

A STUDY OF THE DHILLO AND DHALO FESTIVAL OF THE CANACONA TALUKA

A Dissertation for

Course code and Course Title: HIS 651: Dissertation

Credits: 16

Submitted in partial fulfilment of Masters / Bachelor's Degree

M.A in History

by

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, “A Study of the Dhillo and Dhalo Festival of the Canacona Taluka” is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Discipline of History at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University, under the supervision of Mr Vinod Kankonkar 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 the dissertation.

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COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation report “A Study of the Dhillo and Dhalo Festival of the Canacona Taluka” is a bonafide work carried out by Ms Neha Sadanand Pagi under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History in the Discipline of History Programme at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University.

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CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Goa, located on India's west coast is not just a renowned destination for its sun-kissed beaches and architectural marvels. It has a cultural tapestry comprising its history, traditions, and blend of influences. Aside from its beautiful landscape, Goa holds a unique position in India's cultural fabric, showcasing a deep-rooted heritage that lasts through the ages.¹

The cultural significance of Goa extends beyond monuments and festivals to its people's daily lives, beliefs and practices. From vibrant festivals and rituals to the harmonious coexistence of diverse communities, every aspect contributes to the unique cultural fabric of this coastal region.²

In Goa, nature and religion are closely connected, forming a unique blend that influences the way of life for its residents. The people of Goa have a deep respect for nature viewing it as a divine entity worthy of veneration. This connection is evident in their religious practices, cultural rituals, and daily life. In their folklore, nature or earth is often referred to as The Great Divine Mother.³

The worship is not confined to temples and churches alone, it extends beyond to the natural elements that surround them. Annual rites, artistic performances and folk festivals are expressions of cultural consciousness and celebrations of the relationship between the community and the environment. These cultural expressions and

¹ Pandurang R Phaldesai. *Goa: Folklore Studies*. Panjim: Broadway Publishing House, 2011.

² Pandurang R Phaldesai. *Goa: Folklore Studies*. Panjim: Broadway Publishing House, 2011.

³ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar. *Eco-Culture Goa Paradigm*. First edition. Panjim: Broadway Publishing House, 2013.

performances represent the emotional and ritualistic heritage passed down through generations.⁴

In the rural society of Goa, where agriculture is the main occupation of the community, cultural celebrations are deeply linked with the cycles of sowing, nurturing and harvesting. These festivals therefore become a reflection of the various stages of agricultural practices. Through the celebration of these festivals, the people express their gratitude for the connection between the soil and their livelihood. Furthermore, these festivals serve as a representation of the seasonal shifts in the agricultural cycle. These festivals also provide an opportunity to worship collectively thereby leading to group solidarity.⁵

The Dhilllo and Dhalo festivals in Goa are such expressions of reverence for Mother Earth. These festivals are deeply rooted in the belief that nature plays a vital role in the well-being of the community. These festivals involve rituals such as invocations and blessings to nature. They believe in the harmonious relationship between nature and humans. By acknowledging and celebrating the Earth's life-giving forces, Dhilllo and Dhalo festivals play an essential role in maintaining the cultural heritage and ecological consciousness of the Goan community.

The Dhilllo festival is observed by tribal women living in the Western Ghats regions of Canacona, Sanguem and Quepem Taluka. It serves as a gesture to express gratitude to Kartikey, the son of goddess Parvati who symbolizes Mother Earth. During the celebration, usually, the unmarried girls recite melodious folk songs and participate in

⁴ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar. *Folk Dances of Goa*. Udaipur: West Zone Cultural Centre, 2010.

⁵ Lachawiliana Varte. 'Socio-Religious Significance of Tribal Festivals: A Study of The Traditional Dimasa Kachari Community Festivals'. Accessed 29 December 2023.

folk dances and traditional games. While Dhilllo is predominantly performed by unmarried girls married women also take part except for the widows.

Dhalo is performed during the month of Pausha and Magha (January- February in the Hindu calendar) just before the arrival of winter. This dance serves as a form of prayer, which women perform in the hope of bringing happiness and good health to their family members, particularly their husbands.⁶ Typically, a group of 12 to 24 women form two parallel rows, facing each other. The dancers place their arms on the waist of the adjacent dancer and gently sway to the tunes of the songs sung. This performance is repeated for about a period of one week.⁷

The maand tradition holds profound cultural and spiritual significance, serving as more than just a physical plot of land. The maand stands as a repository of socio-cultural values. It functions as an open meeting place where communities gather and engage in cultural activities and make crucial decisions for their villages. It holds a sacred status, serving as a place where various deities are invoked. Certain festivals, such as Dhilllo and Dhalo, are specifically celebrated on the maand.⁸

With the progression towards modernity, these traditional elements are only showcased on stages in urban areas. It is undeniable that rural communities in Goa play a crucial role in preserving folk culture, customs and traditions. They maintain the authenticity of these folk dances by continuing to perform them in the actual maand, a traditional gathering place, during annual occasions. In rural communities, the connection to these

⁶Pandurang R Phaldesai, "A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa". Goa University. Accessed 18 December 2023.

⁷Pandurang R Phaldesai, "A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa". Goa University. Accessed 18 December 2023.

⁸ Phaldesai, Pandurang R. *Goa: Folklore Studies*. Panjim: Broadway Publishing House, 2011.

traditions remains strong fostering a deeper and more authentic preservation of Goa's rich cultural heritage.

1.2. IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH PROBLEM\ HYPOTHESIS:

This research aims to undertake a thorough and detailed examination of the Dhilllo and Dhalo festivals within Canacona Taluka, with a specific focus on the villages of Kotigao and Gaodongrem for the Dhilllo festival and Agonda for the Dhalo festival. Notably, such an in-depth study has not been undertaken before. The primary goal is to delve into the socio-religious practices and significance of these festivals in the life of women, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding that fills the existing research gap.

The socio-religious practices and significance of the Dhilllo and Dhalo festivals in Canacona Taluka, with a specific focus on the villages of Kotigao, Gaodongrem, Agonda, play a pivotal role in shaping the cultural identity and fostering community bonds among women.

The Dhilllo and Dhalo Festival in Canacona Taluka holds cultural significance as it acts as a platform for preserving and promoting traditional customs, and rituals within the community. These cultural events are rooted in the farming calendar suggesting connections to agricultural practices such as sowing or harvesting. The festival becomes a reflection of the community's ties to the land and its dependence on agricultural cycles. These festivals through their performance honour and acknowledge the rhythms of nature.

1.3. OBJECTIVES:

- To Examine the socio-religious significance of the *Dhilllo* and *Dhalo* festivals.

- To Recognize the role of women as cultural custodians and knowledge bearers.
- To Understand the changes that have occurred recently in the two festivals.

1.4. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Feasts, Festivals, and Observances of Goa by Maria de Lourdes Bravo da Costa Rodrigues is a comprehensive and insightful study of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Goa. The book provides a detailed overview of the various feasts, festivals, and observances that are celebrated in Goa throughout the year. The book includes a topic on Dhalo which provides an overview of the festival. The book shows how the Dhalo festival, its rituals, songs, and dance are connected to nature and women.⁹

Folk Dances of Goa by Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar is a well-researched book that provides a detailed overview of the folk dances of Goa. He argues that folk dances are not just entertainment but are an important part of the cultural identity of the Goan people. The Dhilllo and Dhalo festivals in this book provide valuable information about the role of ritualistic performances, communities' beliefs, and connection to the divine in Goan culture.¹⁰

Eco-culture Goa Paradigm by Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar is an important source that provides a cultural context of Goa. The book emphasises the importance of rituals, festivals, and daily practices in shaping the life of the Goans. It deals with the deep-rooted relationship between the local community and nature and the way of life of Goans which is closely connected to their ecological surroundings. Extensive research

⁹ Maria de Lourdes Bravo da Costa Rodrigues. *Feasts, Festivals and Observances of Goa*. Goa: L & L Publications, 2004.

¹⁰ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar. *Eco-Culture Goa Paradigm*. First edition. Panjim: Broadway Publishing House, 2013.

on the Kulmi community's self-sustaining lifestyle, daily routines and dietary habits has been done. An overview of this community is essential as Dhilllo is particularly practised by this community. Understanding the community's values, beliefs and practices will aid in a better interpretation of the Dhilllo festival. It also covers a topic on Dhilllo and Dhalo festivals providing basic information on the eco-cultural understanding of the festivals.¹¹

Pandurang Phaldesai's *Goa: Folklore Studies* delves into the rich tradition of Goan folklore. The book explores the traditions, beliefs and rituals that shaped the cultural identity of Goa. It covers a variety of topics from oral literature of folk songs and narratives to the rituals and festivals that celebrate Goa's connection to nature and communities. Phaldesai highlights the significance of Dhalo within Goan folklore and its connection to women, nature and ancestral traditions.¹²

Pandurang Phaldesai's thesis, *A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa* holds considerable importance and relevance. The detailed documentation of religious practices and festivals in this work provides valuable insights into the region of Canacona. This information is beneficial for understanding the belief system and social practices of the people. The thesis covers Dhalo and Dhilllo festivals which are crucial for my dissertation. The discussion on the rituals and beliefs associated with Dhilllo and Dhalo festivals offers insights into their cultural and religious practices.¹³

Mhajen Goem is a short Konkani book by Geeta Narayan Naik that explores several Goan feasts, festivals and the cultural life of the people. One of the notable topics covered which is of significance for my work is the Goan folk dance Dhalo. The author

¹¹ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar. *Folk Dances of Goa*. Udaipur: West Zone Cultural Centre, 2010

¹² Pandurang R Phaldesai. *Goa: Folklore Studies*. Panjim: Broadway Publishing House, 2011.

¹³ Pandurang R. Phaldesai. 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa'. Goa University, 2003. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

provides a comprehensive and insightful explanation of Dhalo, shedding light on its cultural significance. The author has also included the songs sung during the performance of Dhalo.¹⁴

Adhya Sanskriti Goprashtachi a book authored by Ulhas Prabhu Desai delves into a selection of festivals celebrated by the people of Goa. The book is divided into two sections, one dedicated to festivals performed by males and the other to those by females. Of particular interest for my dissertation are the female-centric festivals, namely Dhilllo and Dhalo. The latter part of the book extensively explores these festivals, offering a comprehensive explanation and presenting various songs sung by the communities during the performance of these folk dances.¹⁵

In Jayanti Naik's *Amonnem Yek Lokjinn*, the primary focus is on the village of Amonnem in Quepem taluka and its surrounding regions. The book explores various aspects such as the history, religion, social customs, festivals and folklore of the region. The book also provides insights into women-centric festivals like Dhalo, specifically practised in the village. This information is crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of the Dhalo festival.¹⁶

Goa Kulmi Paryavaraniya Sanskritiche Janka, Rakshak authored by Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar is a comprehensive examination of the lifestyle, cultural practices and ecological balance maintained by the Kulmis of Goa. The author's research delves into the daily life of the Kulmis shedding light on various aspects of their existence. The book also deals with the festivals observed by the community, including the Dhilllo festival which is the focal point of my study. The author has provided an overview of

¹⁴ Geeta Narayan Naik. *Mhajan Goem*. Goa: Prakashak, 2022.

¹⁵ Ulhas Prabhu Desai. *Adhya Sanskriti Goprashtachi*. Quepem-Goa: Ulhas Prabhu Desai, 2011.

¹⁶ Jayanti Naik. *Amone: Ek Lokjeen*. Goa: Goa Konkani Akademi, 1993.

the festival accompanied by an introduction to some of the songs performed during the celebration.¹⁷

Rajendra Kerkar's *Natural Heritage of Goa* offers a comprehensive exploration of diverse aspects of Goan society covering themes such as deities, rituals and their connection to people. It also delves into the eco-feminist nature of the Dhalo festival. It provides insightful perspectives on how the festival includes ecological and feminist principles. It provides insights into the harmonious relationship between the festival, nature and women.¹⁸

Glimpses of Goa's Cultural Heritage by Bhiva P Parab focuses on the rich natural and cultural heritage of Goa, highlighting its ancient traditions, folk festivals and the significance of folk songs and dances. The author points out the persistence of these folk traditions from generation to generation. The author particularly focuses on the various folk songs prevalent in Goa, such as Lagna Geeta, Fugudi, and Dhalo. The Dhalo festival is described as a unique celebration of the local Goans particularly in villages. It is presented as a blend of Dance, drama and song dedicated to Earth goddesses and Forest goddesses.¹⁹

Living Traditions of The Emerald Land: Tulashi Vrindavans and Holy Crosses of Goa by P.V Pathak and Usha P Pathak is a photographic documentation that captures the essence of Tulshi Vrindavans and Holy Crosses in the state of Goa. The book aims to introduce these cultural symbols to readers and art enthusiasts. Through their work, the authors shed light on the cultural significance of Tushi Vrindavans in every household along with daily rituals and celebrations associated with this sacred plant. The book

¹⁷Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar. *Goa Kulmi Paryavaraniya Sanskritiche Janka, Rakshak*. Goa: Mahesh Angle, 2004.

¹⁸ Rajendra Kerkar. *Natural Heritage of Goa*. Goa: Broadway Publishing House, 2016

¹⁹ Bhiva P Parab. *Glimpses of Goa's Cultural Heritage*. Goa: Broadway Publishing House, 2013.

also covers the Dhalo festival associated with this sacred plant providing an understanding of the cultural heritage of Goa.²⁰

Goenchim Dhalo Gitam edited by Jayanti Naik is a compilation of Dhalo songs from all over Goa, from Sattari to Canacona Taluka. Naik emphasises the importance of Dhalo celebrations in the life of the people of Goa. These songs play a crucial role in my dissertation serving as valuable material to support information gathered from oral sources.²¹

Santer Worship in Goa A Cultural Study in Historical Perspective by Vasu Madhu Usapkar, is a doctoral thesis that delves into the worship of Santer in Goa which forms an important part of nature worship. Goddess Santer is symbolically represented as the mother of the people holding a profound influence on various aspects of their lives. The thesis thoroughly examines the various facets related to Santer including the various festivals celebrated. The work also explores the relationship between Goan ethnic communities and nature, including daily rituals and annual festivals. This is particularly significant as Dhillo and Dhalo are highlighted as expressions of reverence towards Mother Goddess.²²

1.5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:

²⁰ P.V Pathak, and Usha P Pathak. *Living Traditions of The Emerald Land: Tulashi Vrindavans and Holy Crosses of Goa*. First edition. Goa: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2003.

²¹ Jayanti Naik, ed. *Goenchim Dhalo Gitam*. First edition. Goa: Goa Konkani Aakademi, 2021.

²² Vasu Madhu Usapkar. 'Santer Worship in Goa A Cultural Study in Historical Perspective'. Deccan College Post Graduate And Research Institute, 2017. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/315630>.

