Ana Paiva and Sneha S.P. Malkarnekar (Panaji: Krishnadas Shama Goa State Central Library, 2014), 33-36.

⁴³ Savio Rodrigues, *Jesuit Heritage in Goa* (Panjim: Goa Jesuits, Jesuit House, 2009).

⁴⁴ Apolinario Cardozo, *When Goa Celebrates* (Panaji: Dalgado Konknni Akademi, 2022).

⁴⁵ Rui Gomes Pereira, *Goa: Temples and Deities*, Vol 1 (Panaji: Printwell Press, 1978).

The book, *Walking in Goa*, written by Heta Pandit, gives a brief description about the Velim village located in Salcete *taluka*.⁴⁶

Research Design and Methodology

The research design and methodology attempts to study a socio-cultural history of the Catholic community of the Velim village of Goa. The study is based on the use of multiple methods to collect and collate relevant information. Since the research is qualitative in nature, I have relied on different methodological tools for the study such as ethnographical analysis, interviews, observation, field work, textual analysis, iconographical analysis, besides analysing primary and secondary literary sources.

Ethnography is qualitative research methodology that involves observing or interacting with the people in their natural environment. Ethnography is briefly defined as the systematic study of the people and their culture. Ethnographic methods enable the researcher to immerse themselves with the target population and to come out with accounts of actions, behaviours and events, etc., that are otherwise very difficult to extract and record.

Interview is a flexible form of qualitative data collection method used by the researchers to collect primary data by asking one or more people about their opinions, experiences and perspectives on the research topic. There are three different forms of interviews that is, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. I have conducted mostly semi-structured interviews which are a blend of both structured and unstructured interviews. The semi-structured interviews are often open-ended and flexible, therefore by using such interviews, my respondents have been able to express

⁴⁶ Heta Pandit, *Walking in Goa* (Mumbai: Eminence Designs Pvt Ltd, 2003).

their personal feelings, experiences, beliefs, thoughts and opinions and present a more 'realistic' picture.

Field work is a qualitative research method of data collection that aims to observe, interact and understand people in their natural environment. Field work was done in the village to collect primary data from the people. Since the study is based on oral traditions, stories from the field becomes an essential part of the research because it helps the researcher to know about the perspectives of the people. Stories can be an essential source to connect to the cultural traditions.

Observation is another qualitative research methodology in which the researcher studies a group of people through observation. By using this method I have got a deeper insight into the celebration of feasts and festivals of the churches, crosses and chapels of Velim, Tollecanto and Baradi. This method enabled me to gain more information about the festival of *mell* celebrated by the *Gawda* community. This method provided a deep understanding of the people's culture, beliefs and practices.

Textual analysis is form of qualitative research methodology that help us to understand and have a detailed idea about how people communicate their ideologies, thoughts and experiences through texts. In textual analysis researchers consider music, video interview, newspaper article, audio, images as text and use them for their evaluation. In short, textual analysis consists of describing the characteristics of a text and making interpretations to answer specific questions.

Primary and secondary sources such as books, newspapers and journal articles and magazines have been examined in detail to review the past work undertaken in the area in order to gain insight into the interpretative and analytical potential of the study and to make this research more authentic and reliable. The sources were gathered from

the various libraries such as Krishnadas Shama State Central Library - Panaji, Dr. Francisco Luis Gomes District Library - Navelim, Goa University Library – Taleigao Plateau and the Department of Archives, Government of Goa, Xavier Centre of Historical Research - Porvorim. In addition to this, web sources have been consulted. Photos and video documentation has been undertaken.

Scheme of Chapters

With a view to analyze the objectives of the present study, which discusses a socio-cultural history of the Catholic community of the Velim village of Goa is presented in the following six chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter introduces my research topic. This chapter includes objectives of the study, the literature review, the different methods and tools adopted for data collection and analysis. The chapter also consist of scheme of chapters, scope and relevance of the study.

Chapter 2: Velim Village: The Land and Its History

The second chapter discusses the etymological roots of the Velim Village and its wards. This chapter also gives information about the geographical setting and demography of the village. This chapter includes the diverse viewpoints on the identification of the port of Valipattana by the scholars. The chapter discusses the Velim village in the Kadamba inscription. The chapter deals with the revolt of 1583 and the *comunidade* system. It also discusses the contributions of freedom fighters from the Velim village. The chapter also includes the post-liberation developments.

Chapter 3: Catholic Community of the Velim Village - A Profile

The third chapter examines different castes among the Catholic community and their occupational activities. This chapter also includes customs and traditions of the Catholic *Gawda* community with regard to birth, marriages and death practices.

Chapter 4: Catholic Religious Shrines of the Velim Village

The fourth chapter discusses the origin of the two churches of the Velim village, St. Francis Xavier Church and the St. Roque Church. The architectural design of both the churches are also discussed. This chapter also focuses on the origin of the village chapels and crosses. Crosses are the most common landmarks of the Catholic community. Therefore, an attempt has been made to discuss the origin of the *matievoilo rakhnneachea khuris* of Cumbeabhath, Nagdolim and Goenchembhatt. The *matievoilo rakhnneacho khuris* literally means the protective cross on the hill top.

Chapter 5: Feasts and Festivals of the Velim Village

Goa is known for its vibrant celebration of feasts and festivals. Almost all churches, village chapels and roadside crosses have their annual feasts or other rituals that are celebrated with pomp and vigour. There is a meaningful identity behind such celebrations. Some events have myths and legends associated with them, but for others there are histories, stories and folktales. The fifth chapter gives a detailed description about the feasts and festivals celebrated by the Catholic community in churches, chapels and the crosses. This chapter also deals with the festival of *mell* celebrated by the people of Velim. *Mell* in Konkani means a gathering of people, who walk in procession from their ward to other wards. The *mell* was performed by the *Gawda* community who got converted to Christianity during the Portuguese rule.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The sixth chapter includes the summary, findings and the observations of the study based on the preceding chapters.

Scope and Relevance of the Study

The state of Goa is rich in history and culture as it was ruled by Hindu and Muslim dynasties and was also a former Portuguese colony. Goa is divided into two districts, North and South, and the twelve *talukas* of Goa are namely, Pernem, Bardez, Tiswadi, Mormugao, Salcete, Ponda, Bicholim, Satari, Sanguem, Dharbandora, Quepem and Canacona. The *talukas* are further divided into villages and different wards. Every village in Goa has its own story to tell. Each village is considered to be a potentially viable unit for conducting micro level studies and there is a vast scope for such studies in Goa, especially with regard to its socio-cultural history. The study area of my dissertation is based on the Velim village which is located at the periphery of the Salcete *taluka*.

This is a qualitative research study based on the Catholic community covering the social and cultural aspects. So far, no systematic in-depth study on this community has been undertaken. The objective of this study was to explore the social, religious and cultural aspects of the Catholic community. From a review of available literature it was evident that not much work had been done pertaining to the social and cultural aspects of the community.

The village of Velim offers a rich potential source for historical and cultural research. The focus of the study is more on understanding the historical background of the Velim village, including its pre-Portuguese history, colonial influences and post-

liberation developments. The study explores the religious rituals, traditions and ceremonies practiced by the Catholic community of the village along with their significance. The dissertation enables us to gather knowledge about the different castes and their occupational activities, including fishing, farming, toddy-tapping and coconut-plucking and how these activities have influenced social and cultural practices.

The study helps us to understand the feasts and festivals celebrated in the churches, chapels and at crosses. The study analyses the festival of *mell*, celebrated by the Catholic community in the village. The festival of *mell* presents deep sensibilities and yearning of the people of Velim to connect them with their past as well as an attempt to syncretise their identity with a new religion and culture.

The study contributes to the preservation of the unique cultural heritage of the Catholic community of the Velim village, ensuring that its traditions, rituals and customs are documented and celebrated. The study shed light on how historical events, colonial legacies, and contemporary influences have shaped their identity and sense of belonging. The study empowers local communities to share their histories, fostering a sense of pride and ownership over their cultural identity. The study adds to academic scholarship by providing insights into the socio-cultural dynamics of a particular community within a broader historical context.

CHAPTER 2

VELIM VILLAGE: THE LAND AND ITS HISTORY

Velim village, today widely known for its scenic beauty, fishing jetty and miraculous crosses is rich in history and culture. The village was once under the sway of ancient rulers and later under the Portuguese influence. The earlier Hindu and later Christian faiths, nurtured the long-standing traditions and beliefs, it moulded the character of the people, by producing a unique Goan identity and culture. Therefore, in this chapter an attempt has been made to briefly discuss the history of the Velim village. The history of the village is divided into the following phases; early history, Velim village under colonial rulers and post-Liberation developments.

Geographical Setting

The village of Velim is located in Salcete *taluka* of South Goa district, in the Indian coastal state of Goa. The etymology of the village can be derived from two words, *vell* which means shore and *halli* means village, coming together to form Velim, also known as a village with a seashore.¹ The village with its beautiful river bank, verdant rice fields and coconut plantations covers a total area of about 8.14 square kilometers. The village shares its borders with the villages of Cuncolim, Assolna, and Ambelim on one side, and the river Sal on the other.²

¹ Isidore Domnick Mendis, "Keeping Decades of Tradition Alive," *The Times of India*, February 24, 2020, 5.

² Filippe Nery Xavier, *Bosquejo Historico das Comunidades das Aldeas dos Concelhos das Ilhas, Salsete e Bardez*, volume II (Bastora: Typografia Rangel, 1907), 405.

The river Sal, formerly known as *rio do Sul* (southern river) and later known as *rio do Sal* is a 24 kilometers long river.³ It rises between Verna and Raia and passes through Margao. It assimilates the waters of the Adnem in Assolna and flows out into the Arabian Sea near the fort of Betul.⁴ The Adnem arm of the Sal cuts off the five villages, Ambelim, Assolna, Velim, Veroda, Cuncolim from the rest of the *taluka*.⁵

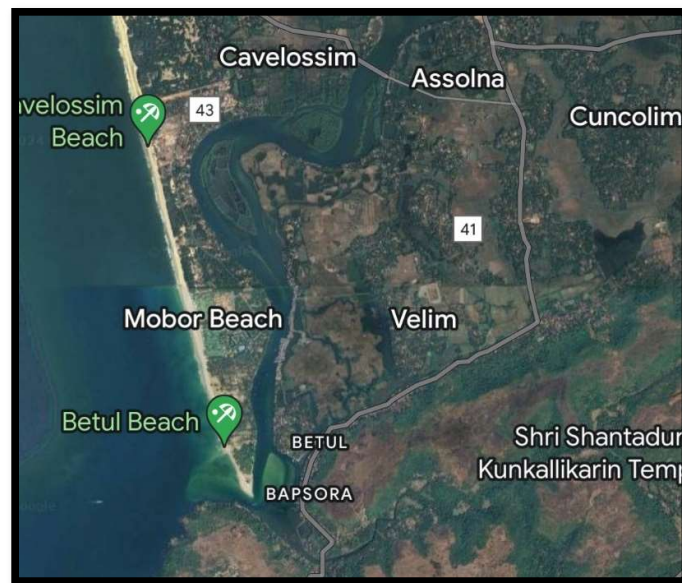
The village of Velim is located 15 kilometers away from Margao and 47 kilometers away from the state capital, Panaji. One can reach Velim village via Chinchinim - Assolna road or Chinchinim - Sarzora – Guddi road and National Highway 66. The Balli Railway Station is the nearby station which is located 9 kilometers away from the village. Though the Margao Railway Station is a major railway station which is almost 13 kilometers away from the Velim village.

³ Joseph Velinkar, *On the Spice Trail: Europe discovers India in Goa* (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2016), 48-49.

⁴ Joseph Velinkar, *India and the West: The First Encounters* (Mumbai: Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture, 1998), 5.

⁵ Velinkar, *On the Spice Trail: Europe discovers India in Goa*, 49.

Fig. 1. Map of Velim village



Source: <https://villagemap.in/goa/south-goia/salcete/26300.html>

Fig. 2. River Sal



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Etymology of Place Names

The village of Velim is divided into different wards such as Naik-Caiero, Ubdando, Silvas, Porobus-Mascarenhas, Golleaband, Cumbeabhatt, Goenchembhatt, Nagdolim, Gorcomorod, Carxeta, Cutbona, Caroi, Sibrete, Tollecanto, Baradi, Zaino/Olizaino.⁶ The etymology of place names forms an important source of information for the study of the wards of the village. Therefore, an attempt has been made to discuss the etymological roots of the following places.

The wards Naik-Caiero, Silvas and Porobu-Mascarenhas got their names from the surname of the people living there. During the pre-Portuguese period these wards were known as Naik and Porobu.⁷

There are two theories when it comes to the etymology of the ward Cumbeabhatt. The word Cumbeabhatt is derived from two words ‘*Cumbea*’ and ‘*bhatt*.’ However, it is believed that the ward was once covered with large number of *Careya arborea* trees (also known as *Cumbea zhad* in Konkani). Another theory is that the ward was once inhabited by the *Kumbhar* or the Potter community.

In Goa there are some places that have had religious importance. In the Velim village there is one ward named Zaino. The word Zaino may have been associated with Jainism or may have Jain influence.⁸

⁶ Mendis, "Keeping Decades of Tradition Alive."

⁷ Sushila Sawant Mendes, "Mell of Velim, Ambelim and Assolna: A Syncretic Representation of Identity," *The Navhind Times*, 5 March 2023, 2.

