

From Soil to Society: Significance of Land in Goan Society through ages.

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GOA UNIVERSITY

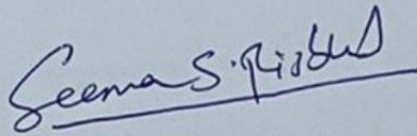
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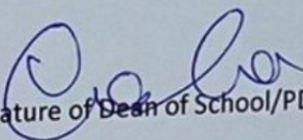
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This is to certify that the internship report "From Soil to Society: Significance of Land in Goan Society" is a bonafide work carried out by Ms. Krutika Krishna Karki under my mentorship in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters in Arts in the History Discipline at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University.



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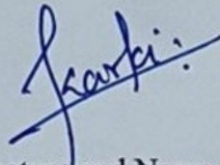
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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Internship report entitled, "From Soil to Society: Significance of Land in Goan Society" is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Department of History at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University, under the guidance of Professor Dr. Seema Risbud and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities / College will not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given in the dissertation.

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PREFACE

Goa is a region in India situated on the western coast. It has a rich and diverse history spanning centuries. In the early days, the relationship between the land and society was interdependent, with each shaping and influencing the other. The land's lush forests, fertile plains, and winding rivers served as the foundation of Goa's story, providing sustenance to its inhabitants and beyond. This research explores the unique relationship between the land and society, highlighting how they coexisted and evolved over time.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive depiction of early Goan society by using a combination of historical research, archaeological evidence, and anthropological insights. By exploring the diverse communities that resided in Goa.

To learn from the past, we must approach this study with an open mind and a genuine desire to understand. The story of Goa is not just a tale of conquest and colonization, but also a testament to the resilience and adaptability of its people in the face of adversity. This study aims to shed light on the fascinating history of Goa and its people, providing a greater understanding and appreciation of its rich cultural heritage.

The study looks closely at the indigenous people of Goa and their old ways of life. It seeks to understand their unique customs and past. The study aims to show how these traditions and practices lasted over time. In simple words, the study aims to tell the story of Goa's original people and their rich heritage.

Through my extensive research, I have delved deeply into the vital role that land plays in the communities of Goa. My focus has been on studying the ancient village groups and their intricate relationship with the land. This rigorous study has provided me with invaluable insights into the profound significance that land holds for the people of Goa, and how it is intricately intertwined with their cultural identity and sense of belonging.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study has been shaped significantly by the valuable assistance of many individuals and institutions. Most importantly, it gives me an immense pleasure and my sincere gratitude to my research supervisor Dr. Seema S. Risbud, Assistant Professor at D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University, who gave me guidance, support, inspiration and help during dissertation study.

I would also like to acknowledge the guidance given to me by our Dean Prof. Ganesha Somayaji and the esteemed faculty members of the Department of History, Dr. Pratima Kamat, Prof. Nagendra Rao, Dr. Parag Parobo, Dr. Nalini Naik, Mr. Vinod Kankonkar and Mrs .Sneha Ghadi.

I am greatly indebted to the staff and authorities of institutions like Goa Archives, Goa University Library, Central Library, for providing me with valuable material related to my topic.

I would also like to thank the teaching and non- teaching staff of Goa University for helping me when required.

I sincerely thank my parents and friends for their guidance, help, support and encouragement.

Last, I thank the Almighty for bestowing my good health to carry out my work

Glossary

Barazzan - Refers to the twelve (figurative) ancestors who founded the agricultural villages and inhabited them for the first time.

Bhumipurush- refers to the spirit or deity of the land.

Comunidades - Village Communities of Goa.

Foral- Charter

Gaumponn- It was the pre-Portuguese council of the village community.

Gaunkars - Male descendants of the original settlers of the villages in Goa through male lineage.

Gauncaris - Pre-Portuguese denomination for the comunidades of Goa.

Hala - An ancient Indian measurement of land.

Khazana - Low lying rice fields susceptible for inundation during tides.

Kumeri- Burn and shift cultivation.

Mandd- Community square used as a meeting place as also for socio-religious functions.

Mith-agors- Salt-pans.

Mith Gavdas - People belonging to the kshatriya caste engaged in saltmaking.

Abstract

The objective of this study is to investigate the historical importance of land use in shaping the cultural, economic, and social structure of Goa. By examining the link between land use, societal structures, and human activities, the research aims to understand how the early settlers of Goa utilized different environments for their sustenance. The study will focus on agriculture activities to investigate the role of land in shaping the cultural, social, and economic paths of Goan communities. The research will analyze historical records, including copper plates and other important sources, to gain insight into how the people of Goa distributed, owned, and utilized land over time. Ultimately, this study will offer a deeper understanding of Goa's historical development and the profound bond between its people and the natural world.

Key words: Agor, Gauda, Gaunkari, Khaans, Kumeri, Kunbi, Mithgauda.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Five similar facts starting with ‘J’ that is: Jameen- land, Jal- water, Jungle- forest, Jan- people, and Janawar- animal” are essential for the existence of humankind on earth”¹.

Land is the most important resource of mankind, which supports human life in some way or the other. Land means different things to the different people who live on it, to the farmer it is a rich soil that provides earnings, to the miner land serves as a reservoir of precious minerals, to the soldier it is an emotion, a duty towards his mother earth, to the historian land is a living past buried deep in its surface, to the builder land is a groundwork for constructing various structures. Hence, land is not just the outer layer of the planet; it is the essential support system for human life, as well as plants and animals.

Land is an essential element in forming living, as it provides the foundation for our homes, cities and farms. Land gives us a place to live. It's where we construct our homes, our communities, and places that define our everyday existence. Furthermore, land serves as a backbone for agriculture, fishing, mining, and tourism, etc.

The Konkan is believed to be the bequest of the God Parashurama, the sixth of the tenth incarnation of Lord Vishnu as remarked in the book “Legends of Goa”². It is referred to as the Lord *Parshurama* is credited with the formation of the land of Goa, he ordered the sea

¹ V.V Khedekar, *Eco-culture Goa Paradigm* (Panaji: Broadway Publishing House, 2013).

² Mario Cabral e Sa, *Legends of Goa* (Mumbai: India Book House Limited, 1998).

to roll back and thus created the fertile land. There is a temple in *Painginim* of Canacona taluka dedicated to Lord *Parshurama*. Thus the author Vinayak Khedekar in his book remarks “Goa is a land reclaimed from the sea”³. Another legend says that after a dispute with Parvati, Lord Shiva came down from the Himalayas to Gomantak, the earlier name of Goa. “According to Harivamsha Purana which is considered as Upa-Purana of *Mahabharata* God Krishna is said to have fought a fierce battle with the demon Jarasandha on the mountain Gomanchal in which the King of Magadha was totally defeated”⁴. Also “The Sahyadrikhand describe that the Goan saraswats (*Baman*) were brought by the *Parshurama* (66 families is 10 Gotras)”⁵.

Goa, which became the 25th state to join the Indian Union on May 30, 1987, is the smallest and most breathtaking region of India. It is well-known for its sandy beaches, waterfalls, magnificent temples, heritage architecture, casinos, and unique culture. Coastal activities, such as farming, traditional fishing, and shellfish fishing, harvesting, are essential for Goa's survival. Fortunately, Goa has a 105-kilometer-long coastline.

Goa is a territory that is composed of 12 talukas and 2 districts. The total area covered by Goa is around 3702 sq.km. On its northern side, Goa shares its borders with the Sawantwadi taluka of Sindhudurg district and Kolhapur district of Maharashtra state. On the southern side, it shares its borders with Uttara Kannada (Karwar) of Karnataka State.

Etymology of Goa reveals that since early times Goa has been known in various terms, Goi,

³ V.V Khedekar, *Goa: Land, Life and Legacy* (Panaji: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2016).

⁴ V.T. Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji: Gazetteer Department, 1979).

⁵ V.T. Gune, *Gazetteer of the union territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji: Gazetteer Department, 1979).

Goembab, Govapuri, Govem and Gomantak in Marathi, Gomant, Gomantdurg, Gomanchal, Gova, Gova Pradesh and with many other names, (Sakhardande, 2019). The term "Gomantas" refers to the people of Goa and can be traced back to the 9th century. "The commonly accepted origin of the term Gomantaka is from Go+manta+ka. 'Go' means cattle, 'Gomanta' means a herd of cattle owners, and 'ka' is a taddhita affix added to the noun"⁶.

References are made that "Goparashtra is the land of cowherds, and there are numerous names given to Goa." Additionally, the book "People of India, Goa volume XXI" mentions that the name "Govarashtra " may come from "Gopa Rashtra," meaning the area of cowherds and nomadic tribes⁷.

According to Joao Antonio Jacinto Da Costa "the name Govapuri appears also in the Samhita where it is said that the very sight of Govapuri destroys any sin committed in previous life just as the sun-rise dispels the darkness"⁸. We see Goa was known differently over the time even Portuguese tried to search the meaning of the word Goa the writer Alfred Braganza in the book "The Discovery of Goa " states that Portuguese historians tried to establish the meaning and etymology of the word 'Goa'. Diogo Couto traces it to the term Goe-moat which, according to him, signifies 'refreshing land'⁹.

In the book people of India: Goa volume XXI gives an account of "John Wilson, the well known

⁶ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji:Gazetter Department,1979).

⁷ K.S Singh, *People of India Goa: volume XXI* (Bombay:PopularPrakashan,1993).

⁸ Joao Antonio Jacinto Da Costa, *A History Of Goa: from the earliest times to days of liberation from the Portuguese in December 1961* (Mapusa: Ramakant Printers,1982).

⁹ Alfred Braganza,*The Discovery ofGoa* (Panaji:BrooksPublications,1964).

¹⁰ Anant Dhume, *The Cultural History of Goa From 10000B.C.to1352A.D* (Panaji: Mapp Printers, 1985), 93.

Indologist, the word ‘kunbi’ was a corrupt form of the ploughman (*krishini*), derived from Sanskrit root *krishi*, i.e ploughing¹¹. Kunbis are one of the Goan tribes that indulge in agricultural activities. Rice, coconuts, and arecanuts are examples of agricultural products. This demonstrates that agriculture was a means of survival for the early Goans.

Author Vinayak Khedekar remarks “ Among the folk deities of Goa, the divine spirit or *denvchar* is regarded as a *jagrita Devata* ”¹².The most prominent and widely believed figure among the locals of Goa is said to be *Denvchar*, *Rakhandar*, *shimepurush*. Who is looked upon as the protector of the land and people of Goa. The other folk deities are *Shantadurga*, *Bhumika*, and *Ravalnath*.

Goa has a very glorious past and has experienced the rule of Portuguese, Muslim, and Hindu rulers. Its culture and society are diverse, and it has seen changes. Before the Portuguese arrived and ruled for a long period, Goa was ruled by several different dynasties, including the Bhojas, Satvahanas, Konkan Mauryas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Shilaharas, Kadambas, Bahamanis, Vijayanagar, and Adil Shah of Bijapur and Portuguese. Each of these dynasties kept its records, which were primarily written inscriptions. And other records that provide us a deeper understanding of our past through different pieces of evidence left over which consist of tools, Sati stones, land grants, copper plates, monuments, letters, and so on.

¹¹ K.S Singh, *People of India Goa: vol XXI* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan,1993),135.

¹² V.V Khedekar, *Goa: Land,Life and Legacy* (Panaji: Directorate of Art and Culture,2016).

Various copper plates have been discovered that contain information about land grants made by different dynasties, which played an important role in shaping the socio-cultural society. Rulers frequently gave land concessions to people. The Devraj Bhoj of Shiroda plate is the oldest known copper plate found in Goa. It is the first historical evidence that confirms the land grant given by the king to two Brahmins, Govind Swami and Indra Swami of Bharadwaj Gotra. The grant included some tolls from the village Thanniyarka Kottihakayya, along with a house site and pasture land for cows¹³.

Research Problem

In early Goa, the link between land use, societal structures, and human activities significantly influenced the region's cultural, economic, and social elements. The early settlers of Goa, adapting the diverse environments, employed various techniques, including agriculture and resource allocation, to sustain themselves. The indigenous communities of Goa developed sustainable practices deeply rooted in their profound bond with the natural world, utilizing the fertile land for survival. Whether it is used for agriculture or other coastal activities, the use of land has become a vital component of Goa's communities, influencing their way of life and forming their cultural, social, and economic paths. Therefore, it is essential to have a deep understanding of the various roles that land plays and the significance that it has for the people of Goa in order to understand its historical development. To truly get why Goa is the way it is today, it's important to know how the people there used and thought about the land in the past. This tells us a lot about their history and how their society grew and changed over time.

¹³ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji:Gazetter Department,1979).

Objectives:

The objective of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of land use in societal structures, including how it has been utilized and distributed over time. The study aims to delve into the early society of Goa, exploring how people lived, worked, and interacted with one another. It seeks to uncover details about the land use, also the study aims to investigate how different communities in Goa distribute, own and utilize land.

Review of literature:

In his book "Ethnography of Goa, Dama, and Diu," A.B. de Bragança Pereira provides a detailed account of the way of life for the locals residing in Goa. The author delves deep into the material, spiritual, and social aspects of their lives, highlighting the unique customs, beliefs, and practices that shape their daily routines and cultural identity. Pereira's ethnography offers a fascinating insight into the rich and diverse heritage of these regions, and how it continues to influence the lives of the people. The author makes an effort to present a complete picture of Goan culture, customs, and practices through this book.

Furthermore the book provides detailed information on the few protocols that Goan societies followed when planning and carrying out marriages. The author in this book gives detailed knowledge about the social life of people in Goa right from birth to the death of a human is being explained in the chapter social life of this book in this book. Chapter material life

explains the different agricultural crops cultivated in Goa like coconut, rice, etc. Chapter also contains then knowledge of food consumed by the community of Goa. By reading this book one can get a detailed knowledge of social life of Goa, different practices followed. The reader can get a good insight, right from the food they consumed, the way they lived, the occupation they followed, the religion they practiced and so on. Book ethnography helps one to understand society of Goa¹⁴.

Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar's book, "Eco-Culture Goa Paradigm," provides a detailed analysis of Goan eco-cultural life. The book delves into the beliefs and traditions that shape the lives of the people, offering an understanding of their deep-rooted connections with the environment. Khedekar also sheds light on the unique eco-cultural festivals celebrated in Goa, showcasing the region's vibrant cultural landscape. A prominent aspect of the book is its focus on the agricultural practices of the people, highlighting the relationship between culture and the land. Through thorough research and detailed analysis, author Khedekar depicts how the practices of daily living in Goa are naturally linked to its rich cultural heritage. The book tends to highlight the unbreakable bond between people and nature. Additionally the author tries to demonstrate how life and people are related to ecology while highlighting the idea of Jal, Jameen, Jungle, Jan and Janawar. Furthermore, when talking about ecology, the author points out how little local customs have to do with the environment. "One companion is the tree" married women traditionally worship the 'Vad' Banyan tree on 'Vadapunav' full moon day of Jyeshtha, the third month of Hindu calendar¹⁵. Similar to ethnography this book also discusses the locals eating habits, customs, and a few rituals. The book beautifully makes the connection between local customs and nature, which

¹⁴ A.B de Bragança Pereira, *Ethnography of Goa, Daman and Diu* (NewDelhi:Penguinbooks, 2008).

¹⁵ V.V Khedekar, *Eco-culture Goa Paradigm* (Panaji: Broadway Publishing House, 2013).

is the only difference. The book primarily discusses the significance of ecology in people's daily lives and explains how ecology affects human existence. This book provides explanations for festivals such as "Chavath. Chavath is an event for preparing specific dishes related to nature¹⁶. The book is interesting to read as it provides wide knowledge of Goa¹⁷.

Gerald Pereira's scholarly work titled "An outline of pre- Portuguese history of Goa" is a comprehensive research piece that delves into the rich history of Goa, both prior to and during Portuguese rule. The work provides an in-depth analysis of the various dynasties that ruled over Goa and the early settlers that shaped the region's history. Additionally, the work offers critical insights into the Portuguese conquest of Goa, exploring its impact on the region and its people. Furthermore this book highlights the origin of Goa emphasizing the Gaud Saraswat Brahmins, the Aryans. The author is trying to trace the early settlers of Goa. Additionally the book contains detailed information of the dynasties that ruled Goa. Kingdoms like the Konkan mauryas, Silaharas, Kadambas, Bahamanis, etc are been thoroughly discussed in this work. The book is important in studying the political history of Goa as it talks about the powers that governed Goa over the years. Overall, the work is a must-read for a wide understanding of Goa¹⁸.

Dr. Olivinho Gomes' book, "A Concise History Of Goa," is an insightful and informative work that delves into the intricate political landscape of Goa. Through its pages, readers can gain a deep understanding of the diverse political forces that have governed this region

¹⁶ V.V Khedekar, Eco-culture Goa Paradigm (Panaji: Broadway Publishing House, 2013).

¹⁷ V.V Khedekar, Eco-culture Goa Paradigm (Panaji: Broadway Publishing House, 2013).

¹⁸ Gerald Pereira, An Outline Of Pre-Portuguese History of Goa (Panjim: Diarioda Noite Press,1973).

throughout history. From the earliest rulers to the most recent, the book provides a detailed account of the various political systems that have shaped Goa's past and present. It is a must-read for anyone seeking a comprehensive understanding of Goa's complex political history¹⁹.

People of India, Goa volume XXI" edited by K.S. Singh is an invaluable resource for those seeking comprehensive insights into the diverse communities of Goa. The book offers an in-depth exploration of the Goan people, with a particular emphasis on their unique customs, traditions, and caste systems. It provides a detailed analysis of the various communities residing in Goa, offering a wealth of information that is sure to fascinate anyone interested in the rich cultural heritage of this vibrant region. Additionally this book explains different communities of Goa such as Dhangar, Gurav, Gosavi, maratha, mahar, kunta, velips, kumbhar etc. The book provides insight about regional communities of Goa highlighting the nature of their living. The food they consume, the occupation the communities practice, rituals they follow are discussed. The book also presents images of the regional people belonging to certain caste additionally at the end of this book one can find the article name "etymology of the village and places names of Goa by P.P Shirodkar which gives a valuable information of how villages names of Goa were termed, such as villages names like Advalpal, Casarpal etc. 'Pal meaning a hamlet²⁰. Overall the book deals with the communities residing in Goa²¹.

Antonio Jacinto de Costa authored a comprehensive book titled "History of Goa from the Earliest Times to the Day of Its Liberation from the Portuguese, in December 1961". This

¹⁹ Olvinho Gomes, A Concise history of Goa (Panaji: Director of Official Language,2010).

²⁰ K.S Singh, People of India volume XXI (Bombay:PopularPrakashan,1993).

book provides an in-depth coverage of Goa's history, starting from the pre-Portuguese period, and delving into various eras such as the Muslim era, the Hindu era, and the dynasties that once ruled over Goa. With a special emphasis on the Portuguese era, the book offers a detailed account of the Portuguese colonial rule in Goa and the events that led to its liberation²².

The first part of the "Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman, and Diu", which has been expertly edited by V.T. Gune, is an extensive source of information about Goa. It provides a comprehensive overview of this beautiful region, covering a wide range of topics such as the characteristics of its people, industries, history, culture, communication, commerce, and much more. Whether you're a scholar, this text is an invaluable resource for understanding all the aspects of Goa. It provides a good knowledge to the scholars about the region²³.

Dr. V.R. Mitragotri's book titled 'Socio Cultural History of Goa: from the Bhojas to Vijaynagara' delves deep into the fascinating work of Goa's socio cultural environment during the period spanning from the Bhojas to Vijaynagara. The book explores various aspects of Goa's sociocultural history, with special emphasis on the evolution of architecture, society, and religion during this period. The author has displayed together a narrative that brings to life the rich tapestry of Goa's cultural heritage and its influence on the region's social and political landscape. The book provides insights into the social life of locals tracing their way of living the chapter I of the book includes the information on the society

²² Joao Antonio Jacinto Da Costa, A History Of Goa: from the earliest times to days of liberation from the Portuguese in December 1961 (Mapusa: Ramakant Printers,1982).

²³ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji:Gazetter Department,1979).

showcasing the different communities of Goa in this chapter author writes about indigenous people and their communities further the next chapter deals with the position of women in early Goan society, highlighting aspects like position of Royal women, the different societal system that existed then regarding the marriage and dowry practices. The writer also covers in this chapter the Devadasi system and Sati practices, the book further discusses about the dress, food and tradition followed by the indigenous it also sheds lights on the religion followed by the people of Goan showcasing Hinduism as the most followed religion among the Goans it also contains information on folk deities of Goa the book plays a vital role in understanding the Goan culture and living methods²⁴.

"The Discovery of Goa," written by Alfred Braganza, provides a thorough outline of Goa's religious nature. The book explores the language, customs, and beliefs of the people living in this region, exploring their distinct cultural blend. Braganza sheds light on the customs and religious rituals practiced in Goa. The book also explores a variety of Goan feasts, which helps the reader get a deeper understanding of the rich cultural heritage of the area.

The chapter 1 of this book give detailed information of Goa. Which includes topography, geographical locations, occupations, religion and administration. The author further discussed the ancient names of "Goa". It also deals into the political history of Goa giving reader insights into different dynasties that governed Goa. This book too talks about the social life of Goas festivals and feasts they celebrated²⁵.

“Gaunkari, The Old Village Associations” is a book authored by Rui Pereira that provides

²⁴ V.R Mitragotri, Socio Cultural History of Goa: from the Bhojas to Vijaynagara. (Panaji :Institute Menezes Braganza, 1999).

²⁵ Alfred Braganza, The Discovery of Goa (Panaji: Brooks Publications, 1964).

valuable insights into the traditional administrative system of villages. The book elaborates on the crucial role played by the Gaunkars, who were the village headmen responsible for overseeing the governance of the village. Through this book, readers can gain a better understanding of the intricate workings of the old village administrative system and the pivotal role played by Gaunkars in leading it. The old village association is highlighted through this book the writing shows the importance of old village association which were headed by gaunkars "the gaunkars were all powerful and they alone shouldered the responsibilities"²⁶. This shows the gaunkars were the main figure of this association this system was prevailing in most of the villages of Goa as it maintain the communities. The further chapter IV of the book highlights the different communities gaunkars came from, the member of this association includes kulcharis who were basically clerks of the communities the kulacharis were the servants of the communities their functions were bonderkars, chulkars, sotrekars. The gaunkaris the old village association headed by the gaunkars who were the locals of the Goa, in this book the writer gives insights into the nature the background the gaunkars came from. Highlights the different aspects of village association the author give detailed insights about their functions, responsibilities, etc²⁷.

Author Anant Dhume's book, titled "The Cultural History of Goa from 10000 B.C. to 1352 A.D.", is a treasure trove of information about the rich and ancient history and culture of Goa. The book contains detailed accounts of the establishment of various kingdoms, and their significant contributions to the evolution of Goas culture. The author's writings offer a fascinating insight into the customs, traditions, and way of life of the people of Goa, as well as the influences that helped shape their cultural identity over the centuries. Overall,

²⁶ Rui Gomes Pereira, Goa; Gaunkari The Old Village associations (Panaji: Printwel I Press, 1981).

²⁷ Rui Gomes Pereira, Goa; Gaunkari The Old Village associations (Panaji: Printwel I Press, 1981).

this book is a must-read for anyone interested in the history and culture of this small state of India²⁸.

Surya Gaude's book "Silent Goa" provides a detailed insight into the caste system and diverse communities of Goa, shedding light on their way of life and cultural practices. Its emphasis on the different communities of Goa. The book offers a comprehensive study of the social hierarchy, customs, traditions and beliefs of these communities, providing readers with a deeper understanding of Goa's rich cultural heritage²⁹.

“The book "The Legends of Goa" by Mario Cabral” explores the rich variety of Goa’s folklore. Many legends are presented in a beautiful way in the book, one of which is the story of Parshurama, which demonstrates the formation of Goa's land. It also includes the well-known Navadurga of Madkai legend, which gives the collection more depth. For those who want to know more about Goa's mythological and cultural past, this book is enjoyable to read as the tales are presented by the author, which brings these legends to life. "The Legends of Goa" is proof of the region's long-lasting traditions and tales. Also the book consist of more tales and through this book one shall come across many tales of Goa³⁰.

“Goa: Land and Legacy: A Field Study of Goa” by Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, provides an in-depth study of Goa's rich history. It explores a number of topics, including agriculture, daily life, and customs and beliefs of the people. The book provides a thorough picture of Goan customs and practices, clearly gathering the cultural importance of the Goa’s

²⁸ Anant Dhume, The Cultural History of Goa From 10000B.C.to1352A.D (Panaji: Mapp Printers, 1985).

²⁹ Surya Gaude, Silent Goa (Ponda: Human Resource Development Trust,1980).

³⁰ Mario Cabral e Sa, Legends of Goa (Mumbai: India Book House Limited, 1998).

community. For those who are interested in learning about the cultural trends and past history of the region, Khedekar's well-written text offers useful details about the workings and dynamics of Goan society. The account contains profitable information about the region and its people, which will help one study about Goan people and society. Speaking about the family names in the chapter village structure the book provides direct insight to the reader about the Goans. The book too tells about the caste system and different communities living in Goa the book also mention about the folk activities of Goa and certain spirits believed by Goans. It also contains information of community activities. The book also explains about the socio-cultural institutions like that of 'Mand', significance of it in people's lives. The book plays the important role in understanding the history of Goa's culture and society³¹.

"Goan Society in transition: A study in social change" a book, provides an extensive look of Goan society both before and after Portuguese influence. It explores the social, religious, political, economic systems of pre-Portuguese Goa. The traditional values that bound Goan society together are also examined in the study. Additionally the book highlights the transition that emerged in Goan society during Portuguese rule. The author has attempted to study the social change that has occurred in Goan society after the coming of Portuguese power. The author nicely presents the change that emerged in Goan society due to the impact of the political, economic and social system imposed by foreign powers. The author also discusses the scenario of Goan society before Portuguese. All together the book provides a thorough understanding of Goa's social changes that occurred after the coming of Portuguese³².

³¹ V.V Khedekar, Goa: Land, Life and Legacy (Panaji: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2016)

³² B.G. D'souza, Goan society in transition (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1975).

"Medieval Goa: A Socioeconomic History" by Teotonio D'Souza provides a comprehensive account of life in medieval Goa. The book explores various facets of Goan society, including the agricultural techniques and practices adopted by its people. D'Souza delves into the rural life, shedding light on both the daily experiences of villagers and the corporate life within communities. Furthermore, the book offers valuable insights into the urban economy of Goa and the organization of its municipalities. The rural economy and cooperative lifestyle of the Goan people are the main topics of this book. While the first section of the book focuses on the corporate world and the rural economy, the author also discusses the social lives of the people in that section. The focus of the book's second section is on the urban economy and municipal organizations, with particular attention paid to urban topography, municipal structures, and people's economic lives in cities. The author provides accounts of rural life, analyzing people's ways of living. He also makes reference to the Gaunkari, the Goan village association. The social life of Goa is also included in this book. Making it an important book for understanding the region's history and development authors gives important knowledge³³.

Research Design and methodology

The research methodology includes the documentation of sources. I have collect historical information from a variety of sources, such as old documents, inscriptions, and findings. Literally works conducted by prominent scholars have been utilized for the study that are present in libraries. The remaining cultural elements and artefacts are covered during museum visits. Field visits to important historical sites relevant to this research are one of

³³ Teotonio De Souza, Medieval Goa: A socio-economic History (New Delhi: Concept publishing company, 1979).

the important components of my studies.

