

Centrality of Land Among the Velips of Canacona, South Goa

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, Centrality of Land among the Velips of Canacona, South Goa is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the M.A Sociology at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioral Studies under the Supervision of Dr. Joanna Pereira Coelho and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will be not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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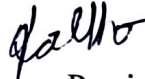
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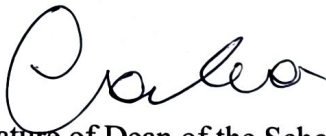
COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation report “**Centrality of Land Among the Velips of Canacona, South Goa**” is a bonafide work carried out by Mr. Sandesh Yeshwant Velip under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of master of arts in the Discipline sociology at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioral Studies Goa University.



Dr. Joanna Pereira Coelho

Date: 19/4/2024



Signature of Dean of the School

Date: 19/4/2024

Place: Goa University



Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the Velip community of Gaondongrim village, of Canacona, South Goa whose experiences have inspired and shaped this research. As a member of this community and a researcher, I am grateful for the opportunity to study our strong bond with the land.

I hope this work honours the wisdom and traditions of our ancestors.

With grateful appreciation,

Sandesh Yeshwant Velip

PREFACE

This dissertation explores the centrality of land among the Velips of Canacona, South Goa. The Velip community is indigenous to this region and has a rich cultural heritage closely tied to their land. Understanding the significance of land for the Velips is essential for appreciating their social, economic, and cultural dynamics. This study delves into the intricate relationship between the Velips and their land, examining how it influences their identity, livelihoods, and overall well-being. By shedding light on this topic, I aim to contribute to the broader discourse on indigenous communities and their connection to land.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who supported me throughout the process of researching and writing this dissertation.

First and foremost, I extend my deepest appreciation to the Velip community members in Bhupar Ward of Gaondongrim village, Canacona, South Goa, who generously shared their time, knowledge, and experiences with me. Without their willingness to engage and collaborate, this study would not have been possible.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In tribal societies, land isn't just about geography. Land holds immense importance, going beyond its physical boundaries to shape various aspects of community life. It's a big deal, influencing everything from culture to economics. This dissertation aims to dig into why land matters so much to these community. By looking at this tribe, I want to understand how land shapes their societies, beliefs, and how they manage resources.

For tribal groups, land is not just a piece of property it's a symbol of heritage, spirituality, and belonging. Passed down through generations, it carries the stories and memories of ancestors, grounding communities in their collective history. Moreover, land often serves as a sacred space where rituals and ceremonies are performed, strengthening the spiritual connection between people and their environment.

Beyond its cultural significance, land is also vital for the economic sustenance of this tribal community. In this region many rely on agriculture, hunting, and gathering as their primary livelihoods, making land ownership and access crucial for their survival. However, the management of land resources goes beyond mere economics, it's about ensuring the well-being and self-sufficiency of the entire community.

Yet, the relationship between tribes and their land is not without challenges. Issues such as land tenure, territorial boundaries, and indigenous rights often come into play, raising questions about ownership and authority. This dissertation aims to delve into these complexities, drawing on insights from anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies to shed

light on the dynamics of land governance and importance of land within the study area i.e, Velips of Bhpuar ward from Gaondongrim village.

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF “TRIBE” IN GOAN SETTING

In the Indian context many researchers and anthropologists have conducted studies on various tribes around India. According to them, “Tribes” refer to distinct social groups often characterized by their unique cultural, linguistic, and historical heritage. These communities typically reside in specific regions and maintain their traditional customs, languages, and social structures. (Beteille 1986, Elwin 1941, Ghurye 1980, Xaxa 1999). Ghurye (1980) defines, tribes as distinct social groups characterized by common ancestry, endogamy, dialect, and a sense of solidarity. He also referred them as "Backward Hindus" in the sense that he believed tribes were part of the larger Hindu social framework, yet perceived as lagging in certain aspects of social, economic, and cultural development.

Goa, a small coastal state in India, hosts several tribal communities. In Goan context, a tribe typically refers to a distinct social or cultural group with shared ancestry, traditions, language, and often residing in specific geographic areas within Goa. These communities may have unique customs, practices, and identities that differentiate them from the general population. (Monteiro 2015, Phaldessai 2004, Dhume 1986, Gawas 2015). According to Gawas (2015), The tribes like Gawda, Kunbi and Velip first settlers of Goa. The available evidence, particularly archaeological literary and folklore have proved that the tribes are aboriginals of Goa. And also, the tribal communities are called as Mull Goenkar i.e. indigenous peoples meaning the original settlers of Goa.

The Government of Goa officially recognized or granted Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to specific communities through a series of notification and legislative actions. In (1954), the first mention of ST in Goa appears in the Portuguese Organic Charter, which recognized “Tribes” as a distinct group with certain rights, (Goa Government Gazette, 1954). Goa’s liberation from Portuguese rule (1961), the Indian Constitution came into effect, explicitly recognizing and protecting ST’s. The Constitution’s Fifth Schedule lists the ST communities across India, but Goa was not initially included. In (1972), the Goa Scheduled Tribes Act, was enacted to specially define and notify ST communities in Goa. The Act identified seven ST communities in Goa, based on their various criteria such as their distinct language, culture, social organization and geographical isolation. In year (2003), The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, issued a notification recognizing more communities as STs in Goa, which included Kunbi. The criteria for determining ST in Goa are based on factors such as primitive traits, geographical isolation, and economic backwardness. (Official Gazette of India, Part II, Section 3(i), 2003).

According to Mitratogi (1999), “Kunbi” is considered to be a sub-caste of Marathas, and they primarily engaged in farming. Besides Goa, the communities of Kunbis are largely found in the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. In Phal’s essay (1982), “Kunbis of Goa” he says, the Kunbi is one of the tribal or original community of Goa. According to Satoskar (1971), Kunbis have two sub-castes, Velip and Gaonkar. In some villages, Velips are devoted to temple services and sometimes acts as priest in performing certain religious rituals. The Gaonkar is mainly engaged in cultivation and agriculture. The Velip tribe is one of the indigenous communities in Goa. Primarily found in the Sanguem, Quepem and Canacona talukas, they have a rich cultural heritage deeply rooted in their traditional

practices. Khedekar (2004) says, the Velip people traditionally engaged in agriculture, cultivating crops like rice, millets and pulses. They are known for their distinctive customs, rituals, and folklore, contributing to the diverse cultural landscape of Goa.

According to Santos, M. (2008), the Velip community traces its origin to the ancient Dravidian civilization of South India. They are believed to have migrated to Goa from the neighboring states of Karnataka and Maharashtra centuries ago. The Velip primarily speak Konkani, the language of Goa. They also have a distinct dialect known as Velip Konkani, which is characterized by its unique vocabulary and pronunciation. They have a special reverence for the forest and its deities and they celebrate a number of festivals throughout the year. Traditionally, the Velip community relied on agriculture and traditional crafts for their livelihood. They were skilled farmers, and artisans. However, over time, these traditional occupations have declined, and many Velip have shifted to other occupations, such as wage labor and government employment. The Velip community is organized into a number of exogamous clans, known as 'jati'. Each jat has a totem animal, which is believed to protect the clan from harm. They also have strong sense of community and kinship ties. They are known for their hospitality and strong social network.

1.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The relationship between indigenous tribes and land is a fundamental aspect of their cultural, social, and economic identity. The centrality of land among indigenous tribes, focusing on various dimensions such as spiritual connections, traditional practices, land tenure systems, and contemporary challenges.

1.3.1 Spiritual Connections to Land

Many indigenous tribes view land as sacred, embodying their spiritual beliefs and ancestral connections. Land is often perceived as a living entity, imbued with cultural significance and spiritual power. Rituals, ceremonies, and traditional practices are deeply intertwined with the land, reinforcing the spiritual bond between the tribe and its territory (Smith, 2018). For example, the Navajo people of North America consider certain geographic features as sacred sites, where ceremonies are performed to honor their ancestors and maintain harmony with the natural world (Yellowhorse et al., 2020). Similarly, Australian Aboriginal communities have Dreaming stories that narrate the creation of the land and establish the spiritual relationship between the people and their ancestral lands (Biddle et al., 2019).

1.3.2 Traditional Land Management Practices

Indigenous tribes have developed sophisticated land management practices over centuries, based on traditional ecological knowledge and sustainable resource use. These practices are deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of the tribes and reflect their profound understanding of local ecosystems. For instance, many indigenous communities practice rotational agriculture, shifting cultivation, and forest stewardship to ensure the long-term health and productivity of the land (Berkes, 2018). Traditional land tenure systems, such as communal ownership and customary land rights, play a crucial role in maintaining community cohesion and regulating access to resources (Davidson-Hunt & O'Flaherty, 2018). These practices not only sustain biodiversity but also contribute to the resilience of indigenous societies in the face of environmental changes.

1.3.3 Land and religion: Sacred Landscapes and Ritual Practices

For indigenous tribes in India, land is not merely a physical resource but a sacred entity imbued with spiritual significance and ancestral connections. Sacred groves, rivers, mountains, and forests serve as sanctuaries of biodiversity and repositories of cultural heritage, where tribal communities perform rituals, ceremonies, and festivals to honor their deities, ancestors, and natural elements (Malhotra & Sivaramakrishnan, 2013). For example, the Dongria Kondh tribe in Odisha reveres the Niyamgiri hills as the abode of their deity Niyam Raja, and they conduct elaborate rituals to maintain harmony with the land and seek blessings for their agricultural activities (Behera, 2018). Similarly, the Apatani tribe in Arunachal Pradesh practices terrace farming in harmony with the natural landscape, guided by their animistic beliefs and ecological wisdom (Chaudhuri & Mibang, 2015). These sacred landscapes and ritual practices not only reinforce the spiritual bond between the tribe and its territory but also sustain ecological balance and cultural continuity within indigenous communities. The relationship between land and religion among indigenous tribes in India is deeply rooted in cultural practices, spiritual beliefs, and traditional ecological knowledge.