⁸ P. P. Shirodkar, "Etymology of Village and Place Names of Goa," in *People of India: Goa*, Volume XXI, ed. K. S. Singh (Bombay: Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd., 1993), 220, 235.

There is another ward named Caroi. The etymology of the term Caroi is derived from the word Karai which means a *bund* or embarkment.⁹ The ward Tollecanto got its name from a lake which means (*tolle* in Konkani).

The etymology of the ward Carxeta can be derived from two word ‘*car*’ or ‘*kar*’ and ‘*xeta*.’ *Kar* means salty and *xeta* means field. However, it was believed that the water from the sea would flood the fields and it would become salty.

The ward of Baradi got its name from the Baradi deity to which an ancient temple was dedicated to it.¹⁰

In earlier times some lands were granted to the residents of a village for their sustenance. Such lands were known as Cutubona, that is, *Kutumbana*. In Velim village there is one ward known as Cutbona.¹¹

Early History of the Village

The Shilaharas as the feudatories of Rashtrakutas shouldered the responsibility of the defence of the western coast. There were three families of the Shilaharas; South Konkan or Goa Shilaharas, North Konkan or Thana Shilaharas and Kolhapur or Valivade Shilaharas. The South Konkan Shilahara dynasty ruled from circa 750 A. D. to 1020 A. D. From the grants of Rattaraja, the territories acquired by the Shilaharas were named as *Simhala*, Gopakapattana or modern-day Goa Velha might have been the capital of the rulers and they probably shifted their capital to Balipattana or

⁹ Shirodkar, “Etymology of Village and Place Names of Goa,” 232.

¹⁰ Tensing Rodrigues, “Mysterious Baradi,” *The Navhind Times*, 16 October 2022. <https://www.navhindtimes.in/2022/10/16/magazines/panorama/mysterious-baradi/>.

¹¹ Shirodkar, “Etymology of Village and Place Names of Goa,” 235.

Valipattana.¹² The scholars have identified Valipattana with Valavli, Banda in Sawantwadi, Kharepatan in Ratnagiri district, Balli in Quepem and Velim in Salcete.

Identification of the Ancient Port of Valipattana

The historical possibility of having a port around the Velim village is based on the identification with the port of Balipattana or Valipattana of the Silaharas. There were three copperplate grants of Goa Shilaharas that have been discovered. These were Chikodi or Pattanakudi grant of Avasara III dated 988 A.D., the Kharepatana grant of Rattaraja dated 1008 A.D., and thirdly, the Valipattana record of the same ruler dated 1010 A.D. Shanaphulla, the founder of Goa Shilahara was succeeded by his son Dhammiyara who built the port at Valipattana harbour on the west coast.¹³

The Pattanakudi plate mentions the king ruling from Balinagara: “During the unrivalled and augmenting reign, here in Balinagara, which has become venerable by the cupid-like great beauty and good fortune.” The plate also mentions, “In that family there was the illustrious king Dhammyra, who founded Balipattana, charming with the surging waves of the ocean.”¹⁴

The Kharepatana plates of Silahara king, Rattaraja, also gave reference to Balipattana. The plate refers to Rattaraja as the Mandalika, the Kharepatana plate records the grants by king Rattaraja to the three villages, that is, Kushmandi, Asanavira and Vadangula for the purpose of worshiping the holy god Avveśvar. The temple of

¹² V. T. Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu Part 1, Goa* (Panaji: Gazetteer Department, Government of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu, 1979), 84-85.

¹³ Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu Part 1, Goa*, 84-85.

¹⁴ Vasudev Vishnu Mirashi, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol 6 (New Delhi: Director General Archaeological Survey of India, 1977), 182.

Avveśvar for whose service these grants were primarily meant had been built by Rattaraja's father Avasara III, who apparently named the god after himself.¹⁵

The village of Kushmandi, is surrounded on the east by the prapa of Manigrama; on the south by the road to the village of Varparavata; on the west, by the water course of the village Sachandalakapittha; and on the north by a salt river (*kshara-nadi*). The village of Asanavira, is bounded on the east by Dharavahala; on the south, the river of the village Karaparni, on the west, the sea, and on the north, the river of the village Gavahana."¹⁶

The Valipattana record dated 1010 A.D. issued by Rattaraja from Balipattana mentions, "In prosperous Balipattana situated in the kingdom of Mahamandalika Rattaraja, which is increasing and venerable like the Sun and the Moon."¹⁷ However this proves that Valipattana or Balipattana was a prosperous city, and since the order was issued from there, it is likely to have been the capital.

Historians like Panduranga Pissurlencar identifies Valipattana of Silahara plates with Valavali in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra.¹⁸ Shennoi Varde Valaulikar argues that Valipattana was modern Balli. According to him, the limits of Balli were extended

¹⁵ Mirashi, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol 6, 184-185.

¹⁶ Mirashi, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol 6, 192.

¹⁷ Mirashi, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol 6, 191.

¹⁸ Panduranga Pissurlencar, "Inscrições pre-Portuguesas de Goa," in *O Oriente portugues*. - Vol. 30, n.º 22 (1938), 16.

up to the sea including Betul.¹⁹ Ranabir Chakravarti identifies Valipatana with the present Kharepatan in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra.²⁰

The villages mentioned in the grants of the Kharepatana plates, were in close proximity with Valipattana. The villages seems to fit some place names in Salcete and Quepem *talukas* of Goa, which are close to Velim village. Kushmandi = Kusmanem, Varparavata= Veroda, Manigrama = Amonem or Amona, kshara-nadi = river Sal, Asanavira = Assolna, Karaparni= Karmanem or Carmona, Gavahana = Gavna, now a ward of Carmona village.²¹ Out of the six, the last four are in close proximity of Velim village.

The villages of Assolna and Velim are separated by Ambelim village and Carmona and Gavna lie across the river Sal from Velim. But Bali lies almost 8 kilometers away from these places and is unlikely to have been referred to as a port. Valaulikar is of the opinion that God Avveśvar referred to above was the predecessor of the present Chandreshwar venerated on the Chandranath hill. Kusmanem and Amonem are close to the temple of Avveśvar at Paroda, and are closer to Velim than Balli. It is very likely that Assolna, Carmona and Gavna were within the extended domain of Valipattana.²² However this strongly supports Velim as the ancient

¹⁹ Shennoi Varde Valaulikar, “Vallipatanacho sod” in *Samagra Shenoi Goembab (Collected literature of Shenoi Goembab)* vol II, ed. Shantaram Varde Valaulikar (Goa: Goa Konkani Akademi, 2003), 298, 299.

²⁰ Ranabir Chakravarti, “Coastal trade and voyages in Konkan: The early medieval scenario,” *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 35. No.2 (1998). 107.

²¹ Shennoi Varde Valaulikar, “Vallipatanacho sod” in *Samagra Shenoi Goembab (Collected literature of Shenoi Goembab)* vol II, ed. Shantaram Varde Valaulikar (Goa: Goa Konkani Akademi, 2003), 302, 303.

²² Tensing Rodrigues, “Peripheral evidence for Velim,” *The Navhind Times*, August 28, 2022, 8.

Valipattana. George Moraes asserted that Valipattana was indeed Velim. In fact, in another plate Valipattana is also referred to as Velyapur.²³

Velim Village in the Kadamba Inscriptions

Jayakeshi I, son of Shashtha-deva I, ascended the Kadamba throne in *circa* 1050-1080 A.D. and made his firm abode in the city of Gopakapattana which became the capital of the Kadambas.²⁴ There were two stone inscriptions of Jayakeshi I, that is, Panjanikhani stone inscription of *saka* 976/A.D. 1054 and Raia stone inscription *saka* 993/ A.D. 1071.²⁵ The Raia stone inscription which was founded by Rev. Henry Heras and deciphered and translated by Prof. K. G. Kundangar, is in old Kannada script and language. The inscription is important on account of the mention of *Velliapura*, which has been identified with modern day Velim.²⁶

Jayakeshi I, in a bid to expand his kingdom further, came in clash with a rival king named Kamadeva. Kamadeva was a feudatory chief under the Chalukya Emperor, Vikramaditya VI, and belonged to the Pandya family. Dr. Fleet consulted the inscription and gave Kamadeva the designation of the “Lord of Gokarna, the best of towns” and “the ruler of the Konkana *Rashtra*.”²⁷

Kamadeva ruled over the territory bordered on the northern side by the kingdom of the Goa Kadambas. However, it is not unlikely that Kamadeva captured some

²³ George M. Moraes, *The Kadamba Kula: A History of Ancient and Mediaeval Karnataka* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1931), 181, 401.

²⁴ Moraes, *The Kadamba Kula: A History of Ancient and Mediaeval Karnataka*, 179.

²⁵ Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu Part I, Goa*, 99.

²⁶ Henry Heras, “Pre-Portuguese Remains in Portuguese India” in *Journal of the Bombay Historical Society*, ed. Braz A. Fernandes (Bombay: St. Xavier College, 1932), 48.

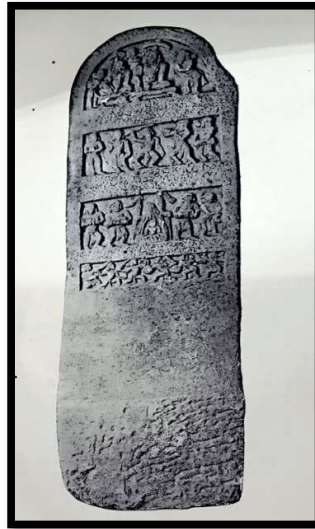
²⁷ Moraes, *The Kadamba Kula: A History of Ancient and Mediaeval Karnataka*, 180.

territories in South Konkan from the Southern Maratha Silaharas. It appears that they have encroached upon each other's dominions. Therefore, Jayakesi I considered it as a challenge to his supremacy over the question of sovereignty over Konkan.²⁸ He ordered his Governor, Gobbarasina, from the southern district of *Velliapura* to deal with Kamadeva. In the battle Gobbarasina was killed. Therefore, Jayakesi I himself marched against Kamadeva and won a decisive victory over Kamadeva of Gokarn.²⁹

²⁸ S. G. Kadam, *Sources of the History of the Kadambas of Goa* (Panaji: Broadway Publishing House, 2013), 99, 100.

²⁹ Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu Part I, Goa*, 101.

Fig. 3. Raya Viragal of Jayakesi I



Source: George M. Moraes, *The Kadamba Kula: A History of Ancient and Mediaeval Karnataka* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1931).

Fig. 4. Coconut Plantations



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Velim Village under Colonial Rulers

The Jesuits, as they are commonly known, are the members of the Religious Order known as the “Society of Jesus.” The Society was founded by St. Ignatius de Loyola in the year 1540.³⁰ The Jesuits were led by Francis Xavier, a Spanish priest who arrived in Goa in 1542. With the arrival of the Jesuits in Goa, the conversions of Goans to Christianity increased rapidly. In 1560, the territory of Salcete was allocated to the Jesuits for the purpose of evangelisation.³¹

Resistance to Conversion: The Revolt of 1583

The villages of Cuncolim, Assolna, Veroda, Ambelim and Velim of Salcete *taluka* bordering the Adilshahi territory were inhabited by a daring Hindu population. The people of these villages paid rents whenever they felt they should and only after consulting their deities to the annoyance of the Portuguese authority. Moreover, they also continued to build temples despite a banning order and refused to give up idolatry. For a long time, the missionaries found it impossible to convert these people to Christianity.³²

The viceroy, Francisco Mascarenhas, wanted to teach them a lesson, so he ordered the destruction of all temples that they had rebuilt. Gil Eanes de Mascarenhas, Captain Major of the Malabar coast entered the Cuncolim region via the river Sal. The Captain Major burnt and set ablaze everything that he found before him, he cut down

³⁰ Olivinho J. F. Gomes, *The Religious Orders in Goa XVIth – XVIIth Centuries* (Chandor: Konknni Sorospot Prakashan, 2003),

³¹ Gomes, *The Religious Orders in Goa XVIth – XVIIth Centuries*, 130.

³² Délio de Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry: Goa Under Portugal 1510-1610* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2002), 273.

the palm groves of the enemies, destroyed the Hindu temples along with the gardens and rice fields.³³ The two priests, Pietro Berno and Manuel Teixeira, killed a cow and violated the sanctity of a nearby holy tank by immersing its intestines into it.³⁴

During the same year the Jesuit priest, Rudolf Acquaviva, had returned from an embassy to the Mughal emperor, Akbar. In a Jesuit gathering held in the villages of Cortalim and Verna, Rudolf Acquaviva discussed the most suitable methods to finish converting the people of Salcete *taluka*. On the accounts of the past history of violence a particular effort was made to convert the residents of Cuncolim and the neighbouring villages.³⁵

The Jesuits under the leadership of Fr. Rudolf Aquaviva, the Rector of the Holy Cross Church at Verna, decided to visit the leading village of Cuncolim to convince the villagers of the virtues of Christianity. Fr. Rudolf Aquaviva led a delegation of some fifty men to these villages.³⁶ Before the priest had left for Cuncolim, Father Antonio Francisco asked some Christians from Orlim, Baltasar Serrao, Pedro de Mascarenhas or Diogo de Castro, to proceed to Cuncolim and build a makeshift shelter there. The arrival of the Christians from Orlim was not welcomed by the villagers of Cuncolim and this began a conflict which increased after the arrival of the missionaries.³⁷

³³ Pratima Kamat, *Farar Far: Local Resistance to Colonial Hegemony in Goa 1510- 1912*, 38.