The methodology that will be employed in this research includes conducting a thorough literature review to gather insights from the existing works on these two festivals- *Dhalo* and *Dhilllo* and identify the research gap. Using recorded video footage of the performances for analysis. Conducting interviews with the performing groups and other local people to record their perspectives. This fieldwork will involve qualitative interviews with local women from Kotigao, Gaodongrem, Agonda villages who perform the Dhilllo and Dhalo festivals respectively.

1.6. CHAPTERIZATION

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background and context of the study

Identification of Research Problem/ Hypothesis

Research objectives

Literature Review

Research Design and Methodology

Significance and relevance of the study

CHAPTER 2: THE SETTING

This chapter discusses various aspects of Canacona taluka in South Goa, including its geographical features, historical background, cultural heritage, demographic profile, occupation, people, and resources. It deals with the blend of natural beauty, cultural richness, and economic activities in the region.

CHAPTER 3: THE MAAND

This chapter delves into the intricate cultural institution of the Maand in Goa, exploring its historical roots, social significance, economic role, and cultural importance. The Maand, serving as a communal gathering space deeply embedded in rural and tribal life, plays a pivotal role in preserving Goan customs, fostering community bonds, and facilitating various social, cultural, and religious activities.

CHAPTER 4: THE DHILLO FESTIVAL

Chapter 4 explores the Dhilllo festival, a traditional celebration observed in Canacona Taluka in Goa. Rooted in folk culture and deeply intertwined with the reverence for the earth's creative and fertility powers, the Dhilllo festival serves as a unique manifestation of the community's connection to the land and nature. Predominantly performed by women, the festival revolves around acknowledging the earth's nurturing qualities symbolized by the worship of a 'womb-like' mound of sacred soil, known as Dhilllo.

CHAPTER 5: THE DHALO FESTIVAL

Chapter 5 of the study delves into the Dhalo festival of the Agonda village, Goa, which venerates the earth-goddess and embodies a deep connection between women, their community, and the natural world.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Chapter 6 concludes the findings of the research.

1.6. SCOPE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study lies in shedding light on the cultural and religious practices associated with the Dhilllo and Dhalo festivals in the villages of Kotigao,

Gaodongrem, and Agonda. Through this study, an attempt is made to uncover the deep-rooted traditions, rituals and veneration of nature within these communities.

CHAPTER 2- THE SETTING

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Goa is located on the southwestern coast of India, known for its rich history, diverse culture and beautiful landscapes. It is divided into two districts: North Goa and South Goa. These districts are further subdivided into twelve talukas Tiswadi, Bardez, Pernem, Bicholim, Sattari, Ponda, Sanguem, Canacona, Salcete, Mormugao, Quepem¹ and Dharbandora. These talukas serve as administrative subdivisions and play a crucial role in the governance and development of the state. Each taluka comprises several villages and towns, contributing to the cultural, economic and social fabric of Goa.

Canacona Taluka located in South Goa is renowned for its stunning coastal landscapes and unique geographical features. Positioned along the western coastline it holds the distinction of being the southernmost taluka of Goa with an area of 352.04 km².² Bordered by the Quepem taluka to the north, Sanguem taluka to the northeast and the state of Karnataka to the South, Canacona boasts a location that blends natural beauty with cultural richness. The administrative hub of Canacona is the town of Chaudi.³

In 1764, the ruler of Sonda temporarily handed over the territories of Sanguem, Quepem and Canacona to the Portuguese for fear of invasion from Hyder Ali. However, as the ruler failed to reclaim these territories eventually became integrated into the Portuguese Estado da India. Along with the other territories acquired by the Portuguese, these came to be known as the “New Conquests” (Novas Conquistas).⁴

Canacona as one of the final areas to be incorporated into Portuguese-controlled Goa, has a shorter duration of exposure to Portuguese influence compared to other regions. This shorter period of interaction with Portuguese colonial administration, culture, and customs allowed Canacona to retain more of its indigenous traditions and cultural practices, particularly those associated with Hinduism. As a result, Canacona has

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

² Priyanka Velip, ‘Shifting Cultivation In Goa: Livelihood And Rights Of Women Of The Velip Tribe’ (Goa, Goa University, 2020).

³ Academic Accelerator, ‘Canacona: Most Up-to-Date Encyclopedia, News & Reviews’, Academic Accelerator, accessed 16 February 2024, <https://academic-accelerator.com/encyclopedia/canacona>.

⁴ Kamat, *Farar Far (Crossfire): Local Resistance to Colonial Hegemony in Goa, 1510-1912*.

maintained a stronger Hindu identity relative to other areas of Goa where Portuguese influence had a more significant impact on societal norms and customs.

Goa's cultural landscape is a vibrant mosaic of diverse traditions, and Canacona stands out as a prime example of its cultural richness. Throughout the year, the region comes alive with a vibrant array of Zatras, feasts, and festivals, which serve as important markers of community identity and heritage preservation. Zatras are significant cultural events. These temple festivals are deeply ingrained in the local socio-religious fabric, serving as occasions for spiritual devotion and community celebration. This can be widely witnessed in the Zatra of Shri Mallikarjuna temple in Canacona.⁵

Central to these celebrations are the performances of traditional folk dances and dramas. These artistic expressions serve not only as entertainment but also as a means of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage from one generation to the next. Folk dances such as the Dekhni, Fugdi, and Dhalo are performed with great fervour captivating spectators with their rhythmic movements and singing.⁶

The annual village dance and festivals are integral to the cultural fabric offering a glimpse into the local heritage and customs. These occasions not only serve as opportunities for religious observances but also as social gatherings where friends and family members reconnect, exchange greetings and partake in traditional delicacies.

2.2. HISTORY

Canacona taluka presents a wealth of historical and cultural potential. The area was settled by hunter-gatherers during ancient times, as indicated by Kunbi settlements and practices such as kumeri cultivation. Additionally, certain place names in the region hint at ancient settlements influenced by Dravidian or South Indian culture.⁷

The recorded history of Canacona taluka begins during the Satavahana period (200 B.C. to 100 A.D.), with evidence of minor dynasties such as the Chutus in the nearby Karwar

⁵ Tony Martin and F.M Nadaf, *Goa As Goa Was Canacona The Last Frontier* (Goa: Directorate of Official Language (Govt. of Goa), 2011).

⁶ Tony Martin and F.M Nadaf, *Goa As Goa Was Canacona The Last Frontier* (Goa: Directorate of Official Language (Govt. of Goa), 2011).

⁷ Pandurang R Phaladesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

area. Subsequently, the area was ruled by the Bhojas of Chandor until 500 A.D., followed by control under the Badami Chalukyas until the 7th century A.D. Over the next few centuries, the region came under the influence of various dynasties from North Karnataka, including the Kadambas of Banavasi, Hangal, and Chandavar. The South Konkan Shilaharas occupied the area in the 10th century before it was annexed by the Kadambas.⁸

The Kadambas ruled Canacona taluka until around 1300 A.D., with frequent conflicts with other Kannada kingdoms such as the Sindas, Rattas of Saundatti, Gangas of Talkad, and Hoysalas of Dwarsamudra. Following the end of Kadamba rule, the area experienced a period of instability, with control shifting between small chieftains like the King of Gersoppa and the Nawab of Honavar. Malik Kafur briefly established control in the early 14th century before the Bahamanis captured the area in 1380 A.D. The Vijayanagara Empire then ruled Canacona until 1472 A.D.⁹

Subsequently, the taluka saw brief Adilshahi rule before local chieftains, aligned with the Vijayanagara emperor, gained control. In 1510 A.D., Afonso de Albuquerque captured the Tiswadi island, during which time there was Adilshahi rule in Canacona. The kings of Sonda continued to control the taluka until they surrendered it to the Portuguese in 1763 A.D. From then until 1961, Canacona taluka was under Portuguese rule as one of the "New Conquest" talukas. During this period, from 1946 to 1961, the taluka witnessed a struggle for freedom, employing both violent and non-violent means.¹⁰

2.3. ETYMOLOGY

The name of the Canacona region has evolved, with various interpretations regarding its etymology. Originally known as Advat, it denoted a region accessible through remote routes, highlighting its isolation from early population centres. Over time,

⁸ Pandurang R Phaldesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

⁹ Pandurang R Phaldesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

¹⁰ Pandurang R Phaldesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

linguistic influences from Kannada led to the transformation of the land to Kadkona referring to the abundance of wild Indian bison in the area. Another interpretation suggests a connection to the Kannada words “kan” or “kanu”, denoting a jungle and “kon”, meaning a lake. This association implies the presence of a jungle containing a lake within it, leading to the name “Kankon”.¹¹

According to Marathi Bhasha Udgam Va Vikas, “Kankon” could have evolved from “Kanvapuram”, as local historian S.S. Desai suggested in 1992. Desai supports this claim by referencing the presence of Kanvashram, a site located near the Mallikarjun temple in Shristhal within Canacona. His analysis, as detailed in his book “Shree Mallikarjun Devasthancha Itihas”, suggests a connection to Puranic mythology in his discussion of Kanvapuram and Tarpanachi nadi.¹²

According to S.S. Desai, the name “Canacona” emerged recently, about hundred to hundred and fifty years ago. However, historical records show that during the Vijayanagara and Sonda Kingdom’s rule, the area was known as Siveshwar or Shiveshwar Mahal. Desai explains that initially, Shiveshwar Mahal and Kankon were separate regions, with Shiveshwar covering the southern area up to the Kali River, while Kankon included the Northern part of today’s Canacona taluka. Over time these regions were merged, and the name “Kankon” became dominant.¹³

The title of the Mallikarjun deity in historical documents is recorded as “Advat Simhasanadhishwar Mahapati,” indicating a connection to the Advat or Kankon region. With the influence of Sanskritization, the name “Kankon” gained acceptance, with “Kanan” meaning jungle and “kunda” meaning lake in Sanskrit. This aligns with regions abundant jungles and lakes.¹⁴

Furthermore, the influence of the Portuguese led to the transformation of “Kankon” to “Canacona”, which is in use to date. In essence, the name “Canacona” has Dravidian

¹¹ Pandurang R Phaldesai, ‘A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa’ (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625..>

¹² Pandurang R Phaldesai, ‘A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa’ (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

¹³ Pandurang R Phaldesai, ‘A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa’ (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

¹⁴ Pandurang R Phaldesai, ‘A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa’ (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

origins and reflects the area's geographical features rather than being linked to the Puranic mythology, contrary to popular beliefs.¹⁵

2.4. ETYMOLOGY OF THE VILLAGES TAKEN FOR STUDY

The villages chosen for the study of the two eco-feminist festivals, Dhillo and Dhalo, are Gaondongri, Khotigaon, and Agonda. Specifically, Agonda village is selected for Dhalo, while Gaondongri and Khotigaon are chosen for Dhillo.

The name “Cotigao” (also known as “Khotigaon”) originates from the term Khoti, which refers to contractual income obtained from forest products and cultivation. During the Maratha Kingdom, a Khot was an official responsible for collecting revenue from such lands as part of a hereditary office. Therefore, the village acquired its name “Khotigaon” due to its association with the role of the Khot in revenue collection from these lands.¹⁶ Another interpretation suggests that the name may also stem from “Khoti”, which was involved in contracting for standing crops or wood from the jungle.¹⁷

The name "Gaondongrem" has a literal translation that reflects the geographical features of the area. Specifically, "Gaondongrem" signifies a village located amidst hills or mountains. This suggests that the terrain surrounding the village is characterized by hilly landscapes, with the settlement nestled among these elevated features. Such descriptive names are common in regions where the natural environment plays a prominent role in shaping the local identity and lifestyle. In the case of "Gaondongrem," the name vividly captures the hilly topography that defines the village's surroundings.

The villages of Gaondongrem and Cotigao exemplify typical habitats where tribal communities reside in isolated mountain ranges. These villages are renowned for their abundant biodiversity and the predominant presence of tribal populations.¹⁸

¹⁵ Pandurang R Phaldesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

¹⁶ Pandurang R Phaldesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

¹⁷ Arvind Haldankar, 'Development and Changing Livelihood Systems Among the Tribal Communities In South Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2016).

¹⁸ Pandurang R Phaldesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

In both Gaondongrem and Cotigao, tribal settlements are scattered across various hills, primarily inhabited by the Velip community. The topography of these villages is characterized by hilly terrain, with Gaondongrem having a more pronounced elevation compared to Cotigao. The tribal communities tend to settle near water sources such as natural springs, which are abundant in the mountainous regions. Settlements are often found below gaps formed by adjoining hills or mountains, strategically located to access water resources. These perennial water sources have been vital lifelines for the communities for generations.¹⁹

While historically concentrated in hillside settlements, the Velip community has also begun to inhabit plains in recent times, which facilitates easier communication and access to modern amenities.

The derivation of the name "Agonda" from "Agondeshwar" underscores the deep-rooted ties between the village and its religious heritage. It reflects the rich cultural tapestry of the community and highlights the role of local landmarks in shaping the collective identity of the area.

Agonda village is known primarily for its beautiful beach. The primary occupation of Agonda village, like many coastal villages in Goa, revolves around tourism and fishing. Tourism plays a significant role in the local economy due to Agonda's beautiful beach and tranquil atmosphere. Many locals are involved in hospitality-related businesses such as running guesthouses, beach huts, restaurants, and cafes.

Fishing is another vital occupation in Agonda. Local fishermen venture out into the Sea to catch a variety of seafood. Fishing has been a traditional way of life for many families in Agonda. Despite the growth of tourism, fishing remains an essential part of the village's identity and economy.

2.5. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

According to data from the Census conducted in 2011, this region exhibits several notable characteristics. The total population of Canacona taluka stands at 45,172 individuals, distributed fairly evenly between males and females- with 22,532 male

¹⁹ Arvind Haldankar, 'Development and Changing Livelihood Systems Among the Tribal Communities In South Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2016).

residents and 22,640 female residents. A considerable portion of the population comprises young children under six years old, numbering approximately 4,635.²⁰

The caste system plays a role in shaping the community's dynamics; only 173 members belong to Scheduled Castes, while the Scheduled Tribes constitute a more prominent segment, accounting for 13,657 inhabitants. This indicates a higher representation of tribal communities compared to other castes.²¹

Education has played a vital part in improving the quality of life among the local people, as evidenced by the high literacy rate of 84.68%. This figure suggests that the vast majority of adults possess basic reading and writing skills.²²

Gender equality appears to be reasonably balanced, with a sex ratio of 1,005 women per thousand men. Although not entirely equal, this value demonstrates that women enjoy relative parity with their male counterparts.²³

Urbanization remains a minor factor in Canacona Taluka, where just over one-quarter of the population resides in urban areas. Consequently, the bulk of the population continues to live in rural settings.²⁴

In terms of religious affiliation, Hindus form the largest group comprising around 80.47% of the population, followed closely by Christians who account for nearly 18% of the residents. Lastly, Islam represents a smaller but still noticeable minority, making up about 1.69% of the overall population.²⁵

Overall, Canacona Taluka offers a fascinating glimpse into the complexities of Indian society, showcasing both traditional and traditional aspects such as the caste system and modern trends like increased literacy rates and urbanization. These factors combine to create a dynamic environment that fosters growth and development within the region.