1.3.4 Cultural Practices and Traditional Knowledge

Land is deeply intertwined with the cultural identity and daily practices of indigenous tribes in India, shaping their worldview, social organization, and spiritual beliefs. Rituals, ceremonies, and festivals are often linked to agricultural cycles, seasonal changes, and natural phenomena, reinforcing the spiritual bond between the tribe and its territory (Gadgil & Guha, 1992). For example, the Bishnoi community in Rajasthan has a tradition of tree worship and conservation, where members protect sacred groves and wildlife habitats as an expression of their religious beliefs and environmental ethics (Tribhuwan, 2007). Similarly,

the Warli tribe in Maharashtra depicts their connection to the land through intricate wall paintings known as Warli art, which symbolize their agrarian lifestyle, social harmony, and cultural heritage (Gajjar, 2017). Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) passed down orally through generations plays a crucial role in sustainable resource management, biodiversity conservation, and adaptation to environmental changes (Berkes, 2018). Indigenous tribes possess rich knowledge systems about local flora, fauna, soils, and climate patterns, which inform their agricultural practices, medicinal remedies, and land-use strategies (Pathak & Sahu, 2019).

1.3.4 Traditional Livelihoods and Resource Dependency

Land serves as the primary source of livelihood for indigenous communities in India, supporting diverse traditional occupations such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, and pastoralism (Kumar & Kumar, 2018). Many tribes practice subsistence agriculture, cultivating crops such as rice, millets, pulses, and spices using traditional farming methods adapted to local agro-ecological conditions (Singh & Hazra, 2016). For example, the Soliga tribe in Karnataka practices shifting cultivation (known as jhum or podu), rotating crops in hillside fields to maintain soil fertility and biodiversity (Krishnan & Parthasarathy, 2019). Similarly, pastoral communities like the Gaddis in Himachal Pradesh and the Rabaris in Gujarat rely on transhumance grazing practices, migrating seasonally with their livestock to access fresh pastures and water sources in the highlands and plains (Shiva, 1991). These resource-based livelihoods are deeply intertwined with cultural traditions, social customs, and indigenous knowledge systems, reflecting the close relationship between land use, natural resources, and community well-being (Baviskar, 1995).

1.3.5 Land Governance and Tribal Autonomy

The governance of land and natural resources in India is characterized by a complex interplay of statutory laws, constitutional provisions, and customary practices, often posing challenges for indigenous communities in asserting their land rights and self-determination (Dasgupta & Sarkar, 2015). While the Constitution of India recognizes the special status of Scheduled Tribes (STs) and safeguards their land rights through provisions such as the Fifth Schedule and the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), implementation gaps, bureaucratic hurdles, and legal ambiguities undermine tribal autonomy and community control over land (Ganguly & Sengupta, 2017). State-led development interventions, such as mining projects, infrastructure development, and conservation initiatives, often encroach upon tribal lands without adequate consultation, consent, or compensation, triggering conflicts and resistance from affected communities (Saxena, 2018). The lack of effective mechanisms for tribal participation, decision-making, and redress exacerbates tensions between indigenous peoples, state agencies, and private actors over land governance and resource management (Gonsalves, 2014).

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

There are a number of reasons for choosing to conduct research on the centrality of land among the Velips of Canacona. Firstly, relatively few insightful or research work or studies have done on the Velip Tribes. The Velips represent an indigenous community with unique cultural practices and beliefs. Investigating the role of land within their society provides an opportunity to explore distinct perspectives on land ownership, utilization, and significance. This exploration contributes to a deeper understanding of how different cultures perceive and interact with their natural environment.

Such research holds anthropological significance as it delves into the relationship between the Velips and their land. By examining aspects such as land tenure, indigenous rights, and cultural identity, it adds to broader anthropological discussions. This inquiry not only enriches academic scholarship but also offers insights into how societies conceptualize and engage with their surrounding landscapes.

Moreover, focusing on Canacona as the geographical and cultural epicenter of the Velips ensures local relevance. By directly addressing issues pertinent to the community, the research may offer insights valuable to local policymakers and stakeholders. Understanding the intricate connection between the Velips and their land can aid in formulating interventions or policies aimed at addressing challenges such as land rights disputes, environmental degradation, or cultural preservation.

Lastly, academically, delving into a relatively understudied topic like the Velips relationship with landfills gaps in the literature. By providing a detailed case study, the research contributes to a broader understanding of cultural dynamics and can facilitate comparative analyses with other indigenous communities or cultural groups. In sum, a dissertation on this topic offers valuable insights into the intricate interplay between culture, land, and society, with implications for both academic scholarship and practical interventions.

During my research, I got detailed information on the centrality of land among the Velip tribe, drawing upon personal experiences from over twenty years of living in this locality. Sharing narratives from myself and fellow Velip tribe members enriched the academic discourse on land centrality. The research enabled me to conduct in-depth studies on the topic, exploring how land is crucial for the livelihood of tribal communities. I

witnessed firsthand how the Velip tribe's livelihood depended on the land. Living among the Velip tribe allowed me to immerse myself in their culture, understanding the symbolic and spiritual significance of land through rituals, ceremonies, and daily practices. This formed the foundation for comprehending their identity and worldview. Exploring livelihood practices, including agriculture, hunting, and resource gathering, provided insights into the community's resilience and adaptability. These practices shaped the economic dynamics of the Velip tribe. Investigating the social structure revealed how land ownership and use influenced power dynamics, community structure, and interpersonal relationships. Assessing the environmental impact of land utilization practices highlighted the importance of sustainable development and environmental conservation within the Velip tribe's context. Examining historical patterns of land use provided valuable insights into the community's resilience and adaptability over time.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The research question is, how does land play a central role in determining the socio-cultural, political, and economic life of Velips in Gaondongrim village, specifically exploring its socio-cultural, spiritual aspects, political significance, influence on traditional practices, community cohesion, and livelihood strategies?

The research aims to investigate the centrality of land among the Velips of Gaondongrim village, focusing on its role in shaping various aspects of their society. It seeks to understand how land influences their socio-cultural practices, spiritual beliefs, political dynamics, traditional customs, community cohesion, and livelihood strategies. Additionally, it aims to explore the significance of land in the economic structure of the Velip tribe and its impact on environmental stewardship. Through an in-depth analysis, this

study aims to provide insights into the intricate relationship between land and the Velip tribal society, shedding light on its multifaceted roles and implications.

1.6 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the study is to comprehensively examine the centrality of land within Velip tribal society, specifically in Gaondongrim village. It aims to uncover the various ways in which land influences socio-cultural practices, political dynamics, economic structures, and environmental stewardship among the Velip community. By investigating these aspects, the study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the significance of land in shaping the lives and livelihoods of the Velip tribe, contributing to academic discourse and potentially informing policies and interventions aimed at supporting indigenous communities and their relationship with land.

The objectives of this research endeavor to provide a comprehensive understanding of the centrality of land within the Velip tribal society of Gaondongrim village. Firstly, the study aims to document the socio-demographic profile of the study area, shedding light on the demographic composition and characteristics of the community. Secondly, it seeks to uncover the historical trajectory of land management practices in Gaondongrim, tracing the evolution of land use patterns and ownership structures over time. Thirdly, the research endeavors to discern the intricate association of land with religion, culture, and polity within the study area, exploring the spiritual beliefs, cultural practices, and political dynamics intertwined with land. Fourthly, the study intends to investigate the connection between land and livelihood among the Velips, examining how land influences their economic activities and sustenance strategies. Finally, the research aims to inquire into the occurrence of political mobilization or conflicts pertaining to land in the study area,

analyzing any instances of political activism or tensions surrounding land ownership and usage. Through these objectives, the study seeks to illuminate the multifaceted roles played by land in shaping the socio-cultural, economic, and political dynamics of the Velip tribal society.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

In this research, the Qualitative Research method is used to accurately document the required information on tribe. Ethnographic research is a qualitative method that is utilized in this study. In which participant observation was taken place, that is immersing oneself in the tribe's community to observe and participate in their daily activities, rituals, and interactions. And also Interview method was used for conducting structured and semi-structured interviews with tribe members to understand their beliefs, practices, and perspectives. The members who were interviewed such as Priest, locals, village headman, farmer, village panch and Zankars. The study was depended on primary as well as secondary sources in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the chosen topic. Primary data was collected by using the tools of data collection such as interview method, and observation. Carolyn Ellis, (2004), defines auto ethnography as a research method that combines autobiography and ethnography. It involves the researcher's personal experience and reflection, exploring how their own cultural background and identity influence their understanding of a particular social phenomenon. Auto ethnography is a form of qualitative research that the researcher had used to explore and understand the relationship between tribal communities and their land. Whereas secondary data includes books, journals, magazines, blogs, census data, articles, various research papers or thesis and so on. Combining these methodologies allows for a holistic understanding of the tribal centrality

of land, taking into account cultural, historical, legal, social, and environmental dimensions.

1.8 SCOPE & LIMITATIONS

Future research opportunities abound in the exploration of the centrality of land within the Velip tribal society, as outlined by the current study's objectives. Firstly, comparative studies offer a promising avenue to deepen our understanding of land-related practices across different tribal communities, both regionally and globally. By examining similarities and differences, researchers can uncover unique cultural nuances and contextual factors shaping land use, ownership, and governance systems.

Moreover, longitudinal studies present an opportunity to track changes in land management practices, socio-cultural beliefs, and political dynamics within the Velip community over time. By tracing historical trends and analyzing contemporary developments, scholars can gain valuable insights into the adaptive strategies employed by indigenous communities in response to evolving socio-economic and environmental challenges.

Gender perspectives represent another fruitful area for future research, particularly in exploring the gender-specific dimensions of land ownership, access, and decision-making among the Velips. By examining how gender roles and power dynamics intersect with land-related practices, researchers can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of intra-community dynamics and inequalities.

Policy analysis offers yet another avenue for future inquiry, with a focus on evaluating existing land policies and their implementation in tribal areas. By assessing the

effectiveness of policy interventions in addressing the socio-economic needs and rights of indigenous communities, researchers can identify gaps and opportunities for policy reform and advocacy.

Environmental impact studies represent a crucial area for future research, particularly in assessing the ecological consequences of land use practices within Velip tribal lands. By exploring sustainable land management approaches and their implications for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem resilience, scholars can contribute to efforts aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and resilience.