³⁴ Ângela Barreto Xavier, *Religion and Empire in Portuguese India: Conversion, Resistance, and the Making of Goa* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2022), 256.

³⁵ Xavier, *Religion and Empire in Portuguese India: Conversion, Resistance, and the Making of Goa*, 256.

³⁶ Kamat, *Farar Far: Local Resistance to Colonial Hegemony in Goa 1510- 1912*, 38.

³⁷ Xavier, *Religion and Empire in Portuguese India: Conversion, Resistance, and the Making of Goa*, 257.

When the missionaries entered the village, the Jesuit, Francisco Aranha, announced that they had aimed to construct a Christian church. Their objective was to erect a cross and select the ground to build a church.³⁸ The villagers were inflamed by the sight of some of priests measuring the ground near their temple, this was looked upon with dread as the precursor of a church. The *gaonkars* of the village fell upon the priests and their companions and killed most of them in a brutal manner.³⁹

After a few days of the revolt the viceroy of Goa, Dom Francisco Mascarenhas, punished the sixteen local residents identified as leaders of the rebellion. The men termed as ‘traitors’ lost their lives and all their properties. The Portuguese Crown extinguished the *gaonkaris* of the five villages and their territories were taken over by the Portuguese. The Crown then gave the villages of Cuncolim and Veroda to Dom Joao da Silva and the villages of Ambelim, Assolna and Velim were handed over to Dom Pedro de Castro, who in turn donated them to the Jesuits.⁴⁰

Comunidade System of the Velim village

The most important characteristic of the pre-Portuguese Goan economy was the institution of the self-sufficient, quasi-autonomous village community known as the *gaonkari*. The reclamation and the development of the fertile *khazans* had created a regional coastal society where the cultivation and administration of the village lands was being undertaken by coparcenary co-operatives, the *gaunponns*.⁴¹ A *gaon* is a

³⁸ de Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry: Goa Under Portugal 1510-1610*

³⁹ Kamat, *Farar Far: Local Resistance to Colonial Hegemony in Goa 1510- 1912*, 55.

⁴⁰ Xavier, *Religion and Empire in Portuguese India*, 265.

⁴¹ Pratima Kamat, “Peasantry and the Colonial State in Goa 1946-1961” in *Goa and Portugal: History and Development*, ed. Charles J. Borges, Óscar G. Pereira and Hannes Stubbe (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2000), 138.

village and a *gaonkar* a villager who by virtue of being the descendent of an original settler of the village, is a freeholder, a *gaonkari* is an association of the villagers formed to hold the lands of the village on a cooperatives basis and the *gaonponn* can be literally translated as the village administration. The Portuguese replaced the term *gaonkari* as *comunidade*.

The *gaonkars* were the most respected and privilege group of persons in the village community or agricultural community. They had exclusive rights over the common property of the village and they could dispose of it for the benefit of the village. The *gaonkars* were mostly Hindus. They belong to high caste namely Brahmins and Kshatriyas. The *gaonkars* of the Velim village were Prabhu and Naik.⁴²

In the year 1584, the villages of Ambelim, Assolna and Velim were confiscated on the account of the fact that the said villages had revolted against the Portuguese government. The rebellion by the *gaonkars* and the death of the tax collector were consequences of the prohibition of the religious ceremonies of the Hindus as decreed by the provincial council and other provisions for the spread of Christianity.⁴³ It was the Jesuits who withstanding the resolutions of 1581 and 1582 managed to get the long lease by way of gift in procession. They did not leave the property despite the several decisions obtained by the *gaonkars* to get them restored their possessions.⁴⁴

The *Comunidade* occupies a total area of about 301 hectares of which about 295 hectares were utilized for the paddy cultivation. The paddy fields are mainly of

⁴² Rui Gomes Pereira, *Goa: Hindu Temples and Deities* vol. I. (Panaji: Printwell Press, 1978), 110.

⁴³ Olivinho J. F. Gomes, *The Goan Village Communes* (Panaji: Vasantao Dempo Education & Research Foundation, 2006), 100.

⁴⁴ Gomes, *The Goan Village Communes*, 110.

khazan and kher types were cultivated in the monsoon crop season and in both the seasons and have an average production of 16 khandis per hectars. They were divided into 499 plots of which 341 cover an area above 4000 square meter each. In the year 1963 the plots were leased out to 512 tenants. In the same year there were 49 shareholders registered holding 41,650 shares, of whom 44 were non-residents in the village. The *Comunidade* did not spend any amount towards the religious and social work till the year 1960 the same being incurred only beginning with 1961 at the average of Rs. 4.50 per year.⁴⁵

Velim and Goa Struggle for Freedom: The Contribution of Luis Mendes and Roque Satana Fernandes

Goa was liberated by the Indian Army on December 19, 1961. However, this was not achieved without a long struggle by Goan nationalists, who are referred to as freedom fighters. The village of Velim has contributed and sacrificed a lot for Goa's liberation. There are two freedom fighters from the village, Luis Mendes and Roque Satana Fernandes.

Luis Mendes was a freedom fighter from the Velim village, contemporary of Juliao Menezes, one of the foremost Goan nationalists from Assolna. He was the then-secretary of *Gomantak Praja Mandal*, founder and general secretary of the Maritime Labour Union of India, founder and general secretary of Goan Clubs Federation and Goan Toddy Tappers Association.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ José C. Almeida, *Aspects of the Agricultural Activity in Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji: Aspectus DA Actividade Agricola Em Goa Damao e Dio, 1967), 119, 120.

⁴⁶ Isidore Domnick Mendis, "Keeping Decades of Tradition Alive," *The Times of India*, February 24, 2020, 5.

Roque Satana Fernandes was also a freedom fighter from the Velim village. He took part in liberating Goa from the colonial rulers. He held secret meetings along with his father for his plan of action in contributing to Goa's freedom struggle. In the year 1949, during Christmas holidays, Fernandes was held responsible for the conspiracy to sabotage the reception which was organized for the Portuguese Governor General, Fernando de Quintanilha e Mendonça Dias, at the Indo-Portuguese Institute in Dhobitalao, Bombay. Fernandes and his associates were also caught destroying a large-size photograph of then Prime Minister of Portugal, Dr. António de Oliveira Salazar.⁴⁷

Around 1950s, after serving his sentence, Fernandes and other freedom fighters of the *Azad Gomantak Dal* were headed in a vehicle to one of the Portuguese police outposts with loaded ammunition to initiate an attack for an attempt to free Salcete *taluka*. The plan was however unsuccessful as the information was leaked to the police personnel by pro-Portuguese Goans.

Kudds of the Velim Village

The history and cultural identity of Goa would be incomplete without the mention of Goans who migrated to and settled down in Bombay. From the beginning of the 20th century, Goans who worked as seamen (*tarvotis*) for the British merchant shipping companies have maintained village clubs or facilities known as *kudds* in Bombay, thereby extending a part of their village and protecting their common interest. These *kudds* represent an important symbol of identity and a source of pride in distant

⁴⁷ Siyona G Gaunkar, "50 years celebration of Goa Legislative Assembly," 7 January 2013.

hometowns. There have been about 500 such Goan clubs mostly situated at Dhobitalao, Mazagaon and others areas of Bombay. There are four *kudds* of Velim in Bombay.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Aida A. P. Dourado, “*A Study of Kudds in Mumbai: Home to Goans Male Migrants*” (PhD diss., Goa University, 2020).

Fig. 5. Velim *Kudd* around Dhobi Talao market



Source: Aida A. P. Dourado, "*A Study of Kudds in Mumbai: Home to Goans Male Migrants*" (PhD diss., Goa University, 2020).

Fig. 6. Inside the Velim *Kudd*



Source: Aida A. P. Dourado, "*A Study of Kudds in Mumbai: Home to Goans Male Migrants*" (PhD diss., Goa University, 2020).

The Velim Association Mumbai Welfare Centre

Velim villagers who settled in Bombay have done something unique to their village. United under the banner of the Velim associations (Mumbai), the association's alcoholic detoxification centre, Home for the aged, and day care centre were inaugurated in the Zaino ward of Velim on 12 May. Mr. Kenneth Mascarenhas gave his palatial house in Velim for the purpose of the centre. Though there were old age homes in South Goa, this serves as district's first alcohol detoxification centre. The patient after getting treatment in the Hospicio hospital are admitted here for recovery.

Post-Liberation Developments

Demography

As per the Population Census 2011, the village has a population of 5955 of which 2805 are males while 3150 are females. The population of children with ages 0-6 is 528 which makes up 8.87 % of total population of the village. The Average Sex Ratio of the village is 1123 which is higher than Goa state average of 973, whereas the Child Sex Ratio for the village as per census is 821, lower than Goa, average of 942.⁴⁹

Velim Constituency

Velim is one of the 20th constituencies that came into existence in the year 1989. Before that it was part of Cuncolim Constituency. The Velim Constituency is made up of three parts. As Margao city ends and so also the urbanised village of Navelim, the constituency begins with Chinchinim, Dramapur and Sarzora, known for its large population of sea farers and across the river Sal lies the villages of Assolna and Velim,

⁴⁹ Census of India, *District Census Handbook South Goa: Village and Town wise Primary census abstract (PCA)* (Goa: Directorate of Census Operations, 2011), 74.

well known for its liberation struggle history and many freedom fighters, while the third side of the constituency are parts of Sao Jose de Areal and Dicarpale. Currently, in Velim constituency there are 31,346 registered voters out of which 16,526 are female voters and 14,827 are male voters.

The village has a Panchayat, which is located in Ubdando ward and two educational institutions, St. Xavier's High School and St. Rock's High School. St. Xavier's High School was established in the year 1962 and St. Rock's High school was established in the year 1955. Both the school are private aided co-educational school. These schools consists of Grades from 1 to 10 along with pre-primary section attached to it. The schools are affiliated to Goa Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education. The village comes under the jurisdiction of the Balli primary health centre with the sub-health centre based in Velim village. Cutbona is one of the important jetty of the village. There are almost 270 mechanized trawlers operating through this jetty.

Fig. 7. Velim Association Mumbai Welfare Centre



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 8. Velim village Panchayat



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 9. St. Xavier High School



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 10. St. Rock High School



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Chapter 3

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF THE VELIM VILLAGE – A PROFILE

The Catholic community of the Velim village plays a vital role in various aspects of the village life. The Catholic community is divided into different castes such as *Bamonn* (Brahmins), *Chaddi* (Kshatriyas), and *Sudir* (Shudras) and *Gawdas*. These castes play a significant role in preserving cultural heritage, fostering community bonds and addressing social issues unique to their village. They are also engaged in the traditional occupational activities, such as fishing, agriculture, toddy-tapping and coconut-plucking. These traditional occupational activities shape their identity and sustain their livelihoods for generations.

Caste Structure in the Velim Village

The population of the Velim village primarily consists of Roman Catholics, with a small number of Hindus and Muslims. All the caste divisions prevalent among the Christians in Goa are present in the Velim village. As per the census of 2011, there were 5955 persons living in 1536 households. There are 3150 female individuals and 2805 male individuals in the village. Females constitute 52.9% and males constitute 47.1% of the total population.¹ The Catholic *Gawda* community forms the majority in the village. The other castes found in this village are Catholics *Bamonn* (Brahmins), *Chaddi* (Kshatriyas), and *Sudir* (Shudras).

There are 2021 Scheduled Tribe people out of which 1125 are females and 896 are males. Females constitute 55.67% and males constitute 44.33% of the Scheduled Tribe population. Scheduled tribes constitute 33.94% of the total population. There are

¹ Census of India, *District Census Handbook South Goa: Village and Town wise Primary census abstract (PCA)* (Goa: Directorate of Census Operations, 2011), 74.

53 Scheduled Caste people out of which 24 are females and 29 are males. Females constitute 45.28% and males constitute 54.72% of the Scheduled Caste population. Scheduled Caste constitute 0.89% of the total population.²

The Christian *Bamonn* were generally characterized as the top of the caste hierarchy. The families in this community were well educated. The *Bamonn* of the Velim village mostly lives in the Prabhu- Mascarnehas ward. The *Chaddi* caste occupies central place in the village and plays an important role during the festival of *mell*. The people belonging to *Chaddi* caste live mostly in the Naik-Caeiro ward. *Sudir* is another caste among the Christians in the Velim village. The *Gawdas* are aborigines or the first settlers of Goa. The term *Gawda* can be traced to *Ganv* that is village.³ The Christian *Gawda* women wear *kapod* (*saree*) that is woven in Goa using dyes extracted from local fruits. The *sarees* have different checked patterns in varying shades of red.

Traditional Occupational Activities of the Velim Village

Fishing, farming, toddy- tapping and coconut-plucking have been the primary occupations of the villagers of Velim in the olden days. But nowadays only limited people are involved in practicing these occupations. These occupations have been practiced for generations and are integral to the local economy of the village. Fishing serves as a primary occupation for many residents of the village. Situated near the River Sal and close to the coast, Velim village boasts of a rich aquatic ecosystem making it an ideal location for fishing activities. Many families in Velim have relied on fishing as

² Census of India, *District Census Handbook South Goa: Village and Town wise Primary census abstract (PCA)*, 75.

³ Anant Ramkrishna Sinai Dhume, *The Cultural History of Goa From 10000 BC – 1352 AD* (Panaji: Broadway Book Centre, 1985), 55.

their main source of income, with many families passing down their traditional fishing techniques and knowledge from one generation to the next.