A comprehensive understanding of how the life of early people of Goa revolved around the 'Land' and this reflected through the cultural beliefs and societal functions have been produced through an analysis of primary and secondary sources. The textual analysis of the literary sources has been carried out that comprise of books, articles. So far the research has consulted Krishnadas Shama Goa State Central Library, Goa University Library, Goa Archives, Goa state museum, District Library, Bicholim. Through this study, I have made an attempt to give a better understanding of my topic. This study will help me add on to my knowledge in border ways. This will help me understand the people of Goa and society closely.

Scheme of Chapters

Chapter 1 - Introduction provides a comprehensive overview of the study, shedding light on the introductory knowledge about the research subject and highlighting the location of Goa.

Chapter 2- emphasizes the people of Goa, particularly the Gauda, Kunbi, and Mith Gauda communities, their culture, traditions, and way of life.

Chapter 3 - delves into the significance of land to human life, exploring how land impacts our daily living, economic activities, and social structures.

Chapter 4 - Gaunkari in Goa, traces the origins of gaunkari and highlights the functions of the gaunkars in Goa's society.

Chapter 5 - Case study of Salt Pans of Batim Village - focuses on the study of salt pans of Batim Village, examining the processes involved, the benefits, and the challenges faced.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion - provides a summary of the key findings of the study, highlights the implications of the research, and offers recommendations for future research..

Scope and Relevance

The study aims to highlight the link between land and the creation of society, focusing on how the land of Goa led to the development of communal living. The research explores the dynamics of collective ownership, the processes involved in making decisions, and the peace and harmony that occurs when people live on land. This covers changes to the way land is used and the creation of settlements. It contains information on how land was utilized for human survival over time. Through analysis, the research aims to highlight land utilized by few communities in Goa. The study also contains a brief background of few societies in Goa.

Additionally, the study broadens its scope to include the interaction between people and land. The research comprises a detailed analysis of the ways in which the land was utilized for agricultural activities. Showcasing how land impacted the communities and their way of life. The main goal is to identify the societal impacts that resulted from the division of land by closely examining the interrelationship of the land and the people who live there.

This research proposal, in all aspects, describes analysis of the relationship between land and society and also highlights the land use by the people in adopted times.

The study closely looks at the early Goan settlers, shedding light on their distinctive strategies of life, habits, and traditions. It attempts to capture the root of how these early inhabitants lived, interacted, and shaped the socio-cultural landscape of Goa by going deeply into the history of Goa's early periods.

The study looks closely at the indigenous people of Goa and their old ways of life. It seeks to understand their unique way of living. In simple words, the study aims to tell the story of Goa's original people and their rich heritage in the bigger picture of India's diverse culture.

By exploring collective living, hierarchy, decision-making processes, land formation changes, and the relationship between land and people, the research aims to provide important new perspectives on the historical socio-cultural dynamics influenced by land.

CHAPTER II

PEOPLE OF GOA

In this chapter of dissertation we shall understand about the tribes of Goa, an attempt has been made to understand the concept of tribe and different tribal communities residing in Goa. Which further also highlights their way of living. We shall further understand the Mith Gaude community of Goa. Through this study an attempt will be made to understand the communities residing in Goa who are indulged in usage of land for their survival.

2.1 Tribe

A tribe is a group of people who reside in small communities, usually in jungle areas. This community practiced land based activities or animal bearing for their survival. They are also termed as indigenous people who practiced land activities and are dear to Land, these communities have played a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity contributing to unique customs, and practices.

The word "tribe" originally came from ancient Rome, where it referred to administrative divisions and voting groups. Later on, it was used in the Bible to describe the early Israelite communities. Over time, it started being used in Middle English to talk about different groups of people. By the 16th century, it was used more widely to describe communities that shared things like ancestry or race.

The “Orthodox definition of tribes revealed in the dictionary of anthropology which states; tribe is a group, usually with definite area, dialects, cultural homogeneity, and unifying Social

organization it may include several sub groups, such as sibs or villages it may and may have common ancestors as well as providing duties”¹.

Author Virginius Xaxa gives a definition of tribes states “tribes are primarily seen as a stage and type of society. They represent a society that lacks positive traits of modern society and thus constitutes a simple illiterate and backward society”².

Prof. S.C Sinha has tried to define the category of the tribe as essentially pre-literate groups living in relative isolation in hills and forests or in the plains skirting the forests who are apparently outside the thresholds of Brahmanical hierarchical Civilization³.

Anthropologists call a tribe a society that runs its own politics, lives off the land and has its own territory “the Anthropological survey of India under the people of India project identifies 461 tribal communities in India”.

Over the years different scholars have given different views in terms of definition of tribe. We understand through reading that a tribe or indigenous is a group of people who reside in forests, who isolate themselves from the urban world and use the natural world for their survival. They are looked upon as a group that holds separate cultural identity practicing culture within themselves related to the natural world and away from modern cities.

¹ Ajeet Kumar, “Tribes in India,” (Department of Social work Indira Gandhi National University regional campus manipur).

² Virginius Xaxa, “Tribes as Indigenous people of India”, *Economic and political weekly* (1999),18-24.

³ Ajeet Kumar, “Tribes in India” (Department of Social work Indira Gandhi National University regional campus manipur).

2.2 Indigenous people

Goa's indigenous population are deeply rooted in tradition and have a rich history dating back to their ancient times. These groups are often custodian of unique cultural heritages, maintaining deep connections to their ancestral lands and traditional ways of life. While understanding the indigenous people of Goa we come across Gauda, Kunbi and Velip as important ethnic groups of Goa found in the all talukas of Goa. Gauda and Kunbi are aboriginal people residing in the coastal Indian state of Goa. The tribes like Gauda, Kunbi, and Velip were the first people to settle in Goa, they are known as Mull Goenkar, meaning indigenous people or the first settlers of Goa. "In the year 2003, three communities, namely Gauda, Kunbi and Velip, were added to the existing list of Scheduled Tribes of Goa, increasing the population of Scheduled tribes considerably, with the total tally of Scheduled Tribe communities in Goa reaching 8 per cent.

2.3 Gauda

The Gauda are the most populated among the tribes in Goa. Some scholars are of the opinion that the Gauda has its origin in Kannada word Gavunda meaning original Gauncar. V.T Gune mentions that "they are called Gaudas as it was considered that they have come from Gauda Desh"⁴. "The Gawdas belong to the Munda section of the Proto-Australoid race and they are supposed to have migrated from South East Asia into Assam, Orissa, Bengal, Bihar, Kerala, Malabar and then to Goa also mentioned in Gazetteer of Goa Daman And Diu"⁵.

⁴ V.T. Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji: Gazetteer Department, 1979), 233.

⁵ V.T. Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji: Gazetteer Department, 1979).

“Some scholars have linked this community to the Gauda community of West Bengal”⁶. In Goa, the Gauda community is divided into three main groups: Christian Gaudas, Hindu Gaudas, and Nava Hindu Gaudas. Hindu Gaudas, who claim to be servants of the mythical hero Parshuram, were once considered untouchables and worked as landless laborers. One can find this community in parts of Tiswadi, Ponda, Canacona, Bicholim and Quepem. The Nava Hindu Gaudas say they were originally Goud Gaudas who were baptized by the Portuguese in the 16th century but later reconverted to Hinduism in 1928. Catholic Gauda are also known as Christian Gauda found in Salcete and Bardez taluka of Goa. Scholars have linked the Gauda community to Bengal.

2.4 Kunbi

There are different meanings highlighted in different works, author Dhume says “the word kunbis is derived from the word kul”⁷. Sir Mitragotri in his book states the word “kunbi originated from Kutumbin that is one who is possessing a family or a house”⁸. In the book People of India it is written that “according to John Wilson, the well-known Indologist, the word 'Kunbi was a corrupt form of the ploughman (krishini), derived from the Sanskrit root Krishi, i.e. ploughing”⁹

According to the Anthropological Survey of India, the term Kunbi is derived from kun and bi meaning 'people' and 'seeds'. Also author Correia in her book states that “the Portuguese called

⁶ Luis de assis Correia, *Goa through the mist of history from 10000 BC-AD 1958 select compilation on goa's genesis* (Panaji: Maureen publisher, 2006).

⁷ Anant Dhume, *The Cultural History of Goa From 10000 B.C. to 1352 A.D* (Panaji: Mapp Printers, 1985), 55.

⁸ V.R Mitragotri, *Socio Cultural History of Goa: from the Bhojas to the Vijaynagara* (Panaji: Institute Menezes Braganza, 1999), 59.

⁹ K.S Singh, *People of India Goa: vol XXI* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1993).

certain ethnic groups with lower professional status "Curumbis," which came from the Konkani word "Kunbi," a variation of "Kulambi" and "Kulvadi." These words originated from "Kul," which means "a specific area of land" in Kannada and "an area being cultivated with a pair of bullocks" in Sanskrit¹⁰. We understand that the Kunbi community resides predominantly in the hilly terrains of Goa and similarly engages in agricultural purposes for their food. For a long time it was misunderstood that the Gauda and Kunbi belonged to the same Dravidian stock as they followed similar occupational therapy.

In "An Ethnological Study of Goan Society," S.S. Desai talks about the Kunbi communities who came from Maharashtra and made their home on the slopes. These communities are mainly farmers, growing crops for a living. According to V. R. Mitragotri, "Kunbi is considered to be a sub-caste of the Marathas, and they are primarily engaged in farming"¹¹. Whereas historian Anant Ramakrishna Dhume, says that the "Kunbi caste are descendants of the Mundari"¹²13.

This community is divided into two major groups: Velip and Ganokar. The Velip attends priestly, religious affairs, whereas the Gaonkars are considered as clever, wiser persons.

2.5 Beliefs

The main deities worshiped by the Hindu Gaudas are "Bali, and Bhima, one of the Pandavas. Many people in the Canacona taluka worship Mallikarjuna. The family deities of

¹⁰ Luis de assis Correia, *Goa through the mist of history from 10000 BC-AD 1958 select compilation on goa's genesis* (Panaji: Maureen publisher,2006).

¹¹ V.R Mitragotri, *Socio Cultural History of Goa: from the Bhojas to the Vijaynagara* (Panaji: Institute Menezes Braganza, 1999),59.

¹² Anant Dhume, *The Cultural History of Goa From 10000 B.C. to 1352 A.D* (Panaji: Mapp Printers, 1985),55.

Goud Gaudas of Chimbél are Mahalsa, Kamakshi, Betal, Shirvaikar, Folkar, Shantadurga, Mallikarjuna, Mahadev, Boma, Kamaleshwari, Nagueshi and Lohanai, and the family deities of Nava Hindu Gaudas are Ravalnath, Mallikarjuna, Betal, Mahadev, Kamakshi, Nava Durga, Mahalaxmi, Chamundi and Shantadurga”¹³. “There is a special temple for Gaudas in their own hamlet of Askenware in Madkai village wherein idol of Mallikarjun is installed”¹⁴.

The important festival practised by this group is in the month of August/September is called as Gauda Panchami. Gaud Panchmi is a special festival celebrated by the Gaudas community. It happens on the fifth day after the full moon in August or September. During this festival, they harvest the first paddy and offer it to Mallikarjun, their temple god. They also make a sweet dish called payasa using the new rice, sugar, and milk. It's similar to the nabhhanna festival in West Bengal.

Besides Gaud Panchmi, Gaudas also celebrate Holi, Diwali, and Ganesh Chaturthi. One significant event for them is the Nava-Durga Jatra, held in October or November, where people from all communities gather at the village temple of Nava-Durga. It's the biggest fair for the Gaudas. Kunbis are Hindus and worship various Hindu deities as their village gods, including Vetál, Tulsi, Naga, Shantadurga, Khalnath, and more. They celebrate Hindu festivals like Raksha Bandhan, Ganesh Chaturthi, and Ramnavami, but they consider Shimga or shigmo or Holi as their most important yearly festival. Additionally, they have a local festival called Gudulachi Parab that they also observe.

2.6 Language and Food habits

¹³ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji:Gazetter Department,1979).

¹⁴ K.S Singh, *People of India Goa: vol XXI* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1993),104.

The Gauda, Kunbi people mainly speak Konkani and enjoy eating non-vegetarian food, especially rice and fish. Catholic Gaudas are the only ones who eat beef and pork. They're really good at farming and grow lots of different crops, which helps them make a living and supports the local community too. The coconut is an important ingredient in their kitchen and has been used in most of the dishes made by them. The ambil is the most important food consumed by this community. For mid-morning, they eat Pez (canjee) with dry fish or raw mango. In the book people of India states that “ they first brought with them crops, viz., rice, coconut, arecanut, plantains, black pepper etc. into this region.

Also prof Prajal sakhardande in an article from the 2000 says that these communities brought along with them rice, coconuts, areca nut, plantains, black pepper, nachni, etc., into Goa. They have a strong connection to the land and use traditional and modern farming methods to grow their crops. Even though they live near the coast, they also do farming, showing how skilled they are. Their culture is shown not just through their farming tools, but also in their special dances and traditional clothes, which are important parts of who they are. Despite changes over time, the Kunbi-Gawda community still holds onto their traditions and values their way of life¹⁵.

2.7 Dressing pattern

Men belonging to these communities usually wear red checked langoti, a square cloth passed between the legs and tucked in at the waist, sometimes letting the front part hang loose. They wear a mundase, a type of turban, and a coarse woolen blanket over their shoulders, and hold a small sickle and a small cotton bag called a chenchhi, which contains betel nuts, leaves,

¹⁵ V.VKhedekar,Goa:Land,Life and Legacy (Panaji :Directorate of Art and Culture,2016).

lime, and tobacco. Women wear eight-yard saris. They drape the sari in a specific way, tucking the back pleats into the waist and passing the ornamental end of the sari from the back of the waist under the right arm, across the chest, and over the left shoulder. The females of this community were not known to choli (bodice) but later at the times of Portuguese they were stopped from entering market areas. Their hair is fully oiled and tightly tied behind like a bun. Married women commonly wear necklaces made of 40 to 50 colourful glass beads. Except for the widows the rest all teenagers and Women deck their heads with plenty of flowers, precisely the red one¹⁶.