Finally, exploring alternative livelihood options beyond traditional land-based activities among the Velips presents an opportunity for future research. By examining factors such as market opportunities, skill development, and access to non-land resources, scholars can contribute to the diversification of livelihood strategies and the enhancement of socio-economic resilience within indigenous communities.

The future research endeavors hold great potential for deepening our understanding of the complex interplay between land and indigenous societies like the Velips. By exploring these diverse avenues for inquiry, scholars can contribute to academic knowledge and inform practical interventions for sustainable development and social justice.

1.9 LIMITATIONS

During the course of the research, some limitations were encountered, which influenced the study's scope and outcomes. One significant limitation revolved around the number of respondents and representation of the participants. Due to constraints such as time,

resources, and accessibility. The research has relied on a smaller number of respondents. Additionally, reluctance and limited availability of participants to engage in interviews and surveys posed challenges in gathering comprehensive data on land management practices, socio-cultural beliefs, and livelihood strategies. Accessing relevant historical or archival data on land-related issues had been constrained by limited availability or documentation, impacting the depth and accuracy of the study's historical analyses. Furthermore, resource constraints, including time and personnel, may have impacted the overall scope and rigor of the research efforts. Limited resources could have influenced decisions regarding data collection methods and the depth of analysis.

1.10 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH CHAPTER

Chapter one provides an introductory framework for the research study. It begins by presenting the background and context of the study. The chapter then articulates the research question and problem statement, which serve as guiding principles for the study's exploration of the centrality of land within the Velip community. Also discusses the thematic literature review. Following this, the purpose and objectives of the research are outlined, highlighting the study's aim to unravel the multifaceted roles played by land in influencing various aspects of Velip society, including socio-cultural practices, economic structures, and environmental stewardship. Additionally, the chapter discusses the significance and relevance of the study, emphasizing its potential contributions to academic discourse, policy interventions, and community empowerment.

Moreover, the scope and limitations of the study are delineated to provide clarity on the research boundaries and constraints. While the study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the centrality of land within the Velip tribal society, it acknowledges certain

limitations, such as sample size constraints, data collection challenges, and ethical considerations, which may impact the depth and breadth of the research findings. Lastly, the chapter outlines the methodology employed in the research study, detailing the research design, data collection methods, sampling techniques, and analytical approaches utilized to address the research objectives.

Second Chapter, delves into two primary aspects the demographic profile of the study area and the historical context of land management practices in Gaondongrim village. Firstly, it provides a detailed examination of the socio-demographic characteristics of the Velip community, including population size and occupational patterns. Secondly, it talks about historical evolution of land management practices in Gaondongrim village, tracing the trajectory of land ownership, use patterns, and governance structures over time.

Chapter three, focuses on exploring the intricate association of land with religion, culture, and polity within the Velip community of Gaondongrim village. It delves into the spiritual beliefs, cultural practices, and political dynamics that intersect with land-related issues, shaping the socio-cultural fabric and governance structures of the Velip society. The religious significance attributed to land within Velip culture, exploring rituals, ceremonies, and myths surrounding land ownership, use, and stewardship. It elucidates how land is perceived as sacred and deep feeling with spiritual significance, playing a central role in religious observances and community rituals. The cultural dimensions of land among the Velips, exploring how land shape's identity, and inter-community relationships. It examines traditional customs, folklore, and customary practices related to land inheritance, marriage, and social obligations, shedding light on the cultural norms and values that underpin Velip land tenure systems.

Fourth chapter is dedicated to examining the connection between land and livelihood among the Velips in Gaondongrim village. It delves into the ways in which land influences economic activities, sustenance strategies, and overall livelihood patterns within the Velip community. The diverse economic activities and livelihood strategies that are dependent on land resources. It examines traditional occupations such as agriculture, shifting cultivation, cashew plantation and forest-based livelihoods.

Lastly, Chapter five deals with discussing about whether there have been any political mobilization/ political conflict with regard to land in the study area i.e, the Bhupar ward of Gaondongrim Village.

CHAPTER 2: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF STUDY AREA

AND HISTORY OF LAND MANAGEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I have discussed the socio- demographic profile of the study area. Also, I have discussed about the history of how land was managed in this particular region.

The village, Gaondongrim is situated in the southern part of Goa, in a taluka called Canacona. Its name, derived from the Konkani words ‘gaon’ meaning ‘village’ and ‘dongri’ meaning ‘hill’. Which simply means people living on top of the hill. Gaondongrim’s history intertwines with the legacy of the tribal communities who have inhabited the region for centuries. The village inhabitants, predominantly belonging to the Scheduled Tribes, i, e, the Velips, have preserved their unique cultural heritage, evident in their vibrant festivals, traditional attire, and deep-rooted connection to the land.

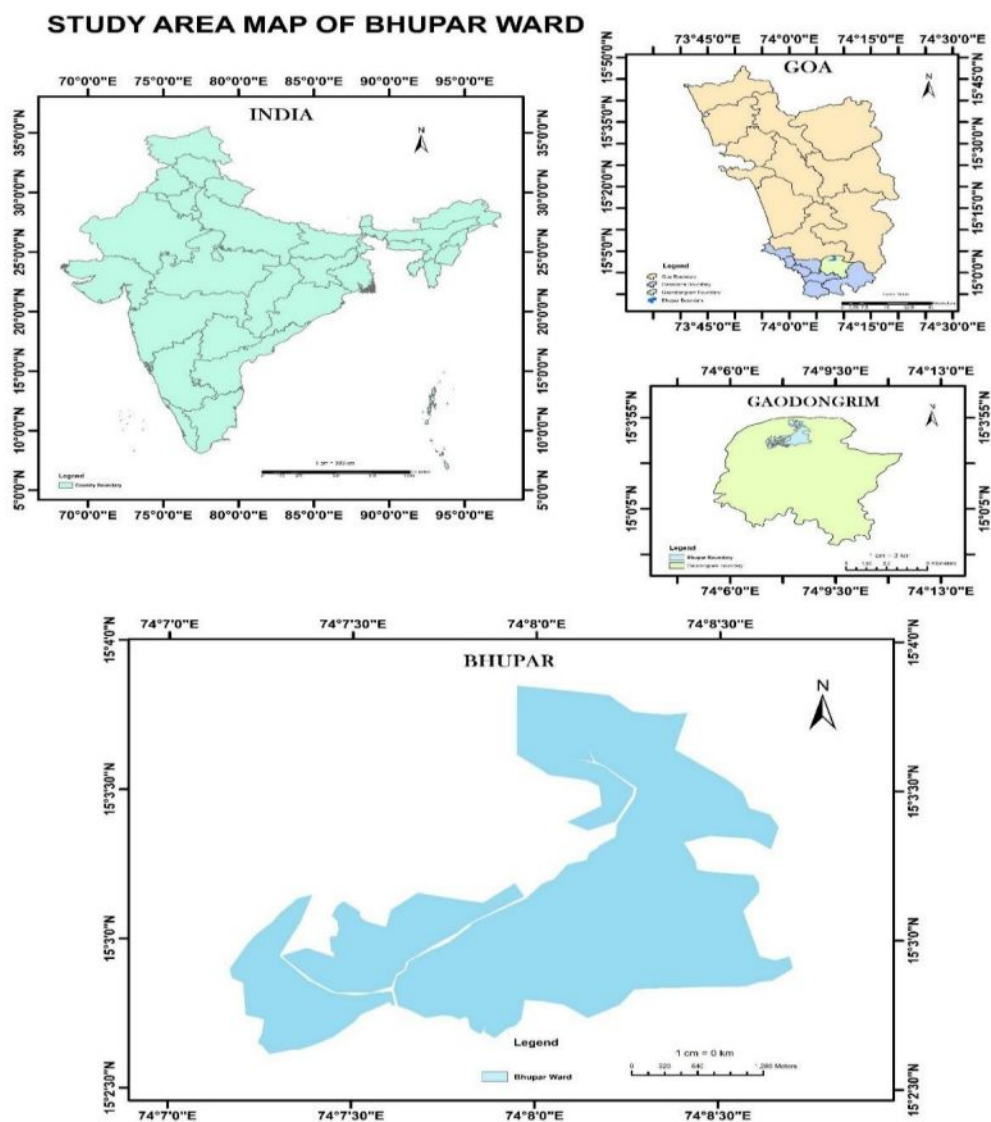
Agriculture forms the backbone of Gaondongrim’s economy, with paddy cultivation, coconut plantation, areca nut plantation and cashew nut production being the primary source of the livelihood. The village fertile soil and abundant rainfall create an ideal setting for these crops, contributing to the region’s agricultural output. Beyond its agricultural pursuits Gaondongrim has rich culture woven from the thread of its tribal heritage. The village’s annual festival’s such as the Shikmo, Zatra, Kalo and other festivals related to nature showcase the community’s deep-rooted traditions and colorful attire. Folk dances, traditional music, and community gatherings enliven the village’s atmosphere, creating a sense of shared identity and cultural pride.

The village is located far away from urban centers and major cities. Surrounded by lush greenery and their traditional way of life, which revolves around farming, and handicrafts. Population in remote village areas typically relies on agriculture or traditional livelihoods for sustenance, and the lifestyle is often simpler and more closely tied to nature. The village characterized by its traditional mud hamlets, as time encompasses it's going through transition, colorful attire, and a deep-rooted connection to nature. The locals often celebrate their cultural festivals with lively dance and music performances.

The Gaondongrim village, comprises of many wards. As per Census 2011 (Indian village Directory) data the area code or town code of Gaodongrem town is 627025. Gaodongrem village is situated in Canacona taluka of South Goa area in Goa, India. It is arranged 12km away from sub-region settle Canacona (tehsildar/mamlatdar office) and 49km away from locale settle Margao. According to census of 2011, Gaondongri is the gram panchayat of Gaodongrem village. The absolute topographical area of town is 6193.6 hectares. Gaodongrem has a complete populace of 4,946 people groups, out of which male populace is 2,561 while female populace is 2,385. Education pace of Gaodongrem town is 65.99% out of which 73.33% male and 58.11% are females. There are around 1,004 houses in Gaodongrem village. Pin code of Gaodongrem village territory is 403702. With regards to organization, Gaodongrem town is administrated by a sarpanch who is chosen delegate of the town by the nearby races. Also, Gaodongrem village goes under Canacona gathering supporters and South Goa parliamentary voting demographic. Canacona is closest town to Gaodongrem town for all major monetary exercises.