The Cutbona jetty serves as an important fishing spot for the villagers of Velim due to its strategic location. The jetty makes it convenient for local fishermen to launch their boats and access marine resources essentially for their livelihoods. The jetty offers infrastructure and facilities that supports fishing activities by providing space, storage facilities and market access for selling their catch. The trawlers leave along with fishing boats in the evening and come back with their catch early morning and later sell the fish in the market.

Farming is another most important occupation of the villagers. In the village, paddy is grown twice in a year depending upon the climate and irrigation facilities. The paddy which is grown from May to August is called *sorad* and the paddy grown from September to February is called *aigon (vaigon)*. Through generations the villagers have relied on cultivating rice, coconuts and cashews, which sustains their livelihoods and thus preserves their cultural identity and ties to the land.

Coconut-pluckers (*padekar*) and toddy-tappers (*render*) are still found in the Velim village. Coconut-plucking and toddy-taping are indeed, traditional occupations among the villagers as there are plenty of coconut plantations in the village. There is also reference to the palm groves of Ubdando and Zaino ward of the village which were under the Jesuit.⁴ This occupation requires specialized knowledge and skills, providing livelihood for many villagers while contributing to the local economy and cultural heritage.

⁴ Charles J. Borges, *The Economics of the Goa Jesuits, 1542-1759 An Explanation for Their Rise and Fall* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1994), 185.

The other occupations which were found earlier but now have become extinct were Carpenters, also known as *Thevoi* or *Mest* in Konkani. The *Kumbhars*, also known as Potters. The origin of the word *Kumbhar* comes from the Sanskrit words *kumbh* meaning jug of water and *kar* the one who makes it.⁵ The *Kumbhars* were mostly situated in the Cumbeabhatt ward of Velim.

⁵ Pantaleão Fernandes, *Traditional Occupations of Goa* (Benaulim: The Word Publications, 2015), 36.

Fig. 1. Cutbona Jetty

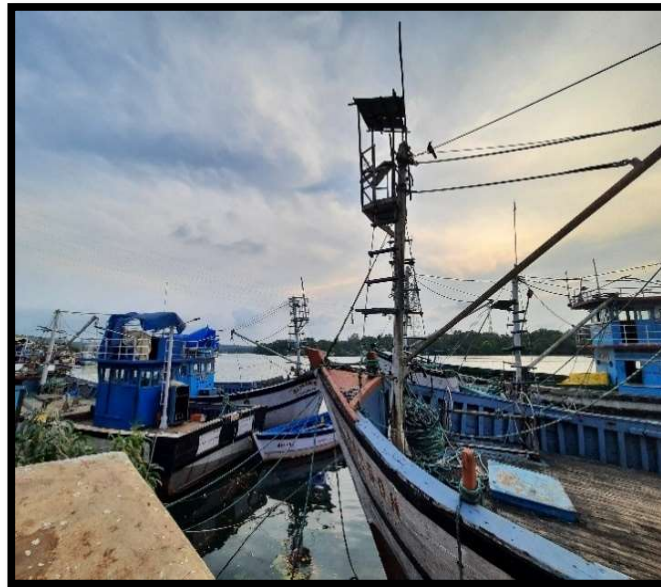


Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 2. Paddy Cultivation in the Velim village

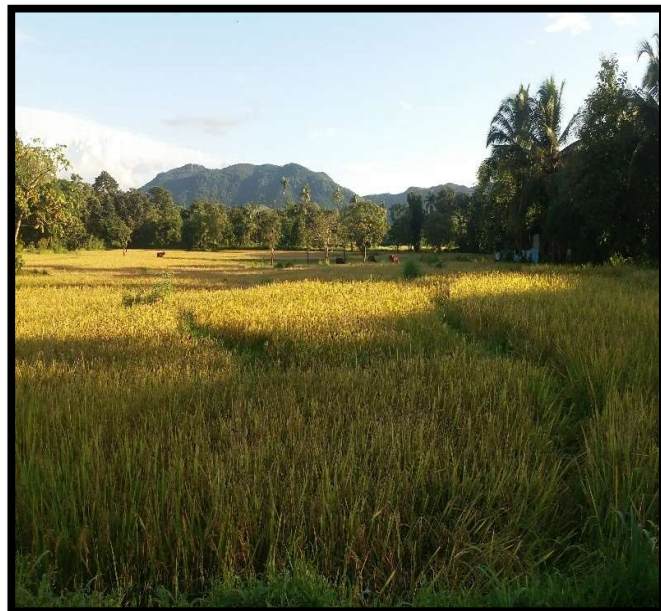


Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Rituals and Customs of the Catholic *Gawda* Community of the Village

The *Gawda* community of the Velim village have rich and diverse rituals and customs that are deeply rooted in their cultural heritage. Some of the prominent rituals and customs observed by the *Gawda* community during birth, marriage and death are discussed below. The *Gawda* community have their own traditional folk dances and music which are performed during festivals, weddings and other community gathering.

Rituals of birth among the *Gawda* Community of the Velim

The Catholic *Gawda* community of the village performs *sutti*. The *sutti* is performed on the seventh day after the infant's birth. The baby's maternal grandmother attends the celebration of *sutti*. But before entering the house she has to wait for few minutes in the balcony of the house. Then she enters the house and was the first person to feed *chuvolleo* (a sweet dish prepared by mixing jaggery, wild beans and grated coconut) to the baby and its mother. This sweet dish was served to everyone except the pregnant women on the banana leaves, after which women used to dance the *fugddi*.⁶

When *sutti* is performed, the other woman in the ward who are pregnant were sent to their mother's house as it was believed that *Sutti Mai* (Mother Destiny) would come to the house where *sutti* is being performed and this was considered dangerous for other pregnant women.

Another ritual called *nanni* or *nanno* is performed wherein a bathing pit was dug in front of the house and was covered by palm leaves and the mother of the infant had to bathe in this *nanni* or *nanno* from the first day after delivering a child till the eighth

⁶ Mozinha Fernandes, "Where Have all the Songs and Rituals Gone?," accessed November 18, 2023, <https://hanvkonn.wordpress.com/2019/08/02/where-have-all-the-songs-and-rituals-gone/>.

day. On the eighth day, the infant was given a bath for the first time in the *nanni* or *nanno* followed by the mother, and then the child is kept in a bamboo sieve.

Children are invited for the lunch. A small girl had to remove all her clothes except undergarments, and then take the naked baby out from the *bamboo sieve*, and hand it over to the mother. A candle is lit in the *nanni* or *nanno* for the dead members of the family. The food was served to everyone on the banana leaves. The father of the infant ties a red handkerchief on his forehead, breaks a coconut in the *nanni* or *nanno*, and walk three times around the ritual pit.

On the ninth day, the maternal grandmother sent a gift of *Bhalseache Ojje*, a basket containing fruits like bananas and sweets like *ollge* (prepared by mixing flour, jaggery, and coconut). The *ollge* was given to everyone in the ward except the pregnant women.⁷

Rituals of marriage among the *Gawda* Community of Velim

The *Gawdas* of the Velim village would get married within their community from the same ward or from other wards of the village. In the earlier days a person known as a *Mali* or *Raibari* used to arrange the marriages of the *Gawda* people by taking a proposal to the boy's or the girl's house. But nowadays, very few marriages are arranged this way. After they agree for the marriage, a decision called *utor* or promise is taken by the families of both boy and girl, whereby they discuss the details of the wedding that includes the dowry to be given to the bridegroom.⁸

⁷ Mozinha Fernandes, "Where Have all the Songs and Rituals Gone?."

⁸ Maria de Lourdes Bravo da Costa Rodrigues, "Marriage Traditions and Customs Among the Catholic of Mercês," in *Goa in the Indian Sub-Continent (Seminar Papers)* ed S. K. Mhamai (Panaji: Directorate of Archives and Archaeology, Government of Goa, 2001), 184.

The engagement is then traditionally held at the groom's place in the presence of family members, relatives and friends. After the engagement all the wedding preparations actually start. Relatives of both, the bride and the groom go for shopping on a particular day to purchase fabrics for the bridal gown, the *saddo* and the dress material that the bride has to wear on the next day of the wedding.

The next step for the couple is civil registration which is done at the Civil Registrar's office, in the presence of parents, close relatives and two witnesses. Within a period of three weeks thereafter the public can raise and submit objections, if any, as the Registrar affixes a notice on the board inviting them to do so.

The wedding letters also known as *banns* or *chit* in Konkani are read in the church on three consecutive Sundays just some weeks before the wedding. If there is no time to read all three *banns* then one or two may be read. This informs the public of the impending marriage and they can bring out the objections if any. After the first *bann* is read, on the very same day the bride is supposed to wear the *chuddo* in her maternal uncle's house who is supposed to invite her for lunch.

The *chuddo* ceremony takes place when the bangle seller or the *kakonkar* comes to the house and fits bangles on the bride's hands in the accompaniment of *zoti* which are special commemorative songs. The bangles worn are green in colour with yellow lines, followed by green, red and yellow bangles. It symbolizes the married life of the bride. The bangles should not be broken and the bride is not expected to do any work.

The bangle seller is paid some money for his services along with a measure of rice, one coconut and some bananas.⁹

Saddo is the ceremonial cutting of the cloth, normally flowery red, to be worn by the bride in the house after the wedding. A tiny image of child Jesus is placed on the floor mat where the tailor is sitting with the clothes, two tiny lengthways pieces of clothes are cut by the tailor and placed in the form of a cross. To begin with, there is the *Nomon* in which blessing of almighty God and especially of the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, is invoked in the form of *Zot* (a special song peculiar to the occasion sung by an expert). Then each relative, walks up to the spot where lies the Infant Jesus and lays his or her offerings of money before the image. The money collected on the occasion is taken by the tailor, apart from the wages.¹⁰

The woman is called *vokol* (bride) and the man is called *novro* (bridegroom). Before the marriage, the place in front of the house called *angonn* was cleaned up and cowdung was spread on the floor. A *matto* (pandal) made of *mollam* (palm leaf thatch) was erected. Food was prepared for the entire *Gawda* community. Old as well as young people sat on a *vanso* (coconut tree stem split in half). Food was served on banana leaves and sometimes on jackfruit leaves stitched together to make a *potravoll* (plate).

The sweet dish like *soji* made of rice and wheat flour, coconut juice along with sugarcane and coconut jaggery and *onn* is made of coconut juice and gram dal. The *soji* was served after the food in the coconut shells. Even the spoons used were made from the bamboo stick and coconut shell. *Doce* is prepared at the bride and groom's house

⁹ Katia Goes, "Customs and traditions that set Goan weddings apart," June 10, 2023, <https://www.gomantaktimes.com/my-go/art-culture/customs-and-traditions-that-set-goan-weddings-apart>.

¹⁰ Bonaventure D' Pietro, *Forever Yours*, trans. Willy Goes (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2017), 55.

respectively. Family, relatives, neighbours, and friends join together in the making of the *doce*.

The dowry known as *dennem* in Konkani. In this custom, the bride's family offers household essentials that would be useful to the bride after marriage such as jewelry, clothes, kitchen utensils, sweing machine, furniture, etc. It is essential to send a small image or statue of baby Jesus. This is to make sure that the bride doesn't need to be dependent on others as she starts her new beginning of life.

The *ros* ceremony involves anointing the bride and groom with freshly squeezed coconut milk. The ritual is done at the respective house of the bride and the groom. Pouring coconut milk on the bride and the groom is supposed to purify the couple before the wedding and the ritual simply signifies a new life filled with happiness and prosperity. The money of the *ros* is put in different bowls and later given to the maids who helped in the preparations of the *ros*. A sweet dish made of rice, coconut and jaggery known as *atoll* is served to the guests at the end of the *ros* ceremony.¹¹

Resper is the celebration of the Christian sacrament of marriage in the church. The couple promise each other that they will share all the happiness and sadness of life. The holy mass is then celebrated and the union of the newlywed couple is sealed by reciting the vows and signing the marriage registers in the presence of the priest and witnesses, after which the couple is officially declared husband and wife. After the *resper* a celebration is held at the bridegroom's house.¹²

The bride and the groom were kept at a neighbour's house till the *potor* (people from the bride's side arrive). After the *potor* arrive, the elder of the house welcomes

¹¹ D' Pietro, *Forever Yours*, 55.

¹² Mozinha Fernandes, "Where Have all the Songs and Rituals Gone?."

the newly married couple inside the house. *Gawda* people from both the side sing marriage songs known as *Erss* (also pronounced as *Verss*). These songs are sang by the women from the *Gawda* community. The women sing these songs standing in two lines facing each other and holding candles in their hands. In one line are women from bride side and facing them on the opposite side are the women from the bridegroom side.¹³

Saddo is a red dress which is given to the bride by the family of the groom. Upon arriving at the groom's house, the bride is given a gold chain, after which the couple kneels in front of the altar while the prayers are recited. It is at this point that the *saddo* is placed on the shoulder of the bride as a gift from her new family. After the reception is over, the relatives and the family members draw an imaginary line called *xim*, literally a boundary line in Konkani. The bride's family stands on one side and the groom's on the other side. A prayer is offered and wishes are expressed for the prosperity and happiness of the married couple. Two bottles of liquor are taken by the groom family out of which one is offered to the bride family. The liquor is poured on the *xim*. Later on, the one or two relatives from the bride side would cross the *xim* and would invite the couple to the bride's place.¹⁴

Portonem means to return. This practice takes place the day after the wedding when the newlyweds return to the house of the bride and spend the night there. Keeping with tradition, the new bride wears a red saree or dress which is stitched using cloth material that is given by the family of the groom. The *vojje* a basket containing sweet items prepared by the bride's family. The *vojje* includes *doce*, banana and other fruits.