²⁰ 'Canacona Taluka Population, Religion, Caste South Goa District, Goa - Census India', www.censusindia.co.in, accessed 20 February 2024, <https://www.censusindia.co.in/subdistrict/canacona-taluka-south-go-go-5619>.

²¹ 'Canacona Taluka Population, Religion, Caste South Goa District, Goa - Census India'.

²² 'Canacona Taluka Population, Religion, Caste South Goa District, Goa - Census India'.

²³ 'Canacona Taluka Population, Religion, Caste South Goa District, Goa - Census India'.

²⁴ 'Canacona Taluka Population, Religion, Caste South Goa District, Goa - Census India'.

²⁵ 'Canacona Taluka Population, Religion, Caste South Goa District, Goa - Census India'.

2.6. OCCUPATION

The occupation of Canacona taluka is multifaceted, with its economy deeply rooted in various sectors such as fisheries, animal husbandry, agriculture, and horticulture. Fishing stands out as a significant occupation owing to the taluka's extensive coastline stretching approximately 40 kilometres, coupled with 24 kilometres of inland waterways and numerous small tanks. The region's coastal and inshore waters are abundant in fish resources, particularly mackerels and sardines, attracting traditional and modern fishing practices alike. Fish landing centres scattered across the taluka serve as vital hubs for the fishing industry, facilitating the processing and distribution of the abundant catch.

Agriculture and horticulture form the backbone of Canacona's economy, providing sustenance to a significant portion of the population. Paddy and cashews are the primary crops cultivated in the region, complemented by a diverse range of wet and dry crops, plantation crops, and garden crops. The taluka's agricultural diversity includes fruits, vegetables, spices, and plantation crops like coconut and areca nut. Despite challenges such as limited arable land and irrigation facilities, agriculture and horticulture remain essential occupations, contributing to food security and economic stability in the region.

Overall, Canacona taluka's economy thrives on a mix of traditional and modern occupations, with fishing, animal husbandry, agriculture, and horticulture playing pivotal roles in sustaining livelihoods and fostering economic growth. The rich natural resources and favourable climate of the region continue to support these occupations, ensuring their continued significance in the local economy.

2.7. PEOPLE OF CANACONA

Migration and settlement of communities in Canacona began in the prehistoric era and persisted until the eighteenth century. Similar to villages in other regions, most villages in the Canacona taluka have settlements organized into separate wards for different occupation groups such as carpenters, blacksmiths, mahars, chambhars, potters, washermen, laborers, goldsmiths, priests, and fisherfolk. Reports indicate that

numerous families migrated from different locations and established roots in this taluka.²⁶

The indigenous people of the region are said to be the Gaudas and the Kunbis tribes. These communities reside in distinct areas within the villages of Patnem, Poinguinim, Loliem, Agonda, Gaondongiri, Cotigao, Chapoli, and Kola, all located in the Canacona taluka.²⁷

The tribal population of Canacona comprises Mahars, Kunbis, Velips, Gaudas, Dhangars, and Pagis/Pagui. The Pagis/Pagui predominantly inhabit the coastal areas of Canacona and are likely named after their occupation, fishing, derived from the word 'pag,' meaning fish, or 'paguir,' referring to fishing nets. They are primarily involved in fishing activities and are organized into endogamous groups with exogamous clans named after family deities.²⁸

The Kunbis are divided into two subgroups: Gaunkars and Velips, with the latter considering themselves distinct from Kunbis and holding a priestly role. These tribes are thought to belong to the proto-Australoid group, but due to the lack of archaeological, anthropological, epigraphic, and literary evidence, definitive conclusions are challenging to make.²⁹

These tribes possess a diverse and vibrant culture, with each having their own distinct rituals and ways of celebrating life. Living largely at a subsistence level, they are often marginalized within society. To meet their economic needs, they form alliances with other clans, leading to an interdependence that extends not only to economic matters but also to religious rituals, which continue to be observed today.

This interdependence is intricately woven into their ritual practices, with each tribe assigned specific roles, effectively uniting them as a cohesive whole. Their distinctive style of dress, mannerisms, chewing of betel leaf, deep attachment to the land, and close relationship with nature provide a unique and exclusive experience for observers.³⁰

²⁶ Phaladesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa'.

²⁷ Domitel D'Souza, 'Race, Ethnicity and History- The Voices From Below', 17 February 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Canacona_taluka&oldid=1208420623.

²⁸ Domitel D'Souza, 'Race, Ethnicity and History- The Voices From Below', 17 February 2024.

²⁹ Domitel D'Souza, 'Race, Ethnicity and History- The Voices From Below', 17 February 2024.

³⁰ Domitel D'Souza, 'Race, Ethnicity and History- The Voices From Below', 17 February 2024.

Their traditional festivals, folk culture, drama, dances, etc are unique and represent an important aspect of their way of life, although some are gradually disappearing over time.

A significant initiative aimed at promoting and highlighting tribal culture and heritage is the 'Lokutsav'. 'Lokutsav' combines 'Lok', which refers to the people or indigenous groups, with 'utsav', meaning celebration or festival. Therefore, 'Lokutsav' represents a celebration of the people themselves, encompassing their heritage, culture, lifestyle, traditional knowledge systems, art, crafts, livelihoods, and folklore.

At 'Lokutsav', visitors can explore a variety of everyday items used by tribal communities. Alongside essential household items, the exhibition features terracotta pottery of diverse designs, grass and cane baskets for agricultural purposes and storage, eco-friendly mats, and coconut shell artifacts. The event offers insights into livelihood systems, demonstrating pottery-making, woodcutting, pounding, grinding, and weaving coconut fronds. Traditional songs accompany these demonstrations, providing a holistic view of subaltern lifestyles.

Agricultural tools and equipment showcased at the event offer knowledge of traditional farming practices. Visitors can also learn about ethno-medicine, observing herbs and barks used to treat common illnesses. Folk dances are performed, and competitions are organized to promote tribal culture among students and cultural clubs, with participants showcasing their talents to tribal tunes. Traditional games and adventure activities highlight the adventurous aspect of tribal life.

Tribal cuisine is a significant attraction, featuring dishes cooked without oil, with specialities like 'pollia bakri' available for visitors to savor in a traditional thatched-roof house setting. Additionally, visitors can explore tribal dress styles, ornaments, and musical instruments among other exhibits. 'Lokutsav' serves as a subaltern expression of culture and lifestyle, offering a rich tapestry of tribal traditions and customs.

2.8. RESOURCES

Canacona taluka boasts a rich tapestry of natural resources that play a vital role in sustaining both its economy and ecological balance. From mineral wealth to lush

forests, bountiful water sources to thriving fisheries, and vibrant agriculture to diverse wildlife, Canacona is a treasure trove of natural abundance.

The taluka is endowed with a diverse range of minerals, including granite, bauxite, clay, and basalt. These resources form the backbone of the region's industrial potential, with significant deposits identified by the Geological Survey of India. The presence of various mineral formations such as schistose meta-basalt and pink ferruginous phyllite underscores the geological complexity of the area, offering opportunities for further exploration and extraction.³¹

The taluka is blessed with ample water resources, primarily sustained by the Talpona and Galgibag rivers, along with several minor rivers and springs. These water bodies not only cater to the agricultural needs of the region but also support a thriving fishing industry. The rivers' extensive drainage areas and seasonal springs contribute to the socio-economic vitality of Canacona, fostering agricultural cultivation and providing livelihoods to local communities.

The taluka's verdant forests, covering a significant portion of its land, serve as vital ecological buffers and economic assets. Conservation efforts, rooted in traditional practices of forest stewardship, have helped preserve the biodiversity and integrity of these forests. The Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, a sanctuary within Canacona, stands as a testament to the region's commitment to nature conservation, providing a sanctuary for diverse wildlife and original virgin forests.

Canacona's coastline and inland waterways support a thriving fishing industry, fueled by abundant fishery resources such as mackerels, sardines, and prawns. Fishing communities rely on creeks, estuaries, and coastal waters for their livelihoods, utilizing both traditional and modern fishing techniques. Mechanized vessels and fish landing centres dot the coastline, facilitating the sustainable exploitation of marine resources while contributing to the local economy.

2.9. CONCLUSION

Canacona taluka in South Goa stands as a testament to the rich historical, cultural, and ecological heritage of the region. Its diverse landscape, encompassing stunning coastal

³¹ Pandurang R Phaldesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

vistas, lush forests, and rolling hills, provides a picturesque backdrop to its vibrant communities. The taluka's history, spanning from ancient times to colonial rule, reflects a tapestry of conquests, migrations, and cultural exchanges, shaping its unique identity.

The people of Canacona, including indigenous tribes like the Gaudas, Kunbis, Velips, and others, have preserved their traditional way of life amidst evolving societal dynamics. Despite facing challenges such as marginalization and encroaching modernity, these communities continue to celebrate their heritage through festivals, rituals, and artistic expressions.

Occupationally, Canacona's economy thrives on a mix of traditional livelihoods such as fishing, agriculture, and animal husbandry, alongside emerging sectors like tourism and hospitality. The taluka's natural resources, including mineral deposits, lush forests, and abundant water bodies, form the cornerstone of its economic prosperity and ecological sustainability.

Initiatives like the 'Lokutsav' play a crucial role in promoting and preserving tribal culture and heritage, offering a platform for showcasing traditional practices, craftsmanship, and culinary delights. Through such events, visitors gain insight into the intricate interconnectedness of culture, livelihoods, and the environment, fostering appreciation and understanding of Canacona's rich tapestry of traditions.

As Canacona taluka moves forward into the future, it is imperative to safeguard its cultural and ecological wealth while embracing modernity and progress. By nurturing a balance between tradition and innovation, the taluka can continue to thrive as a vibrant hub of diversity, offering a unique experience for residents and visitors alike.

In essence, Canacona taluka embodies the intricate interplay between tradition and modernity, nature and culture, history and progress. As it navigates the challenges of development and globalization, preserving its rich tapestry of heritage and natural wealth remains paramount, ensuring a sustainable and inclusive future for its inhabitants and generations to come.

CHAPTER 3- THE MAAND

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Goa is a culturally rich area where festivities are celebrated year-round enthusiastically. Numerous rituals and celebrations in the state use agriculture as their backdrop, as it is a vital occupation for communities such as the Gaudas and the Kunbis¹. Folk dances are frequently included in these festivities, either as stand-alone events or as part of particular festivals. Several of these dances are performed in specially designated areas, such as temple mantaps or Maands, which have ritual and cultural importance.²

In Goan villages, maands are communal gathering spots that perform a variety of social, cultural, and religious events, including folk dances. The community's deep ties to the land and its customs are reflected in these performances, which frequently feature themes of agriculture, fertility, and rural living.³

An important part of controlling the Goa folk's cultural life is the institution of "Mand". It acts as the hub for the expression of emotions and the development of group identity. Mand is present in many spheres of life, such as the social, cultural, religious, and economic. The fundamental goal of it all is to preserve cultural values and the arts, even though its structure and functions may alter slightly depending on the area and period.⁴

As per the information provided by Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar in his 1993 book *Loksarita*, the history of Maand goes back thousands of years and was shaped by the impact of tribes like Kol and Gond. Goa's cultural landscape was shaped by the customs, beliefs, and organisational ideas brought by these tribes.

The institution of "Maand" is engrained in Goa's rural culture. It acts as a place of origin and flourishing for important folk arts. Mand is an organic establishment that acts as a centre for cultural events. It is usually owned by a villager but is used for group cultural activities. Its size can vary from twenty to twenty-five square metres to several thousand

² Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Loksarita* (Goa: Goa Kala Academy, 1993).

³ T.S.K Bambolkar, 'Semiotics of Traditional v/s Modern Space in Folk Theatre with Special Reference to the Maand System of Goan Folk Tradition', *The Chitrolekha Journal on Art and Design*, 2018, 47–56.

⁴ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Loksarita* (Goa: Goa Kala Academy, 1993).

square metres. Although the place is regarded as communal, ownership is still informal and mand owners are honoured annually. even though it's not formally documented.⁵

Especially in the rural and tribal spheres, Goan folk life has been deeply rooted in the antiquated institutional notion of the Maand. Throughout history, it has given Goan folk culture's music, theatre, and dance forms vitality. The Maand once had a great influence on society norms and provided moral and spiritual leadership. Along with performing social tasks including infrastructure construction, water supply, healthcare, and tax collecting, it also had involvement in banking, tax collection, and legal proceedings.⁶

3.2. MAAND

The word "Maand" describes an ancient institutional concept that was essential to Goan folk culture. It served as a community-based institution present in every ward or neighbourhood ('Waado') of a particular society. In addition to managing the sociocultural, agro-economic, and religio-spiritual aspects of the community, the Maand provided energy to Goan folk life in rural and tribal life. It also assumed functions like banking, tax collecting, handling legal matters, etc. Additionally, the Maand supported community festivals like shigmo and Dhalo financially and maintained cultural instruments and costumes.

3.3. DIFFERENT TYPES OF MAAND

Each community within the society had its own Maand, located in a specific area such as a lane, street, or part of a rural settlement or around a temple. The area where maand was established naturally became a sacred place and profanity of any kind such as quarrelling. Fighting or spouting bad words were strictly prohibited even women were not allowed to enter the maand during the days of her menstruation. These Maands catered to the social, cultural and economic needs of their respective community.

⁵ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Loksarita* (Goa: Goa Kala Academy, 1993).

⁶ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Folk Dances of Goa* (Udaipur: West Zone Cultural Centre, 2010).

Most of the Maands were named after the festivals celebrated on their premises. For example, the maand where Shigmo was performed was called as Shigmya mand and no other festival was performed there. Similarly, Dhalo and Dhillo also have their separate maand called Dhalla maand (Dhallcho maand) and Dhillya Maand (dhillya angan). Other examples include the maands of Ranamalem, Jagor, Gade, etc each dedicated to specific forms of folk performance.