The name Bhupar, derived from the Konkani word 'Bhupar' meaning 'land of plenty', aptly reflects the ward's agricultural abundance and natural beauty. Beyond its

agricultural pursuits, Bhupar ward boasts a rich cultural tapestry, woven from the threads of its tribal heritage. The ward's inhabitants have preserved their traditional knowledge of medicinal plants, natural remedies, and sustainable agricultural practices. They are skilled in handicraft making, and woven baskets.



(Map.01, *Study area map of Bhupar ward*)

Source: Map from GIS (Geographic Information System) student.

All the residents of this ward belong to Scheduled Tribes community, there is also no caste break up and all of them have common surname i.e, Velip and Gaonkar. They practice Hinduism, and all the residents living in this ward belong to Velip community. There are no sub- groups within but we can find different clans within the community. For instance, they have their 'Kul Devta' Kulgatipurush. People are the worshipper of nature; they worship stones and trees. Here comes the concept of totemism. Their livelihood was fully dependent upon nature.

2.2 TO DOCUMENT HISTORY OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Traditional land use practices among the Velips are characterized by a symbiotic relationship with nature, where resources are utilized sustainably to meet subsistence needs while preserving ecological balance. Agroforestry, shifting cultivation, and community-managed forests are integral components of Velip land management systems, reflecting indigenous knowledge systems and cultural values which are associated with land.

2.2.1 Boundary Stones

Carved stones marked land borders between villages, families, or individuals. In tribal areas, managing boundary stones involved a mix of cultural traditions, social norms, and practical considerations. Leaders in the community, often respected elders, helped decide where to place these markers. These markers are in form of small pyramid, the structure is made up of around fifteen or twenty stones. They relied on stories passed down through generations and landmarks like rivers or mountains to determine boundaries. Boundary stones weren't just about marking land, they were symbols of the community's identity and unity. Social dynamics were important too. Setting boundaries wasn't just a technical

task it was a ritual that reinforced the community's connection to the land and to each other. Sometimes, ceremonies or gatherings accompanied the placement of boundary stones to emphasize their significance. When we talk about ceremonies, if a person had sudden death for instance, he died in road accident, then his cremation is done on "*Shim*", it is basically on the border of that particular village. Shim is a boundary line which divides the village.

When disputes arose over boundaries, tribal headman such as Bhudwant or meetings were held to resolve them. Elders or neutral parties helped mediate discussions, relying on unwritten rules and traditions to find fair solutions. The focus was on restoring peace and keeping the community together, rather than punishing anyone.

Despite not having written records, tribal communities passed on their knowledge orally from one generation to the next, ensuring that boundary markers remained respected and understood. Even when facing outside influences, in this contemporary period these communities held onto their traditions of managing boundary stones as a way to maintain their identity and connection to the land.

2.2.2 Shifting Cultivation

Shifting cultivation, commonly referred to as slash-and-burn agriculture, served as a traditional land management practice among tribal communities in the past. The process began with the careful selection of a suitable plot of land, within forested regions abundant in biodiversity and fertility. With simple tools such as axe and machete, the tribes cleared the land by cutting down existing vegetation and burning it, a practice integral to the method known as 'slash-and-burn.'

Once the land was cleared, tribes proceeded with planting crops such as raghi, “*tori*”, “*kanguu*”, “*mirchi*” and so on, chosen for their compatibility with the local climate and soil conditions. However, as the years passed, the fertility of the soil inevitably declined due to nutrient depletion. In response, tribes adopted a system of crop rotation, abandoning the cultivated plot after a few years to allow the land to regenerate naturally. This rotation of cultivation sites not only preserved soil fertility but also mitigated the risk of soil erosion. The major thing is that on abundant plot these people are planting cashews, as it is economical crop, which help them to generate better economy.

Shifting cultivation was characterized by a sense of community cooperation, with tribe members working collectively to clear land, plant crops, and harvest produce. This communal approach fostered a deep connection to the land and instilled a shared responsibility for its stewardship. Moreover, tribes exhibited a profound respect for nature, demonstrating a keen understanding of their local environment and employing sustainable farming practices to ensure the longevity of their agricultural endeavors.

They would relocate to new areas if soil fertility declined or if external factors such as climate change or population pressure necessitated a shift in traditional farming practices. Despite the practical aspects of shifting cultivation, its cultural significance was equally profound, intertwined with spiritual beliefs, traditional rituals, and social customs that reinforced the connection between the people and the land.

Overall, shifting cultivation epitomized a sustainable approach to land management that allowed tribal community to thrive in harmony with their environment for generations. However, the encroachment of modern development and the expansion of agriculture have led them to abandon this traditional way of life in favor of more intensive farming methods.

Less importance is given to shifting cultivation as they are in contact with modern world and development which are taking nearby to them. It is crucial to preserve and understand these ancient practices for the benefit of future generations.

2.2.3 Cattle Rearing

Cattle rearing has been a traditional practice among tribal communities for centuries. Tribes raise cattle for several important reasons, each contributing to their livelihood and culture.

Cattle play a role in sustainable agriculture. Tribal communities practice rotational grazing, where cattle help fertilize the soil with their manure, enhancing crop yields and maintaining ecosystem balance. It represents a vital aspect of their way of life, contributing to their overall well-being and sustainability.

CHAPTER 2: ASSOCIATION OF LAND WITH RELIGION,

CULTURE AND POLITY

In chapter 2, I have discussed socio- demographic profile of the study area. And also, I have discussed about the history of how land was managed in this particular region. Whenever we try to carry out research it is necessary to know the field area as well as to know the demographic profile of study area. Which will help to get more in-depth information. And also, by looking at history we got to know about how people were connected to land and how they used land for their livelihood and sustenance. Now in this chapter I have discussed the association of land with regards to religion, culture and polity of study area.

3.1 RELIGION

3.1.1 Temple (Kulgatipurush)

In tribal region, temples hold significant cultural, social, and religious importance within the community. These temples serve as central hub for various activities and rituals that are integral to the tribal way of life. The utilization of temple in these regions is multifaceted, catering to both spiritual and practical needs of the community.

Kulgatipurush is a temple of their clan which is called as “Kul” it is regarded as Kulgatipurush Devasthan. Shri Kulgati Purush Dev Prasaan is a Hindu temple located in Bhupar, a village in the Canacona taluka of South Goa district, Goa. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, who is worshipped here in the form of a lingam.

The headman or the priest who carries out the poojas and look after the temple is a “Velip”. The Velips is only person or their family members could do poojas or worship them, no other can become priest and worship. We are living in contemporary period but the idea of stratification and hereditary rights are still in existence.

The temple in this region is primarily used for various religious ceremonies and worship. These ceremonies often revolve around their deities, spirits, or ancestors that are believed to have a direct influence on the tribe’s well-being. Rituals such as prayers, offerings, and festivals are conducted within the temple premises to seek blessings, protection, and prosperity for the tribe and its members. There are various festivals and rituals that are celebrated at this temple such as Nayachi Parab, Ustanachi Parab, the annual Zatra is took place at temple.

The management and administration of temples in this region is overseen by local religious leaders or elders who hold esteemed positions within the community. Such as the “Bhudwant” and other respected elders plays a vital role in this context of temple. These individuals are responsible for maintaining the temple infrastructure, organizing religious ceremonies and festivals, and resolving any disputes or conflicts that may arise within the community.

The funding and upkeep of temples are often supported through contributions from tribe members. These financial resources are used to cover expenses such as maintenance, repairs, and the purchase of offerings or supplies needed for religious ceremonies. For instance, they have the separate council to look into the financial assessment. The have to keep each and every record of the event which took place and how much money they spent

on. On annual day of particular day of the year they carry out meeting in which all community members are present. And the whole budget is present in front of them. This is how the system at temple is runned by the Velips in their locality.

Overall, temples in tribal region serve as vital institutions that fulfill a variety of religious, social, and practical needs within the community. Through their role in facilitating worship, social gatherings, and support services, this temple plays a central role in preserving and perpetuating tribal culture and traditions.

3.2 SACRED PLACES

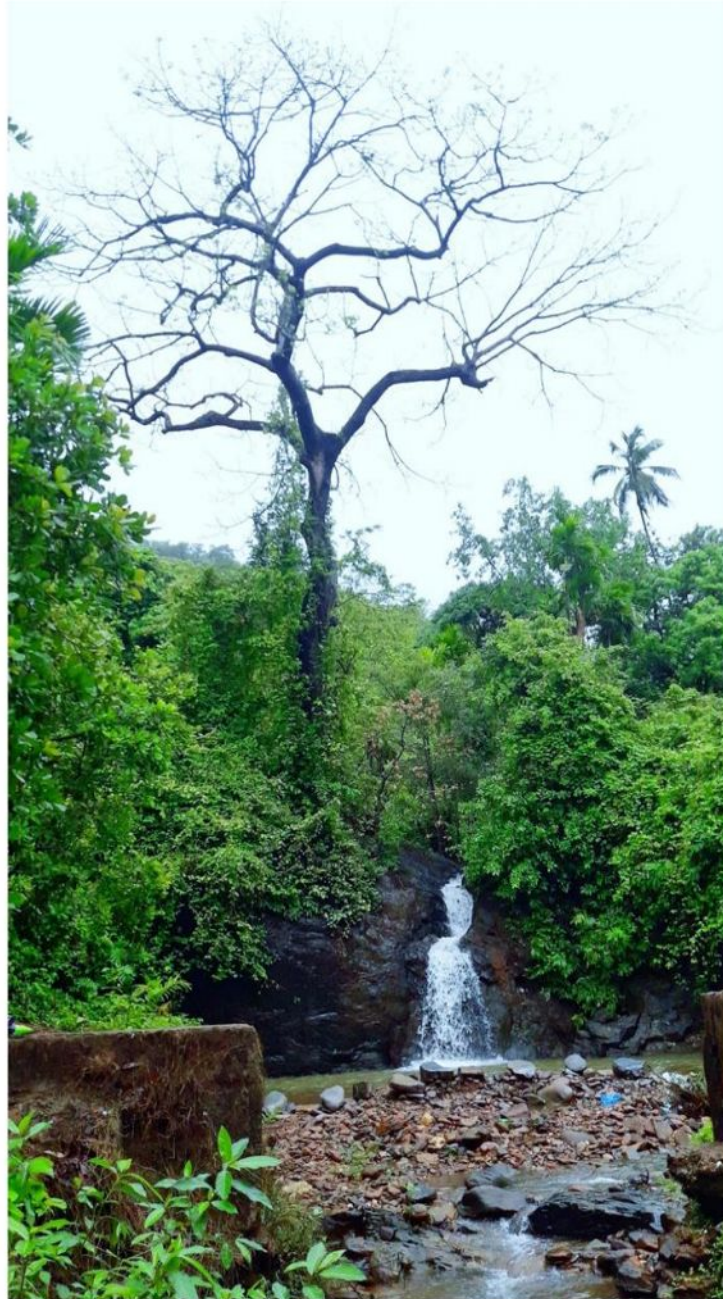
Sacred places are locations that hold special religious, spiritual, or cultural significance for certain communities or individuals. These places are often revered and considered sacred due to their association with important events, deities, ancestors, or spiritual forces within a particular belief system. In this study area there are various such kind of sacred places. This is because the people living here are highly connected to nature and they are worshiper of nature. The sacred places of study area are:

3.2.1 Gunn

It is a place where people made a pond to conserve the water from in between of free-flowing stream (“Vaal/ Vool”) & equip it in the winter and summer season for the daily use. The water from pond was used by cattle to drink and for mostly it was used by women to wash clothes. They had to bring out the water and use it for their purpose. Beside pond (Gunn) there was another source of fresh water which was used by the locals for drinking purpose. This place is sacred because a woman who has having her periods should not

enter the pond. After five days they are allowed to go inside and use the water. This is how the concept of “purity and pollution” came in force in this community.

Some fifteen years back the villagers had constructed the pond to maintain and store more amount of water for their daily use and livelihood. Nowadays this pond has become a waterfall. Now it is called as “Gunni” or “Bhupar” waterfall regarded as one of the most famous waterfalls of South Goa. Large amount of tourist and locals visit this place and makes it dirty. Like people who visit here they take alcohol inside and drinks, as well as they eat chicken outside which is not right according to residents they consider it as sin.



Photo, 1. *Sacred place “Gunn” now known as “Bhupar Waterfall*

Source: The researcher clicked the image

3.2.2 Folakaden

It is a fresh water source (“Zoor”). Water is used for purpose of drinking, to have bath, also used by cattle to drink and one of the most important things is it is regarded as Holy place because, when the annual festival shigmo starts at the end of that day, all the gadi (people who went for shigmo as a Mel) they come at this place at midnight to have bath as purity. As whole during the three days of shigmo this “Mel” they do not have bath. Interesting, the women are not allowed to go inside the area and bring out the water instead other man has to help her to get that water when they need. Another thing is if a woman passes by that area to go somewhere else, while coming back they should not take another route and they don’t have to circled this area by choosing to go from another route. This is regarded as sin according to their mythology.

3.2.3 Zalmyache Dhade

This is a sacred place where this people worship a mango tree. On various rituals like at Parab’s been celebrated at that moment they do poojas and offer prasad (coconut, leaf, araca nut) to their God.

3.2.4 Gharvai/ Moth

Gharvai is a place which is made up of ten people. The people belonging to nearby village but belong to same clan. These people are called as Bhuparkar (people belong to Bhupar ward), Nanekar (people belong to Nanem ward), Ziltarkar (people from Ziltawadi ward), and Indradkar (people from Indrawad ward, not all but those who are called as “Munshikar”). These people are called as Brothers, also they don’t marry to each other as

they themselves regarded as or belong to same clan. Here, at this place on various account Pooja takes place and they do worship. For instance, when a person who want to take “Gudi” they have to come here and form it. What is Gudi?? It is basically a stick which is designed and flowered by the individual which is to be carried out by him.

This “Gudi” is taken by men who is unmarried and one man should take “Gudi” in accordance if he wants to marry in future. Without taking Gudi one man cannot marry according to their myth. If he does not take than it is said he doesn’t belong to this God. At this place there is also rituals are practised such as (*“tel ghalop”*) which means one day before marriage this ceremony took place at “Gharvoi”.

3.2.5 Khuti

This is an oldest and most powerful devasthan which is present in this tribal area and a sacred place. It is said that it is the first totem which this people started worshipping.

3.3 CULTURE

3.3.1 Daando

The original settlement of tribal region traces back to ancient times when human societies began to form settled communities. The original habitat or early settlement of the Velip is called as Daando, which is on hill. This region is located in remote area, away from the urban centers. And characterized by their distinct cultural, social, and political structures, often based on kinship ties and shared traditions.

One key aspect of the original settlement of tribal regions is the dependency on subsistence farming and pastoralism. The historically practiced agriculture, cultivating crops suited to their local environment, such as rice, raghi and vegetables. Additionally, pastoralism, the raising of livestock such as cattles played a significant role in tribal economies and for sustenance. Their livelihood was heavily based on this, as they were traditionally located in this region.

Social organization within tribal settlements is typically based on kinship ties and clan structures. Families within a tribe are interconnected through blood relationships, and these familial bonds form the basis of social cohesion and cooperation. Tribes often have chiefs or elders who hold authority within the community, making decisions related to resource allocation, conflict resolution, and rituals. For instance, the administration work is given to “Bhudwant” i.e, the headman of the village. The work of worshipping and doing poojas is given to Velips who is a priest and does priestly works. There are also other categories in which the work is divided among the community members. It is hereditary in nature. Overall, the original settlement of tribal regions was characterized by subsistence farming, pastoralism, and kinship-based social organization.

3.3.2 Transition and development at Daando

Daando was their mainstream area of livelihood around 40-50 years back. They used to stay there, along with their cattles and other things, also agriculture was practised there. They had mud houses and huts made of bamboo. Their living was heavily dependent upon forest. They were celebrating their festivals, rituals and ceremonies at that place such as shikmo, zatra, and parabs. Basically, this place was their whole and soul of living. The

tribal transition as the movement of indigenous communities from traditional subsistence to integration with modern economies, affecting culture, identity, and socio-economic conditions (B. K. Roy Burman, 2006). As time passed away the Velips started moving from Daando to another place. They all settled down to the foot hill with their livelihood. This might be because in search of better livelihood and development at other aspect of life. Slowly and gradually, they started to have connection with other mainstream societies.

Transition kept happening in their social life and also there was transition and development at their earlier settlement. Though they left their earlier settlement but the connection is still there in it. For instance, their religious, culture and other important ties are still practice at Daando. For example, their diets, rituals, and ceremonies still they carry out at Daando. The development we seen at Daando is incoming of kachha road, mud houses are replaced by bricks and the solar lights are being used.



Photo, 2. *Development at earlier settlement i.e, at Daando*

Source: The researcher clicked the image

Earlier there were only four houses at Daando, all family members who had kinship relationship they all stayed in one house, the concept of joint family was highly existed. But as time passed away each one of them started building one separate house for themselves and for their upcoming children. The four houses are replaced, now there are twenty to twenty-five houses of different families. The foot path is replaced by kachha mud road, it is in condition that the vehicles can go easily. Also, the mud houses are being replaced by bricks houses, and there is installation of solar pannels at several houses.

3.4 SHIKMO FESTIVAL

3.4.1 Meaning of Shikmo

The term “Shigmo” is very much talked about in Goan setting. But what about the “Shikmo”? A Shikmo is a Adivasis traditional festival celebrated by Velip community i.e, the tribal people of Goa. The term Shikmo refers to as, in which tradition passes on from ancestral knowledge to future generation. Basically, in this festival man perform traditional folk dance such as Tonyacho khel, and Talgadi on traditional songs which are related to nature and worshipping towards nature.

3.4.2 The process of carrying out Shikmo

This festival is carried out during the Hindu month of Phalguna, which falls between February and March. Before shivratri the locals start practicing folk dance at night at particular place and it is called as “Khutacher khelop”. Also, it is a perfect time for the children to learn. Childrens usually come up with their father, because they have that sense of belongness towards their culture and they are passionate and willing to learn their tradition. Overall, their love towards tradition makes them to learn and gain ancestor’s knowledge while growing up.

In this study area, the Shikmo is celebrated at “Daando” it is an early settlement of this people located on hill top. Away from the new settlement. Preparations for Shikmo usually begin several days in advance. Houses are cleaned and traditional “maatovs” are built. On the day of Shikmo, all people from new settlement goes at old settlement i.e Daando. All the men participate in this festival, they wear “Feto”, cap or “Turo”. Turo is

worn by newly married person which has to be gifted from his wife's side. All these are covered by local flowers which are in red, yellow, and in pink color. Because at this period of time, this flower grows up in nature. Such as "Abolechi Fula". Also, folk songs are related to nature, for instance the folk is "Abole fullya baikaden, sundare navta nhaikaden". The folk dance is performed by men and dressed up in vibrant attire. They perform is "Tonyacho khel" in which it requires "toni" made up of wood which is used and "Ghungru" which are tied to feet. And another folk dance is "Talgadi" the equipment which are needed for this is a "Ghumat and Shamel" and handkerchief. So, in this the tradition songs are related to trees, birds, or animals. Overall, it is directly or indirectly it has connection with nature. These performances often depict stories from mythology and folklore, celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the tribal community.

In each village there is hierarchy and different people have given different roles to do on various occasions. For instance, while carrying out this festival, it is led by "Guru". He is the head and leads the Shikmo, all people respect him. The people who go with him are called as "Mel" i.e., who goes for Shikmo. On the night of carrying out Shikmo, the Guru says "Naman" on "Maand". Naman is something which Guru says and afterwards the other people give him support. So, basically Naman is worshipping their local deities and re-collecting their names. This is how the day one summarizes.

The Mel is carried out at night, so at mid night they sleep on mountain without any assistance such as bed. They walk barefoot and also doesn't have bath for three days. So, the Mel goes to their neighboring villages and perform their art. While entering to any village they play "Rommad" the combination of "Dhol" and "Taso" to make aware for the

people that the Mel is arrived at your place and if they are at longer distance so they can come home.