¹³ Mozinha Fernandes, "*Christian Gawda Women, Culture And Imaging Goa*" (PhD diss., Goa University, 2020), 112.

¹⁴ da Costa Rodrigues, "Marriage Traditions and Customs Among the Catholic of Mercês," 192.

The *vojje* is distributed to the villagers and the relatives as a token of love for their support during their marriage.

Rituals of death among the *Gawda* Community of Velim

Whenever a person from the *Gawda* community dies, the first thing that was done was to give the deceased a bath on a *moll* (bamboo mat). The *moll* then had to be thrown out or burned, but only the *vhoddil*, the village elder, had the right to do so. The dead body was then dressed up by the elders. On the fourth day after the corpse was buried, all the members of the family would come together in the house of the deceased, with every member bringing food items needed for lunch. Then they would prepared the meal and eat together as a symbol of equality.

If the husband dies, then the wife was called a *randd bail* (widow). On the eighth day, the wife is taken to her mother's house, where food was kept ready, along with a black *kapod* (a type of cotton saree worn by *Gawdas*). When she arrives at the house, everyone else moved out and the widow was left alone. After the lunch the widow had to take the *kapod* and return to her in-law's place.¹⁵

To conclude, the traditional occupational activities of the Velim village help to preserve their cultural heritage and identity. They are often passed down through families and communities maintaining age-old practices, skills and knowledge related to farming techniques, fishing methods and artisanal crafts. Though many youngsters have sought employment overseas but many residents of the Velim continue to rely on these traditional occupations to sustain their livelihood. The practice of *sutti* is gradually disappearing among the *Gawdas* of the village. But the memory of it keeps

¹⁵ Mozinha Fernandes, "Where Have all the Songs and Rituals Gone?."

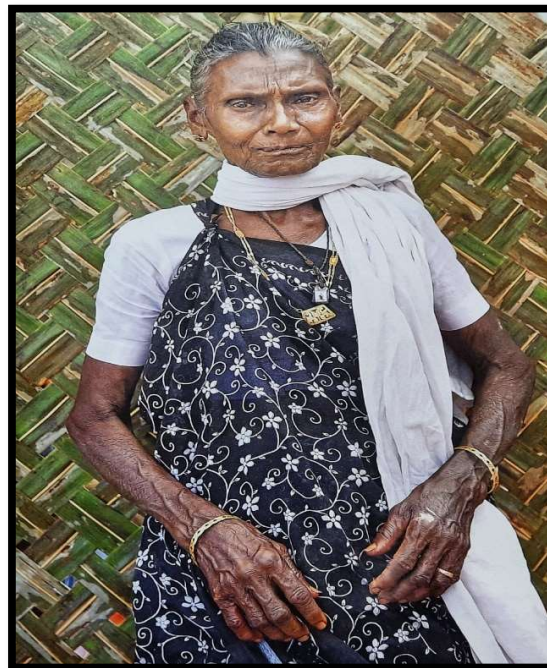
most of the people on the alert that, during that night the fate of the child was written or decided.

Fig. 3. Gawda Kapod



Source: Pantaleão Fernandes, *Goa: Rare Portraits* (Benaulim: The Word Publications, 2018).

Fig. 4. Black Kapod



Source: Pantaleão Fernandes, *Goa: Rare Portraits* (Benaulim: The Word Publications, 2018).

Chapter 4

CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS SHRINES OF THE VELIM VILLAGE

Goa is dotted with a number of majestic churches, quaint chapels, and little wayside crosses, each with their own interesting history. Many of these are immersive studies in architecture and local culture. Churches in Goa have been a part of the Goan culture from time immemorial. The Portuguese, who colonized Goa for over 450 years, played a major role in setting up Christianity as the main religion in Goa. And today we see many popular churches in Goa dotting the landscape of the Indian state. Some are very old and some were set up more recently but all these churches serve to remind us of our rich history and culture. The churches in Goa are the finest examples of Christian art and architecture, which blend into the landscape of Goa.

The village of Velim has two parish churches, St. Francis Xavier Church and St. Roque Church. These churches are known for its historical significance and typically features Portuguese colonial architectural design and serves as a focal point for religious and cultural events in the village.

St. Francis Xavier Church

St. Francis Xavier Church, also known as ‘Sao Francisco Igreja em Velim’ in Portuguese was originally a chapel built before 1771.¹ The chapel was then affiliated to the Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church of Assolna. The Chapel was detached from the Assolna Church on 30 March 1802 and was erected into a new parish on 29

¹ Savio Rodrigues, *Jesuit Heritage in Goa* (Panjim: Goa Jesuits, Jesuit House, 2009), 183.

September 1805.² The Church was rebuilt in 1806 at the expense of the parishioners. St. Francis Xavier is the patron saint of the Velim Church.³

There are two theories how the church got its name, one theory is that, it is believed that St. Francis Xavier landed at the Port of Cabo de Rama in the 1500's and reached Velim village which is almost 14 kilometres away. In the village, he tried to convert few people into Catholics, but the blacksmith community from Velim did not encourage him to stay and drove him away.⁴

Another theory is that, the *vangod* from the Karmali village of Ilhas came and settled here, there were eight *vangod* out of which seven were surviving. All constituted of *chaddi* caste. After the conversion by the colonial rulers, the *vangod* were as follows: first, Lobo, Barros, and Colaço; second, Vaz Falcão; third, Sá and Rodrigues; fourth, Nunes; fifth, Pereira; sixth, Valladares and Pereira; and seventh, Viegas. The original first *vangod* was of Vaz, which soon became extinct and members of the second *vangod*, Falcão, adopted the conjoined surname of Vaz-Falcão.⁵

By the late 16th century, when the plague hit the village and people began to die the villagers fled and soon the village of Karmali became deserted. The Barros and Colaço, the balance of the first *vangod*, together with the Vaz-Falcão of the second

² José Lourenço, *The Parish Churches of Goa: A study of façade architecture* (Margao: Amazing Goa Publications, 2005), 191.

³ Nascimento J. Mascarenhas, *Follow Me: Parish Priests of the Parishes of Salcete and Mormugão*. (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2010), 391.

⁴ “What makes Velim special and Holy,” *The Goan Everyday*, December 15, 2012, <https://www.thegoan.net/what-makes-velim-special-and-holy/2351.html>.

⁵ Tensing Rodrigues, “The Disease and the Diaspora,” *The Navhind Times*, March 20, 2022, 8.

vangod settled in the Velim village. These *vangod* from Karmali may have influenced from Francis Xavier and might have named the Church as St. Francis Xavier.⁶

The chaplains of the St. Francis Xavier Church from 1789-1806 were Fr. Benjamin da Silva from Assolna, Fr. Rafael Viegas from Assolna and Fr. Remedios da Cruz from Cavorim (Chandor).⁷ The Religious Order in the parish is The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians are based at Auxilium Centre in Colaco ward of the village.

The church structure is in Mannerist Neo-Roman style. It is of medium size, having five bays and three storeys. It has a triangular profile with belfry at apex with a concrete cross mounted. The bell is fixed at the gable apex. There is festoon moulding in the second storey and the finials are of the spear type. The Jesuits inscription of 'IHS' is on the façade of the church. The high roofed porch of the church is supported by slim ornamental columns.⁸

St. Roque Church in Tollecanto

St. Roque Church, called 'Sao Roque Igreja em Tollecanto,' in Portuguese was originally a chapel built in 1883 and erected on 18 June 1885. The chapel was affiliated to St. Francis Xavier Parish Church. The chapel was detached from the Mother Church and erected into an independent parish in 1955. Fr. Telesfore Fernandes was the first resident chaplain and later became the first parish priest. The church has a modest structure comprising of three bays and three storeys in Rococo Neo-Roman design. The

⁶ Rodrigues, "The Disease and the Diaspora," 8.

⁷ Mascarenhas, *Follow Me: Parish Priests of the Parishes of Salcete and Mormugão*, 392.

⁸ Lourenço, *The Parish Churches of Goa: A study of façade architecture*, 191.

gable has triangular alettes and a star motif. The bell was fixed at the gable apex. The porch is with arches and corrugated sheet roof.⁹

In October 2020, the front façade of the church collapsed, a plan for restoration was made under the leadership of Fr. Dr. Menino Allan S.M. Peter Tavares, a Pilar priest and conservation scientist, the team ensured that the original architectural character and worship ambience of the church was conserved. The newly conserved church was inaugurated on May 21, 2022.¹⁰

The church altar was symbolically designed, with the stained glass windows on the façade wall displaying ‘St Francis Xavier,’ ‘St Roque,’ ‘Eucharistic symbols’ and ‘a star,’ while the stained glass windows on the road-facing façade wall have images of ‘Mother Mary with Infant Jesus,’ ‘St Joseph with infant Jesus.’¹¹

The front courtyard of the church is designed with pavements merging into a labyrinth, created with rubber-moulded cobbled stones. Fr Tavares explained that in ancient thought, labyrinth (maze) walking was meant to correctly orient the body magnetically with the earth's magnet, also enabling spiritual centering, contemplation and prayer if one walks quietly and meditatively along the path of the maze. “In Christian thought, by the 13th century, a labyrinth was positively understood as a pilgrim’s path to God, strewn with difficulties.”¹²

⁹ Lourenço, *The Parish Churches of Goa: A study of façade architecture*, 191.

¹⁰ “Of Heritage and Worship,” *The Navhind Times*, January 19, 2023, 7.

¹¹ Venita Gomes, “Goa's St Roque Church: A perfect example of total heritage conservation,” *Gomantak Times*, January 02, 2023, <https://www.gomantaktimes.com/my-go/a/art-culture/goas-st-roque-church-a-perfect-example-of-total-heritage-conservation>.

¹² “Of Heritage and Worship,” 7.

The boundary of the church wall is used in a very interesting way. There are fourteen stations of the Cross. The flooring of the church is made of terracotta tiles. The labyrinth (maze) walking is removed from the front courtyard of the church. The Religious Order present in the parish of St. Roque Church is The Good Shepherd Sisters. The Good Shepherd Sisters are based at Good Shepherd Convent in Carxeta ward of the Velim village. The number of Catholics in the parish of St. Rock Church is 3,200.

Both the churches has different associations such as Parish Pastoral Council, youth, such as St. Francis Xavier Parish Youth and St. Roque Parish Youth, *confrarias*, *fabrica* etc. The *fabrica* committee is an important executive administrative body which is appointed by Arch Bishop. The main function of this association is to look after all the money matters and the church property. The *Confrades* or members of the *Confraria* are also known as *Irmaos* signifying the spirit of Christian brotherhood. *Confrades* wears uniform during occasions like feasts and other church ceremonies, especially in procession. The unique two-piece garment is known as *Opa- Murca* in Portuguese. The *Opa* is a sleeveless flowing gown, cut open in front from top to bottom and fastened at the top with button or hook. It is normally of white gauzy material flowing down towards the feet. On the top of this white garment, a red or coloured cape like second piece of the garment called *Murca* is worn.¹³

¹³ Olivinho J. F. Gomes, *Village Goa: A Study of Goan Social Structure and Change* (New Delhi: S. Chand and Company Pvt Ltd, 1987), 227.

Fig. 1. St. Francis Xavier Church



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 2. St. Roque Church



Source: José Lourenço, *The Parish Churches of Goa: A study of façade architecture* (Margao: Amazing Goa Publications, 2005).

Fig. 3. St. Roque Church with labyrinth (maze)



Source: <https://www.gomantaktimes.com/my-goa/art-culture/goas-st-roque-church-a-perfect-example-of-total-heritage-conservation>.

Fig. 4. St. Roque Church without labyrinth (maze)



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Holy Cross Chapel at Baradi

The Holy Cross Chapel at Baradi is dedicated to the Holy Cross. The present majestic chapel was constructed in the year 1983. There are almost 15 steps leading to the chapel. The chapel has only one altar and behind on the wall is a huge cross with the image of the Crucified Jesus. A residence for the chaplain is near another small chapel down in the village. The altar as per the inscription on the marble stone on the wall of the chapel was given by Jeronimo Fernandes, from Caroi ward of Velim on April 23, 1984, in remembrance of their departed father, Estrelito Fernandes.

Jesus of Nazareth Chapel at Cutbona

The Jesus of Nazareth Chapel is located in Cutbona ward of Velim. The chapel comes under the jurisdiction of Tollecanto parish. The chapel dedicated to Jesus of Nazareth was blessed on November 7, 1928. It had a small sanctuary with the altar dedicated to Jesus of Nazareth, whose image is above the altar. In front of it was another altar which was used to celebrate the Eucharist. The portion in front of the sanctuary was like an open hall and in front of it outside was an erected Cross. On the other side of the sanctuary was a sacristy. Mass is celebrated only on Saturday evening. The chapel has a committee called the ‘Dha Zann’ that comprises men of the ward, which meets after the feast of the Chapel to discuss the chapel matters.¹⁴

In the late 1990s as the population of the ward increased, there was a need for the construction of a new chapel, the earlier chapel was found to be too small. Hence a new chapel was constructed in the fields very close to the earlier one. The chapel is in a

¹⁴ Apollo Cardozo, “Jesus of Nazareth Chapel in Velim,” *The Goan Everyday*, April 16, 2023, 4.

circular shape and can accommodate about one hundred people. The list of donors who helped financially towards the construction of the chapel has been put on two large marble stones on display at the left hand side of the wall. The plaque on the front wall states, “this Chapel of Jesus Nazareth was founded by late Rev. Fr Bosque Rodrigues and blessed by Fr Olavo Diniz, the parish priest of Tollecanto Church on December 10, 2000, Velim, Cutumbana, Salcete Goa.”