3.4. DHILLO AND DHALO FESTIVALS

The Dhillo and Dhaalo festivals, though both eco-cultural annual women's festivals, are celebrated by different communities - Dhillo by tribes and Dhaalo by rural folk.⁷ Conceptually, they are similar, but their manifestation reflects the distinctive features of their lifestyles and their connection with their environmental settings. Dhillo spans 22 nights, while Dhaalo is celebrated over 5, 7 or 11 nights. Both festivals take place at a sacred venue called Maand. The two festivals, Dhillo and Dhaalo, are celebrated in different Maands. Dhalo festival takes place on Dhaalo Maand, whereas the Dhillo festival is observed on Dhillya Maand or Dhillya Angan.

During Dhillo, an image of Dhillya, the dev-god, is created from virgin soil by unmarried women though now married women also take part, while Tulsi Vrindawan is compulsory for Dhalo. While Dhaalo is devoted to Dhartarimay and Vandevta, representing Mother Earth and the goddess of the forest, Dhillo invokes only three divine powers - Dhillya dev, the goddess of the forest, and Maanda dev. Both festivals emphasize the significance of human association with the surrounding environment.⁸

3.5. THE PRESENT SIGNIFICANCE OF MAAND

The maand traditionally used to have a lot of influence on the society, but its importance is gradually waning. Although it is still revered and regarded as sacred, there isn't a

⁷ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Eco-Culture Goa Paradigm*, first edition (Panjim: Broadway Publishing House, 2013).

⁸ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Eco-Culture Goa Paradigm*, first edition (Panjim: Broadway Publishing House, 2013).

great deal of trust placed on it. The maand's structure has also undergone modification. The Maand was formerly merely an open space surrounded by forest, but nowadays, many communities have cemented Maands in place of clayed and cow-dung-coated ones. In certain instances, the new architectural influences have even given the Maands a new look and colour. The usage of natural materials that represent the relationship between humans and the environment, such as mud, clay, and cow dung, has decreased because of this concretisation of the structure.

In Agonda village, the Dhala maand situated at Davalkazan, opposite the Shri Vithal Rukmai temple, has stood for many years. Over the past two decades, it has seen several changes. Before the festival commences, the maand undergoes cleaning, a task traditionally handled by women who used cow dung for this purpose. Women also used to venture into the jungle to gather wooden pillars for erecting a matov. These responsibilities were shared among all women, with men refraining from involvement as the festival was seen as a celebration primarily for women.

As time passed, conflicts began to emerge as women increasingly found the festival tasks too demanding and tiring, especially since they had to be repeated annually. Gathering ample cow dung and more than 18 wooden pillars for the matov, along with palm leaves to cover its top, became overwhelming. Consequently, around 2004, they collectively opted to modernize the maand by cementing it and erecting concrete pillars instead.

The women had accumulated funds through an annual auction held on the final day of the Dhallo festival each year. With the emergence of tourism in Agonda, they also sought donations from visiting tourists. Additionally, they received support from the MLA of Canacona at that time, enabling them to raise concrete pillars and cement the maand area. In January 2024, the Agonda panchayat provided them with financial assistance, allowing them to tile the floor of the maand. As a result, its appearance has now shifted away from its traditional form.

However, in remote areas like Gaondongri, on the other hand, continue to operate on maand which is natural earth and are still surrounded by their natural environment, free from the influence of modern society. The tribal population celebrate Dhilllo as one of their most important festivals. Here, Dhilllo is worshipped in the form of a mud globe.

Like other communities, they too have their own Maand which is traditional. Their Maand is located on high hills where they originally used to reside but has now descended and moved to areas closer to areas accessible by a proper road. However, they did not forget their roots and visited their traditional maand and performed the festival there. This portrays that though Maands are changing as how the Maand at The Agonda Village has been cementicized within the last ten years Maands in areas like Gaondongri will continue to exist.

3.6. ORIGIN

As stated by Vinayak Vishnu Kedekar the Mand institution's precise beginnings are difficult to determine because there aren't many written records or other supporting materials. It was sometimes overlooked by historical sources because it was an organisation that mostly assisted underprivileged and illiterate communities. Although there are some fifty-year-old financial transaction records available, they don't reveal much about the institution's beginnings. To determine the age of Mand, researchers have relied on oral histories, anecdotes from wise elders, and conjecture.

Khedekar suggested that words like Maand might have come from the languages used by the tribes. 'To set' is what Maand means. It may also imply "taxes." Although the word "Mand" sounds like "Mandav," which is similar to Mandap or Mandapa (a stage or platform with decorations), the Mand site itself usually doesn't have any of these buildings. Therefore, it doesn't seem likely that Mandap is where the word Mand came from.⁹

3.7. THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MAAND

The Mand, serves as a vital institution for meeting the social needs of the community, particularly concerning specific Vados or clans. In particular, with regard to certain Vados or clans, the Mand is an essential institution for addressing the social concerns of the society. Every caste in the past had a Mand, which was usually located in a predetermined location inside a rural community. These Mand places played a crucial

⁹ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Goa: Land, Life And Legacy*, first edition (Goa: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2016).

role in the community's social structure and served as more than just locations for cultural activities.¹⁰

Every Vado's Mand had its peculiarities, most of which were called after festivities held there, such as the Shigmo and Intruz Mand. Various folk acts such as Ranamalem, Jagor, Gade, Dhalo, and Sanjao were exhibited at these festivals, which also functioned as opportunities for community reunions. The community's identity was preserved and a sense of belonging was encouraged by its diversity of cultures.¹¹

The Mand also had control over social behaviour, enforcing strict rules to preserve discipline and order. Anything considered impure, like fighting, arguing, or gambling, was forbidden inside its boundaries.

Despite these rules, the Mand was a centre for artistic expression and useful projects as well as a place of confinement. Committees chosen by the people of the Vado governed the Mand and were in charge of collecting money and enforcing laws. The continuity of the Mand as an essential social institution in the society was guaranteed by this form of governance.

3.8. THE ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF MAAND

The issue of money inevitably came up when the Mand started a variety of social, cultural, and recreational activities. Several avenues were used to raise money. Initially, at events such as weddings, the villagers freely contributed money and things, such as musical instruments, decorations, fruits, and agricultural produce.¹²

Furthermore, auctions were conducted. For instance, on the last day of Dhalo in Agonda village, ladies arrange an auction and bring a variety of goods, including sarees, fruits, nuts, and baskets. Every household is expected to take part in the auction for everyone to contribute. The money raised from this auction is used to buy supplies like paint for the Mand or to buy essentials for the Dhalo celebration. Furthermore, this money is occasionally loaned, with interest, to only women in the community. At the maand, the

¹⁰ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Loksarita* (Goa: Goa Kala Academy, 1993).

¹¹ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Loksarita* (Goa: Goa Kala Academy, 1993).

¹² Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Goa: Land, Life And Legacy*, first edition (Goa: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2016).

interest rate is quite favorable, with 400 rupees earned annually for every one thousand rupees lent.

The women establish a committee to oversee the management of the maand. Committee members are chosen from each ward, with the number of members determined by the size of the ward. For instance, a small ward like Val, which comprises only three houses belonging to the Pagi Community, has one member appointed. In larger wards with more houses, two or three women may be appointed as committee members. The composition of the committee changes annually, with everyone given a chance to hold a position.

Committee members have various responsibilities, including informing residents of their ward about committee decisions and the commencement of the Dhalo festival. They also coordinate group purchases of goods for the auction. The Dhalo festival typically lasts for five, seven, or eleven days, and during this time, a woman from every household is expected to attend. Failure to do so results in fines, which are collected by committee members. These fines are intentionally imposed to encourage attendance, as some women may refuse to participate for various reasons.

All funds collected from these activities are directed to the maand and related endeavors. Only women who participate in the Dhalo festival are eligible to borrow money from the maand; others are not permitted. Additionally, when the Shri. Vithal Rukamai temple in Agonda underwent renovation, the women provided financial assistance to the temple in the name of the maand's deity, Shri Dhindi Prasan.

3.9. CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MAAND

As a highly esteemed establishment with a strong foundation in Goan culture, The Maand embodies the spirit of custom, community, and artistic expression. In its role as guardian of cultural legacy, it communicates and protects customs like dance, music, and rituals, giving its members a strong feeling of identity and community. Maands are benefactors of the arts who support local festivals, foster talent within the community, and provide significant funds to promote creative endeavours. In addition to its artistic

contributions, the Maand represents the interdependence of the social, cultural, and spiritual facets of Goan society by providing moral support and spiritual direction."

Through a variety of rites and incantations, the maand is purified both spiritually and physically before to the commencement of any festival performance. As a ritualistic space, three major deities are worshipped on Maand. They are Van-devata that is the forest goddess, Dharitrimata that is Mother Earth and Maanda Guru that is Teacher of the Maand. The deity is summoned on the maand once this is completed prior to the festival's start. During the Dhalo festival, it is traditional to welcome the goddess of the land and all women to the maand and extend an invitation to join in on the opening song. Similar to this, a ceremony is carried out to shut the maand and instruct the spiritual entity to take care of it the following day before the night's performance comes to a end.

On the final day of the Dhalo festival, a ritual called Garane takes place after all the dances conclude. During Garane, participating women form a circle where vows are fulfilled and festival offerings are made. These offerings typically include coconut, jaggery, and rice. After the rituals, the offerings are shared among the people present at the Mand, and they are also allowed to take some home for those who couldn't attend. Following the distribution, the coconut that was installed at the Mand on the opening day is broken, and pieces of its kernel mixed with jaggery are distributed among the congregation. This signifies the conclusion of the Dhalo festival. Finally, the Mandkan woman smears the Mand with a paste made of cow dung, or nowadays water mixed with cow dung due to changes in the platform, typically replaced with tiles and the deities invoked earlier are respectfully asked to return to their abode.

3.10. CONCLUSION

Maands are deeply ingrained in Goan culture, symbolising not just physical locations but also the core of custom, community, and artistic expression. Due to their historical significance and current relevance, these locations operate as hubs for artistic endeavours, social engagement, and cultural heritage preservation.

Throughout history, Maands have played a crucial role in bringing communities together, fostering bonds among villagers, and providing a platform for various social, cultural, and religious activities. Despite the changes brought about by modernization, including shifts in demographics and infrastructure development, Maands remain steadfast symbols of Goan identity and collective memory.

The adaptation and modernization of Maands reflect the evolving nature of Goan society, demonstrating resilience and flexibility in the face of change. While some Maands may have undergone physical transformations, their underlying significance as cultural institutions persists, ensuring that the past remains an integral part of the present in Goa.

As guardians of tradition and custodians of cultural heritage, Maands continue to inspire and unite communities, serving as reminders of the rich tapestry of Goan culture. Their enduring presence ensures that the values, rituals, and customs they represent will be celebrated and passed down to future generations, thus preserving the essence of Goan identity for years to come.

CHAPTER 4- THE DHILLO FESTIVAL

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The significance of forests in both economic growth and ecological security cannot be immeasurable. Forests provide a multitude of ecosystem services, such as regulating climate, purifying air and water, preventing soil erosion, and supporting biodiversity. Additionally, they are a crucial source of livelihood for millions of people worldwide, particularly indigenous communities who have deep cultural and historical connections to forested areas.

In India the tribal population, comprising 8.61% of the total population¹, has a particularly close relationship with forests. These communities rely heavily on forests for their sustenance, deriving resources for food, medicine, shelter, and income generation from forest ecosystems. The forest is not just a provider of tangible resources, but also a repository of cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and spiritual significance for these communities.

The cultural heritage of India is rich, and festivals play a significant role in conveying messages about the importance of nature and natural objects. Indian households often regard women as the custodians of household activities and traditions, and they actively participate in celebrating various festivals that highlight the significance of celestial bodies and wildlife conservation.²

Biodiversity serves as the cornerstone of ecosystems, providing essential services that sustain life on Earth by furnishing necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing. In India, women from all walks of life have played significant roles and continue to contribute to the conservation of forests and wildlife. Their contributions span various aspects of conservation efforts, reflecting their deep-rooted connection to nature and their pivotal role in safeguarding biodiversity.³

¹ 'Statewise Total & Tribal Population | Government Of Maharashtra, India', accessed 18 April 2024, <https://trti.maharashtra.gov.in/statewiseTotalTribal>.

² Ishan Saini, Prashant Kaushik, and Babu Lal Saini, 'Role of Indian Women in Conservation of Biodiversity', *International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences* 8, no. 04 (2019): 63.

³ Ishan Saini, Prashant Kaushik, and Babu Lal Saini, 'Role of Indian Women in Conservation of Biodiversity', *International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences* 8, no. 04 (2019): 63.

One area where women have made substantial contributions is through the preservation and transmission of traditional ecological knowledge. Across indigenous and rural communities, women hold invaluable knowledge about local ecosystems, plants, and wildlife. This knowledge passed down through generations forms the basis for understanding and conserving biodiversity. Women often serve as custodians of this knowledge, imparting it to future generations and playing a crucial role in maintaining the delicate balance of ecosystems.

Folklore refers to the traditional beliefs, customs, stories, and practices passed down orally or through cultural traditions within a community or society. It encompasses a wide range of cultural expressions, including myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, rituals, songs, dances, and crafts. Folklore often reflects the shared experiences, values, and worldviews of a particular group of people and serves to preserve and transmit their cultural heritage from one generation to the next. It can also provide insights into the history, social structure, and beliefs of a community, offering a window into its collective identity and cultural identity. Folklore plays a significant role in shaping cultural identity, fostering social cohesion, and providing a sense of continuity and belonging within communities.

Folklore comprises stories passed down through generations, often containing solutions to various challenges. Examining folklore from an ecofeminist perspective offers a fresh approach to understanding society.⁴ The Dhillio festival, a folk celebration observed in specific villages of Sangeum, Quepem, and Canacona Taluka in Goa, is a prime example of this. Predominately performed by women, It revolves around acknowledging the earth's creative and fertility powers, symbolized by the worship of a 'womb-like' mound of sacred soil. Rooted in folk culture, the Dhillio festival blends worship with community bonding, progress, and a unique method of preserving nature.⁵

⁴ Deepshikha, 'Women, Nature and Folklore: An Ecofeminist Perspective on Chaṭh Pūjā', *Journal of Arts, Culture, Philosophy, Religion, Language and Literature*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.5958/0976-1926.2015.00017.0>.