The main highlight and importance of the Shikmo festival is the cultural performances and rituals. Traditional music and dance forms such as “Tonyacho Khel” and “Talgadi”. This is the real tradition of the Adivasis and also tradition of Goa.

3.5 MAAND

Maand is a sacred and spiritual place of these people. During the seasonal festival called shikmo at that time people came at Maand to celebrate shikmo. All mens comes here to form an art (dance). At that time “Naman” (taking or recalling name of various God, basically it is like worshiping them, taking prayers from them.) is sung at the commencement of Shikmo festival. Next to begin Shikmo or first step before the performance of traditional dance they sing Chaurang. It is like telling story through song and it is in their local language i.e, in Konkani. Only men are allowed to visit and perform their act on Maand. No women should enter there and maand is only used at the time of Shikmo festival.



(Photo,3. *Performance during Skimo, at Maand*)

Source: The researcher clicked the image

3.6 FESTIVALS (PARABS)

3.6.1 Nayachi Parab:

“Nayachi Parab” refers to the traditional celebration of the harvest festival. This Parab is carried out by the whole community members. In this process, while carrying out this Parab the agricultural crop is grown at particular place to a limited and restricted area. When the

crop is grown and during the event time crop is cut by only Velip (who does priestly work at temple). After cutting, near the field they do ritual of breaking coconut and then the “Naye” is taken to the temple by the Velip. After sometime the “Naye” is taken at Gharvoi (Sheyamelar: a place where they offer first harvest to their God). Later it is distributed among the locals. The locals have to receive it from the temple in which they have to take bath, have to come up with bare foot and also have to bring new towel to receive the Naye. After getting that to their home, they worship it and does Pooja of that Naye and offers flowers. Then it is tied to the door up front of the Devaro (where there is Puris and they have their God, Goddess pictures). First, they offer to “Puris” (a Puris is a wooden plank, of which they worship as a God). After that the Naye is tied to various equipment which they use in their daily life. For instance, to the door, utensils, knife, axe, pot, vehicle and so on. Overall, Nayachi Parab is not only a celebration of the harvest season but also a time to express gratitude for the blessings of nature, promote unity within the community, and welcome the arrival of longer days and warmer weather.

3.6.2 “Ustand” / Ustanachi Parab

This Parab is associated with vegetables. Most of the people here does shifting cultivation as well cultivate other traditional vegetables during rainy season. In local term they are regarded as, padwal, dhudi, also they grow cucumber, red chillies which are more famous in South Goa of Canacona taluka. These are the items which these people usually grow. This Parab encounters during rainy season, and in local language it is called as “Mhaal” period. The process of this Parab is like, all local gets whatever Vegetables they have at their temple. Each piece of each vegetable is cut down and then worshipped to God as “Choru”. Other remaining things they cook at temple, by mixing all vegetables and locals

have their food. The people celebrate this Parab at temple and also at each individual house by cooking food. It is saying that, we all eat but others should come to eat as well so they invite “Vhoor” (newly married couple) from neighboring villages. When they arrive the feet of this couple are being washed and does their pooja. After that they are feed on banana leaf.

3.7 POLITY

In this study area, tribal land tenure systems encompass a diverse range of practices and customs governing land ownership, access, and distribution within indigenous communities. These systems are often rooted in longstanding traditions, cultural norms, and historical context, reflecting the unique relationships between tribal groups and their lands.

3.7.1 Communal Ownership and Access

One key feature of tribal land tenure systems is communal ownership. In such systems, land is viewed as a collective resource belonging to the entire tribal community rather than to specific individuals. This communal ownership model emphasizes the interconnectedness between people, land, and traditional practices. Within communal ownership frameworks, access to land is regulated by customary laws and protocols established by the tribe. These regulations typically govern how land is allocated for various uses such as for religious activities, grazing, hunting, or ceremonial purposes. The access rights to this land are often based on kinship ties, clan affiliations, or participation in communal activities, ensuring that community members have equitable opportunities to utilize and benefit from the land.

3.7.2 Individual Ownership Rights

In this tribal region, there is no much communal ownership but the individual ownership is on larger scale. Individual ownership has emerged through processes such as inheritance, and formal land title registration. When we talk about inheritance, it has come from their parents. But now it is divided among their children and now they have officially authority over that land by doing registration. Individual ownership land is in not equally distributed among the community members. Those who had higher position and status in society earlier now they acquire the majority of land in this ward. And some have less land. This land is used by them for purpose of agriculture, cashew plantation and so on.

3.7.3 Dispute Resolution

Disputes over land are common in tribal communities and are typically resolved through indigenous methods of conflict resolution. These methods emphasize consensus-building, mediation by community elders or leaders, and adherence to traditional norms of justice and fairness. Bhudwant as well as elders play a crucial role in settling land disputes by drawing upon customary practices and customary laws.

CHAPTER 4: CONNECTION BETWEEN LAND AND LIVELIHOOD

The chapter 3, discussed about the association of land with regards to religion, culture and polity of study area. In which we got to know about how land plays a crucial role in tribe's religious activities, and also in the aspects of culture it is so vital. With regards to polity, there is association of land in this region. Overall, land is central to Velips. Now in this chapter I have discussed the connection between land and livelihood among the Velips.

The Velips, a Scheduled Tribe have inhabited the Canacona region of Goa for centuries, relying on the land for sustenance and livelihood. The Velips have maintained a close connection to their ancestral lands, which serves as the foundation of their cultural identity and economic activities. The socio-economic status of the Velip community plays a crucial role in shaping their relationship with the land. High levels of poverty, limited access to education and healthcare, and lack of alternative employment opportunities compel many Velips to rely primarily on agriculture, cashew plantation and forest-based activities for their livelihoods. In response to changing socio-economic conditions, many Velips have diversified their livelihoods by engaging in non-farm activities and wage labor.

4.1 AGRICULTURE

Agriculture as a main source of livelihood refers to the dependence of a significant population on farming activities for their sustenance. This involves cultivating crops, raising livestock, and engaging in related activities. The people from this community rely on agriculture for income, food, and employment, making it a crucial aspect of their economic and social fabric. The success of agriculture often determines the well-being of

these communities, as it directly influences their access to essential resources and economic stability.



Photo,4. *Agricultural fields in Bhupar ward.*

Source: The researcher clicked the image

4.1.1 Agricultural transition in Bhupar

Land is an important part and plays a crucial role to any living human beings. It is a main element of shelter. For the people living in rural areas land is vital because their livelihood is dependent upon agriculture. In these areas, agriculture was the primary activity for sustainable and livelihood. Traditionally more people were involved in agricultural and

they were doing collective farming. In which labors were helping each other in their field and was basically labour-intensive work.

Traditional agriculture in this villages involved manual methods and basic tools for cultivation. Farmer (“shetkar” in konkani word) typically used wooden plows called as “Nangar” drawn by bullocks to till the fields. Hand tools like hoes (“khore & pikas”) were employed for tilling the soil and preparing it for planting. Hand tools like sickles (“Evlo”) were employed for harvesting crops. They used traditional irrigation systems; they were called as “khariz” which means people made channels and through which they bought water from free-flowing river. Wells and small ponds (“Baandh”) were constructed to store rainwater and provide irrigation during dry periods to fields. Used cow dung as a manure in the field to grow crop. This is how these people used to do agriculture in a traditional way. The Elders (“Zankars”) used to pass down traditional knowledge and practices through generations.

Modern agriculture has witnessed significant advancements in methods and tools, aiming to increase efficiency, productivity, and sustainability. Tractors and other motorized equipment have replaced traditional bullock-drawn plows, significantly increasing the speed and efficiency of plowing and cultivation. The people now engaged in agricultural are very less as compared to which they were doing earlier. Nowadays tractor is been used by each individual who is engaged in agriculture and Traditional wooden plow and bullock has been extinguished. This is because of modernization and the support from the government and various schemes which is available and farmers avail them.

Various and increased use of chemical fertilizers, and pesticides to enhance crop yield and protect against pests and diseases are being used by modern farmers. Advanced

irrigation methods, such as pipes, are used to provide precise and efficient water distribution. People in ancient times turned to agriculture as a more reliable and sustainable way to secure food resources. But nowadays things are changing, some farmers cultivate more and through use of HYV seeds and fertilizers they get more production which is been later sold in market.

This is been an immense transformation or transition in the agricultural practices in this area. Most of the people in these areas are leaving agriculture because it is labour intensive and time-consuming work. The younger generation feels ashamed to do such work also they are craved to do white collar jobs which is more economy generated.

As time passes the agriculture is degrading, more people are leaving agriculture and involved in white collar jobs and working as daily wage labourers. Very few people are into agriculture and most of the agricultural land is barren. Another major factor of leaving agriculture is this people are getting ration through BPL (Below Poverty Line) ration card at lower prices as well as some gets it free of cost at every month. It is well enough for them to sustain for a month.

4.2 CASHEW PLANTATION

Cashew is an economically important crop cultivated extensively in this region. The cultivation of cashew in Goa can be traced back to the Portuguese colonial period, when cashew trees were introduced to the region from Brazil in the 16th century. Initially grown as ornamental plants, cashew trees soon gained popularity for their edible nuts and cashew apple., (Zantye Cashew. (n.d.) Over the years, cashew cultivation became an integral part

of Goa's agricultural landscape, with smallholder farmers and large plantations contributing to its expansion.

A cashew plantation serves as a primary economic activity involving the cultivation of cashew trees for the production of cashew nuts. Farmers typically engage in activities such as planting, harvesting, and processing the cashew nuts. This agricultural endeavor contributes significantly to local economies, providing employment opportunities and generating income through the sale of cashew nuts, as well as they produce local alcohol called "Hurak" and "Feni" which are widely used in various food products and industries, also used for medicinal purposes and for consumption.