The old chapel is now converted into a Community Hall. The plaque on it says, “Jesus Nazarenachea Copelachi suat bhettoilea by late Sri. Felix Nicaulau Pauxo Vas ani late Smt. Maria Filomena Vas, Dhinvas 10-6-92.”

Holy Cross Chapel at Golleaband

There are no written records with regard to the origin of the chapel. On the plaque it says that, the Chapel was renovated on 15 November 2004. The Chapel bell was donated by Avelino and Fr. Agnelo Fernandes and there is also list of donors displayed on the marble stone.

Fig. 5. Holy Cross Chapel at Baradi



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 6. Jesus of Nazareth Chapel at Cutbona



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 7. Jesus Nazareth Community Hall



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 8. Plaque on Jesus Nazareth Community Hall



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 9. Holy Cross Chapel at Golleaband



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Holy Cross of Baradi

The Holy Cross of Baradi is very huge and founded on a white base. It has a staircase around it that allows people to reach the top of the cross and garland it with flowers. The cross has no canopy over it although many attempts had been made to provide one, this has proved difficult because of its location.¹⁵ As a tradition, devotees circle the cross thrice to offer their prayers.

There is an interesting legend as to how this cross came into existence. In 1583 after the revolt of the *gaonkars* and the aquisition of the property by the Jesuits. As a symbol of their victory, the Paulists erected a cross over what was an abandoned monument. Much later, due to the prevalent conditions and the suppression of religious orders in Goa, the cross might have been abandoned.¹⁶

Fr Simphriano Caetano Dias, the vicar of the Velim Church, saw in his dream the cross whose pedestal was puckered with holes and steps leading to it. He made enquiries about this kind of cross in the village. A Kunbi from Baradi told him that there was a similar cross on the hill which, by then, would be in ruins as nobody went up there. The priest cut his way up the hill only to find the cross lying under a thick cover of trees. He cleaned the place, and built a small chapel next to it.¹⁷

Earlier there was no tarred road to reach the cross and the chapel. One had to alight at the bottom of the hill and walk uphill to the chapel. Today, there is a road that has been built by the government that leads to the foot of the chapel. Earlier, the people

¹⁵ Apolinario Cardozo, *When Goa Celebrates* (Panaji: Dalgado Konknni Akademi, 2022), 291.

¹⁶ Cardozo, *When Goa Celebrates*, 292.

¹⁷ Apollo Cardozo, "Chronicles Of Churches, Chapels: Holy Cross Chapel at Baradi," *The Goan Everyday*, May 03, 2023, 6.

would light candles at the cross, but now adjacent to the cross is a separate structure constructed to light candles. A number of miracles have taken place in the lives of the devotees, who have come here and sought its intercession.

There was also a custom prevailing in the days of old, when the Catholics from the neighbouring villages, who in prayer, singing hymns and accompanied by a brass band, would walk on foot, up the hill to the Cross during the season of Lent as part of their Lenten devotion.

There is another cross erected on a pedestal with a small canopy on it, a few metres away from this cross. A footpath leads to it. The people also go to pray there.

Fig. 10. Holy Cross of Baradi



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 11. Cross on the Pedestal



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Matievoilo Rakhneacho Khuris

There are three *rakhneachea khuris* in Velim village, one in Cumbeabhadd, another one in Nagdolim ward and the third in Goenchembhatt ward. However, there are no written records regarding the origin of these crosses. The elders of the Velim village narrates an interesting story about the origin of the crosses, which they themselves have heard from their ancestors. Earlier, the entire area up to the hill was a forest inhabited by wild animals. At the base of the hill were a few Catholic houses and among them were those of the Gawda Catholic community.¹⁸

The *Gawda* from Goenchembhatt ward were earlier living in a ward known as Ollan tori. However, the people who used to work for *bhatkars* later settled in the ward of Goenchembhatt as *mundkars*. Soon they realise that this place is sufficient for them to live in and was easily accessible for them to go to grazing.

There was a rough winding path leading atop the hill, which the *gonvlli* used to take their cattle and goats for grazing on the hill. They were afraid of their lives because of the presence of the wild animals on the hill. Therefore, the *gonvlli* gathered and constructed a cross on the hills with the available materials and prayed before it for their safety. With the cross they would feel safe and protected by God, hence the cross came to be known as ‘*Matievoilo Rakneacho Khuris*.’ However, there are no evidence which cross was build first.¹⁹

The *rakneacho khuris* of Cumbeabhadd has two crosses. One cross is inside a small chapel with a small altar in front of it. One has to climb almost 130 steps to reach

¹⁸ Cardozo, *When Goa Celebrates*, 310.

¹⁹ Apollo Cardozo, “Matievoilo Rakhneacho Khuris unites communities in Velim,” *The Goan Everyday*, October 28, 2020, 6.

the cross. The *rakhneacho khuris* of Nagdolim has a small chapel with the altar in front of it. However, there are no steps, one has to climb the hill to reach the cross.

The *rakhneacho khuris* of Goenchembhatt has a small chapel with the altar in front of it. A few yards from the chapel, is another small cross on a pedestal, where devotees from different faiths meet to pray for themselves, their loved ones, for favours and also light candles. There are steps to go to the cross, the foundation for the construction of 262 'Holy Cross Steps' was laid on October 18, 1998 by then parish priest Fr Santano Carvalho in the presence of the panchayat members and the government undertook this work under the EAS scheme.²⁰

²⁰ Cardozo, *When Goa Celebrates*, 312.

Fig .12. *Rakhneacho Khuris* of Goenchembhatt



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 13. Steps of *rakhneacho khuris* of Goenchembhatt



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 14. *Rakhneacho Khuris* of Cumbeabhatt



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 15. Steps of *rakhneacho khuris* of Cumbeabhatt



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 16. *Rakhneacho Khuris* of Nagdolim



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

CHAPTER 5

FEASTS AND FESTIVALS OF THE VELIM VILLAGE

The religious life of the people manifests itself in its social dimension in the form of celebration of feasts and festivals that suffuse the cultural landscape of Goa. Feasts and festivals play an important role in the life of every Goan. Every village has its own church or temple, which is known for an annual feast or *zatra*. These festivals have been celebrated for centuries and the knowledge of the rituals, customs and traditions have been passed on from one generation to the next.

Saints have played an important role in the lives of Goan Catholics. For the Catholic Church, saints serve as role models for the people to emulate, follow in their footsteps and change their lives for the better. The saints lived a life devoted to the service of fellow beings, and selflessly reaching out to those in need. In Goa, there are many saints, those who are sons of the soil as well as those who came here from foreign shores, who are venerated. The celebration of the feasts of the patron saints of the churches binds the villagers together as one family.

The two churches of Velim, St. Francis Xavier and St. Roque celebrates the feasts of their patron saints with great fervor and tradition. These celebrations hold immense importance in the life of the villagers as they are deeply rooted in their cultural and religious identity. This chapter delves into the colourful tapestry of feasts and festivals celebrated by the villagers, exploring their history, customs and enduring significance.

Feast of St. Francis Xavier and St. Roque Church

The parishioners of Velim and Tollecanto celebrate the annual feasts of their patron saints on the 3rd December and 29th October, respectively. Before the feast the churches are painted and covered with fairy lights on the outside and beautifully decorated inside. The celebration of the feasts begins with the *maddi* and then *novena*. The word *novena* derives from the Latin, meaning "nine." It is a prayer or Holy Mass that is offered for nine consecutive days, in petition for a divine favour or in preparation for a liturgical feast.¹ Following the *novena* or nine days of prayerful preparations, the villagers celebrate the feasts of their patron saints.

A large number of people wearing festive outfits, attend the mass in the morning to seek the blessings from the patron saint of the church. The feast mass is celebrated in an exquisite way, with a choir and brass band. Before the feast mass, paper flowers are pinned to the dresses and suits of the people. The priest wears special vestments, reserved only for the important occasions of the church. After the feast mass ends, the image of saint is brought out and kept in front of the altar where the priest briefs the faithful.

A procession of the patron saint by the members of the church confraternity and parishioners is held in the church square. The people religiously take part in the procession. In the past, only a few individuals or wards would celebrate the feast, but lately all the parishioners and wards have been involved in the festivities.²

¹ Maria de Lourdes Bravo da Costa Rodrigues, *Feasts, Festivals and Observances of Goa* (Tiswadi: L&L Publications, 2004), 243.

² "Velim also partake in festivities," *The Goan Everyday*, December 03, 2015, <https://www.thegoan.net/goa-news/velim-also-partake-in-festivities/7163.html>.

Following an old tradition a fair is held outside the premises of the church for the feast. The preparation for the erection of the stall begins on the eve of the feast. The fair comprises stalls selling Goan traditional sweets (*khajem*), roasted grams, toys, candles, food and clothes. There are booths for games as well as a fun fair with merry-go-rounds and ferries wheels. In addition, there are a variety of other stalls including those selling furniture. One or two *tiatrs* are also staged during the festivities. In addition, dances are held in the evenings.

The feasts of St. Francis Xavier and St. Roque not only serves as a religious commemoration but also stand as a cultural and visual delight, transforming the village into a vibrant and spiritually charged centre of celebrations. The villagers invite families and friends to celebrate at their homes and they usually visit each others houses carrying trays of traditional Goan sweets.

Feast of Jesus of Nazareth Chapel

The feast of Jesus of Nazareth Chapel is celebrated on the second Sunday of Easter, usually by the President, who is selected on rotation every year. The *maddi* and the nine days *novena* are held in the evening. On the feast day there are two Masses, one at 7 am and the feast mass is at 9.30 am. After the feast mass, the traditional procession of the statue of Jesus of Nazareth is held. Earlier the procession was taken around a few houses of the village, but now it is held inside the Chapel compound itself.³

In the past, after the final blessing and the veneration, men would visit every house of the ward to convey their festive greetings. However, this practice of conveying

³ Apollo Cardozo, “Jesus of Nazareth Chapel in Velim,” *The Goan Everyday*, April 16, 2023, 4.

the festive greeting has faded away. During the yesteryears, there would be a football game between the bachelors and the married men. The day ends with a *tiatr* in the chapel compound itself.

Feast of Holy Cross Chapel of Cumbeabhath

The feast of Holy Cross Chapel of Cumbeabhath is celebrated on 10th May every year. *Maddi* and then the *novenas* are held for nine days followed by the feast. Mass is held for the *novena* in the evening. The feast mass is held in the morning. The procession is held in the chapel compound itself, wherein children dressed as angels participate in the procession accompanied by the brass band. The feast is celebrated mainly by the people of the Cumbeabhath ward.

Fig. 1. Feast Mass of St. Francis Xavier Church



Source: <https://youtu.be/HjqKCZFeCJA?si=zdacx9pNFBXElagM>.

Fig. 2. Statue of St. Francis Xavier



Source: <https://youtu.be/HjqKCZFeCJA?si=zdacx9pNFBXElagM>.

Fig. 3. Feast Mass of St. Roque Church



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 4. Statue of St. Roque



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 5. Fair



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 6. St. Sebastian Procession



Source: https://youtu.be/WeSiPLkm9HI?si=MoO13F1rbD_saQvv.

St. Sebastian Procession

The procession of St. Sebastian is held on 16th January every year. The statue of St. Sebastian is taken out from the St. Roque Church, Tollecanto and is taken to the nearby wards in procession. The people faithfully participate in it accompanied by brass band. The objectives of the procession is to instill into the hearts of the people a spirit of prayer and penance taking the saint as a model. People accompany the procession which goes around the village on a prefixed route. Candles are lit on the house fences and the routes of the procession are marked and decorated with palm fronds.

Feast of Holy Cross at Porobus

The feast of Holy Cross is celebrated on 13th June by the members of the ward. Feast mass is not celebrated and the faithful gather here to pray the rosary and chant litany at the appropriate time.

Feast of Holy Cross of Baradi

The feast of Holy Cross is celebrated on 3rd May every year. The preparations of the feast begins with *maddi* and nine days *novena* which are held in the Holy Cross Chapel. After the mass is a procession held in the marked area and the veneration. Many people irrespective of their religion and place attend this feast. In the evening, a *tiatr* is held near the residence of the chaplain. Retreat is conducted every year in the Lent season for two days. There is a traditional belief that the devotees first have to worship the cross and then proceed towards the chapel for the mass.⁴

⁴ Apolinario Cardozo, *When Goa Celebrates* (Panaji: Dalgado Konknni Akademi, 2022), 292.

Fig. 7. Feast of Holy Cross of Baradi



Source: <https://goa-joeogauk.blogspot.com/2013/05/holy-cross-feast-baradi-3513.html>.

Fig. 8. Feast of Holy Chapel of Baradi



Source: <https://goa-joeogauk.blogspot.com/2013/05/holy-cross-feast-baradi-3513.html>.