2.8 Livelihood

Their primary economic activity is horticulture, with farming being the backbone of their livelihood. Traditionally, they worked as tenants for large landowners, cultivating crops like paddy and sharing a portion of the yield. Despite facing challenges like lack of access to modern farming equipment and fluctuating market prices, they continue to persevere and sustain themselves through agriculture. In the past, the Gawada community had a simple economy based on gathering fruits, vegetables, roots, and hunting animals in the forest. This was a group effort, and the food collected was shared among all members following the principle of communism. Later on, they learned how to grow crops on mountainsides, “including Nachani, Udid, chili, packlo, and vegetables like cucumber, bhendi, kokondudhi, dudhi, gosali, karati, and chibuds. They planted these crops during the rainy season by clearing shrubs on the mountain slopes through slash and burn techniques”¹⁷. The Gawda/Kunbi community relies mainly on rainwater for farming, allowing them to have one crop per year, usually paddy. Apart from farming their

¹⁶ V.T.Gune, Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu (Panaji: Gazetteer Department, 1979).

¹⁷ Surya Gaude, *Silent Goa* (Ponda: Human Resource Development Trust, 1980).

own land, they also work on landowners' coconut, mango, and cashew plantations, receiving a portion of the harvest as payment.

They use simple farming techniques, like using cattle dung as fertilizer, ash to prevent bacteria, and salt to repel pests. Plowing is typically done with handmade plows pulled by bullocks. If they can't afford bullocks, they use pickaxes to till the land.

The Gawda/Kunbi community is known for their agricultural expertise, passed down through generations. They cultivate crops like rice, coconuts, areca nuts, and black pepper, which they brought with them from Maharashtra when they settled in Goa. Their farming practices are vital for the local economy and contribute to the region's food security.

Before settling in the plains, the Gawda/Kunbi people practiced shifting cultivation. This form of cultivation was called the shifting cultivation, locally called as kumeri or koliyo cultivation. A section of a messy mountainside is cleared of its vegetation. The firewood is then chopped and left to dry on the spot before being ignited. The ash that has been gathered in this way is applied evenly throughout the patch prior to the arrival of rain, serving as manure for the kumeri field.

An ancient tool known as a guduli, an iron stick with a point at one end and a rounded end on the other, is used to dip or plant seeds in the soil when the ground gets soft. Crops that are raised are shielded from the destructive effects of untamed wildlife. The crop is thus cultivated, every two or three years, the cultivation is moved to a new plot, and once a cycle is finished, the kumeri or koliyo returns to the original plot. As a result, the settlement serves as the permanent center around which the kumeri cultivation is moved in a revolving circle. With the help of this

technique, called kumeri or koliyo cultivation, they were able to grow crops in a sustainable manner while protecting the environment¹⁸.

2.9 Habitats

The Kunbis, a marginalized community in Goa, lead a simple yet interconnected life deeply rooted in agriculture and traditional customs. Living in modest mud huts with roofs of coconut palm leaves or straw, they form close-knit hamlets led by respected elders known as Budavants and their wives, the Budavantins. These leaders play a vital role in preserving cultural traditions and resolving social issues within the community. Interpersonal relationships among Kunbis are guided by a mix of respect, love, and obligation, varying based on the degree of kinship. Living in clustered kin groups, Kunbis maintain strong ties with relatives and affines, supporting each other through labor, material goods, financial assistance, and moral encouragement.

In matters of inheritance, Kunbi society follows a patrilineal tradition where only sons inherit property, while daughters receive gifts upon marriage. Despite potential implications for gender equality, this practice reflects entrenched cultural norms and is upheld without question¹⁹.

Despite their socioeconomic challenges, the Kunbis exhibit a rich tapestry of social interactions and cultural practices that sustain their way of life. Through the guidance of revered elders, the bonds of kinship, and a shared commitment to tradition, While their material circumstances may be modest, their wealth lies in the richness of their social fabric and the strength of their community ties.

¹⁸ Surya Gaude, *Silent Goa* (Ponda: Human Resource Development Trust,1980).

¹⁹ Surya Gaude, *Silent Goa* (Ponda: Human Resource Development Trust,1980).

The Hindu Gaudé community relies heavily on land as its main economic asset. Instead of being owned by individual members, the land belongs to the entire clan, known as the kul. This means that the produce from the land is shared among all the kul members. In areas where there isn't enough land to support everyone's needs, some kul members have to find work on other people's land. Although the Gaudé community relies primarily on agriculture for its livelihood, the unequal distribution of land and limited availability of resources mean that some members must seek employment elsewhere to survive.

Despite these challenges, the community's collective ownership of land fosters a sense of solidarity and cooperation among its members as they work together to make a living²⁰.

2.10 Cultural trend

Goa is renowned for its many folk festivals and performances, and it has a distinct, vibrant cultural past. In Goa's lengthy history, numerous castes, sub-castes, and tribes have blended together to form its social content, which has resulted in a diverse range of folk arts that represent the state's customs, beliefs, traditions, and culture. These two communities perform a peculiar folk theater and dance known as jagor and dhalo respectively²¹. Zagor is a traditional folk drama performed in many Goan villages, serving as a form of entertainment and a means of seeking protection from evil. It begins with prayers at a sacred spot called mand, where folk artists and villagers seek blessings from deities for a successful performance. A torch-light procession called sauri then proceeds to the stage.

²⁰ K.S Singh, *People of India Goa: vol XXI* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1993).

²¹ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji: Gazetteer Department, 1979).

The performance involves recitation of devotional songs and the invocation of various gods and goddesses by well-dressed folk artists. They take the stage to the tunes of folk music and continue for around 10 hours. Unlike traditional plays, Zagor doesn't follow a fixed story but instead portrays day-to-day experiences and occurrences in an engaging manner. Legend has it that folk dramas like Zagor were a primary source of entertainment for villagers in the past, before modern forms of entertainment existed. It is considered a precursor to modern theater in Goa, focusing on aspects of traditional village life²².

Dhalo is a popular ritual folk dance form Goa, India. The dance is performed by women and serves as a prayer of protection for their households. The songs to which the dance is performed are usually sung in Konkani or Marathi language. The themes of such songs are commonly religious or social in nature. It is conducted over a period of 1 week in the month of Pousha at the onset of winter. Up to 24 people participate in this dance-song form, in which the women divide into two parallel rows of 12 people each. They face each other and form a closely knit unit by tying their arms around their waists. They then sway, bend, move forward and backward, and sing in unison as they perform songs that were composed locally from memory and then revised extempore, adding or changing words and lines as needed to fit the situation.

The dance moves are very basic; they step forward five times, step back, and then step forward five times again in a pattern that resembles a wave. Singing a line from a song is performed in time with the movements. Taking up the second line, the other group proceeds in

²² V.V Khedekar, *Goa: Land, Life and Legacy* (Panaji :Directorate of Art and Culture,2016).

the same way. The performances end in a circular movement that maintains the original arrangement of the women dancers' arms linked in rows²³.

2.11 Social life

The Mand, an ancient institution in Goa, holds a significant place in the region's cultural heritage and identity. Dating back to antiquity, it served as a vital socio-economic and cultural center in Goan folk life. More than just an economic institution, the Mand played a crucial role in shaping the cultural landscape of Goa, reflecting the influence of culture on daily life. It is an important meeting place where the decision and important discussion is carried out. The Mand was not only a marketplace but also a hub for cultural exchange, creativity, and community interaction. It provided a platform for rural artists and craftsmen to showcase their talents and engage in creative endeavors. Mand dates back to 5000 years, there were two kinds of Mand one was Jagor and one was for Shigmo. At the jagor and the rituals were followed and at shigmo and the shigmo festival was carried out celebrating victory²⁴.

On various levels, the Mand influenced and shaped the existence of the Goan community. Religiously, it served as a place for rituals, ceremonies, and religious gatherings, strengthening the spiritual fabric of the society. Culturally, it fostered a sense of identity and belonging, with traditional music, dance, and theater performances being integral to its activities. Economically, the Mand was the lifeline of many communities, providing a platform for trade and commerce. Farmers, artisans, and traders would gather to exchange goods, barter, and sell their products,

²³ V.V Khedekar, *Goa: Land, Life and Legacy* (Panaji :Directorate of Art and Culture,2016).

²⁴ Surya Gaude, *Silent Goa* (Ponda: Human Resource Development Trust,1980).

contributing to the local economy. Socially, the Mand served as a meeting point for people from different backgrounds, fostering social cohesion and unity among Goan communities²⁵.

2.12 The Mithgauda

This community is a subgroup of the Gauda or Gavada community. They are known as Mith Gavada in Maharashtra and as Mithgaude or Mith Gavdas in Goa. The community is primarily engaged in the manufacturing of salt, hence the name "Mith" which means salt²⁶. Despite their association with a particular occupation, the Mithgaudas claim to be higher than the Gaudas in social hierarchy belongs to the Kshatriya Varna²⁷.

The Mith Gavdas primarily resided in the Pernem block of North Goa district, where they practiced their trade of salt production. Unlike the Gaudas/Velips, who were considered the original settlers in the region, the Mith Gavdas traced their identity and livelihood to their role as salt-makers.

What sets the Mith Gavdas apart is their distinction from the original Gaudas and their subsequent impact on the social landscape of Goa. Despite not sharing the same racial stock as the Gaudas/Velips, the Mith Gavdas played a significant role in the history and development of the region. According to them, Gauda means a villager and therefore, the village people, who are salt-makers by tradition are called Mithgauda²⁸.

²⁵ V.VKhedekar, *Goa: Land, Life and Legacy* (Panaji: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2016).

²⁶ K.S Singh, *People of India Goa: vol XXI* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1993), 162.

²⁷ K.S Singh, *People of India Goa: vol XXI* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1993), 163.

²⁸ K.S Singh, *People of India Goa: vol XXI* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1993), 163.

The Mithgaudas are considered to be the most skilled salt makers among all the communities in the region. They have inherited the art of making salt from their ancestors who were believed to have been gifted by the gods with the knowledge of salt-making. Their unique skill set has been passed down from generation to generation, and they have continued to refine and improve it over the years.

The salt-making process involves the collection of saltwater from the sea, which is then heated in large pans until the water evaporates, leaving behind salt crystals. The Mithgaudas are experts in this process, and their salt is known for its high quality and purity. They take great pride in their work and are committed to preserving their tradition and passing it on to future generations.

Even though historians and scholars have different opinions about where the Gawda/Kunbi people originally came from, most of them agree on one thing: these folks were probably the first people to live in Goa. While we don't have exact records of how they got there or when it happened, it's widely believed that they are the original inhabitants of the region. "The communities like Kulwadi, Kulmi, and Gawda are in close contact with the earth .

The Gavda, Kunbi and Mith gaude people are communities primarily found in the coastal regions of Goa, India. Both groups have rich cultural traditions that are deeply intertwined with their agricultural lifestyle and close connection to the land and sea. The Gavda Kunbi are known

for their expertise in farming, particularly rice cultivation, while the Mith Gaude people have a strong heritage of Salt extraction .

Despite facing challenges such as environmental degradation, these communities have persevered, maintaining their distinct identities and preserving their cultural practices.

CHAPTER III

SIGNIFICANCE OF LAND

“Land is not merely soil, it is a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants and animals.” Aldo Leopold's quote clearly emphasizes the fundamental role of land, not just as soil but as a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals. It's crucial to understand that land is not just a physical entity but a vital force that impacts all living beings. It is important to acknowledge the significant historical value of land, particularly in regions like Goa.

3.1 Land and people

In ancient times, Goa was indeed inhabited by indigenous communities whose lives were intricately rooted with the land. Historical evidence strongly suggests that the Gauda were the original settlers of Goa, and they established a settled lifestyle through agriculture. “Researcher identifies the ancestor of Gauda community of Goa as creator of the khazan”¹. The shift to agriculture marked a significant turning point in human history, giving rise to permanent societies that relied on land for their livelihoods².

There is no denying that the indigenous communities who inhabited Goa in ancient times were deeply connected to the land. The gauda were, in fact, the original settlers of Goa, who

¹ Nandkumar M. Kamat, “History of Khazan land management in Goa: ecological, economic and political perspective” (A paper presented at Goa University, Department of History, Seminar on History of agriculture in Goa, March 12, 13, 2004).

² Subrai Nadkarni, *The Khazans of Goa* (Panjim: Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2022).

followed the pastoral community in Goa and established a settled lifestyle through agriculture, leading to gaunkari system in Goa, an old village association that governed the village lands who were basically agriculturist. They relied heavily on its fertile soil for agriculture, its forests for resources, and its rivers for sustenance³. “Age-Old self governing Gaunkar looked after the system of bunds and sluice gates and managed the khazan land”⁴.

The Gaunkars, who were the village heads, played a significant role in managing agricultural resources and ensuring that the surplus of the village was allocated to temple maintenance. The tradition of naming newly reclaimed Khazan lands after the reclaimers highlighted the communal effort involved in agricultural development.

Overall, agriculture in ancient Goa was characterized by communal effort, technological innovation, and the integration of cultural and religious practices into agricultural practices.

The land provided not only physical nourishment but also served as a spiritual anchor, shaping the cultural practices and beliefs of its inhabitants.

3.2 *Bhumipurush*

The concept of *Bhumipurush* is deeply rooted in the rich tapestry of Goan culture, symbolizing the spiritual connection and reverence that people hold towards the land they inhabit. The word ‘*Bhumipurush*’ is derived from two words that is ‘*bhumi*’ and ‘*purush*’ meaning land and man respectively. He is known to be God of Land. This ancient tradition

³ Sangeeta Sonak, *Environment and Development: Goa at Crossroads* (Panaji: Broadway Publishing House, 2014).