Every household owns cashew plantation, which help them to raise their economic level at some extent. Cashew production starts during summer season in a month of February to May. The locals usually sell nuts in market around at a price of hundred or one fifty. It doesn't have steady price tag, it keeps on fluctuating, depends upon the production as well as what demand they have in market. The fruit which is left out, they make local alcohol and sell it. The produce two types of alcohol i.e, "Urrak" and "Feni". These are indigenous alcoholic beverages deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of this region of Gaondongrim as well as some other parts of Goa.

4.2.1 The process of making "Urrak" and "Feni"

The process of making Urrak and Feni involves traditional methods passed down through generations, highlighting the expertise of local artisans. The production of Urrak and Feni begins with the careful selection of raw materials. For Urrak, ripe cashew apples are typically used, while Feni primarily utilizes the Urrak which was earlier produced and it is

distillated. The quality of the raw materials directly influences the flavor of the final product. Once the raw materials are collected, the next step involves the extraction of juice. For Urrak, the cashew apples are crushed or pressed to extract the juice, which is then fermented. In the case of Feni, the process varies slightly. After the juice extraction, the liquid is left to ferment in large containers or earthen pots. Once fermentation is complete, the fermented liquid undergoes distillation to increase its alcohol content. Traditional pot stills made of copper or clay are commonly used for this purpose. The fermented liquid is heated, and the vapors are condensed to produce a higher alcohol content spirit. Once the Urrak or Feni has been distilled then it is sold. The production of Urrak and Feni is a labor-intensive process that requires skill, knowledge, and dedication. Through the careful selection of raw materials, extraction of juice, fermentation and distillation. By preserving and promoting these traditional methods, communities uphold their cultural heritage while also contributing to the local economy through the production and sale of Urrak and Feni.

4.2.2 Challenges

Despite its economic importance, the cashew industry in Goa faces several challenges that threaten its sustainability. These include fluctuating market prices, for instance the prices are never stable and are never in condition that helps small farmers. Small farmers constitute a significant portion of cashew cultivators in Goa. These farmers typically own small plots of land and rely on cashew cultivation as a primary source of income. They are responsible for land preparation, planting, and maintenance of cashew trees throughout the growing season. Climate change impacts, and the spread of pests and diseases. The climate in Goa is changing unconditionally, in summer season there is rain that affects the cashew plantation.

Additionally, competition from other cashew-producing regions like, people from neighboring states like Maharashtra and Karnataka which are on border of Goa, they tend to sell nuts in Goan market, as the price is higher in Goa as compared to their state. And changing consumer preferences pose further challenges to the industry. Because due to climate change there is slightly change in the quality of nuts. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from policymakers, researchers, and industry stakeholders to ensure the long-term viability of cashew cultivation in Goa.

4.3 SHIFTING CULTIVATION

Shifting cultivation involves clearing a plot of land, burning the vegetation, and then planting crops. After a few harvests, the plot is left fallow, allowing it to regenerate while a new area is cleared. This cycle helps preserve soil fertility, as different plots are used in rotation, preventing continuous depletion of nutrients.

For tribal peoples, often living in areas with limited resources, this method allowed them to adapt to the environment's variability. This cultivation was very helpful for them to generate a better livelihood. Because they were not fully engaged to urban centers and markets. So, the cultivation helped them to grow various local crops such as *mirchis*, *tori*, *padval*, and so on for their sustenance. During olden days every household would engage in shifting cultivation, but nowadays people are losing interest and most of the locals are doing white collar jobs and engaged in better jobs. But elders still practice this cultivation for sustenance.

4.4 “PORS” KITCHEN GARDEN

In the past, in tribal region, the management of land often involved a combination of traditional knowledge and sustainable practices. One of the primary methods employed was the establishment of kitchen gardens, locally known as “*pors*”, which served as an essential component of subsistence farming. Kitchen gardens were small plots of agricultural land cultivated near the tribal households. These gardens played a crucial role in ensuring food security and nutritional sustenance.

The management of land for kitchen gardens involved several steps, beginning with the selection of a suitable site. They choose area which had fertile soil, adequate sunlight, and better access to water sources, such as on river bank or stream. Also, they use wells and use of mechanized machines such as water pump to extract water. Traditional farming techniques, such as hand tools like hoes and spades, were commonly used for these tasks. But now modernity has encountered which led them to use machines like tractors in field. They relied on their intimate knowledge of the land and its natural cycles to determine the timing of planting and harvesting.

The selection of crops for the kitchen garden was based on factors such as climate, soil type, and dietary preferences. Local varieties of vegetables were favored to grow. Such as vegetables like *tambdi bhaji*, *mulyachi bhaji*, *kanyachi paat*, *irvil*, *bona*, *mirsango* and so on. These are the local term which are called in this particular region.

Throughout the growing season, the kitchen garden required constant care and attention. They diligently watered, weeded, and monitored their crops, ensuring optimal growth and productivity. Harvesting was done selectively, allowing for continuous yields

over an extended period. Surplus produce was often shared within the community or neighbors and also sold in market. But the market is far away from their settlement, also transport is not favorable. Also, their goods are not sold at higher prices, the bargaining is always there. They didn't benefit much from it. Some elderly women sell it in market but they face lot of hardships. Sometimes, their goods are not sold and they have to get back with empty hand.

The management of land in tribal regions through kitchen gardens exemplifies the harmonious relationship between humans and the natural environment. Through their intimate knowledge of the land and sustainable practices, tribal communities were able to cultivate nutritious food while preserving the health and fertility of the soil for future generations.

4.5 BHOVNI

Bhovni is a ritual related to God. It is carried out before one day prior to parabs like *Nayachi Parab*, *Gudulyachi Parab*, *Diwalichi Parab*, *Shikmyachi Parab* and *Aasadulichi Parab*. The process of carrying out Bhovni is that one person has to give louder call that is heard by all locals as their houses are nearby, after that all men comes together at one place, forms a group and then decides in which location of forest they are supposed to go for hunting. There is no specific area or they have no restrictions on certain land. They can go to any nearby forest and do the hunting. But the animal which is hunted specially they hunt wild boar has to be taken to village sacred places. In this region there are three sacred places in which they can cut the wild boar. The cutting should be done by only Velip, no other has right to cut at first time. This is according to their mythology and tradition. When

the process of cutting is done, those who went for Bhovni they get more pieces but interestingly those who were absent still they get pieces but less in quantity.

After sometime, the blood is worshipped to their local God, the place is known as *Jalmyache Dhade* and the thing which is worshipped or given to God is called as *Chunnipan*. On this one coconut they break, and offers some bananas. After that they cook food at religious place and have it. This is how Bhovni, hunting is done in this region by Velip community people.

CHAPTER 5: POLITICAL MOBILIZATION/ POLITICAL CONFLICT WITH REGARDS TO LAND

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 4, I have discussed about the connection between land and livelihood among Velips. In which I got to know about how land plays a crucial role in their day-to-day life and for their sustenance. In which they grow sustainable as well as cash crops for their economic development. This is how land is an important resource to an Velips tribe of this region. So, in this chapter I have discussed about whether there have been any political mobilization/ political conflict with regard to land in the study area i.e, the Bhupar ward of Gaondongrim Village.

In the history of Velips tribes they didn't witness significant mobilization but some conflicts or challenges related to land ownership or access they have faced. In society where traditional land tenure systems are well-established and community consensus on land use is strong, the need for political mobilization around land issues is very less pronounced. Due to the cultural values and norms of the Velips tribes had prioritize collective decision-making and communal ownership of land. In such settings, disputes over land could be resolved internally within the community without the need for external political mobilization

External factors such as limited urbanization, industrialization, or government interventions in the study area have resulted in less urgency or external pressure for land-related political activism. Without external pressures altering traditional land-use patterns or threatening customary rights, there might be limited incentives for mobilization.

The leadership structure within the Velips tribes may not emphasize confrontational or mobilizational tactics. Traditional leaders and elders had preferred consensus-building and negotiation over public mobilization as a means of addressing land-related issues. Strong social cohesion and stability within the Velip community contributed to the absence of political mobilization. Where communities are tightly knit and cohesive, individuals may perceive less need for external advocacy or mobilization to address land-related concerns.

The absence of political mobilization regarding land issues among the Velip tribes could be explained by a combination of historical, cultural, social, and leadership factors that contribute to a stable and internally managed system of land governance.

But there was conflict in this society with regards to land, which is discussed below.

5.2 SAAVOD

5.2.1 Meaning, development and decline interest toward Saavod

In this ward of Bhupar, people do Saavod for their livelihood. Saavod is a traditional subsistence farming, focuses on farming primarily for the purpose of feeding oneself and one's family, rather than for profit or commercial gain. It often relies on traditional methods and tools, with a focus on sustaining the farmer's household rather than generating surplus for market trade. Subsistence agriculture is common in many rural and less economically developed regions of the world.

Firstly, all people came together because one person cannot do all things. For instance, they did it for sustenance and livelihood. Saavod was firstly formed with consideration of village members. The main reason was to help the needy people as well

as for the betterment and upliftment of an individual or family as a whole. The four members had put forward an idea of forming “Saavod” and later came in force.

In contemporary period, only the older people are working or part of Saavod. The interest of younger generation is declining because they are educated and they want white collar jobs and want to be economically stable. At Saavod they do not get enough money to sustain. And also, the majority of work need physical strength. So, they tend to ignore the traditional cultivation practice.

5.2.2 Source of livelihood

Saavod was the main source of livelihood among the locals. In past, there was no economic opportunities as well as less job opportunities. These people didn't have much connection to the external society or urban centers. In past they only grew agriculture and the members were involved in it. As time passed away, they grew commercial crops such as cashew, coconut and so on. This would help them to generate more money, which led to economic sustainability. Allowed them to have stable economy.

All members were divided into groups, they worked in shifts, such as the ones shift could be of three or of four days. If one person was absent on that particular day, he would fine 250 rupees, later as time passed away, they increased to 500 rupees per day. In summer season there is cashew plantation which gives heavy peak. As it is cultivated on hills, difficult to collect and it requires physical strength. If during this season time, you are absent one day than you get fine of 1000 rupees. This was made because, if you skip this work and go to do daily wage labour work you are paid 800 rupees. So that all members should come on that respective day, that others should not suffer and have to do much

work. These people do not get salary on weekly or monthly bases, but they get it at once time. On particular day of the ending season all the members come together and calculate the money and accordingly they distribute among themselves. The salary depends upon the production and the expenditure that they had done in particular year. The minimum salary an individual receives is 40,000 to 50,000 thousand. In their entire history they only once received an amount of 80,000 thousand per individual.