Feast of Matievoilo Rakhneacho Khuris

The feasts of all three *rakhneachea khuris* of Cumbeabhath, Nagdolim and Goenchembhatt wards are celebrated in similar way but on different dates in the month of October. In the ward of Nagdolim the feast is celebrated on 24th October, in Goenchembhatt on 27th October and in Cumbeabhath on 29th October. Earlier the feasts were only celebrated by the *gonvlli* who belong to the Catholic *Gawda* community by just offering prayers through *ladainha*.⁵ Before the celebration the *gonvlli* would collect coconut, jaggery and rice from each house to prepare a sweet dish called *fir*.

After the *ladainha* is over, the *gonvlli* would carry flags mounted on a bamboo stick and would sing and dance accompanied by brass band. They would come dancing down from the cross to the nearby lake which is located in the Nagdolim ward of the Velim village. They would put the flags in the lake. After that they would gather at a place to have meal and the sweet dish *fir* was served to them on the banana leaf. A portion of *fir* and a bottle of cashew *feni* was kept for wild animals as an offering.⁶

But when the crosses were reconstructed into small chapel with altar, the feasts were celebrated differently. In Goenchembhatt ward of Velim there is a plaque that says that the first mass was arranged by Shri Dattaram Lotlikar from Baga, Velim, in 1960. Recently, the feasts are celebrated with mass and then the *ladainha* in the evening. After the mass the *gonvlli* used to dance with flags and put them in water. There is another cross down the hill where they would offer prayers followed by meal and *fir*. But now

⁵ Cardozo, *When Goa Celebrates*, 309.

⁶ Apollo Cardozo, "Matievoilo Rakhneacho Khuris unites communities in Velim," *The Goan Everyday*, October 28, 2020, 6.

the feast is celebrated by those who make *angvons* along with the people from the wards. They also collect money from the people along with some donations.

Fig. 9. Feast of *rakhneacho khuris* of Goenchembhadd



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 10. Plaque on the *rakhneacho khuris* of Goenchembhadd



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 11. Nagdolim Lake



Photo Credit: Falma Gomes

Fig. 12. São João celebration in the Velim Village



Source: <https://www.gomantaktimes.com/ampstories/web-stories/sao-joao-festa-2023-in-velim-was-a-celebration-of-culture>.

Ladainhas

Catholic people of every ward in the villages recite the Rosary and sing the *ladainhas* near crosses that can be found by the roadsides, on the hills, in the middle of the paddy fields on small embankment, in the church square and in other places. These are public *ladainhas* sung sometimes in Latin or in Konkani. *Ladainhas* are essentially a series of invocations and prayers entreating or laudatory very short in nature. These invocations could be prayed or sung by the person who is the leader of the ceremony and the prayers which are not changeable are repeated or sung by the assembled.⁷

The crosses are decorated with marigold flowers and candles. Today, the resettlement of young Goans in far flung lands has reduced not only the numbers in the assembly for the public *ladainhas* but also the age of the people attending them. The onus of continuing these traditions lies on the elderly left behind.

Feast of São João in the Velim village

The feast of São João is celebrated on 24th June. In Goa the feast is celebrated following many traditions of the old which add colour to it, such as inviting the son-in-law to the bride's house, jumping into the water bodies, preparing *patolleo*, etc. The festival is celebrated largely by the Goan Catholics. In the Bible it is mentioned that that St. John the Baptist was in the womb of Elizabeth, who was Mary's (the mother of Jesus) relative. When Mary visited Elizabeth who was pregnant, it is said that the child in Elizabeth's womb jumped with great joy. Jumping in the wells is the enactment of this particular instance when St John leaped with joy in his mother's womb.⁸

⁷ Celina de Vieira Velho e Almeida, *Feasts and Fests of Goa: The Flavour of a Unique Culture* (Panaji: Celina de Vieira Velho e Almeida, 2023), 95-96.

⁸ Cardozo, *When Goa Celebrates*, 62.

People in the Velim village celebrate São João by going around the wards of the village with traditional musical instruments singing popular Konkani songs. One song that cannot miss out hearing is: “*São João, São João gunvta mure vatt amkam dissonam, aicho dis urbecho konn konnak hansonam, choll-re pie-re tum illo ghe-re faleam kaim mevonam.*” This is a popular song by late C. Alvares, one of the stalwarts of the Konkani *tiatr*.⁹

The young and the old adorned with kopels, a crown made out of *sanjanvchi val* (creeper of São João) fresh flowers and fruits are strung together. Singing songs of São João they parade the streets, visiting houses, shouting, “São João! São João!” Then they proceed to the nearby wells, tanks, rivers and jump into them. Traditional sweets such as *patolleo*, *holle*, *sannas*, are made and distributed to the villagers.

Festival of *Mell*

The celebration of carnival is also known as *Intruz* in Goa. In urban Goa, carnival is associated with the float parades but in the villages the merriment and fun is of a different genre. *Intruz*, incorporates festive elements of Goa’s Hindus and Catholics with dramatic performances. Over time, the Goan carnival has outgrown social and cultural barriers to become a celebration of Goan unity. It has absorbed the Portuguese influence with indigenous Goan elements, resulting in a unique cultural syncretism.

Syncretism is a blending of religious ideas and practices by means of which either one set adopts more or less thoroughly the principles of another or both are

⁹ Almeida, *Feasts and Fests of Goa: The Flavour of a Unique Culture*, 63-64.

amalgamated in more cosmopolitan and less polytheistic shape.¹⁰ Syncretism means a reconciliation between the old and the new customs, practices and religious beliefs.¹¹

The forty days of Lent of the Catholic liturgical calendar begins with Ash Wednesday. While the rest of Goa celebrates three days of the Carnival festivities preceding this day, the village of Velim celebrate these three days with revelry, merriment, music and fun but of a different type. In this village, *intruz* is celebrated with *mells* and *khells*. The *khells* were street side drama performances in open spaces, normally enacted in front of the regedors and landlords *balcões*, who in turn would pay for these performances. In more recent times *khells* are sponsored by politicians. *Khells* comprised of three one act plays (*partio's*).¹²

Mell in Konkani means a gathering of people who walk in procession from their ward to other wards.¹³ The *mell* was performed by the *Gawda* community who got converted to Christianity during the Portuguese rule. The Holy Cross of Baradi (Baradkarincho Khuris) is a syncretic version of the Baradkarin, the female deity of the Hindu tradition which is sacred to the *mell* celebration.¹⁴ *Mell* is closely connected with Hindu customs and rituals.

¹⁰ Pratima Kamat, "Konkan Conquered for Christ by Priests of the Society of Jesus." in *Indo-Portuguese Encounters: Journeys in Science, Technology and Culture* Vol. 1, ed. Lotika Varadarajan (New Delhi: Indian National Science Academy, 2006), 47.

¹¹ Délio de Mendonça, *Conversions and Citizenry: Goa Under Portugal 1510-1610* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2002), 8.

¹² Sushila Sawant Mendes, "Amcho Goycho Carnaval– is here again!," *O Herald*, February 11, 2024, 6.

¹³ Sushila Sawant Mendes, "Mell of Velim, Ambelim and Assolna: A syncretic representation of identity." *The Navhind Times*, March 05, 2023, 2.

¹⁴ Pratima P. Kamat, *Goa: Its Tryst with Trade* (Panaji: Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2009), 115.

The *Gawdas* of Baradi are divided into three *vangodd*: first *vangodd* - Raikar, second *vangodd* - Gyōkar and third *vangodd* - Gāydolkar. Each *vangodd* is made of several *kutumb* that claims a common ancestor. A *kutumb* consists of a man, a woman and their children. Each *vangodd* is headed by a *budvont* also known as a *vhodil*. The *budvont* is always a male member. He comes from a fixed family. However, if there is no male member to be the next *budvont* then any other male member who is interested is appointed at the *ganvponn*. Each *vangodd* lives in a house known as a *vhodle ghor*.¹⁵

Before the beginning of the *mell*, the *divli* or *maulem* (lamp) is brought out from the house of the *mandkara* that is, the Raikars. It is cleaned to the singing of *chourong* (verses in konkani) with ardent drumming. On the first day of *mell* the *mand* is prepared by lighting a *maulem* by the *budvont* accompanied by drumming, it is also known as *mand dorlo*. Then *melliancim jevonam* is held at the *vhodle ghor* of each *vangodd*.

The villagers gather at the *mand*. At the centre lies the *maulem* and the national tri-colour flag. With the lighting of the *maulem*, the nature of the *mand* changes from profane to sacred. No footwear is allowed and women are strictly forbidden from entering the *mand* while the men are in it.¹⁶

Mand is a sacred space of each ward of the village. A big brass lamp is lit with coconut molas (matted coconut fronds) protecting the flame. The *mell* comprises of a procession of villagers with drums and cymbals walking from their own *mand* to the

¹⁵ Maria Bernadette Gomes, “*Ethnomedicine and Healing Practices in Goa (The Kunnbi Case)*” (PhD diss., Goa University, 1993), 36-38.

¹⁶ Gomes, “*Ethnomedicine and Healing Practices in Goa (The Kunnbi Case)*,” 78.

mand of other wards. Near the cross of each ward, there is a *mand* where a big brass lamp, is lit with coconut oil.¹⁷

The three *budvont*, each weilding a *torsad* (sword), lead an assembly of men outside the chapel in Baradi, adjoining the *mand*. In front of a candle lit cross, they invoke the deities of Baradi. The invocation is a public announcement of the men coming together for worship, and a promise that they will also go their ways in peace as they have come together. Each time an invocation is pronounced the *budvonts* hits the sword on their shoulders, indicating a promise. After the invocations the people recite Our Father and Hail Mary. After these prayers the *mell* comes to the *mand*. The men fix a wooden pale with three branches.¹⁸

Each branch represents a *vangodd*. The *budvonts* of the three *vangodd* herald the beginning of the festivities by climbing up the three branches. Here the order of the climbing is reverse of the usual way of addressing the three *vangodd*. The Găydolkar climbs first, next the Gôykar, and then the Raikar. The men dance enthusiastically around the *maulem* to the tunes of the *chaurong*. The *mell* disperses in the early hours of the morning. This ceremony is called the *medi*. It cannot commence without a representative from the *Chaddi* from Velim. A member of the Caeiro family represents them.¹⁹

On the second day of the *mell*, the *budvont* breaks the previous year's coconut that had stood by the *maulem* in the *vhodle ghor* of the Raikars. The Raikar *budvont* then plucks a fresh coconut to be kept for the ancestor as a collective offering of the

¹⁷ Mendes, "Mell of Velim, Ambelim and Assolna: A syncretic representation of identity," 2.

¹⁸ Gomes, "Ethnomedicine and Healing Practices in Goa (The Kunnbi Case)," 79.

¹⁹ Gomes, "Ethnomedicine and Healing Practices in Goa (The Kunnbi Case)," 79.

community. The deities are invoked, and an Our Father and Hail Mary is offered by the *budvont*. Only the *budvonts* can do the prayer to God on behalf of the people. The men then come to the *mand* and put kajal tilak on each another's foreheads. This is a symbol of brotherhood. The first tilak is put by the Caeiro representative on the forehead of the Raikar *budvont*. The men then move out of the *mand*. Now the women can move into the *mand* to apply the holy oil from the *maulem*. While the women are at the *mand* no man is allowed to step in.²⁰

The *mell* of Baradi visits surrounding areas, collecting coconuts and dancing. They come up to the Baradi hill following a particular route which is said to have been taken by their ancestors. At the hill the *budvont* perform the *pradakshina* in the anticlockwise direction, around the Holy Cross of Baradi. The coconuts which were collected are shared among each other. To go back without having a piece of coconut is a taboo. With the conclusion of this ceremony the Baradkars open the way of the *mell* for others. Only after the Baradkars invocations other *mells* can come to the Holy Cross of Baradi. *Mell* from Cumbeabhat, Goemchembhat, Naik-Caeiro, Chinchimin, Sarzora, Ambleim, Assolna, Tollecanto all come to the Baradi hill. They perform *pradakshina* around the cross and share the coconuts.

Each *mell* carries the national flag. In the past, a saffron flag was used. People walk in the *mell* for *angvons* (miraculous favours). It is common to find some men dressed as women, walk in the procession to the rhythm of drums and cymbals. One can hear the chant of the original Hindu surnames used by people to introduce themselves. The people who take part in the procession are generally Catholics, with a

²⁰ Gomes, "Ethnomedicine and Healing Practices in Goa (The Kunnbi Case)," 80.

small number of Hindus, as the villages of Assolna, Ambelim and Velim have a majority Christian population. One can hear chants of “Homell re Naikalo,” although this surname has now changed to Caeiro, and “Homell re Porbalo,” even though the surname has changed to Mascarenhas.²¹

Bottle of liquor and some *cunjee* (rice gruel) was kept ready to offer to the procession. The same liquor or whatever was left of it was used to pour on the ground and mark a *xim* or a boundary for the *mell*, which went to the next ward. Nowadays, *cunjee* is substituted with soft drink and biscuits. Money for the expense of the *mell* was shared by all the houses in the ward, but now it is offered by individuals who wish to do so.