⁵ Pandurang R Phaladesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

4.2. DHILLO FESTIVAL

The Dhilllo festival in Goa is a celebration which coincides with the paddy-harvesting season.⁶ It is observed exclusively in a handful of villages located within the three talukas of South Goa: Sanguem, Quepem, and Canacona. This celebration is dedicated to Dhilllo or Dhillyadev, who is revered as the son of Goddess Parvathi and Lord Shiva, also known as Kartikeya.⁷ The Dhilllo festival is observed by the Velip community residing in the Canacona region of Goa. It takes place during the Hindu month of Ashwin, typically falling between September and October, coinciding with the Navaratri celebration.⁸

The Dhilllo festival of Canacona taluka is deeply intertwined with the reverence for the earth's creative and fertility powers. This association is prominently displayed through the worship of a 'womb-like' heap of sacred soil. The sacred soil heap symbolizes the nurturing and life-giving qualities of the earth, akin to a maternal figure. By honouring and worshipping this heap of soil, participants in the festival pay homage to the earth's ability to sustain life and foster growth. This practice presents the close relationship between the Kulmi community and the natural world, highlighting their connection to the land and nature.

On the evening of the ninth day of the bright half of Ashwin, a group of women from different wards of the village gathers in the courtyard of the headman, known as the gaonkar. This courtyard, referred to as the mand or dhillya angan, serves as the focal point for the gathering. Led by a teenage girl from the gaonkar's family, the women proceed to an anthill, carrying tools like a hoe or pickaxe. They dig into the anthill and collect the mud in a leaf of the arum plant. Returning to the mand, the leader forms a heap of mud and places it on a wooden stool in the arum leaf, positioned in front of the Tulasi vrindavan. This heap formation is typically completed by sunset. To adorn the

⁶ Pandurang R Phaldesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003),

⁷ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Goa: Land, Life And Legacy*, first edition (Goa: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2016).

⁸ Pandurang R Phaldesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003),

heap, large marigold flowers and other wildflowers are used. Once decorated, the heap is referred to as the Dhilllo.⁹

After dinner at night, the women gather at the mand. The head woman of the ward, known as the Gaonkann, distributes a small quantity of rice to each participant, except for widows. An oil lamp is lit near the Dhilllo, and betel leaves and areca nuts (pana-vido) are placed in front of it. An empty copper vessel is placed nearby after being blown into. The Gaonkann leads the invocation song, which is repeated by all participants in unison. Once the invocation is complete, participants sprinkle rice on the Dhilllo.¹⁰ During the dance, participants form two rows facing each other, linking arms around each other's waists. When the two rows meet, they bend their waists in unison, and then move backward with the same gesture. The dance involves intricate footwork, including lifting and twisting each leg before touching it to the ground. The participants sing rhythmic songs, with a senior woman leading with a couplet that is repeated by the others.¹¹ The festival lasts for 21 days, during which the women gather at the maand every night to dance, sing songs, and enjoy themselves.

In this festival, only females are actively involved, with male only participating in the offering of Wadi-rice and jaggery to the deity at the festival.¹² The festival mainly revolves around Velip girls who have not yet reached puberty, and their involvement is obligatory. In villages like Zitalwada in Gaondongri, only young girls perform the ritualistic aspects, whereas in villages like Yeda in Cotigao, married women take on the same role.

Essentially, the Dhilllo festival is a female-centric celebration deeply rooted in tradition and community participation. It provides an opportunity for Velip girls to engage in important cultural rituals while also fostering unity and enjoyment among all female members of the community.

⁹ Pandurang R Phaldesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003),

¹⁰ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Goa: Land, Life And Legacy*, first edition (Goa: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2016).

¹¹ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Goa: Land, Life And Legacy*, first edition (Goa: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2016).

¹² Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Goa: Land, Life And Legacy*, first edition (Goa: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2016).

The nightly performances last for approximately two to three hours during the festival. Each night begins with rituals such as lighting an oil lamp, placing betel leaves and areca nut, and sprinkling rice on the dhillo, followed by the dance performance. Every three to five days, unmarried girls add mud to the original heap and redecorate it with flowers and leaves. This ritual of adding mud to the heap is repeated at least five times over the three-week festival period. The festival concludes with the immersion of the dhillo in a nearby water body on the second day of the bright half of the Kartik month.¹³

On the final day, all participants gather at the mand in the morning to repeat invocations and dances. By noon, they ceremoniously worship the dhillo, breaking a minimum of five coconuts in front of it. Five participants then carry the dhillo on their heads to the immersion point, usually a nearby water body, where it is placed on the bank and worshipped again. Participants sing and dance at this spot before ceremoniously immersing the dhillo. Separate songs accompany each ritual of immersion. Following the immersion, all participants enjoy a feast with special food cooked for the occasion.

4.3. FOLK CULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Shifting cultivation, known by various names across India, is a traditional agricultural practice common among tribal communities. It involves clearing small forested patches, burning vegetation, and cultivating crops before moving to new land. Names for this practice vary: "jhum" in Manipur, "rama," "biringa," or "podu" in Orissa, "kuruwa" in Jharkhand, and "valre" or "waltre" in Rajasthan, among others. In Goa, it's called "kumeri cultivation" or "kaamat" in Konkani, with "kumeri" widely used in literary contexts and "kaamat" more common among the Velip community. Shifting cultivation sustains tribal livelihoods but faces modernization challenges and environmental debates.¹⁴

K.S. Singh (1994) noted the extensive diversity of tribal communities in India, numbering over four hundred distinct groups. India hosts the world's second-largest tribal population, following Africa, spread across the nation's length and breadth, with

¹³ Pandurang R Phaladesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003),

¹⁴ Priyanka Velip, 'Shifting Cultivation In Goa: Livelihood And Rights Of Women Of The Velip Tribe' (Goa, Goa University, 2020).

varying sizes of tribal populations in different states. The livelihood of many tribal communities in India has historically revolved around shifting cultivation.¹⁵

Goa, India's smallest state, spans an area of 3702 km² and boasts a coastline stretching 101 km along the Arabian Sea to the west, while dense forests of the Western Ghats and Sahyadris border its southeastern boundary. Various communities have inhabited these forested regions for centuries. According to the March 2008 Government report on Natural Resource Accounting of Goa State, despite its small size, Goa harbours a significant forest cover, totalling an area of 2,156 km², which accounts for 33.06% of its total area. Within this forest cover, 1255 km² comprises moderately dense forest, with an additional 901 km² classified as open forest.¹⁶

Based on the 2011 Census data, Sanguem, Satari, and Canacona are identified as the three largest talukas in terms of area. However, Canacona has the smallest population compared to the other talukas. Each village within Canacona is surrounded by hillsides or forests. Shifting cultivation has long served as a primary source of livelihood for numerous tribal families in Canacona, making them integral to both forest preservation and their sustenance.¹⁷

The Velip Community resides in Canacona Taluka, the southernmost region of South Goa spanning an area of 352.04 km². As per the 2011 Census, Canacona Taluka has a total population of 45,172, with 30.23% belonging to Scheduled Tribes, of which 13,451 reside in rural areas and only 206 in urban settings.¹⁸

The Dhilllo festival serves as an expression of gratitude towards Mother Earth for providing a bountiful harvest, which sustains the livelihoods of the people participating in the festival. Shifting cultivation, a traditional practice among the tribals of Canacona, further underscores their deep connection with the land and the importance of agricultural activities in their lives.

¹⁵ Priyanka Velip, 'Shifting Cultivation In Goa: Livelihood And Rights Of Women Of The Velip Tribe' (Goa, Goa University, 2020).

¹⁶ Priyanka Velip, 'Shifting Cultivation In Goa: Livelihood And Rights Of Women Of The Velip Tribe' (Goa, Goa University, 2020).

¹⁷ Priyanka Velip, 'Shifting Cultivation In Goa: Livelihood And Rights Of Women Of The Velip Tribe' (Goa, Goa University, 2020).

¹⁸ Priyanka Velip, 'Shifting Cultivation In Goa: Livelihood And Rights Of Women Of The Velip Tribe' (Goa, Goa University, 2020).

The contents of the folk songs sung during the festival often praise Dhilllo, symbolizing the divine embodiment of Mother Earth. These songs reflect the reverence and respect the community holds for nature and its life-giving forces. Through lyrical verses and melodies, the tribals express their gratitude and admiration for the abundance provided by the Earth, reinforcing their spiritual and cultural connection to the land.

Before the festival commences, the designated area known as the "maand," where the festival takes place, undergoes a cleansing ritual. Traditionally, cow dung paste was applied to the ground to purify the area. However, with modernization and changes in infrastructure, such as the shift to concrete structures, cleaning methods have evolved, often involving washing the area instead.

Additionally, special attention is given to cleaning the water body where the Dhilllo will be immersed. Whether it's a lake, pond, rivulet, or river, the site is meticulously cleaned to ensure purity and reverence for the natural elements involved. Profanity of any kind is refrained.

Throughout the festival, a deep sense of worship towards the Earth is maintained. For instance, the lamp used during the festival exemplifies this principle. It is either crafted from baked mud, a natural material, or made from Karate, a bitter fruit, the fruit is halved, and oil is poured into the hollowed centre along with a wick, transforming it into a lamp. This reflects the community's ethos of honoring and respecting the Earth's resources while also ensuring sustainability and ecological harmony. The festival thus serves as a profound expression of gratitude and reverence for the environment, emphasizing the sacred bond between humanity and nature.

Additionally, the food prepared on the concluding day of the festival is exclusively sourced from locally grown produce and forest resources, including vegetables, fruits, and tubers. This practice highlights the community's self-sufficiency and independence from market-produced goods. It also significantly contributes to the preservation of indigenous fruits and flowers as most of these are no longer commercially cultivated. By relying on resources readily available in their immediate environment, the community showcases a sustainable lifestyle deeply rooted in their connection to nature.

The religious customs serve as a significant motivator for cultivating rare varieties of fruits and vegetables. With women actively involved in the festival, female farmers

utilize their inherited traditional knowledge to grow and sustain a diverse range of plants in their gardens. This contributes significantly to the overall biodiversity by enriching the variety of cultivated plants.

This festival stands out as one of the most environmentally conscious festivals. All the necessary items for the festival are sourced naturally, with people refraining from using synthetic materials. The majority of the ritual objects are biodegradable and have minimal impact on the environment.

4.4. FOLK SONGS

Folk songs represent a unique and distinct aspect of folklore, conveying the traditions, beliefs, and wisdom of a community in a melodious manner. Women, who have long been instrumental in shaping society, often find expression through these songs, providing an outlet for their emotions and sharing their insights and values across generations. These songs not only reflect personal sentiments but also encapsulate broader environmental concerns, reflecting the regional realities and the relationship between humans and nature.

Indigenous women's folk songs particularly demonstrate a profound connection to nature, emphasizing values of abundance, care for all living beings, and contentment with the natural world. Similarly, traditional songs sung during the Dhillu festival also express a deep regard and compassion for other organisms, whether plants or animals.

DHILLO SONGS

नमन

दाणे कत्पले कणेरीचे
सूर्य उदेलो दाण्या डोंगरीक
किण्णा पोडली दुणयेर
बिड्डी सुटली गाऊलेची
माऊली लागली गवणाक
देंपराच्या भारा पाण्या गेली
आंब्याच्या सावळे गेली घोटणार रावली
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या देवा चाकरी
ह्या धिल्ल्या काय साजो कुळदसाजे
कुदळ साजोन धिल्ल्या हाडलो रे उजवाडा
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या तुजी चाकरी
ह्या धिल्ल्या काय साजो आळवापान साजो
आळवापान साजोन धिल्ल्या हाडलो रे
उजवाडा
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या देवा चाकरी
ह्या धिल्ल्या काय साजो
फळय साजो फळय साजोन धिल्ल्या हाडलो
रे उजवाडा
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या देवा चाकरी
ह्या धिल्ल्या काय साजो पंटयो साजो
पंटयो साजोन धिल्ल्या हाडलो रे उजवाडा
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या देवा चाकरी
ह्या धिल्ल्या काय साजो वाती साजो
वाती साजोन धिल्ल्या हाडलो रे उजवाडा
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या देवा चाकरी ह्या
धिल्ल्या काय साजो तेल साजो

तेल साजोन धिल्ल्या हाडलो रे उजवाडा
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या देवा चाकरी
ह्या धिल्ल्या काय साजो अगरबत्ती साजो
अगरबत्ती साजोन धिल्ल्या हाडलो रे उजवाडा
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या देवा चाकरी
ह्या धिल्ल्या काय साजो पानाविडो साजो
पानाविडो साजोन धिल्ल्या हाडलो रे उजवाडा
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या देवा चाकरी
ह्या धिल्ल्या काय साजो फोगोटयो साजो
फोगोटयो साजोन धिल्ल्या हाडलो रे उजवाडा
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या देवा चाकरी
ह्या धिल्ल्या काय साजो फुलां साजो
फुलां साजोन धिल्ल्या हाडलो रे उजवाडा
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या देवा चाकरी
ह्या धिल्ल्या काय साजो तांदूळ साजो
तांदूळ साजोन धिल्ल्या हाडलो रे उजवाडा
आकरी भाकरी धिल्ल्या देवा चाकरी
तळयाली आकेसा भरयालो शेसा
आज नमन घालू आमी गावतुरे माये गे
घावतुरे माये गे आमी येली खेळो
येली तुमी बरी जाली धिल्ल्या साद घालाय गो
माण धनु खेळाय म्हज्या धालो गे
तळयाली आकेसा भरयालो शेसा
आज नमन घालू आमी धरतरे माये गे
घरतरे माये गे आमी येली खेळो
येली तुमी बरी जाली धिल्ल्या साद घालाय गो
माण धनु खेळाय म्हज्या धालो गे

नासा देवा गा आमी येली खेळो
 येली तुमी बरी जाली धिल्ल्या साद घालाय गो
 माण धनु खेळाय म्हज्या धालो गे
 तळयाली आकेसा भरयालो शेसा
 आज नमन घालू आमी माघल्या देवा गा
 माघल्या देवा गा आमी येली खेळो
 येली तुमी बरी जाली धिल्ल्या साद घालाय गो
 माण धनु खेळाय म्हज्या धालो गे
 तळयाली आकेसा भरयालो शेसा
 आज नमन घालू आमी पायका देवा गा
 पायका देवा गा आमी येली खेळो
 येली तुमी बरी जाली धिल्ल्या साद घालाय गो
 माण धनु खेळाय म्हज्या धालो गे
 तळयाली आकेसा भरयालो शेसा
 आज नमन घालू आमी साठ पुरसा गा
 साठ पुरसा गा आमी येली खेळो
 येली तुमी बरी जाली धिल्ल्या साद घालाय गो
 माण धनु खेळाय म्हज्या धालो गे
 तळयाली आकेसा भरयालो शेसा
 आज नमन घालू आमी त्या महादेवा गा
 त्या महादेवा गा आमी येली खेळो
 येली तुमी बरी जाली धिल्ल्या साद घालाय गो
 माण धनु खेळाय म्हज्या धालो गे
 तळयाली आकेसा भरयालो शेसा
 आज नमन घालू आमी देवी माये गे
 देवी माये गे आमी येली खेळो
 येली तुमी बरी जाली धिल्ल्या साद घालाय गो
 माण धनु खेळाय म्हज्या धालो गे
 तळयाली आकेसा भरयालो शेसा