⁴ Subrai Nadkarni, *The Khazans of Goa* (Panjim: Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2022).

embodies the essence of the land, representing its fertility, protection, and nurturing spirit. It is an undeniable fact that throughout human history, land has played a fundamental role in the development of flourishing societies. From prehistoric times to the present day, the importance of land is evident in political, cultural, and economic spheres.

3.3 Land Grants in the Construction of Agrarian Society

Goa has been ruled by several dynasties in the past, and each of them have left behind their unique imprints. The region is filled with evidence that shows the grants made by various kings to improve agricultural activities. These grants are proof that the kings were actively involved in uplifting agriculture in the region.

The first Khazan Land grant was given by Prithivimallavarman from Prithiviparavato. Location is believed to be in the village Parvat near Chandor. The grant records a donation of a field named Kapoti Khajjana, located in the village Malar, included in Kupalakatadesha. This field was given to Brahmin Damarya of the Bhardwaja Gotra, who is also known as Agniveshya. The grant was written by Buddhadasa of the Kamboja Gotra and was executed by Nidhivard⁵.

The second Khazan land grant that is known is the Bandora (Bandiwade) plates from Goa. These plates were issued by Mauryan King Anirjitavarman from Kumardvipa, which is modern Cumbarjua found in the Tiswadi Taluka. The grant is addressed to the inhabitants of twelve village-desh as well as the present and future officials. The record registers the king's grant of

⁵ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji: Gazetter Department, 1979).

one hala of khajiana land as well as a piece of land, which includes a house-site, garden, and a tank that belonged to an unnamed Rashtrakuta. The grant was given to a brahmin Hastarya of Hariti gotra⁶.

A new inscription of Vijayamahadevi was found in Kochre, located in the Vengurla taluka of Goa's northern border. The inscription mentions a grant of Khajjana land from the village of Kochre to a Brahmin belonging to the Vasa Gotra⁷.

A grant from Rattaraja dated 1010 A.D. is recorded, which grants a plot of land named Kalvala from the village of Bhaktagrama and a betel nut garden near the agrahara village, to Sankamaiya, the son of Brahman Senavai Nagamaiya⁸.

In the ancient region of Goa, agriculture was a crucial aspect of the local economy and society. The region witnessed the rule of various dynasties who supported agricultural development by granting land to Brahmins. These Brahmins converted the land into cultivable land through their collective efforts. The land grants aimed to promote agriculture and increase agricultural productivity in the region. One notable agricultural practice of those times was the cultivation of Khazan lands. These were marshy areas that were reclaimed for agricultural purposes. The lands were tax-free and were maintained by building bunds to prevent saltwater

⁶ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji:Gazetter Department,1979).

⁷ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji:Gazetter Department,1979).

⁸ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji:Gazetter Department,1979).

intrusion. The bunds helped in land reclamation, and the reclaimed lands were then used for agriculture.

3.4 Agricultural Land in Goa

Goa, a small state situated on the western coast of India, proudly flaunts a coastline that stretches more than 100 kilometers. Goa is well-known for its breathtaking landscapes and diverse wildlife. The state has a variety of farms, including commercial, family-owned, and large plantations. The picturesque coastal region has a wide range of landforms, such as sandy and rocky beaches, sea caves, estuaries, mangroves, bays, headlands, cliffs, hills, and coastal islands⁹.

The state has three types of land the Morod Land, the Ker Land, and the Khazan Land. The Morod Lands are a fascinating geographical feature that comprises sloping fields or terraced lands. These elevated areas are perfect for cultivating crops that depend on rainwater for irrigation. Farmers in this region grow an array of crops, including fruits, rice, finger millet, and pulses, using traditional rainfed agriculture methods. Instead of relying on artificial irrigation methods, farmers depend on natural rainfall to nourish their crops. The unique environment of Morod Lands provides a sustainable and eco-friendly way of farming that ensures the preservation of the natural resources of the region¹⁰.

As opposed to the Morod lands, the Kher lands are expanses of flat terrain that are abundant with fertile soil, making them an ideal location for agriculture. These lands can typically be found nestled between the Morod lands and offer a wide range of farming

⁹ Subrai Nadkarni, *The Khazans of Goa* (Panjim: Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2022).

¹⁰ Subrai Nadkarni, *The Khazans of Goa* (Panjim: Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2022).

opportunities. Farmers in this area have the advantage of cultivating a variety of crops, including rice, vegetables, spices, and even cash crops like sugarcane. The climate in Kher lands is also favorable for farming, resulting in a thriving agricultural economy that significantly contributes to the overall prosperity of Goa¹¹.

Lastly, Khazan lands are truly unique. They were once part of the sea or estuaries but have been reclaimed for agricultural use. These lands have a saline or salty soil due to their previous underwater existence. Despite this, they're valuable because they support a variety of flora and fauna adapted to such conditions. Farmers here often cultivate salt-tolerant crops like rice, coconut palms, and certain types of vegetables. Khazan lands also serve as important habitats for migratory birds and other wildlife, adding to the ecological diversity of Goa¹².

3.5 Importance of Khazan Land

The Khazan lands in Goa, India, are a network of reclaimed coastal wetlands that have been transformed over generations by coastal communities into an intricate system of dykes, sluice gates, canals, and salt pans. These lands are not just patches of land, but the livelihood of local communities, providing a myriad of benefits that sustain livelihoods and ecosystems. “Cultivation of Khazan land dates back to atleast 3000 years”¹³.

¹¹ Subrai Nadkarni, *The Khazans of Goa* (Panjim: Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2022).

¹² Subrai Nadkarni, *The Khazans of Goa* (Panjim: Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2022).

¹³ Celsa Pinto, *Consise History of Goa* (Goa: Goa 1556, 2013).

Protective dykes shield fields from inundation, inner embankments curb soil erosion, and sluice gates regulate water and nutrient flow. The "poiem," a pit, acts as a repository for floodwater and serves as a breeding ground for fish and prawn larvae, while canals facilitate water drainage throughout the Khazan fields¹⁴.

This ecosystem is not just a product of environmental adaptation but a testament to the profound ecological knowledge passed down through generations of coastal communities. Their stewardship, characterized by regular maintenance and timely repairs, has preserved this invaluable legacy for centuries. Moreover, they play a pivotal role in regulating hydrological flows, ensuring a stable supply of freshwater for both agricultural and domestic use.

In the socio-economic outline of Goan communities, Khazan lands hold immense cultural significance, serving as symbols of resilience and ingenuity. They provide a source of livelihood for countless families, supporting traditional agriculture, aquaculture, and salt production.

¹⁴ Sangeeta Sonak, *Environment and Development: Goa at Crossroads* (Panaji: Broadway Publishing House, 2014).

CHAPTER IV

GAUNKARI IN GOA

4.1 Overview of Gaunkari System

A major change in human contact with the land occurred with the shift from hunting and gathering to agricultural methods, which opened the door for the development of permanent communities and the idea of land ownership. “Wherever the arrivals settled they successively established the *gaunkari* occupying lands under the regime of joint ownership”¹. The shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture was a turning point in human history, as it brought about a fundamental change in how people interacted with the land. With the advent of agriculture, people no longer moved from place to place in search of food. Instead, they began to settle down in one place and cultivate the land. According to Dias, “Gaunkaris are communities of agriculturists who played a significant role in settling down”². The transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture was a pivotal moment in human history, as it transformed the way people interacted with nature and the land. This led to the emergence of permanent settlements and the concept of owning land.

In Goa, a coastal state in southwest India, a new form of government developed whereby rural communities known as the "gaunkari" jointly owned land. “Gaunkaris were essentially the

¹ R.G. Pereira, *Goa Vol II Gaunkari: the old village associations* (Panaji: Printwell Press, 1980), 1.

² R.A. Dias, “The socio-economic history of Goa with special reference to the *comunidade* system” (Panaji, Goa University, 2004), 44.

groups of families, classes or castes united to exercise ownership jointly over the land”³. “The gaunkari system is an ancient institution that predates even the Portuguese rule in Goa, as mentioned in Pinto's work”⁴.

This system is built on the foundation of communal ownership of land, with each village or "gaon" having its own members or "gaunkars". These gaunkars collectively manage the village land and resources, making decisions through a democratic process. The gaunkari system ensures sustainable use of land and equitable distribution of cultivation benefits among the community members. Gomes Pereira describes this structure in detail in his landmark work "Goa-Gaunkari: the Old Village Associations," describing the village as a little republic led by the gaunkar, who serves as its freeholder, and the gaunkari, who serve as their association⁵.

³ Smita Sail and M.G. Priya, Comunidades of Goa: A Re-reading of Select Goan Literature in the Light of LandLaws and Their Effect on Human- Land Equation (DIALOGUE QUARTERLY Volume-22 No. 2 October- December, 2020),130.

⁴ Celsa Pinto, *Consise History of Goa* (Goa: Goa 1556, 2013),164.

⁵ R.G. Pereira, *Goa Vol II Gaunkari: the old village associations* (Panaji: Printwell Press,1980).

4.2 Factors Shaping Communal Land Governance in Goa

The historical development of communal governance structures in ancient Goa can be traced back to two main factors: the physical and geographical features of the region and the environmental knowledge possessed by the original settlers. Dias argues that the evolution of Gaunkari in Goa was strongly influenced by its physical features and geography. In his study, he emphasizes that “due to the unique geographical features of the region the production activities, especially agriculture, were structured around communal principles”⁶. The original settlers of Goa had possessed indigenous knowledge systems that played a significant role in the development of communal governance structures in ancient Goa.

The state of Goa located on India's southwest coast, “it occupies an area of around 3,701 squarekilometers. Which lies between 15°48'00" N and 14°53'54" N latitude and 74°20'13" E and 73°40'33" E longitude, its geographical coordinates show its important location along the Konkan coastland”⁷. “Towards the east and the south the land boundaries stretch for 136.3km shared by the Kolhapur district of Maharashtra and the Belgaum and North-Kanara district of Karnataka. Towards west is the Arabian sea that stretches 1329 km from the Tiracol Fort to the southern most point of the peak 111.8 meters high”⁸.

The tropical monsoon climate plays a vital role in region's agricultural practices. According to Dia , the gaudas played a significant role as they possessed vast knowledge of monsoon patterns

⁶ R.A. Dias, “The socio-economic history of Goa with special reference to the comunidad system” (Panaji, GoaUniversity,2004),36.

⁷ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji:Gazetter Department,1979),2.

⁸ Anant Dhume, *The Cultural History of Goa From 10000 B.C. to 1352 A.D* (Panaji: Mapp Printers, 1985).

and the local land and environment which helped them to settle on land smoothly and practice agriculture. This linkage between climate knowledge and successful agricultural functions highlights the settlers' adaptation and mastery of their region. However, transforming this land to make it suitable for agriculture was relatively difficult. The process included clearing the tidal forest, controlling saline water from entering agriculture fields, and avoiding flooding of these low lands during heavy precipitation by developing an efficient drainage system. This transformation process required superior knowledge of nature, advanced technology to control. The establishment of gaunkari in Goa can be confidently attributed to two main factors. Firstly, the climatic conditions of the region were highly important. Secondly, the agriculturists, or gaunkars, possessed a wealth of environmental knowledge that enabled them to successfully implement and maintain this traditional system.

The regular and sufficient rainfall during the monsoon months ensures adequate water supply for agricultural activities, contributing to the fertility of the alluvial plains and supporting diverse crops. The region's tropical climate allows for a variety of crops to grow, including coconuts, cashews, pineapples, and spices such as pepper, nutmeg, and cardamom. "It is believed that the Gaudas introduced into Goa variety of crops as rice, coconuts, areca nuts, black pepper"⁹, "they also cultivated nachni, tur, kulita, etc"¹⁰.

Dias also states that the villagers have over the years taken various measures to protect the soil erosion. "The gaunkars have constructed dykes and embankments to prevent soil erosion. Additionally, they have built long and elevated stretches in the middle of the agricultural fields,

⁹ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji:Gazetter Department,1979),234.

¹⁰ V.V Khedekar, *Goa: Land,Life and Legacy*(Panaji: Directorate of Art and Culture,2016), 44.

on which they have planted trees to prevent soil erosion and supplement their agricultural income”¹¹. This indicates to readers that comunidade system, prevalent in the Western Coastal Plains of Goa, has played a vital role in the protection and preservation of the soil as they were educated with the nature and steps to make a better use of it. It is mainly in these regions of Goa that one can witness the dominance of the comunidade system, which is a unique form of community land tenure in Goa.

The river valleys of Kushavati, Zuari and Mandovi in the central uplands have been supporting much of the agricultural activities of the gaunkars. In fact it is this region that witnessed agricultural activity on a- communitarian basis¹². Dias comments in his study “the large presence of Gauda people in the areas of Usgalimal in Sanguem Taluka leads one to believe that the Gauda practiced kumeri cultivation”¹³ and as a result, the river Kushavati has benefited the agriculture activities by providing a continuous supply of water required. Considering this study one can assume that Gaudas settled on the banks of the river Kushavati. We must say that the geographical factors of Goa helped early settlers to establish agricultural communities and adopt communal land ownership practices as we had with us the fertile alluvial plains, abundant water sources, and favorable climate to establish agricultural communities and adopt communal land ownership practices.

¹¹ R.A. Dias, “The socio-economic history of Goa with special reference to the comunidade system” (Panaji, Goa University, 2004), 44.

¹² R.A. Dias, “The socio-economic history of Goa with special reference to the comunidade system” (Panaji, Goa University, 2004), 39.

¹³ R.A. Dias, “The socio-economic history of Goa with special reference to the comunidade system” (Panaji, Goa University, 2004), 49.

4.3 Origins of Gaunkari

The Gaunkari system is a unique form of land governance that has been deeply rooted in the history of Goa. . This system is characterized by communal ownership and collective management of land, and it has significant origins and cultural significance, as we understand it from the author Celsa Pinto in her book “Concise History of Goa”, mentions that "The land was collectively owned by the families in the village to form a village community; each family had an equal share in the agriculture produce from the lands they collectively owned"¹⁴. Let's investigate this system deeply look more closely at its origins.