The *mell* follows a traditional predetermined route, unchanged over centuries. The *mell* from each ward follows a system whereby if a *mell* of another ward has not yet reached at a particular place, that *mell* will wait for it to come to that assigned place and only then proceed forward. It is also a belief that the *mell* cannot be blocked or misfortune will befall the offenders. There are many such incidents narrated down the years but the most recent one is with regard to a palatial house in the ward of Zaino in Velim. A big boundary wall was built with an imposing gate which inadvertently blocked the path of the local *mell*. Some decades back, this house was filled with children but today it is desolate and some parts of the roof have almost collapsed. The two young boys of the house passed away before the age of forty and the daughters are married and have migrated abroad.

²¹ Mendes, “Mell of Velim, Ambelim and Assolna: A syncretic representation of identity,” 2.

Metal cymbals are used to welcome the *mell* into the ward. The drums and cymbals make the revellers dance to their beats and sometimes end with one or two people going into a trance. In Konkani, it is known as *Bharevop* or possessed by the *Hapsi* or the Saibin of that ward. The use of articles which are essentially non-Christian, like the brass oil lamp, cymbals, and offering of oil, reveals a strong desire of going back to one's roots, as against the onslaught of a foreign culture.

On the last day of the *mell*, the Baradkars gather at the *mand*. The *budvont* recite the invocations and pray to God on behalf of the people. On this day the Baradkars close the way of the *mell*. All the *mell* festivities come to an end on this day.

With the passage of years, new social spaces have been created within the existing social hierarchy, while at the same time a strong sense of assertion of one's own identity is observed and maintained. The *mell* is therefore a mirror of the deep sensibilities and yearnings of the people of Assolna, Ambelim and Velim to connect with their past as well as an attempt to syncretise their identity with a new religion and culture.

Fig. 13. Lighting a brass lamp



Source: <https://www.navhindtimes.in/2023/03/05/magazines/panorama/mell-of-velim-ambelim-and-assolna-a-syncretic-representation-of-identity>.

Fir. 14. Dancing around the brass lamp



Source: <https://www.navhindtimes.in/2023/03/05/magazines/panorama/mell-of-velim-ambelim-and-assolna-a-syncretic-representation-of-identity>.

Fig. 15. *Mell* visiting to neighbouring wards



Source: <https://www.heraldgoa.in/Edit/By-invitation/%E2%80%98Amcho-Goycho-Carnaval%E2%80%99%E2%80%93-is-here-again/217649>.

Fig. 16. *Mell* at Holy Cross of Bardi



Source: <https://www.heraldgoa.in/Edit/By-invitation/%E2%80%98Amcho-Goycho-Carnaval%E2%80%99%E2%80%93-is-here-again/217649>.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The present study on the “Socio-Cultural History of the Catholic Community of the Velim village of Goa,” comprises of six chapters. The study focuses on understanding the social, cultural and religious aspects of the Catholic community of the village. The first chapter introduces my research topic. The objectives mentioned in the first chapter have been worked upon. After reviewing the previous works on the village it was evident that the Velim village offers considerable scope for research in history.

The second chapter discusses the geographical setting of the Velim village. Situated in the Salcete *taluka* of Goa, Velim village has tropical climate and fertile land making it suitable for agriculture and fishing activities since ancient times. Over the centuries, due to its location the village has attracted various rulers and civilizations. Rulers from ancient dynasties to colonial powers like the Portuguese. Each era has left its mark on the village, contributing to its cultural diversity and historical significance.

The rule of Shilaharas in the Velim village has left a significant imprint on its history and developments. Valipatana port in the Velim village might have led to regional trade networks, further enhancing its economic prosperity and cultural vibrancy. The presence of the Valipatana port in the village as a hub of maritime trade and commerce has played a crucial role in facilitating trade between Goa and other regions contributing to the economic prosperity of the village and its surrounding areas.

The Raia stone inscription of Jayakeshi I, gives a glimpse into the history of the Velim village. The Portuguese rule in the Velim village has left a profound and lasting impact on its history, culture and society. The Portuguese introduced administrative

systems, including taxation and land tenure, which altered the traditional governance structures of the village. They also imposed their language, religion and cultural practices leading to the widespread adoption of Christianity among the local population. The Portuguese influence is still visible in the village which is evident in the architecture of the churches, the presence of Portuguese surnames and cultural traditions that blend indigenous and colonial elements.

The revolt of 1583 stands as a significant episode in the village's history, reflecting the local population resistance against the Portuguese colonial rule. The revolt arose from the grievances related to heavy taxation, forced conversions to Christianity, and other oppressive measures imposed by the Portuguese authorities. It represented a bold assertion of local autonomy and a desire for freedom from colonial oppression. While the revolt of 1583 may not have achieved its immediate objectives, it served as an intense reminder of the resilience and determination of Velim's residents to defend their rights and preserve their cultural identity. The revolt left a lasting legacy in Velim's collective memory, inspiring subsequent generations to strive for justice, equality and freedom.

The *kudds* of the Velim village plays a vital role in preserving the local culture and fostering community solidarity. The *Comunidade* system in Velim village represents a unique aspect of its socio-economic and land tenure structure. Originating during Portuguese colonial rule, the *Comunidades* were communal landholding institutions designed to administer and manage village resources collectively.

The third chapter discusses the caste structure of the Velim village. Like many other villages in Goa and across India, Velim's caste system is characterized by divisions based on hereditary occupations, social status, and religious practices. The

traditional occupations of the villagers are deeply rooted in its rich cultural heritage and geographical setting. Agriculture has historically been a primary occupation in Velim, with farmers cultivating crops such as rice, coconuts, and spices in the fertile lands surrounding the village. Fishing is another significant occupation of the villagers, providing a vital source of livelihood. Artisanal crafts such as pottery and carpentry, also play a prominent role in Velim's economy, with skilled craftsmen passing down their traditions from generation to generation which have now become extinct.

While modernization and urbanization have led to shifts in occupational patterns, many residents of Velim continue to rely on traditional occupations to sustain their livelihoods and preserve their cultural heritage. These occupations not only contribute to the economic prosperity of the village but also serve as a source of pride and identity for its inhabitants.

The rituals surrounding the birth, marriages and death practices of the Christain Gawda community of the Velim village are deeply ingrained in its cultural and religious traditions. These rituals play a significant role in shaping social bonds, religious beliefs, and family dynamics.

The fourth chapter discusses the origin of the churches of the Velim village which stand as symbols of both religious devotion and architectural splendor and also repositories of history reflecting the village's rich cultural heritage. Constructed during the Portuguese colonial period, these churches serve as centers of worship and community gathering for the Christian inhabitants of Velim. Adorned with intricate designs, colorful murals, and ornate altars, the churches showcase the craftsmanship and artistic expression of their builders, leaving a lasting impression on visitors and residents alike. The churches of Velim continue to play a vital role in the

spiritual and social life of the village, hosting religious ceremonies, festivals, and community events throughout the year. They serve as places of solace, reflection, and celebration, fostering a sense of unity and belonging among the villagers.

The chapels scattered throughout the village represent sacred spaces deeply embedded within the fabric of the community, serving as focal points for religious worship, spiritual reflection, and communal gatherings. Beyond their religious significance, the chapels of Velim play an integral role in shaping the village's cultural landscape and fostering a sense of community cohesion. They serve as meeting points for religious processions, cultural events, and social gatherings, providing opportunities for villagers to come together and strengthen bonds of fellowship. Moreover, the chapels serve as repositories of local history and collective memory, preserving stories, traditions, and customs passed down through generations.

The crosses scattered across the village are emblematic symbols of faith, heritage, and cultural identity. These crosses, often found at intersections, along roadsides, and in public spaces, serve as visible reminders of the village's Christian heritage and the enduring presence of religious devotion within the community. While varying in size and design, each cross carries its own significance, representing the collective faith and reverence of the villagers. Beyond their religious symbolism, the crosses of Velim also hold historical and cultural significance, reflecting the legacy of Portuguese colonization and the integration of Christian beliefs into the fabric of Goan society.

The fifth chapter discusses the feast and festivals of the Velim village. The church feasts in Velim village are vibrant and joyous celebrations that hold profound significance for the community. These feasts, dedicated to patron saints are held

annually at churches, serve as focal points for communal gathering. In addition to their religious importance, the church feasts in Velim are marked by a festive atmosphere, characterized by music, dance, traditional cuisine, and colourful decorations. Villagers as well as visitors from neighbouring communities, come together to partake in the celebrations, strengthening social bonds and fostering a sense of unity and solidarity.

In Velim village, syncretic practices forms the backbone of cultural and religious identity, exemplifying the harmonious coexistence of diverse traditions and beliefs. Through a remarkable fusion of Hindu and Christian indigenous customs, the villagers of Velim have crafted a unique tapestry of rituals and practices that reflect their shared heritage and values. This syncretic ethos not only celebrates the richness of cultural landscape but also fosters a deep sense of unity and mutual respect among different religious groups. It serves as a powerful reminder of the inclusive spirit that defines the community of Velim, where diversity is embraced and celebrated.

The *mell* celebration of Velim village is more than just a religious observance; it is a celebration of community, culture and tradition. The *mell* celebration brings joy and meaning to the lives of its participants, leaving a lasting impact on the hearts and minds of all who take part. The *mell* celebration reinforces the cultural identity and heritage thus, preserving age-old traditions and customs which are passed down through generations.

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Appendix I: Raya Viragal of Jayakesi I

Rāya Viragal of Jayakēśi I

Found at Rāya, Salsette, Goa, by Rev. H. Heras, S.J., and deciphered and translated by Professor K. G. Kundangar; now in the Museum of the Indian Historical Research Institute, St. Xavier's College, Bombay.

Text

೧. ಸ್ವಸ್ತಿ ಸಮಧಿಗತ ಪಂಚಮಹಾಸಬ್ದ ಮಹಾ ಮಣ್ಣು .
೨. ಳೀಸ ಕಾದವ್ವು ಜಯಕೇಸಿ ವರ್ಷದ ಸಕ ವರ್ಷ ೯೯೩
೩. ನೆಯ ವಿರೋಧಿಕ್ರಿತು ಸಂವತ್ಸರದ ಜೇಷ್ಠ ಬಹು
೪. ಳ ಚತುರ್ದಸಿ ಸೊಮವಾರ ಸಂಕ್ರಮಣ ವಳ್ಳಿಯ
೫. ಪುರದ ಭೂಪದೇವರ ಜಾವರಿ ಗೊಬ್ಬರಸಿಣಿ
೬.ಡಿವಾಡಿ ಸತ್ತನಾತ.....
೭. ಜಿತೆನಲಭ್ಯತೆಭೂಮಿಮೃತೆನಾಪಿ ಸುರಾಂಗನಾ ಸ್ವ
೮. ವಿ..... ಮರಣಂ ರಣಂ

Translation

On Monday the Samkramana day the 14th of the dark half of Jyēsthā Virādhikṛt Samvatsara 993rd year of the Śaka year in the reign of Kādamba Jayakēśi who had attained the titles Panchmahāśabda and mahā-maṇḍalēsa, Gobbarasini, the champion of lord Bhūpa of Valliyapura, fought and died

The victor attains land, the dead one also is united with heavenly damsels.

Source: George M. Moraes, *The Kadamba Kula: A History of Ancient and Mediaeval Karnataka* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1931).

Appendix II: Questionnaire

Feast and festivals celebrated by the Catholic community in the Velim village

- What are the main feasts and festivals celebrated by the Catholic community in the village?
- When are these feasts and festivals typically celebrated?
- How do the villagers prepare for these celebrations?
- Are there any traditional rituals or customs associated with these feasts and festivals?
- What role do religious institutions, such as churches, play in organizing and hosting these events?
- Are there any special foods or dishes that are prepared during these occasions? If so, what are they?
- Do these celebrations attract visitors or tourists from other areas?
- How have these celebrations evolved over time, if at all?
- What significance do these feasts and festivals hold for the Catholic community of the village?
- What is the *mell* festival, and what is its significance in the Velim village?
- When is the *mell* celebration typically held?
- Can you describe the preparations and planning involved in organizing the *mell*?
- What are the key rituals or ceremonies performed during the *mell* celebration?
- How do the villagers participate in and contribute to the *mell* celebration?
- Are there any traditional songs, dances, or performances associated with the *mell*?
- What impact does the *mell* celebration have on the social fabric and cultural identity of the village?

Traditional occupations of the Velim villagers

- What are the primary traditional occupations practiced by the villagers of Velim?
- How have these occupations been passed down through generations?
- Are there any unique skills or techniques involved in these occupations?
- How do modern advancements and technologies impact these traditional occupations?
- What role do these occupations play in sustaining the local economy?

Etymology of wards of the Velim village

- What is the origin of the names of the wards in the village?
- Are there any historical or cultural significances associated with the names of these wards?
- Are there any stories or legends behind the names of specific wards?

Caste structure of the Velim village

- What are the main castes or caste groups present in the village?
- Are there any traditional occupations or roles associated with specific castes in the village?
- Are there any caste-based traditions or customs that are still practiced in the village?

Rituals and customs of the Catholic *Gawda* community of the Velim village

- What are the key religious rituals and customs practiced by the Catholic *Gawda* community in the village?
- Can you describe the typical order of events for major religious ceremonies, such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals?
- Are there any specific prayers or songs that hold special significance for the

Catholic community?

- How have these rituals and customs evolved over time, if at all?

Origin of the Churches, Chapels and Crosses of the Velim village

- What is the historical background and origin of the churches, chapels, and crosses in the village?
- How were these religious structures funded and constructed in the past?
- Are there any legends or stories surrounding the establishment of specific churches, chapels, or crosses in the village?
- What role did the local community play in the establishment and maintenance of these religious structures?