आज नमन घालू आमी वडल्या नासा गा
 वडल्या नासा गा आमी येली खेळो
 येली तुमी बरी जाली धिल्ल्या साद घालाय गो
 माण धनु खेळाय म्हज्या धालो गे

छिल्लो खेळाची गीते
 तळयानी आकेसा भरयालो खेळा
 आज नमीन घालू आमी धिल्ल्या देवा गा
 धिल्ल्या देवा गा आमी आली खेळू
 आली तुमी बरी जाली धिल्ल्या शेज भरायगो
 माण धरून खेळाय म्हज्या धालो गे

आमी चालली चालली रानावना
 आमका मिळला मिळला लाकूड कुन्हाड
 कापट्या फोडिल्या फोडिल्या कु-हाड्यांनी
 वाली काडिल्या काडिल्या सरसर वाली
 भर बांधिला बांधिला चिन्यामडुर
 आमी चालली चालली नीट रस्त्यान
 आमका मिळल्या मिळल्या कमळ फूल

पांडवाच्या राजा ने भरल्या पिपुळाची गे
 बाय

पिपुळाच्या पेडा गे बाय जळई समई दिवे गे
 बाय

हाडाय गवणे लायाय चिरे पिपळाक पेड तुमी
 बानाय गे बाय

पिपुळाच्या पेडा गे बाय जळई समई दिवे गे
 बाय

जळता तशे जळ गे बाय इसोर पारपत खेळ
 गे बाय

वयल्या राना काजू मुळा कसलो सरसर गे

करता जाल्यार कर गे मामी गळया माळ कर
वयल्या राना काजू मुळा कसलो सरसर गे

कुंकळी बाजारा वयता मुणतालो आनुय
वयता मुणतालो
उनगेग साडी घेऊन येत मुणतालो आनुय
येत मुणतालो
साडी नेसतली उनी माझी खेळ खेळटली

बत्तीस पानाचो विडा कोणी ठेविला
श्रावण बाळ रानासी गेला
रानात जाऊन त्यानी चंदन कापिला
चंदन कापून त्यानी कावड घडयल्या
त्या कावडीत त्यानी आई बाबा ठेविला
आई बाबा घेऊन तो जत्रेला गेला
जत्रेला जाताना तहान लागली
दशरत राजा शिकारीला आला
पाण्याचा बुडबुड आवाज आला
दशरत राजाने बाण सोडिला
तो बाण श्रावणा छाती घुसला
हाय हाय मणून त्यानी प्राण सोडिला
आई निर्मिला प्राण सोडिला

फातरी पंची कुल्ली ग यमुना
घोरोन हाडली कुल्ली ग यमुना
खुल्ले दोंगटा मडी गो यमुना
कडयेक मिस्सांग वाटी गो यमुना
कुल्ल्या कडी कर गो यमुना
शेजारणीक इल्ली दिली गो यमुना

शेजारणीक जाली थोडी ग यमुना
धुयेक माल्ली बडी ग यमुना
कावटे बसून रडी ग यमुना
नेस कापडाची घडी गो यमुना
चावडेर पासय गो यमुना

अशी फाटीवर वेणमाजी अशी फाटीवर
वेणमाजी
वेणी भरली गो जाया जुयानी
अशी रूक्मिणी नी बहीण माझी
या गणू भाऊत्या उतराची

गाईनी गाय अवतार मैजेचा
माझे रंगले गे मन
पयला अवतार कोणाचा
पयला अवतार सूर्याचा
सूर्य झाले हो दिवसांचा
दुसरा अवतार कोणाचा
दुसरा अवतार चंद्राचा चंद्र
झाले हो रात्रीचा

साळक्या फुलली तळया ग
साळक्या खुटती कोणू ग
साळक्या खुटती कुमुद ग
झेले गालीते कोणू ग
झेले गालीते आबोले ग
देवा गालीतो कोण रे
देवा गालीतो शाणू रे
नेसली कंशन साडी नेसली कंशन साडी

नेसली कंशन साडी हो राया चडला ओवळी
झाडार

चडला ओवळी झाडार हो राया
खुटीले ओवळीकळे हो राया
गातीले सुये सुतार हो राया
दाडिले गणपती देवा हो राया

लींबणी आई दरील्या साखरेत्या
लींबणी रोईल्या आळया मधे
लींबणी शीपल्या दुधा आहे
लींबणी पालेली पानान पान
लींबणी कळेली कळयान कळो
लींबणी फुलली फुलान फुल
लींबू धरले देटान देट
लींबू वाडिली देवा ताटा
लींबू धाडिले धिल्ल्या देवा

आरशी मोडून खूर्ची केल्या
म्हज्या आईला बसू दिल्या
आई बसल्या खूर्चे वरील
तीचा फोटो काडिला शाल्वावरील

माया शामेळी बरी वाजता
भाऊ तळयेर उदबर न्हावता
भाभी साबण तुवालो घेऊन धावता

सरस्वती देवी आमची कोण ग
सरस्वती देवी आमची थोर ग
त्याच्या पायाखाली नाचते मोर ग

गोठ्या बसलेले साळू लजपजना
भाऊ खय गेले गो खय ना पता चलना
भाऊन आणलेली साडी नेस कळना
भाऊन आणलेली टेवी म्हाका लावू कळना

वयल्येकडे माकडपीला
सकल्येकडे भिंडासोला
आईबाबान वाडविला
लोकदेशा पाठविला
जातासताना मरताशिल्ये
काजार जावपाक पावनाशिल्ये
पाड पड नसीबवाला नवरो मेळ्ळा
फिरंगीवाला

वटी काडिल्या शेण माती गे बाई
त्यात वसीला गणपती गे बाई
दवन घेतीला देड दिस गे बाई
प्रसाद वाटिला नायाचो गे बाई
पाण्यात बुडेलला शेड माती गे बाई

लोवशीचो बेल गो लाम सुंदर गेल गो
धाकटो म्हजो भाव गो तोवशी कुटू गेल गो
घरा आळयार पिकना बाजारा वयल्यार
खपना

राधा गवळण ताक चाळी
ग राधा गवळण ताक चाळी
कृष्णान धरिला तिचा हात रे
कृष्णान धरिला तिचा हात
सोडा सोडा रे माझा हात रे कृष्णा

सोडा सोडा रे माझा हात

घौरी घीरी घीरी घीरी दाते वळना दाते वळना
नव्या नव्या कापडाक पालोव धरना पालोव
धरना

कमर बांधले कमर बांधले
केवणी वायानी केवणी वायानी
काणकोणकारा खेळ खेळता
फुगडया माणानी फुगडया माणानी

कास बाये कास तवश्याची तवश्याची कास
आमी दोघां खेलूंक गेल्यात थंय झाली रात
फू माझी फुगडी फुगडी

तेंडलीणीच्या माटवाखाली बसून काडली
रात गो

मावांच्या कुडी गेल्यार विडयांची रात गो
माईच्या कुडी गेल्यार पानाची रास गो
देरात्या कुडी गेल्यार सोन्याचो वास गो
नणदेच्या कुडी गेल्यार साडयांची रास गो
घोवाच्या कुडी गेल्यार सोन्याचो वास गो

हया झाडार त्या झाडार मारली उडी
उडी मारीली हनुमंताने
हया रामाची सीता बाई
सीते चोरून वयला कोणी
हया लंकेच्या रावणाने

डोंगरा वयली केळ कशी हालताय गो

दर्याचो मासो कसो फिरताय गो

फिरल्यार फिरू मासो गो

बोटीर आसा म्हजो भाव गो

बोटीवाल्यांचो घात गो

शेळी गेची शेळ गो

सोबे मध्ये घाल गो

हस्तूर माझे काक गो काणयालो वाक गो

कोण्यावळी बाय कोण्यावळी

एकेत ना ग सोला कडी बाय सोला कडी

देड सानन कट्टया रोस

वयल्या जायेक मारला नेट

गळयात तांबडयो सरीयो गे देवपुळा वरयो गे
शीत झाले अळणी गे खुरया मयणी गे

लांब नेसण बारीक पैजण

खयच्योगावच्यो नारी गे आमी

आमी बड्डे गावच्यो नारी गे

तुमी कित्यार बसून आयल्यो गे

आमी बसीर बसून आयल्यो गे

पाच वसचि सोकू बाय गो

सव्या वसाचे शाळेत घातला गो

सातव्या वसाचे पास जाले गो

आठव्या वर्साक आठवण आली गो

णव्य वर्साक सोयरीक आयली गो

दहाव्या वर्साक लगीन जाल्या गो

पेते पेते नमन ठेवा गो
पावय पावय नवऱ्या घरी गो

अशी नेनटेली बाई सीता

आंब्याच्या ताळयेर आंबो पिकला
आळू गे बाये आळू गे
तामडपिके आळू गे

जोते गे बाये जोते गे
इलापेचे जोते गे

नयीं पलतडी काणयालो माती गे
काणयालो माती

सूर्य उगला गो माडाऱ्या कवळांक
सूर्य उगला गो माडाऱ्या कवळांक
किण्णा पोडली गो सिंहापुरसा देवळांक
किण्णा पोडली गो सिंहापुरसा देवळांक
वाती पेटल्यो गो घरवई देवळांक
वाती पेटल्यो गो घरवई देवळांक
पाच गे पांडव मळपती निदले
पाच गे पांडव मळपती निदले
मळपती निदले पांडव द्रोपती दिसले
मळपती निदले पांडव द्रोपती दिसले
द्रोपती पांडव वळखुनी काढले
द्रोपती पांडव वळखुनी काढले
ढोलीच्या पाच पांडव गेले वनवासा
ढोलीच्या पाच पांडव गेले वनवासा

वनवासा वचून त्यानी एकवोळ बांधल्या
वनवासा वचून त्यानी एकवोळ बांधल्या
एकवोळ बांधुनी विचार केला
एकवोळ बांधुनी विचार केला
विचार करूनी देव झाले कष्टी
विचार करूनी देव झाले कष्टी
देव झाले कष्टी गे नमन घालू सास्ती
देव झाले कष्टी गे नमन घालू सास्ती

रूक माल्लो चंदनाचो गो
रूक माल्लो चंदनाचो गो
फळी केली चंदनाच्यो की
फळी केली चंदनाच्यो की
तेल घायले माथीभोर गो
तेल घायले माथीभोर गो
केस वोळयले फणीयानी गो
केस वोळयले फणीयानी गो
खोपो घायलो रेशिमाचो गो
खोपो घायलो रेशिमाचो गो
केस बांधले वोळियांनी गो
केस बांधले वोळियांनी गो
फुलां माळ्ळी माथीभर गो
फुलां माळ्ळी माथीभर गो
भाग भल्ला शिंदुरानी गो
भाग भल्ला शिंदुरानी गो
डोळे भल्ले काजोळयानी गो
डोळे भल्ले काजोळयानी गो
गळो भल्ला भांगरानी गो
गळो भल्ला भांगरानी गो

हात भल्ले काकणानी गो
हात भल्ले काकणानी गो
पायें भल्ले पैजणानी गो
पायें भल्ले पैजणानी गो
खोपो हाडलो रेशिमाचो गो
खोपो हाडलो रेशिमाचो गो
पोलको घायलो आंगीभर गो
पोलको घायलो आंगीभर गो
साडो हाडलो पोफुळाचो
साडो हाडलो पोफुळाचो
साडो नेसलो आंगीभर गो
साडो नेसलो आंगीभर गो
कास माल्ली ढेपुरभर गो
कास माल्ली ढेपुरभर गो

सयो घडलो माणिकाचो गो
सयो घडलो माणिकाचो गो
व्होंवर बसले सयां वयर
व्होंवर बसले सयां वयर
उठ भरली तांदुळानी गो
उठ भरली तांदुळानी गो
शेंज भल्ले तांदुळानी गो

माम गेलेलो सावडे बाजाराक
माम गेलेलो सावडे बाजाराक
मामान हाडिल्या शेवत्या फाती
मामान हाडिल्या शेवत्या फाती
मामान हाडुनी मामी दिल्या
मामान हाडुनी मामी दिल्या

मामीन केलेले तीन तुकडे
मामीन केलेले तीन तुकडे
तो व्हडले सुने गे चड जालो
तो व्हडले सुने गे चड जालो
गे मारूता उडी सरता पुढी
गे मारूता उडी सरता पुढी

बांधार जायो कोण रोयलेल्यो
बांधार जायो कोण रोयलेल्यो
भावात्या भयणीन जायो रोयलेल्यो
भावात्या भयणीन जायो रोयलेल्यो
भावात्या भयणीन जायो खुटलेल्यो
भावात्या भयणीन जायो खुटलेल्यो
माडाच्या वळें देगेर घातलेले रे देवा
माडाच्या वळें देगेर घातलेले रे देवा
धिल्ल्या देवा माथ्यार झेले सोडलेले
धिल्ल्या देवा माथ्यार झेले सोडलेले

चंदना मुळा एक सुरींगीचो रोपा
चंदना मुळा एक सुरींगीचो रोपा
सान सूर्या देवां आमकां लागली येवजां
सान सूर्या देवां आमकां लागली येवजां
येवजां प्रमाण देव गेले देवासोभेर
येवजां प्रमाण देव गेले देवासोभेर
देवाल्या सोभेर उजवाड पडला
देवाल्या सोभेर उजवाड पडला
उजवाडान चंदन अधिक जाला
उजवाडान चंदन अधिक जाला

आमी गे गेली भावजे देवां कळसा
आमी गे गेली भावजे देवां कळसा
तिंगा गे मेळली आमकां मायी दिसाणी
तिंगा गे मेळली आमकां मायी दिसाणी
तळ्टो तांबे घेवून तेंचे पाय धुवांय गे
तळ्टो तांबे घेवून तेंचे पाय धुवांय गे
सरणाच्या ताटा तेंका जेवण वाढाय गे
सरणाच्या ताटा तेंका जेवण वाढाय गे
हातोरेचो पलंग माजो देवां दिला खेळ
हातोरेचो पलंग माजो देवां दिला खेळ
वयताना गेले देव भरल्या श्रृंगारान
येताना येले देव भरल्या भेणानी
वयताना गेले देव भरल्या श्रृंगारान
येताना येले देव भरल्या भेणानी
भेणाची काण रे देवानी कोणा दिलेली
भेणाची काण रे देवानी कोणा दिलेली
भात्यागेर कारण जाता जावयां दिलेली
भात्यागेर कारण जाता जावयां दिलेली
इतले इतले चांगले देव कोणा फटेयता
इतले इतले चांगले देव कोणा फटेयता
लोकां सांगता पडले देव आमकां फटेयता
लोकां सांगता पडले देव आमकां फटे

CHAPTER 5-THE DHALO FESTIVAL

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Folklore and traditional festivals are integral components of cultural heritage, serving as vibrant expressions of community identity and values. Embedded within the narratives and rituals passed down through generations, they offer profound insights into the beliefs, customs, and social dynamics of diverse societies. Within the rich tapestry of folklore, the Dhalo festival in Agonda village, Goa, emerges as a captivating celebration that epitomizes the deep-rooted connections between women, their community, and the natural world.