The Gaunkari system traces its origins to the pre-Portuguese era in Goa, mentioned in Gazzetterof Goa, Damanand Diu “these institution existed in Goa even before the conquest of Goa by the portugueses”¹⁵ when early settlers established villages and communities. No one is known to it, although there are various ideas that assign the credit of its establishment to either the Gavde community or the Kol tribes, who are regarded as the earliest settlers, as described by the authorSmita Sail remenets are seen today in the ‘gavdi’ and ‘kunbi’ people of Goa says Olivinho Gomes¹⁶. In these communities, collective work and shared resources were the main sources of income, and land ownership was originally associated with tribe or familial relationships.

Sangeeta Sonak discusses the earliest group of settlers who led the formation of gaunkari as they

¹⁴ Celsa Pinto, *Consise History of Goa* (Goa: Goa 1556, 2013).

¹⁵ V.T.Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu* (Panaji:Gazetter Department,1979),159.

¹⁶ Olivinho Gomes, *A Concise history of Goa* (Panaji: Director of Official Language,2010) ,268.

practiced agriculture. However, she mentions that one of the earliest groups to settle in Goa were the gonvillis, who were livestock rearers, but they did not have a settled lifestyle, so the gonvallis/dhangars did not belong to gaunkari because their nomadic lifestyle did not allow them. further explains that The Gaudas, who evolved from a hunting and gathering of food phase to agriculture, were the next group to follow this gonvallis, "The Gaudas belonged to the Munda Section of the Astroid race and are thought to have been the aboriginal people or the first settlers of Goa." The terms "gau" and "gauncaria" originated in Goa with the gaudas. "Wild boars were and are still hunted down and eaten with relish, hunting was done by using the bow and arrow", Through the study, we are able to gain insight into how the Gaudas transition from hunters and gatherers to farmers led to a settled lifestyle, which in turn brought about the introduction of gaunkari.

However evidences suggest that it was during the Portuguese colonization that the Gaunkari system was formalized and codified by the Portuguese authorities upon their arrival in the region. "Afonso mexia was assigned to create a detailed description of the customs and traditions practiced in the village communities. Hence on September 16, 1526 the charter was created wherein 49 clauses were put to effect"¹⁷. The Foral of Afonso Mexia in 1526 marked the first official recognition and regulation of the Gaunkari system, setting the legal framework for collective land ownership and administration. At the core of the Gaunkari system is the concept of collective land ownership, where land within a village or Gaun is considered communal property.

¹⁷ Celsa Pinto, *Consise History of Goa* (Goa: Goa 1556, 2013),164.

4.4 Gauncars and their functions

Although land ownership is collective, control and management of Gaunkari lands are typically vested in male descendants of the village's founders. Gaunkars served as both an administrative and legislative body in addition to being agricultural associations. This village association maintained the roads, khazan fields, infrastructure, etc. in the village.

This patriarchal structure reflects historical gender norms and social hierarchies prevalent in traditional Goan society. The main officials were the village headman or “voddil”¹⁸. In the past, the village council was the authoritative representative of the commune and held the responsibility of liaising with government authorities. “The “escrivao,” or village clerk, would be present to declare the nem and document the proceedings. The other individual in charge of managing the village land register, record-keeping, and other duties was a clerk accountant, known in Portuguese as *escrivao corrente*”¹⁹. On the other hand, “the “terlu” was in responsible for keeping an eye on both public and private holdings, such as peddy fields, palm groves, and orchards. Another person whose duty was to visit each ward and pluck coconuts under the supervision of Terlu was the *padekar*. The *gramavarika*'s responsibility was to arrange for the region's labor requirements. He also served as the designated officer in cases of theft and crop damage from livestock. The village's justice of the peace was served by the *cangale*, *modestny*, and *kumer*.

¹⁸ Olvinho Gomes, *A Concise history of Goa* (Panaji: Director of Official Language,2010).

¹⁹ Celsa Pinto, *Consise History of Goa* (Goa: Goa 1556, 2013),165.

The village clerk, or "kulkarni," was usually selected from one of the commune's "vangodds" (clans), and held certain advantages, such as an exclusive "namos" for their use. Commune personnel, including representatives of the "vangodd," priests, and temple servants, were allotted lands and given remuneration as prescribed for each of them. Only the "gaunkars," or representatives, were allowed to partake in the commune's deliberations. Typically, gaunkars would get together in public spaces beneath mango or banayan trees.

The communal lands held by the commune were distributed equally among the members, or "gaunkars," at specified intervals. Each plot was assigned a specific amount of land revenue. Later on, a bidding system was introduced among members for the allotment of paddy fields for a period of three years. The plots were awarded to the highest bidder among gaunkars.

The rights of gaunkars and others who draw zones possess certain characteristics, such as being rights that vest in members by birth rather than inheritance. A person born into a family of a member of the community is eligible to be enrolled as a member in the category or class to which that family belongs, upon reaching the age prescribed by the respective Instituto Organico.

Non-gauncars, who fell into the Kulachar and Vantel categories, are not allowed to participate in decision-making processes. Kulachar were the village laborers who received land grants as payment. The potters, barbers, carpenters, washermen, and basket weavers were among the other non-agricultural workers who were too significant for the hamlet. The artisans who worked for the community were paid from the profits of namasy or namoshi lands. In addition, the

individual gaunkars to whom they provided their services gave them musaha in the form of grain.

The system encompasses not only land ownership but also governance structures for the administration of communal resources. “Rents collected was used for public works”²⁰. Village assemblies or Sabhas, comprised of male heads of households, play a central role in decision-making regarding land use, cultivation practices, and distribution of agricultural produce. And system also rendered social services says Rui Gomes Pereira in his work on Gaunkari “social services was one of the inherent and essential functions of the communities”²¹. “The comunidades were responsible for construction and maintenance of roads, drainage and irrigation systems, public security as well as judicial and religious institutions”²².

In the communities where contemporary human activity has not yet reached, there is still evidence of prehistoric man's ancestral worship. There is a circle of stones in the Sanguem area village known as Kajur that the locals refer to as the location of Barzan's panchayat meeting.

According to Dias' analysis, this location could likely be where the gauponn, or villagecommunal council, gathered to discuss²³.

²⁰ Pranab Mukhovahdvay, *Now that Your Land is My Land ... Does it matter? A case study in Western India* (GoaUniversity: Department of Economics, 2002).

²¹ R.G. Pereira, *Goa Vol II Gaunkari: the old village associations* (Panaji: Printwell Press, 1980), 25.

²² Pranab Mukhovahdvay, *Now that Your Land is My Land ... Does it matter? A case study in Western India* (GoaUniversity: Department of Economics, 2002), 5.

²³ R.A. Dias, “The socio-economic history of Goa with special reference to the comunidad system” (panaji, GoaUniversity, 2004), 53.

Beyond its economic and administrative functions, the Gaunkari system holds profound cultural and social significance for Goan communities. It fosters a sense of collective identity and solidarity among villagers, and shared heritage. Indeed, the gaunkari system is highly significant to the sociohistorical context of Goa, India. Deeply rooted in the history of the state, it represents the unique relationship of land, community, and economy. Gaining an understanding of this system offers important insights into the dynamics of Goan governance and village life.

The gaunkari system is fundamentally a community landholding structure in which the people living in a village or gaon jointly own and manage the land. This method, which is centuries old, is a reflection of Goa's ancient agrarian civilization. Under this structure, particular families or clans often referred to as "gaunkars" held particular rights and duties which are mentioned above concerning the village land.

4.5 Land beneficial to Gaunkars

The importance of land cannot be overstated. Land was not just a source of livelihood, but the primary source of wealth and economic stability. "The gaunkari association of Goa work jointly in maintaining khazan lands, repairing the bunds and enabling plantations"²⁴. With agriculture providing food, raw materials, and surplus for trade, land ownership became an essential determinant of social status and power. Those who owned land often held higher social standing and wielded greater influence within the community. In addition, land provided a sense of security and stability for families and communities. It secured access to resources and protection

²⁴ Smita Sail and M.G. Priya, *Comunidades of Goa: A Re-reading of Select Goan Literature in the Light of Land Laws and Their Effect on Human- Land Equation (DIALOGUE QUARTERLY Volume-22 No. 2 October-December, 2020)*, 131.

against famine or displacement. Clearly, the land was a key factor in determining the fate and fortunes of individuals and societies likewise.

This study will demonstrate the relationship between the soil and the gaunkari. The gaunkari system's link to agriculture, especially through the administration of khazan lands, was an important feature. “Khazans are saline flood plains that lie below sea level at high tide, on either side of estuaries. The cultivation of khazan lands in Goa dates back to at least 3000 years ago”²⁵.

The Khazan land management, which refers to the coastal saline areas in Goa surrounded by mangroves and influenced by tidal estuaries. “Are located in the estuarine basins of Tiracol, Chapora, Baga, Mandovi- Zuari, along Cumbharjua canal, Sal, Talpona, Galjibaga rivers”²⁶. “The comunidades were essentially village agricultural associations. A major part of their assets were the lands (khazans) recovered by reclamation from marshes and the tidal waters with the help of bunds (embankments)”²⁷. These lands were collectively owned and managed by local communities and were crucial for agriculture. “The task of maintenance and protection of the khazan lands was carried out by the gaunkari”²⁸. The study found that the communities used engineering techniques to drain the lands and balance freshwater and saline water flows, which

²⁵ Celsa Pinto, *Consise History of Goa* (Goa: Goa 1556, 2013), 19.

²⁶ Nandkumar M. Kamat, History of Khazan land management in Goa: ecological, economic and political perspective (A paper presented at Goa University, Department of History, Seminar on History of agriculture in Goa, March 12, 13, 2004), 3.

²⁷ Pranab Mukhovadhvay, *Now that Your Land is My Land ... Does it matter? A case study in Western India* (Goa University: Department of Economics, 2002), 6.

²⁸ Sangeeta Sonak, *Environment and Development: Goa at Crossroads* (Panaji: Broadway Publishing House, 2014), 4.

resulted in productive agricultural ecosystems. This demonstrated the effectiveness of the Gaunkari system in managing resources for farming. “The revenue earned from the auctions was used for the maintenance of the khazan infrastructure”²⁹.

“The khot, as a prominent figure within the Gaunkari association, held significant authority and responsibility. The khot was not only responsible for securing cooperative labor to maintain essential infrastructure such as day levees and sluice gates, but they also held sole proprietorship over the khazan lands. They had an extensive amount of control over the village's resource distribution and farming practices due to this ownership. The khot's primary responsibility was to divide the khazan lands into plots for individual cultivators, known as bhaus. These plots were then allocated to farmers for cultivation, forming the backbone of agricultural production in the village”³⁰. The bhaus, representing the cultivators or farmers within the village, played a crucial role in the agricultural labor force. The khot gave each bhaus a plot of land, and it was their responsibility to cultivate and maintain it. Every bhaus member also had a duty to work whenever labor was required to protect the Khazan domains and uphold vital infrastructure.

We understand that significance of khazan lands to the gaunkari cannot be emphasized as the Khazan lands in Goa are vital to the gaunkars association as this land served as a livelihoods and the sustainability of the agrarian economy for many generations. Rice production has been an essential component of Goa's agrarian economy since ancient times. The gaunkars were able to use the natural resources of the coastal area for agricultural production by using khazan lands.

²⁹ Sangeeta Sonak, *Environment and Development: Goa at Crossroads* (Panaji: Broadway Publishing House, 2014), 5.

³⁰ Celsa Pinto, *Concise History of Goa* (Goa: Goa 1556, 2013), 166.

Khazan lands have been the foundation of Goa's gaunkari system, giving the locals an essential supply of food, a means of subsistence, and a sense of cultural identity.

4.6 The Impact of Charter of Affonso Mexia on the Gaunkari System in Goa.

The Charter of Affonso Mexia (supritendent of Revenue and taxes), also known as “the Foral de usos e costumes dos Gauncares, was a pivotal document introduced on September 16, 1526. It consisted of 49 clauses and was the result of an extensive survey of the Gaunkari system”³¹, a communal land management system practiced by tribal communities in Goa. “This had established a fixed rent for the thirty one villages of Tiswadi taluka”³², and later in 1556 to Salcete and Bardez . With the introduction of the Charter of Affonso Mexia, the Portuguese colonial authorities asserted their right to regulate the Gaunkari communities. They were referred to comunidades, indicating a shift in governance and control.

Clause VI delineates the process by which villages facing financial losses could transfer their governance and responsibilities to other villages under the oversight of Portuguese officials. It underscores the imposition of Portuguese authority and intervention in local affairs to ensure the collection of revenue owed to the colonial government.

Clause VII: Here, the Portuguese influence in determining the ownership and management of village lands is highlighted. It stipulates that villages experiencing losses could be handed over to

³¹ Celsa Pinto, *Consise History of Goa* (Goa: Goa 1556, 2013),164.

³²Pranab Mukhovadhvay, *Now that Your Land is My Land ... Does it matter? A case study in Western India* (GoaUniversity: Department of Economics, 2002).

new caretakers, potentially disrupting traditional governance structures established by local communities.

Clause X elucidates the allocation of lands by Gaunkars for agricultural purposes to individuals willing to improve and cultivate them. It signifies a form of land tenure system where land was granted for productive use under certain conditions, including the payment of rent or land revenue.

Clause XI highlights Specific regulations regarding the cultivation of areca trees on allotted lands are outlined here, demonstrating the Portuguese administration's attempts to regulate and control agricultural practices to ensure revenue generation.

Clause XII focuses on the social aspect of land distribution, with Gaunkaris having the authority to grant lands to various village officials and workers for their continuous service to the community. It reflects the intertwined relationship between land ownership, social status, and community service within the Gaunkari system.