5.2.3 Conflict with regards to Saavod

The Saavod is place where its geographical area is totally vast. The land was not registered to their names, because it was traditional and ancestral cultivation land. Also, they didn't aware about the rules and policies.

After some, they came to know that they have to get registration of that plot, otherwise the forest department will acquire their land. So, the head of the Saavod put a case saying that this land belong to us and our ancestors was cultivating on this land. In the year, 2002, they put forward a case in Mamladar to get the that land. But it doesn't work out for them, because they said they don't have right to discuss and give judgement on this case. Later they filed a case and put forward their problem to collector office. They spend many years and their financial assistance was so weak that they could not afford lawyer and make things happen in their favour. Around four to five lakh amount was spent by them on this case. The struggle to acquire land was problematic and painful as they didn't get any assistance from anyone or any officials.

After struggle for many years in year 2021, the officials came to a conclusion that this land belongs to you people. Through the survey index the registration of land took place and they got their legal authority on this cultivating land.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Chapter one provides an introductory framework for the research study. It begins by presenting the background and context of the study. The chapter then articulates the research question and problem statement, which serve as guiding principles for the study's exploration of the centrality of land within the Velip community. Also discusses the thematic literature review. Following this, the purpose and objectives of the research are outlined, highlighting the study's aim to unravel the multifaceted roles played by land in influencing various aspects of Velip society, including socio-cultural practices, economic structures, and environmental stewardship. Additionally, the chapter discusses the significance and relevance of the study, emphasizing its potential contributions to academic discourse, policy interventions, and community empowerment. Moreover, the scope and limitations of the study are delineated to provide clarity on the research boundaries and constraints. While the study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the centrality of land within the Velip tribal society, it acknowledges certain limitations, such as sample size constraints, data collection challenges, and ethical considerations, which may impact the depth and breadth of the research findings. Lastly, the chapter outlines the methodology employed in the research study, detailing the research design, data collection methods, sampling techniques, and analytical approaches utilized to address the research objectives.

Second Chapter, delves into two primary aspects the demographic profile of the study area and the historical context of land management practices in Gaondongrim village. Firstly, it provides a detailed examination of the socio-demographic characteristics of the Velip community, including population size and occupational patterns. Secondly, it

talks about historical evolution of land management practices in Gaondongrim village, tracing the trajectory of land ownership, use patterns, and governance structures over time.

Chapter three, focuses on exploring the intricate association of land with religion, culture, and polity within the Velip community of Gaondongrim village. It delves into the spiritual beliefs, cultural practices, and political dynamics that intersect with land-related issues, shaping the socio-cultural fabric and governance structures of the Velip society. The religious significance attributed to land within Velip culture, exploring rituals, ceremonies, and myths surrounding land ownership, use, and stewardship. It elucidates how land is perceived as sacred and deep feeling with spiritual significance, playing a central role in religious observances and community rituals. The cultural dimensions of land among the Velips, exploring how land shape's identity, and inter-community relationships. It examines traditional customs, folklore, and customary practices related to land inheritance, marriage, and social obligations, shedding light on the cultural norms and values that underpin Velip land tenure systems.

Fourth chapter is dedicated to examining the connection between land and livelihood among the Velips in Gaondongrim village. It delves into the ways in which land influences economic activities, sustenance strategies, and overall livelihood patterns within the Velip community. The diverse economic activities and livelihood strategies that are dependent on land resources. It examines traditional occupations such as agriculture, shifting cultivation, cashew plantation and forest-based livelihoods.

Lastly, Chapter five deals with discussing about whether there have been any political mobilization/ political conflict with regard to land in the study area I.e, the Bhupar ward of Gaondongrim Village.

In this research on the centrality of land among tribes, we might find Structural Functionalism and Symbolic Interactionism sociological theories useful. While combining a macro sociological theory like Structural Functionalism with a micro sociological theory like Symbolic Interactionism may seem contradictory, I intend to make use of both these in my proposed research. Structural functionalism can help to analyze how land functions within the social structure of tribes, while Symbolic Interactionism can explore the meanings and interactions related to land within the cultural context of these communities.

Structural Functionalism views society as a complex system with various interrelated parts that work together to maintain stability and order. It emphasizes the functions of different elements within a society and how they contribute to its overall well-being. Application to Tribal Land Centrality, in this research, we can use structural functionalism to analyze the role of land within the tribal social structure. The research seeks to explore how land functions in terms of providing resources, shaping social roles, and contributing to the overall stability and equilibrium of the tribe. For instance, it will examine how land ownership and use contribute to the economic, social, and cultural functions of the tribe.

Symbolic Interactionism, focuses on the micro-level interactions and symbols that shape individual behavior and communication. It emphasizes the importance of shared meanings, symbols, and interactions in the construction of social reality. Application to Tribal Land Centrality, use of symbolic interactionism to explore the meanings attached to land within the tribal context. Investigate how individuals within the tribe perceive and interpret land, what symbols are associated with it, and how these meanings influence social interactions. For example, consider rituals, ceremonies, or language related to land

and how they contribute to the construction of identity and social relationships within the tribe.

By applying both Structural Functionalism and Symbolic Interactionism, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the centrality of land among tribes, considering both the broader societal functions and the nuanced individual and cultural meanings associated with land.

Relatively few insightful or research work or studies have done on the Velip tribes. Choosing to conduct research on the centrality of land among the Velips of Canacona presents several compelling reasons. The Velips represent an indigenous community with unique cultural practices and beliefs. Investigating the role of land within their society provides an opportunity to explore distinct perspectives on land ownership, utilization, and significance. This exploration contributes to a deeper understanding of how different cultures perceive and interact with their natural environment.

Such research holds anthropological significance as it searches into the relationship between the Velips and their land. By examining aspects such as land tenure, indigenous rights, and cultural identity, it adds to broader anthropological discussions. This inquiry not only enriches academic scholarship but also offers insights into how societies conceptualize and engage with their surrounding landscapes.

Moreover, focusing on Canacona as the geographical and cultural epicenter of the Velips ensures local relevance. By directly addressing issues pertinent to the community, the research may offer insights valuable to local policymakers and stakeholders. Understanding the detailed connection between the Velips and their land can aid in

formulating interventions or policies aimed at addressing challenges such as land rights disputes, environmental degradation, or cultural preservation.

Lastly, academically, search into a relatively understudied topic like the Velips relationship with landfills gaps in the literature. By providing a detailed case study, the research contributes to a broader understanding of cultural dynamics and can facilitate comparative analyses with other indigenous communities or cultural groups. In sum, a dissertation on this topic offers valuable insights into the detailed interplay between culture, land, and society, with implications for both academic scholarship and practical interventions.

During my research, I got detailed information on the centrality of land among the Velip tribe, drawing upon personal experiences from over twenty years of living in this locality. Sharing narratives from myself and fellow Velip tribe members enriched the academic discourse on land centrality. The research enabled me to conduct in-depth studies on the topic, exploring how land is crucial for the livelihood of tribal communities. I witnessed firsthand how the Velip tribe's livelihood depended on the land. Living among the Velip tribe allowed me to immerse myself in their culture, understanding the symbolic and spiritual significance of land through rituals, ceremonies, and daily practices. This formed the foundation for comprehending their identity and worldview. Exploring livelihood practices, including agriculture, hunting, and resource gathering, provided insights into the community's resilience and adaptability. These practices shaped the economic dynamics of the Velip tribe. Investigating the social structure revealed how land ownership and use influenced power dynamics, community structure, and interpersonal relationships. Assessing the environmental impact of land utilization practices highlighted

the importance of sustainable development and environmental conservation within the Velip tribe's context. Examining historical patterns of land use provided valuable insights into the community's resilience and adaptability over time.

In tribal societies, land isn't just about geography. Land holds immense importance, going beyond its physical boundaries to shape various aspects of community life. It's a big deal, influencing everything from culture to economics. This dissertation aims to dig into why land matters so much to these community. By looking at this tribe, I want to understand how land shapes their societies, beliefs, and how they manage resources.

For tribal groups, land isn't just a piece of property it's a symbol of heritage, spirituality, and belonging. Passed down through generations, it carries the stories and memories of ancestors, grounding communities in their collective history. Moreover, land often serves as a sacred space where rituals and ceremonies are performed, strengthening the spiritual connection between people and their environment.

Beyond its cultural significance, land is also vital for the economic sustenance of this tribal community. In this region many rely on agriculture, hunting, and gathering as their primary livelihoods, making land ownership and access crucial for their survival. However, the management of land resources goes beyond mere economics, it's about ensuring the well-being and self-sufficiency of the entire community.

Yet, the relationship between tribes and their land is not without challenges. Issues such as land tenure, territorial boundaries, and indigenous rights often come into play, raising questions about ownership and authority. This dissertation aims to delve into these complexities, drawing on insights from anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies to

shed light on the dynamics of land governance and importance of land within the study area i.e, Velips of Bhpuar ward from Gaondongrim village.

This research showed that land means a lot to the Velips. It's not just where they live, it's also a big part of their culture, identity, and way of making a living. They have a deep knowledge of the land and how to use it sustainably. Studying the Velips relationship with land has given us insights into the importance of preserving indigenous knowledge and sustainable land practices. It's also shown us the value of conducting research in a way that respects and honors the communities involved.

The findings of the research highlight the multifaceted ways in which land shapes the lives of the Velip community in Canacona. From its cultural significance to its role in economic livelihoods and ecological sustainability, land occupies a central place in Velip society. Understanding and preserving this relationship is essential for promoting the well-being of the Velips and safeguarding their cultural heritage for future generations.

To sum up, the insider perspective afforded me a rich and nuanced understanding of Velip life in Canacona. Through cultural immersion, community embeddedness, and access to insider knowledge, I gained invaluable insights that enriched the research process and contributed to a deeper appreciation of Velip culture and way of life. This personal experience underscored the importance of insider perspectives in conducting culturally sensitive research and highlighted the transformative power of immersive fieldwork experiences.

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