Folklore encompasses a vast array of stories, beliefs, customs, and traditions transmitted orally and experientially from one generation to the next. It serves as a cultural treasure trove, preserving the collective wisdom, history, and identity of communities around the world. Through folklore, societies articulate their understanding of the world, express shared values, and commemorate significant events, weaving a tapestry of narratives that reflect the complexities of human experience.

In the enchanting realm of folk festivals, the Dhalo festival stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of community and tradition in Agonda village. Exclusively celebrated by women, this festival venerates the earth-goddess Sateri and embodies a profound reverence for the natural and cultural heritage of the region. Rooted in ritualistic performances and communal gatherings, the Dhalo festival serves as a vibrant showcase of music, dance, and devotion, uniting women from diverse backgrounds in celebration and sisterhood.

This study delves into the multifaceted dimensions of the Dhalo festival, exploring its historical significance, ritual practices, and contemporary relevance within the socio-cultural landscape of Agonda village. Through meticulous examination of folklore, ritual performances, and community dynamics, this research seeks to illuminate the cultural richness and social cohesion fostered by this cherished tradition. By unraveling the layers of symbolism, tradition, and communal spirit inherent in the Dhalo festival, the aim to deepen our understanding of its enduring significance and transformative power within the fabric of Agonda's cultural heritage.

5.2. FOLKLORE

Folklore refers to the stories, beliefs, customs, and traditions passed down within a community from one generation to another. These can include tales of mythical creatures, traditional practices, and moral lessons. Essentially, folklore reflects what matters to a particular group of people and how they perceive the world around them.¹

Folklore is a cultural treasure chest, filled with oral narratives, songs, dances, and even superstitions that have been cherished and shared among community members for ages. It serves as a way for a community to connect with its past, preserving its history and values through storytelling. Studying folklore involves delving into these stories to gain insights into different cultures and how they have evolved.²

Folklore carries profound cultural and social importance, acting as a channel for passing down cultural values, wisdom, and shared experiences across generations. It helps communities maintain their distinct identity and heritage, fostering feelings of connection and cultural pride. Additionally, folklore has the power to challenge societal norms, promote social progress, and amplify the voices of marginalized communities. By offering insights into the past, folklore illuminates historical events, beliefs, and customs. Furthermore, it enriches the world's cultural landscape by showcasing the diverse traditions and viewpoints of various societies.³

Folklore serves as a platform for artistic expression, inspiring creativity across various mediums such as literature, music, and art. Additionally, folklore celebrates cultural diversity, showcasing the unique traditions and narratives of different ethnic groups and regions. Overall, folklore is instrumental in transmitting cultural heritage, fostering community identity, and enriching our understanding of human culture and history.⁴

Folklore can be divided into three main categories: verbal folklore, customary folklore, and material culture. Verbal folklore includes stories, proverbs, riddles, songs, and ballads passed down through generations. Customary folklore involves rituals,

¹ Temsumongla, 'Tribal Folklore and Literature – Tribal Cultures of India', accessed 17 March 2024, <https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/antp05/chapter/tribal-folklore-and-literature/>.

² Temsumongla, 'Tribal Folklore and Literature – Tribal Cultures of India', accessed 17 March 2024, <https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/antp05/chapter/tribal-folklore-and-literature/>.

³ 'The Fascinating World of Folklore: Exploring Cultural Traditions | HowStuffWorks', accessed 17 March 2024, <https://people.howstuffworks.com/what-is-folklore.htm>.

⁴ Temsumongla, 'Tribal Folklore and Literature – Tribal Cultures of India', accessed 17 March 2024, <https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/antp05/chapter/tribal-folklore-and-literature/>.

festivals, dances, and ceremonies practiced by specific communities. Material culture consists of physical artifacts like folk art, architecture, textiles, and traditional crafts. These categories collectively preserve cultural heritage, transmit knowledge, and express the identity and values of different societies.⁵

5.3. FOLK FESTIVALS

A folk festival is a cultural celebration that showcases the traditional music, dance, food, crafts, and customs of a particular community or region. These festivals often highlight the cultural heritage and identity of a group of people, allowing them to share their traditions with others and celebrate their unique cultural expressions.

Folk festivals typically feature live performances of folk music and dance, often performed by local artists or traditional musicians. They may also include demonstrations of traditional crafts, such as weaving, pottery, or woodworking, as well as exhibitions of traditional costumes and clothing. Food plays a significant role in many folk festivals, with attendees having the opportunity to sample traditional dishes and culinary delights unique to the region.

These folk festivals hold a significant place in society, serving as occasions for communities to come together and celebrate shared traditions, values, and experiences. They have existed for centuries, originating from the human desire to connect with others and strengthen bonds within communities. In the past, people relied heavily on each other for survival, making festivals even more important.

There are different kinds of festivals, each with its unique purpose and focus. These include celebrations marking the changing seasons, giving thanks for the harvest, honoring cattle, paying tribute to deities, commemorating saints or heroes, celebrating the history or culture of a state or nation, and modern festivals centered around specific themes. These categories often blend, allowing a single festival to include elements from multiple categories. For instance, a harvest festival might also involve religious or cultural rituals, while a national celebration could incorporate aspects of seasonal transitions.

⁵ 'The Fascinating World of Folklore: Exploring Cultural Traditions | HowStuffWorks', accessed 17 March 2024, <https://people.howstuffworks.com/what-is-folklore.htm>.

Seasonal and harvest festivals hold immense cultural significance as they symbolize people's deep respect and connection to the natural world. These celebrations are essential because they provide an opportunity to express gratitude for the blessings received from the Earth. Many of these festivals center around agricultural activities, particularly during the abundant harvest season. Examples of such festivities in India include Makar Sankranti, Baisakhi, Bhogali Bihu, Lohri, Onam, and Pongal, among others, which are observed across various regions of the country. Due to India's diverse climatic conditions, these harvest festivals occur at different times in different states.

Harvest festivals serve as joyous occasions celebrated globally, signifying the culmination of the agricultural season and the successful gathering of crops. Rooted in tradition, these festivals have been observed for centuries, weaving deeply into the cultural and religious fabric of many societies.

At their core, harvest festivals are a testament to the gratitude felt towards the land and its abundance. They offer a moment to acknowledge the toil and dedication of farmers who have nurtured the soil and tended to the crops throughout the year. By honoring their efforts, these festivals foster a profound appreciation for the interconnectedness between humans and nature, highlighting the importance of sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship.

Moreover, harvest festivals often incorporate elements of cultural heritage and spiritual beliefs, enriching the celebrations with symbolism and rituals passed down through generations. Whether through prayers, blessings, or ceremonial offerings, these traditions deepen the spiritual connection to the land and its bounty, instilling a sense of reverence and humility towards nature's gifts.

5.4. THE STUDY AREA

Geographically, Agonda is surrounded by the sea on one side and lush green vegetation on the other. It comprises seven wards and covers an area of 14.8 sq. km. Governed by the Panchayati Raj system, the village had a population of 3801 as per the 2011 Census, with Hindus and Christians being the predominant communities.

Traditionally, fishing is a primary occupation in Agonda, with the Pagi or Pagui Community being heavily involved. They utilize various fishing techniques, both in

saltwater and freshwater. Agriculture, though not widely practiced, includes the cultivation of crops such as paddy, chillies, vegetables, and tubers, alongside the flourishing coconut palms and cashew trees.

In contemporary times, tourism has emerged as a significant economic activity in Agonda. The Long Beach, extending approximately 3 km, has become a popular tourist destination due to its serene ambiance. Tourism has led to the establishment of various facilities including restaurants, accommodations, rental services, and water sports activities, thereby providing employment opportunities and boosting the local economy.

5.5. DHALO

Dhalo, a festival exclusive to women in Goa, celebrates the earth-goddess Sateri and showcases the deep-rooted connection between women and their natural and cultural heritage. The term "dhalo" likely originated from "dhartari," meaning earth, or "dhaloe-dhaloe" in the Mundari language, describing waving movements resembling plumes in the breeze. This dance embodies such fluid movements. In Canacona, like in other regions of Goa, the dhalo festival highlights women's roles as custodians of traditional knowledge. Women from all social classes, except Brahmins, participate in the dhalo festivities during the Hindu calendar months of Pausha and Magha, typically falling in January-February. These celebrations take place in a designated area called the mand, which serves as an auspicious and sacred space for the villagers. Each of the villages in Canacona taluka has its mand where the annual dhalo performances, featuring ritualistic music and dance, are held.⁶⁷

In Agonda village, women enthusiastically and energetically participate in the dhalo festival. This cultural event serves as a platform for women to express their devotion to the earth-goddess Sateri and showcase their talents in music and dance. Just like in other parts of Goa, dhalo in Agonda village reflects the deep-rooted connection between women, their community, and the natural environment. The festival brings together

⁶ Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar, *Folk Dances of Goa* (Udaipur: West Zone Cultural Centre, 2010).

⁷ Pandurang R Phaladesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

women from various backgrounds and social classes, uniting them in celebration and reverence for their cultural heritage and the land they inhabit.

5.5.1 Rituals

On a specified day, women from different wards come together at the mand located in Modewado, chosen for its central location surrounded by other villages. They engage in the ritual of cleaning the sacred space using a paste made from cow dung. Once the mand is thoroughly cleaned and adorned with curtains, it is considered purified and prepared for the upcoming rituals. During the ritual proceedings, a man known as a Velip, who holds religious significance, conducts specific rituals on the mand. It is noteworthy that the velip is the sole male permitted to perform these rituals, signifying the unique role he plays in the religious customs associated with the dhalo festival.⁸

On the night of the full moon, all the women gather at the mand under the moonlit sky. They light an oil lamp near the tulasi vrindavan, a sacred pedestal adorned with basil plants. Alongside, a copper or brass vessel filled with water is placed, signifying purity and abundance. The leader of the women, known as the mandkann or gaonkann, takes on the responsibility of performing the worship rituals. She offers prayers and salutations to the divine, specifically the Earth Mother, seeking blessings for the well-being of the entire village and for the smooth and successful completion of the festival rituals without any obstacles. This ritual marks the beginning of the dhalo festival and sets the tone for the ensuing days of celebration and reverence.⁹

5.5.2. Performance

After the prayer, the women divide into two rows, facing each other closely, with each woman holding onto the waist of the person beside her. Once they choose a side, they remain on that side until the final day, when the rows exchange positions. Swaying, bending, and moving in synchronized motions, they sing together, occasionally jumping in unison. Their songs begin with an invocation to Mother Earth, known as dhartari-mai or dhartari-mata, and then they seek blessings from various village deities, gods, household deities, and family deities.¹⁰

⁸ Rajendra Kerkar, *Natural Heritage of Goa* (Goa: Broadway Publishing House, 2016).

⁹ P.V Pathak and Usha P Pathak, *Living Traditions Of The Emerald Land: Tulashi Vrindavans and Holy Crosses Of Goa*, first edition (Goa: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2003).

¹⁰ Geeta Narayan Naik, *Mhajan Goem* (Goa: Prakashak, 2022).

One customary practice during the festival is to welcome every woman to the mand and invite them to participate in the performances through an opening song. However, due to the large number of participants, it's not feasible to call out the name of every individual woman. Instead, the names of the villages from which all the women participating hail are announced. In the past, only the names of wards like Divanbag, Davalkazan, Modewado, Parya, and Mobar were called. However, as the descendants of people from these areas have moved to surrounding wards that were previously uninhabited, such as Val and Karashirmol, and actively participate in dhalo, the names of these wards are now also included in the announcements. This reflects the changing demographics and increased community participation in the festival.

During the Dhalo festival, participants gather and form two rows facing each other, linking arms around each other's waists, creating what is known as a "Fanti." They then proceed to move forward in unison, walking in a synchronized manner. As they meet the other line, both rows bow down, a gesture known as "Naman" or salutation, paying homage to the earth-goddess and forest goddess. Traditional songs are sung during this ritual, praising the abundance of nature, and the bowing occurs at the end of each verse. This process continues for hours, with participants inviting and invoking the presence of various deities and entities, particularly those associated with the village, to join in the Dhalo festivities at the central gathering place known as the "Mand."

The daily performance reaches its climax with a circular dance pattern, maintaining the original formation. Following this, various dances in circular formations are performed, including the traditional folk dance known as fugdi, performed exclusively by women. The invocation songs pay homage to the village deities, after which songs and dances focusing on family life and contemporary society are presented. This dynamic combination of music and movement reflects the rich cultural heritage and traditions of the community, providing both entertainment and cultural significance.

One of the most mysterious and intriguing aspects of the dhalo performance is the enactment of Rambha, the nymphs. During this segment, certain women, including teenage girls, enter a trance-like state and engage in prolonged rhythmic utterances, expressing a yearning to meet their beloved elder brother, referred to as bandhav or

Pundalik. These participants continuously call out to their brother in a rhythmic manner, embodying the essence of devotion and longing.¹¹

According to belief, there are twenty-one Rambhas, depicted as sisters with names like Chakravant, Tulasayevant, Onvalayevant, Surangayevant, Shekarayevant, Kukumayevant, and others, symbolizing the spirit of water, vegetation, and ultimately, mother nature. The age range of Rambhas varies from 14 to 65 years old. Eventually, they are believed to meet their brother successfully and gradually emerge from their trance-like state.

Traditionally, a male adult from the family of the mandkann or gaonkann would represent the brother figure. However, this practice is no longer observed in Agonda or many other villages in Canacona Taluka. It is believed that certain impure acts were committed within the mand, resulting in their subsequent disappearance, never to be witnessed again.

The festival typically spans five nights, but can extend to seven, nine, or eleven nights based on the enthusiasm of the participants. The final night of the festival falls on a Saturday or Tuesday to align with specific rituals dedicated to earth-mother worship, which are performed on Sunday or Wednesday. The dhalo performance is deeply intertwined with the worship of the earth mother and fertility rituals. It incorporates various rituals associated with the earth, plants, water bodies, flowers, and cosmic elements.