Clause XIII restricts Gaunkaris from granting land to individuals outside the village without payment, emphasizing the local and community-centric nature of land allocation and tenure. Clause XVII to XX address issues related to debt, inheritance, and leasing of land, highlighting the colonial administration's involvement in regulating land tenure and revenue collection.

The Charter of Affonso Mexia introduced by the Portuguese colonial authorities brought about significant changes in land governance within the Gaunkari system in Goa. Through a detailed analysis of various chapters, we have outlined the specific provisions and regulations that

reshaped traditional land management practices and structures, reflecting the imposition of colonial authority and control over land and resources. Understanding these historical developments is crucial for comprehending the complexities of land governance in colonial Goa and its enduring impact on contemporary land management practices in the region.

The Charter of Affonso Mexia, introduced by the Portuguese in colonial Goa, changed how land was governed in villages. It gave the Portuguese officials power over village affairs, especially when villages faced financial problems. This meant they could transfer control of the village to another village overseen by the Portuguese. The Charter also allowed the Portuguese to decide who owned and managed village lands, which could disrupt traditional village governance. It introduced rules for giving out land for farming, regulating the cultivation of certain crops like areca trees, and granting land to village officials and workers based on their service. The Charter emphasized that land should mostly stay within the village community and couldn't be given to outsiders without payment. It also dealt with issues like debts, inheritance, and leasing land.

These changes show how the Portuguese exerted control over land in colonial Goa, shaping land management practices that still influence how land is governed today. Understanding these historical changes helps us see the complexities of land ownership and management in Goa's past and present.

CHAPTER V

Case Study: The Agris of Batim Village

5.1: Area where Salt is produced

Goa, lay closely along the southwest coast of India, has a strategic geographic position between latitudes 14°53'54" N and 15°40'00" N, and longitudes 73°40'33" E and 74°20'13" E. To its north, it shares borders with Sawantwadi taluka of Sindhudurg district and Kolhapur district in Maharashtra. These regions offer a blend of cultural influences and natural beauty, enriching Goa's diversity. Towards the east and south, Goa is flanked by the Belgaum and Karwar districts of Karnataka. We have seen that Goa's location has historically facilitated trade and cultural exchanges with neighbouring regions, contributing to its vibrant heritage and cosmopolitan atmosphere. The state's boundaries are not just lines on a map; they represent connections to diverse communities and landscapes, shaping the identity of Goa¹.

Goa's vast coastline plays a crucial role in the state's salt manufacturing industry, providing natural resources and geographical advantages. Study suggest that the coastal geography and economy plays an important role in sustaining local economies as various communities in Goa rely on these coastal features for their livelihoods. "Salt production Goa has been practiced for the past 1500 years"². As the coastal Goa have been producing this sea salt extraction also

¹ Anant Dhume, *The Cultural History of Goa From 10000 B.C. to 1352 A.D* (Panaji: Mapp Printers, 1985),1.

² Kabilan Mani, Bhakti B Salgaonkar, Deepthi Das and Judith M Bragança, Community solar salt production in Goa, India (Goa: 2012).

known as “Solar Salt”. This coastline gives easy access to seawater, which is needed to make salt. It also helps in moving salt from one place to another.

The sunny weather by the coast helps in making salt through a process called solar evaporation. The period from February to May salt is extracted in Goa, hence Nandakumar Kamat in his article “Chemical Ecology of Salt Pan” states “this period is meteorologically optimal for evaporation of water”³. Because of all this, many people in Goa rely on the coast for their income, this highlights how important is coastal land for the local economy and communities in Goa⁴.

The locally known as ‘Mithagar’ or salt pans, where salt is made, are spread out in different areas of Goa. They are “located in Salcete, Tiswadi, Bardez and Pernem”⁵ These talukas are separated by rivers that come from the mountains called the Western Ghats and flow into the sea. These rivers not only divide the talukas but also provide freshwater, which is needed to make salt. In Pernem, salt pans are near the Tiracol river and the Chapora river. In Bardez, they are by the Baga River. In Tiswadi, you can find them along the Mandovi River in places like Patto- Panaji, Ribandar, and Santa Cruz, and also by the Zuari river in Siridao, Batim, Curca,

³ Nandakumar Kamat, “Chemical Ecology of Salt Pans”, The Navind Times, March 16, 2005.

⁴ Reyna Sequeira, *As dear as salt: The story of neglect and decay in a traditional occupation in Goa* (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2013).

⁵ Judith Braganca, “Micobiology of saltpaans”, Navind Times. 2005.

and Bambolim. Salcete, which is below Tiswadi, has salt pans by the Zuari river in the north and the Sal River in the east and south⁶.

This chapter of the dissertation explores how people use the land to harvest salt, which is a crucial function of the land. It aims to highlight the importance of land in salt production. To achieve this, the chapter presents a case study of Batim village in Tiswadi taluka. The focus is on the salt pans of Batim and how people's livelihoods are connected to the land.

In Batim village, salt pans are an essential part of the landscape. These salt pans areas are where seawater is collected and left to evaporate, leaving behind salt crystals. As mentioned earlier, that the salt pans are located by the side of the river, the river that helps in salt extraction in Batim village is river 'Zuari'. According to the study of 'Sir Harichandra Nagvenkar' on 'Salt and the Goan Economy' emphasizes Batim salt pans are located "N 15° 27'15.5 and east 073° 52'55.6."⁷.

The surrounding marshy land of the village supports mangroves vegetation. People in Batim and nearby areas depend on these salt pans for their livelihoods. They work in the salt

⁶ Kabilan Mani, Bhakti B Salgaonkar, Deepthi Das and Judith M Bragança, Community solar salt production in Goa, India (Goa: 2012).

⁷ H.T. Nagvenkar, "Salt And the Goan Economy (A Study of Goa's Salt Industry and Salt Trade in 19th and 20th century)" (panaji, Goa University, 1999).

pans, harvesting and processing salt to sell or use for various purposes. Salt pans at Batim are located alongside NH 17A.

Through this case study, the chapter aims to show how the land plays a crucial role in the salt production process and how people's livelihood are connected with the land. By understanding the relationship between land and salt production in Batim village, researchers can gain insights into the importance of land use for sustaining livelihoods and local economies.

This chapter will provide more information about the community involved in salt harvesting, it dwells into the various methods used to make salt, and the geographical features of the salt-producing areas. It will delve into the characteristics of the salt-making process, including traditional and modern techniques.

Additionally, it will discuss the unique geographic aspects of the salt-producing regions and their impact on salt production. Through detailed exploration, this chapter aims 4 Page | 4 to offer a comprehensive understanding of the salt industry, the people involved, and the geographical factors influencing salt production.

5.2: Village of Batim.

In Konkani tradition, "Bhati" refers to the salt pan where saline water undergoes solar heating to extract salt⁸. This ancient practice, deeply rooted in Goan heritage, involves meticulous techniques passed down through generations. Batim village in Goa is a peaceful place surrounded by lots of greenery in Tiswadi taluka. It's not too far from Panaji, just about 10 kilometres away. The village is pretty big, covering an area of about 275.52 hectares, and it's filled with greenery as people living here practice agricultural activities.⁹ The village holds a unique place in Goa's socio-economic landscape due to its traditional salt pans. Even though it is close to the city one can get a nice rural feel from it. Around 1,489 people live here, and the village is divided into different areas called wards and traditional village wards called vadde (singular: vaddo). Each of these areas has its special history and style¹⁰.

Batim is still a beautiful place to live. People here can easily find fresh food like fish, veggies, fruits, and rice because the land is good for farming as people here rely on land for survival. It is also close to other salt extracting villages like Bambolim, Curca and Santan Talaulim, making it a part of Goa's rich culture and nature.

⁸ Reyna Sequeira, *As dear as salt: The story of neglect and decay in a traditional occupation in Goa* (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2013).

⁹ <https://www.onefivenine.com/india/villages/North-Goa/Tiswadi/Batim>

¹⁰ Ibid

5.3 Correlation Between Khazan Lands and Salt Production

The traditional method of salt production involves collecting seawater in shallow ponds or basins, allowing it to evaporate under the Sun's heat leading to the formation of salt crystals. These crystals are then harvested, washed and dried to create salt which has a variety of uses¹¹. "The sea water contains about 3.5% dissolved minerals out of which sodium chloride is about 2.7% and 0.8% consist chiefly of calcium, magnesium and sulfate ions"¹². Khazan lands not only help in agriculture but this land also helps in salt panning, the extraction of crude oil from saline was discovered more than 2000 years ago.

Khazan lands are a fascinating ecosystem situated in the state of Goa. "The close proximity of khazan lands to the Arabian sea and the vast expanses of tidal influx in Goa's estuarine rivers create a highly conductive environment for salt production"¹³ says Sangeeta Sonak. These lands are protected by bunds, which are embankments that prevent water from flowing in or out. The unique feature of Khazan lands is the intricate network of sluice gates, canals, and dykes, which control the inflow and outflow of tidal waters. This network of waterways is essential for maintaining the delicate balance of the ecosystem, providing. In the process of traditional salt production, the khazan lands hold significant importance.

¹¹ <https://www.soultravelling.in/blog/salt-pans-go-india/>

¹² Judith Braganca, "Microbiology of salt pans", The Navind Times, January 8, 2005.

¹³ Sangeeta Sonak, *Environment and Development: Goa at Crossroads* (Panaji: Broadway Publishing House, 2014).

They are designed with bunds and sluice gates that enable the regulated entry of seawater into the fields. Afterward, the fields are left to evaporate under the sun, resulting in the formation of salt crystals. This method of salt production has been in use for centuries and is still prevalent in many regions around the world. This method of salt production, known as solar evaporation, is highly dependent on the climatic condition of Goa¹⁴.

The khazan lands in Goa play a crucial role in facilitating the economic survival of the local communities from centuries. “Age-old self-governing associations called gaunkari engineered the intricate system of bunds and sluice gates and managed the Khazans”¹⁵. These lands are not only utilized for salt production but also for rice cultivation and fishing, thereby offering diverse sources of livelihood for the inhabitants. As per the records “about 18921 hectares of khazan lands are prevalent in state”¹⁶.

The khazan farming system is based on the regulation of salinity and tides, which is crucial for maintaining optimal conditions for salt production. Historically, salt production was an important economic activity in Goa, and the symbiotic relationship between khazan lands and salt production is evident in the way these lands have been engineered for multiple uses, including agriculture, aquaculture, and salt panning. The khazan lands are truly a unique and

¹⁴ Kabilan Mani, Bhakti B Salgaonkar, Deepthi Das and Judith M Bragança, Community solar salt production in Goa, India (Goa: 2012).

¹⁵ Subrai Nadkarni, *The Khazans of Goa* (Panjim: Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2022).

¹⁶ Ibid

fascinating ecosystem that combines the forces of nature and human ingenuity to create a thriving environment for multiple purposes.

5.4: Significance of Salt.

Evidence states that, the salt industry in India has a long history, dating back over a thousand years . According to Sir Nandakumar Kamat, “salt production is an ancient practice in India, with references to it found in ancient texts like the 'Arthashastra', which was written during the Mauryan period. This text mentions the salt trade and the existence of a position called 'lavanadhyaksha', responsible for supervising salt production”. “It is believed that the first salt pans were constructed during the Mauryan period”¹⁷. The sources highlights the historical significance of salt production in India and its deep-rooted traditions. We find today that “India is the third largest salt producers. Initially, at the time of independence, India imported salt from the United Kingdom and Aden due to a shortfall in domestic production, with annual production standing at 1900 tons”¹⁸.

As coming from Goan background I must say that salt in Goa is not just an ingredient that adds flavor to food but has ample uses in daily life, it is essential for our health and other uses. The Konkani word for salt pans are “Mitagors”, or “Agor”. “The Greek word ‘Agora’ means a place for gathering”. People practicing this are called ‘Mithgavade’. Sir Nandakumar kamat is of the opinion that “ a community of skilled salt producers known as ‘Mithgavade’ was engaged in

¹⁷ Nandakumar Kamat, “Chemical Ecology of Salt Pans”, The Navind Times, March 16, 2005

¹⁸ Kabilan Mani, Bhakti B Salgaonkar, Deepthi Das and Judith M Bragança, “Community solar salt production in Goa, India” (Goa: 2012).

south Konkan”¹⁹. “Salt is not simply a seasoning for food but has more than 14,000 uses in the food, chemical, textile and agricultural industries”.

Furthermore salt also aids digestion, supports cell health, and helps our nerves function properly. It is used in cooking, medicine, and various industries because it prevents food from spoiling and regulates our body's water balance. Depending on our diet and where we live, we need different amounts of salt each day, usually between 5 to 10 grams. When it's hot or we're exercising, we need even more salt to replace what we lose through sweat. Animals also need salt for their health, not just humans. In medicine, salt is used to treat illnesses like goiter caused by not enough iodine. Industries use salt to make lots of things we use daily, like plastics and cleaning supplies. Plus, salt helps melt ice quickly, making it safer to walk and drive on snowy roads²⁰.

“In Goa, they produce three grades of organic salt: white, reddish, and brown. The reddish and brown colors come from harmless bacteria and algae that grow in the salt”²¹. Even though it might look dirty to some, Goan salt is safe and has many nutritional benefits. Besides sodium and chlorine, “it is rich in calcium, magnesium, potassium, sulphur, and bromine”²². Potassium is especially important for our heart health. Unlike refined salt that loses important nutrients during processing, Goan organic salt keeps these nutrients, which are essential for our bodies. This

¹⁹ Nandakumar Kamat, “Benefits of Organic Salt”, The Navind Times, May 26, 2006.

²⁰ H.T. Nagvenkar, “Salt And the Goan Economy (A Study of Goa’s Salt Industry and Salt Trade in 19th and 20th century)” (Panaji,Goa University, 1999).

²¹ Nandakumar Kamat, “Benefits of Organic Salt”, The Navind Times, May 26, 2006.

²² Ibid

shows nutritional value of salt as it does not contain only sodium, rather contains other important components needed for our health.

For centuries, salt has been a big part of Goan life, serving many purposes in homes and industries. People used it to make food taste better and to preserve it. Even now, Goan families continue to use salt for many reasons. Pickle-making wasn't a big industry earlier, so salt was mostly used in households. But in the fishing industry, salt was most important for preserving fish. People salted the fish to keep it fresh for a long time, which was crucial for selling it locally and abroad. Even today one can find salted fish consumed by locals. Salt was also added to cattle feed to make sure the animals got enough salt in their diet.

In farming, salt was used as a fertilizer to help crops grow better. Even though the salt produced in Goa wasn't good for eating because it had impurities, it worked well as fertilizer for plants. Sometimes, the salt had micro-organisms that could spoil meat, fish, and vegetables when used for preserving food. Despite this, Goans still used this salt a lot in their cooking and for preserving food. This shows how important salt was for Goan families, even if the quality wasn't perfect.

Overall, salt has played a vital role in Goan life throughout history. It's not just about making food taste better; it's about keeping food fresh, helping plants grow, and even preserving

fish. Despite changes over time, salt continues to be essential for Goans in their daily lives and industries. |

5.5: Method of Salt production.

"As dear as salt," the book states that the prime requirements for salt production in Goa include saline water, the sun's heat, and the wind.²³ The manufacturing of salt in Goa is closely linked to the unique environment of khazan lands, which are restored agricultural lands located away in estuaries. Rich mangrove vegetation covers these lands, which are carefully managed to control salinity and tidal flow using embankments and sluice gates. These sluice gates, which serve as both technical wonders and cultural icons, are emblematic of the area's rich history. Apart from being used for farming and fishing, khazan lands are essential for the manufacture of salt. This demonstrates the adaptability of khazan lands, where the production of salt coexists peacefully with other agricultural and aquaculture activities, enhancing the ecosystem's resilience and overall productivity.

Salt production in Goa follows a traditional method that has been passed down through generations. Salt making process includes different steps. Land use for salt production is prepared during December, in this month people repair the walls around the salt areas which got damaged during heavy rains. As during the monsoons season they get filled up with rain water so the initial stage of making salt pan includes pumping out any extra water from the salt fields, either

²³ Reyna Sequeira, *As dear as salt: The story of neglect and decay in a traditional occupation in Goa* (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2013), 64.

rainwater or seawater, using machines. Once the water is gone, they start getting the salt beds ready. This means they plow the land, make it flat, perfectly even by stamping on it or biting it hard and smooth. These salt fields have three parts: reservoir,(the primary basin called as Tapovanin) evaporator, and crystallizer²⁴.

The reservoir part gets filled with seawater when the tides come in, and it's connected to many evaporator parts, which are smaller. The water in the reservoir gets heated by sunrays and begins the process of evaporation causing formation of Brine. These reservoir are further connected to next part of the process that is the evaporator. These evaporator parts are linked to the crystallizer, which is the smallest but very important for making salt. After that, the water with more salt goes into the crystallizer, where sodium chloride crystals start to form, making the salt we use.

This basin too is rectangular in shape like that of reservoir and evaporator. Herein layer of water is not more than three inches depth because the crystallizer is smaller and shallower. During the preparation time, the seawater in the evaporator and crystallizer parts sits for a few weeks. Workers stir it from time to time using a tool called 'danto' to remove any extra clay. When the beds are ready, fresh seawater is let into the evaporator and then the crystallizer, where the salt crystals start to form. It takes about ten days for the first batch of salt to be ready, and sometimes they sprinkle a bit of rough salt over it to help the process.

²⁴ H.T. Nagvenkar, "Salt And the Goan Economy (A Study of Goa's Salt Industry and Salt Trade in 19th and 20th century)" (panaji, Goa University,1999).

From around mid-February to May or early June, it's time to harvest the salt. Every day, the right amount of seawater is let into the crystallizer, where the salt crystals form and are collected in the evening. The workers pile up the salt at the edges of the fields or in the middle. After piling up together the next process is the purification wherein a strong saltwater solution is used to remove any dirt and eventually taken to the local market for consuming by the locals.

In Goa, there are two types of salt: one that's a bit dirty at first because it has mud and clay in it, and another type that's cleaner and used for cooking and pickling. The lesser impure salt is used for preservation like salting fish and even as fertilizer for trees such as coconut, mangoes etc. The taste of salt can vary depending on where making salt; it's also about keeping traditions alive and helping the local economy.

5.6: People involved in Salt Production.

Making salt in Goa is hard work, but it is important for the people there. They use natural resources, old knowledge, and careful methods to make different kinds of salt for different uses. “The earliest settlers in Batim are believed to be the Mithgauddas, even before coming of gaonkars”²⁵ says Reyna Sequeira. The book people of india volume XXI agrees that “Mithgaude or Mith Gavdas are those engaged in manufacture of salt”²⁶.

In the village of Batim, the tradition of salt making has deep roots, intertwined with the history and culture of its people. Originally, “the Mithgauddas were the earliest settlers, but they were later displaced by the gaonkars, who formed the Gaonkar Vaddo”²⁷.

The Agris, share a name with salt makers from the North Konkan coast, the Agris of Batim have no direct connection to them. Evidence says that they migrated from various places, such as Taulim, Zuari, Uddi, Mercas, Santa Cruz, and Anjuna. Some came willingly, while others were brought in to work in the salt pans due to labor shortages. Sir Mitragotri in his book

²⁵ Reyna Sequeira, *As dear as salt: The story of neglect and decay in a traditional occupation in Goa* (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2013),127.

²⁶ K.S Singh, *People of India: Goa, vol XXI* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1993), 162.

²⁷ Reyna Sequeira, *As dear as salt: The story of neglect and decay in a traditional occupation in Goa* (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2013),127.

emphasizes “that Agris are the people engaged in salt making in North Konkan coast”²⁸. But they have no connections to the Agris of Batim adds Reyna Sequeira.

When trying to understand the religion I found out that the Batim village consist majority of Christian population, salt pans are owned by both Christians and Hindu. Christian community worship Jesus. The Hindu, the Agris of Batim continue to maintain certain traditions, such as visiting the deity Chamundeshwari in Pilgao before the start of the salt season. The Agris, technically considered Hindus, worship different deities, including “Murkundeshwara, Entramen, and Sabrimani”²⁹. The Hindu populace like the rest of Hindus in Goa celebrate other festivals like Diwali, Ganesh Chaturti, Holi, etc.

²⁸ V.R Mitragotri, *Socio Cultural History of Goa :from the Bhojas to Vijaynagara* (Panaji:Institute Menezes Braganza, 1999).

²⁹ Reyna Sequeira, *As dear as salt: The story of neglect and decay in a traditional occupation in Goa* (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2013).

5.7: Migrants workers In Batim village

Today in Batim, one can find the tradition of salt making involves the employment of migrant laborers known as Agers from Karnataka. These laborers, who are part of the Scheduled Castes and primarily engage in salt making, migrate to Batim seasonally for work during the salt making season. When asked they answered that due to the low wages provided in their home town forced them to migrate as they could earn more doing out the same work in Goa.

They hail from areas like Bankikodla, Gokarna, and Ankola in Karnataka, come to Batim to work in the salt pans owned by the Agris. I observed that the manly work in the salt pans are carried out by Men. Men primarily involved in tasks like bunding, leveling the pans, and sprinkling salt, while women collect and gather salt crystals. The laborers build temporary huts on the salt pans provided by the owners and reside next to this salt pans taking care of it.

Despite the challenges they face, migrant laborers play a vital role in the salt making process in Batim, contributing to the local economy and sustaining the traditional livelihoods of the Agris. Their presence highlights the interconnectedness of communities across geographical boundaries and underscores the importance of seasonal migration in rural economies. As we can see, the majority of Goan youngsters today prefer employment that don't need much physical labor. We have to admit that these migrant laborers support Goa's economy and preserve its salt-making heritage.

In Batim village, the Agers, originally from Karnataka, have adapted to local customs and languages since migrating to Goa several years ago. While Kannada remains their primary language at home, they have learned to speak Konkani and Hindi as well. Their respectful attitude towards their employers is evident in the way they address them as "patrao" for males and "bai" for females. The workers wear modern attire and Western-style dresses, often provided by salt pan owners. Their diet mainly consists of rice, fish curry, and vegetables, reflecting the local culinary preferences. Although they are non-vegetarians, they abstain from consuming beef, pork, and buffalo meat, although some men have started consuming pork since living in Goa³⁰.

The findings reveal a unique compensation structure within the salt production industry, wherein laborers receive a portion of the salt yield as remuneration. Specifically, workers reportedly receive half of the salt produced, with one portion allocated to the owner and the other to the laborers. Since they have been in Goa for a long time, the migrants have become used to the locals and their language. They have also taken on eating habits similar to those of the Goan locals.

³⁰ Reyna Sequeira, *As dear as salt: The story of neglect and decay in a traditional occupation in Goa* (Saligao: Goa 1556, 2013).

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The study provides a detailed account of the cultural heritage and traditions of the diverse tribal communities of Goa. These communities, including the Gauda, Kunbi, and Mithgaude, have inhabited the coastal regions of Goa for generations, embodying a strong connection to the land and sea. Their livelihoods rely heavily on horticulture, farming, salt production, and other land-based activities, which form the backbone of their existence.

Despite facing challenges such as environmental degradation and economic disparities, these communities have persevered, relying on traditional knowledge and practices passed down through generations to sustain themselves. They have a rich repertoire of rituals, festivals, folk arts, and performances that reflect their deep-rooted traditions and beliefs. From the vibrant folk theater of Zagor and Dhalo to the rituals of Gaud Panchmi and Nava-Durga Jatra, these communities celebrate their cultural heritage with pride and reverence.

The study also provides an in-depth analysis of the unique form of communal land governance in Goa, known as the Gaunkari system. This system originated in pre-Portuguese times and embodies the ethos of communal ownership and collective management of land resources. It was deeply intertwined with the agrarian way of life, with local communities coming together to cultivate and steward the land. This system provided not only a means of livelihood but also a framework for social organization and governance within villages.

The study also discusses the impact of geographical factors, such as Goa's tropical monsoon climate and fertile alluvial plains, in shaping the Gaunkari system. These natural endowments provided the foundation for agricultural communities to thrive and adopt communal land ownership practices. The formalization of the Gaunkari system under Portuguese colonial rule brought both challenges and opportunities. While colonial interventions imposed new regulations and control over land governance, they also provided a legal framework for the recognition and preservation of communal land rights.

Today, the Gaunkari system continues to endure as a living heritage of Goan society, reflecting the enduring values of community, cooperation, and stewardship of the land. As Goa undergoes rapid social and economic changes, the Gaunkari system remains a vital institution for promoting sustainable development, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering inclusive governance.

In ancient times, the indigenous communities of Goa, specifically the Gauda, established a deep connection with the land through agriculture. The shift to agriculture marked a significant turning point as it led to settled lifestyles and communal agricultural practices. The Gaunkari system, supervised by village heads known as Gaunkars, exemplified communal land management and allocation of surplus for communal purposes. The land provided sustenance, shaped cultural practices, and acted as a spiritual anchor for its inhabitants.

The concept of Bhumipurush embodies spiritual reverence towards the land, symbolizing its fertility, protection, and nurturing spirit. Throughout history, land has played a fundamental role in the development of societies, influencing political, cultural, and economic spheres.

Various dynasties that ruled Goa left behind evidence of land grants aimed at improving agricultural activities. These grants supported agricultural development, particularly through the cultivation of Khazan lands, which are marshy areas reclaimed for agriculture. The tax-free nature of these lands and their maintenance through bunds facilitated land reclamation and agricultural productivity.

Goa's diverse agricultural landscape comprises Morod, Kher, and Khazan lands. Morod lands, with their sloping terrains, support traditional rainfed agriculture. Kher lands, with fertile soils, offer opportunities for diverse crop cultivation. Khazan lands, reclaimed coastal wetlands, sustain salt-tolerant crops and serve as vital habitats for wildlife.

Khazan lands are not merely agricultural plots; they represent a centuries-old legacy of environmental adaptation and ecological knowledge. They sustain livelihoods, regulate hydrological flows, and support traditional agriculture, aquaculture, and salt production. Khazan lands are symbols of resilience and ingenuity, deeply embedded in the socio-economic fabric of Goan communities.

In conclusion, the significance of land in Goa goes beyond its physicality and encompasses historical, cultural, and economic dimensions. Understanding and preserving this significance is crucial for sustaining livelihoods, conserving ecosystems, and fostering cultural heritage. Land is not just a resource; it is a legacy to be cherished and protected for future generations.

Finally, the study discusses a case study of the Agris of Batim village and the salt production industry in Goa. Goa's coastline is vital for its salt manufacturing industry, with solar salt

production being practiced for over 1500 years. Coastal areas like Salcete, Tiswadi, Bardez, and Pernem host salt pans known locally as 'Mithagar'. These regions, separated by rivers from the Western Ghats, rely on seawater and freshwater from these rivers for salt production. Batim village, located in Tiswadi, is one such region that has been engaged in salt production for centuries. The Agris of Batim village are known for their expertise in salt farming and have been instrumental in preserving this traditional craft. The text provides a detailed insight into the salt production industry in Goa and the role played by the Agris of Batim village in sustaining it over the years.

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List of Photograph



Fig:1, Salt pans of Batim Village, Pic credit: Krutika Karki.



Fig:2, Salt finished Product, Pic Credit: Krutika Karki.



Fig:3, Ghongdi (blanket worn by dhangar community), Kunbi Saree, Pic Credit : Krutika Karki



Fig:4, Tools used for Agricultural activities, Pic Credit: Krutika Karki.



Fig:5, Farmer, Pic Credit: Krutika Karki.



Fig:6 Shiroda Copper plate of Devraja Bhoj, Pic Credit: Krutika Karki.