On the final day of the Dhalo festival, a ritual called Garane takes place after all the dances conclude. During Garane, participating women form a circle where vows are fulfilled and festival offerings are made. These offerings typically include coconut, jaggery, and rice. After the rituals, the offerings are shared among the people present at the Mand, and they are also allowed to take some home for those who couldn't attend. Following the distribution, the coconut that was installed at the Mand on the opening day is broken, and pieces of its kernel mixed with jaggery are distributed among the congregation. This signifies the conclusion of the Dhalo festival. Finally, the Mandkan woman smears the Mand with a paste made of cow dung, or nowadays water mixed

¹¹ Pandurang R Phaladesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

with cow dung due to changes in the platform, typically replaced with tiles and the deities invoked earlier are respectfully asked to return to their abode.

The celebration of the Shigmo festival is intricately linked to the Dhalo of women in the village. If the Dhalo is not performed for any reason, the Shigmo festival is also not observed. However, this scenario rarely occurs because even if the Dhalo cannot be performed, at the very least, the lighting of a lamp takes place to maintain continuity with the tradition.

The dhalo festival has fostered sisterhood among women through entertainment and skill enhancement. Its inclusivity, without age barriers or male participants except for the bandhav or Pundalik, encourages stress relief and unleashes women's creativity. Additionally, it serves as a platform for informal communication and knowledge exchange. Specific rituals for barren women directly connect the festival with fertility cult practices. Overall, the dhalo festival serves as an important cultural heritage, strengthening family and community bonds and fostering a sense of sisterhood among women in Canacona villages.¹²

The women of the village have been actively participating in the dhalo performance since childhood. Some have continued to engage in the festivities even after getting married within the village. Remarkably, some individuals have been involved in the dhalo tradition for nearly four decades, yet their enthusiasm for the festival remains palpable. Despite the challenges posed by generational shifts, with the younger generation being less familiar with all the traditional songs, they still actively participate and support the elder women by joining in singing and dancing. This intergenerational collaboration ensures the continuity and vibrancy of the dhalo festival, fostering a sense of community and cultural preservation within the village.

The dances performed during the dhalo festival have remained largely unchanged across generations, maintaining their cultural continuity. However, updates and additions have been made to the songs sung during the festival, incorporating social issues and mentioning the names of new villages.

¹² Pandurang R Phaldesai, 'A Cultural History of the Canacona Taluka of Goa' (Goa, Goa University, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/35625>.

5.5.3. Purpose

Traditionally, women's daily lives were centred around household chores and agricultural work, leaving them with limited leisure time. In such a context, opportunities for enjoyment and entertainment were scarce. Festivities like marriages, Ganesh Chaturthi, and Dhalo held significant importance as they provided women with rare chances to participate enthusiastically and find joy. These occasions offered a break from routine tasks and allowed women to engage in communal celebrations, social interactions, and cultural activities. For many women, these festive moments became cherished times to connect with their community, express their creativity, and experience moments of happiness amidst the demands of everyday life.

Even in today, women who participate in festivals like dhalo continue to experience a sense of joy and fulfillment. In today's fast-paced and ever-changing world, it can be challenging for people to gather together in one place and connect with others. However, festivals like dhalo provide women with a valuable opportunity to come together, strengthen bonds within their community, and share both their joys and sorrows. These occasions serve as a reminder of the importance of maintaining cultural traditions and fostering meaningful connections with others, even amidst the hustle and bustle of modern life. For many women, dhalo and similar festivals offer a sense of belonging, and rejuvenation, making them cherished events that are eagerly awaited year after year.

Ecofeminist festivals in traditional societies served as vital respites for women from their daily labor, fostering connections with nature, family, and community. They offered breaks from agricultural work, facilitating relaxation and rejuvenation. These festivals promoted family reunions, reinforcing kinship bonds. Rooted in agrarian traditions, they honored nature through rituals seeking blessings for fertility and abundance. Celebratory in nature, they featured music, dance, and feasting, allowing women to enjoy leisurely pursuits. Spiritual practices underscored reverence for the interconnectedness of women, nature, and the divine. Overall, ecofeminist festivals

provided women with holistic experiences, emphasizing their roles as stewards of the earth and community welfare.¹³

5.5.4. Significance of maand

The Mand holds significant spiritual, religious, cultural, and even economic importance within the community. Though physically small, it is considered sacred, and any impurity is strictly prohibited, including the wearing of footwear inside. Before the Dhalo performance, women from every household traditionally gather to clean the Mand, emphasizing its sanctity.

Originally, the Mand was an open plot with only a Tulsi plant, cleaned using cow dung. However, with evolving needs, it has transformed. Nowadays, it is covered and paved with tiles instead of mud. Walls are constructed around it, which are painted during the Dhalo festival. Funding for these developments often comes from the village panchayat.

During the final day of Dhalo, women organize an auction, bringing various items like fruits, nuts, baskets, sarees, etc. It's customary for each household to participate in the auction. The proceeds from this auction are utilized for purchasing necessities for the Dhalo festival or for maintenance of the Mand, such as paint. Additionally, this money is sometimes loaned out to women within the community with interest.

5.7. CONCLUSION

The practice of cultivating and worshipping the Tulsi plant is deeply rooted in Hindu culture and holds significant religious importance. Typically placed in the courtyards of Indian homes, the Tulsi plant is tended to with care, particularly by women, who take on the responsibility of watering it daily and offering prayers.

This ritualistic care and worship of the Tulsi plant carry profound messages about humanity's relationship with nature and the environment. Firstly, by nurturing the Tulsi plant, individuals, especially women, express their reverence for nature and acknowledge the vital role of plants in sustaining life on Earth. This action symbolizes

¹³ 'Harvesting Festivals in India: A Tapestry of Culture, Unity, and Gratitude', accessed 18 March 2024, https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/harvesting-festivals-india-tapestry-culture-unity-gratitude-saxena-luvhf?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&utm_campaign=share_via.

a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of all living beings and highlights the importance of respecting and protecting the natural world.

Moreover, the act of worshipping the Tulsi plant goes beyond religious devotion; it embodies broader principles of environmental conservation. The reverence shown towards the Tulsi plant serves as a reminder of the need to preserve and safeguard plant species for the sake of ecological balance and the well-being of future generations. In this way, the ritual of caring for the Tulsi plant promotes a sense of environmental management and encourages sustainable living practices.

The Dhalo festival in Agonda village, Goa, represents a cherished tradition deeply rooted in community identity and cultural heritage. This exclusive celebration by women honours the earth goddess and underscores the profound connection between people, nature, and tradition. Through rituals, performances, and communal gatherings, the festival embodies the spirit of reverence, unity, and shared values among participants.

Throughout the exploration, I have witnessed the richness and significance of the Dhalo festival within Agonda's socio-cultural fabric. From the purification of the Mand to the rhythmic dances and trance-like rituals, each aspect symbolizes the community's deep-rooted traditions and collective spirit. By examining folklore, ritual practices, and community dynamics, I have gained valuable insights into the festival's enduring relevance and impact.

Moreover, the Dhalo festival serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of preserving cultural heritage and fostering community cohesion in an ever-changing world. Despite modern challenges, the festival continues to thrive as a beacon of cultural pride and solidarity in Agonda. Its ability to unite generations, celebrate traditions and honour nature's bounty underscores its enduring significance.

CONCLUSION

Goa's cultural significance lies not only in its scenic beauty but also in its rich history, traditions, and diverse influences. The region's cultural fabric is woven from vibrant festivals, harmonious coexistence, and a deep reverence for nature. Rituals and performances, rooted in agricultural practices, serve as expressions of gratitude for the connection between the soil and livelihoods, marking seasonal shifts and fostering group solidarity.

The Dhilllo and Dhalo festivals exemplify this reverence for Mother Earth, celebrated by tribal women as gestures of gratitude and prayers for happiness and good health. These festivals, deeply rooted in belief, underscore the harmonious relationship between nature and humans, contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage and ecological consciousness.

The Maand tradition holds profound cultural and spiritual significance, serving as a repository of socio-cultural values and a sacred gathering place where communities engage in cultural activities and make vital decisions.

Maands in Goa hold deep cultural significance, serving as sacred spaces where traditions are preserved and celebrated. They are revered as centres for artistic expression, where dance, music, and rituals are performed to honour deities and strengthen community bonds.

Beyond their cultural role, Maands play a vital social function, serving as gathering places for communities to come together. They facilitate social interactions, and festivals, fostering a sense of belonging among villagers. Maands enforce strict rules to maintain discipline and order, contributing to social cohesion and harmony within community.

Maands engage in various economic activities to support their cultural endeavors, such as fundraising through auctions and community contributions. They provide financial assistance to local festivals, and offer favorable loan terms to women. Committees oversee financial matters and organize community events, ensuring the sustainability of Maands' cultural and economic contributions.

The history of Maands in Goa dates back thousands of years, influenced by tribal customs and beliefs. While their precise origins are difficult to determine due to limited written records, oral histories and anecdotes provide valuable insights. Despite societal changes over time, Maands have adapted to preserve their core cultural significance, reflecting the resilience of Goan society in maintaining its heritage.

Despite the challenges of modernization, Maands continue to play a vital role in Goa's cultural landscape. Some Maands have undergone physical transformations, but their underlying significance as cultural institutions remains intact. The adaptation and modernization of Maands demonstrate the resilience and flexibility of Goan society in preserving its cultural heritage while embracing change.

Maands symbolize the heart and soul of Goan culture, embodying the essence of tradition, community, and artistic expression. As guardians of cultural heritage, Maands ensure the preservation of Goan identity for future generations. Through their enduring presence, Maands inspire unity, celebrate diversity, and uphold the rich tapestry of Goan culture for years to come.

The Dhillo festival, a traditional celebration observed in specific villages of Sangeum, Quepem, and Canacona Taluka in Goa, India highlights the paramount importance of forests, not only for sustenance but also for ecological security, particularly for indigenous communities. The forests provide essential ecosystem services and sustains livelihoods, of tribal populations, therefore the tribals in turn take care and revere it. Festivals in Goa, including the Dhillo festival, serve as conduits for conveying messages about nature and conservation, with women playing pivotal roles in preserving traditional knowledge and participating in cultural festivities that celebrate the environment.

The festival is dedicated to Dhillo or Dhillyadev, the festival coincides with the paddy-harvesting season and is exclusively observed in select villages of Canacona Taluka. It entails the worship of a 'womb-like' heap of sacred soil, symbolizing the earth's nurturing and life-giving qualities. Through rituals such as collecting mud, decorating the heap, offering prayers, and performing traditional dances, participants express gratitude and reverence for nature, reinforcing their spiritual connection to the land. The festival culminates with the immersion of the Dhillo heap in a nearby water body, symbolizing the cyclical relationship between humans and nature.

The work explores the intersection of folk culture and biodiversity conservation, shedding light on shifting cultivation practices among tribal communities in Goa. It underscores the Velip community's integral role in forest preservation and their reliance on agricultural activities for sustenance. The festival's songs and rituals serve as manifestations of cultural values and environmental consciousness, promoting sustainable practices and reverence for the environment. The festival's emphasis on using locally sourced produce and natural materials points to the community's commitment to ecological harmony and self-sufficiency.

The final chapter of the work delves into the Dhalo festival, a female centric celebration of women in Agonda village, Goa, honoring the earth goddess and highlighting the deep connection between women, their community, and nature.

Focusing on folklore, the chapter emphasizes the cultural significance of oral narratives, songs, and traditions passed down through generations. It discusses the role of folklore in connecting communities with their past, preserving history and values through storytelling, and fostering cultural pride and identity. Additionally, the chapter explores the broader context of folk festivals, highlighting their role in showcasing traditional music, dance, food, crafts, and customs unique to specific communities or regions.

In the study area of Agonda, the chapter provides geographical and demographic insights, emphasizing the village's traditional reliance on fishing and agriculture, alongside the emergence of tourism as a significant economic activity. It then delves into the specifics of the Dhalo festival, detailing its rituals, performances, and purpose.

The chapter highlights the festival's inclusive nature, its role in fostering sisterhood among women, and its significance as a platform for entertainment, skill enhancement, and stress relief. The chapter touches upon the economic significance of the festival's central gathering place, the Mand, and its role in community cohesion and resource management.

Overall, the study of these festivals highlights the importance of cultural preservation, environmental management, and community solidarity in sustaining the unique heritage of Goa. By embracing tradition while embracing change, Goan society continues to

thrive, embodying the essence of tradition, community, and artistic expression for generations to come.

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Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3



Fig.4



Fig.5



Fig.6



Fig.7



Fig.9



Fig.8



Fig.10



Fig.11

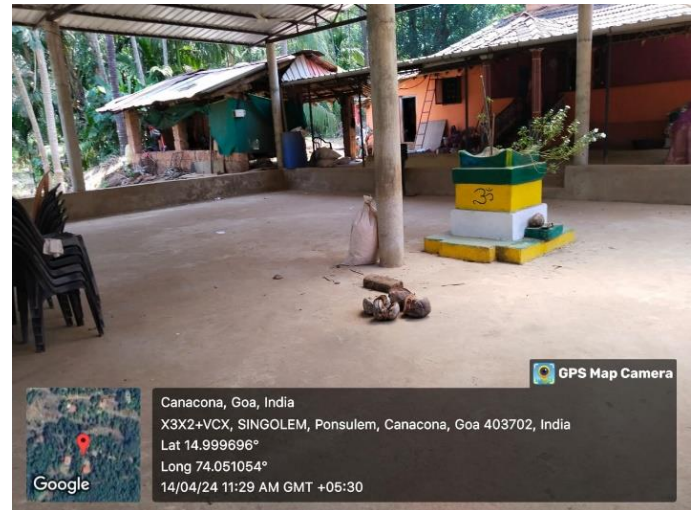


Fig.12



Fig.13



Fig.14



Fig.15

Fig. 1 The soil from a sacred place is collected by 5 young unmarried girls to make Dhillo, at Zitalwada

Fig.2. The mud is moulded and formed into a globe called Dhillo, at Zitalwada

Fig.3. and Fig.4. The Dhillo made from mud is adorned with flowers, above it is an idol of Kartekiya which the villagers has started to establish on the festival, this is a recent trend at Zitalwada, Gaodongrim

Fif.4 and Fig.6. is the immersion of the Dhillo on the last day of the celebration.

Fig. 7. The place where Dhillo is established at Zitalwada

Fig. 8. Maand at Zitalwada

Fig.9. A ritual performed at Yeda in Cotigao wherein Two married women and a young boy is honoured before the beginning of the Dhillo festival

Fig.10. Gaonkar and Gaunkan of Yeda at Kotigao

Fig.11. The Dhillo at Yeda, Kotigao

Fig. 12. Dhillya Maand at Yeda. Kotigao

Fig. 13 and Fig.14. Dhalla Maand at Agonda.

Fig. 15. Women performing Dhalo at Agonda

