Religion, Caste and Gender: A Sociological Study of *Shigmoutsav* and *Veeramel* in Patnem, Canacona,South,Goa

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, "Religion, Caste and Gender: A Sociological Study of *Shigmo utsav* and *Veeramel* in Patnem, Canacona, South, Goa" is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Sociology Department at D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University under the Supervision of Ms. Ninotchka Mendes and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation report ''Religion, Caste and Gender: A Sociological Study of *Shigmo utsav* and *Veeramel* in Patnem,Canacona,South,Goa'' is a bonifide work carried out by **Ms. Nimisha Nilesh Komarpant** under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master's of Arts** degree in the Discipline of Sociology Department at the D.D Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies ,Goa University.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The taluka of Canacona is well known as a tourist's destination with the popularity of coastal beaches of Palolem, Agonda, Galjibagh, Cola and Patnem. The regions have also gained attention for its festivals and traditions performed in the rural hamlet of Canacona and one such festival is the traditional *shigmo* festival which is also known as *Dhakto Shigmo* or *Shigmya mel* including other festivals and rituals taking place during this *dhakto shigmo* are the *veeramel* and *shisharaani* in Konkani, which occurs every year in the month between February and March in the month of *Phalguna*. `Phalguna` occurs in the month generally February to March,this `phalgun` month is seen as a harvest festival in Goa,India.

The *shigmo* festival is celebrated in the month of `phalguna` between February to March and Hindu considered this *phalgun* month as the festival of Holi according to the Hindu calendar. The area selected for the study contain the southern portion of Canacona village covering the Patnem village.

Shree Mallikarjuna temple is dedicated to god *Mallikarjuna*, an incarnation of Lord *Shiva* and is located at *Sristhal* village in Canacona taluka, South Goa and primarily worshiped by *Velips* and *Marathas*. . A temple where devotees seek advice from oracles known as 'kaul' in Konkani meaning 'Devacho Prasad' the advice of oracles is either taken by priests in a trance or they interpret falling petals.

The God *mallikarjuna* holds very significant in religious and cultural importance for the villagers. *Mallikarjun* is the *kuldevta* (clan deity) of many villagers residing in canacona.

Figure1.1'*kaul*' a wooden board at *shri Mallikarjuna* Temple

Source : photography by the researcher

 The people in this village belong to different caste and religions, following their own traditions and practices, follow sequences during sacred practices especially during the

time of festivals and sacred activities because there are specific group of caste people who performs certain rituals and customs. Religion plays an important role in village people life, similarly caste also plays an equally important and crucial role in religious practices and continuity in the lives of the people in the villages. Religion lends legitimacy to the caste system, hence these both religion and caste are inseparable in villages.

The origin of the caste system comes from religion, where there is religion there is caste system and each group of people of different caste is given different rituals, customs and other activities to perform during the time of festivals.

Every year in village of Canacona, there are three important significant festivals taking place and these three festivals are *dhakto shigmo,shisharaani* and *veeramel* , here we get to observe the differences and similarities in rituals practices in village communities. Here I have selected only two festivals those two are *dhakto shigmo* and *veeramel* because *veeramel* festival is not celebrated either inside or outside the *mallikarjun* temple but this *veeramel* festival takes place outside the temple premises and in another village and not around the temple and the other one is *dhakto shigmo* ,this only takes place within the village, involving every household and every corner of the village with participation from various castes and religions.

Each village has its own local God and Goddesses those have different '*avatars*' (incarnation) this *avatar* word used in Sanskrit meaning incarnation of deity or an incarnation in human form where people worship deity with deep devotion and unwavering faith and can feel the God through the incarnation '*avatar*' of God in human form of incarnation.

Every village culture has different attitudes and expectations that encompasses unique anticipations and perspectives regarding gender roles when engaging in customs and religious sacred activities that takes place during festivals. Some cultures are much stricter about their gender roles, imposing several restrictions on women's during certain sacred religious activities practices while others are more open and flexible approach to the same customs .Each culture has different perspectives of looking into things because there are unique, different reasons and unique hidden stories behind those restrictions those restrictions imposed on genders participations where only the '*Zante*' (ancestors) of the villagers knew.

So, these all things made me to think and found very interesting, so i decided to chose this area Patnem Canacona as my research field area to study and as a researcher I felt that something is unique to study about the village culture, what is exactly culture is for them to be part of it, how and why religion, gender and caste plays an important sector in their life and why? These all things really found me unique to learn and to do research on it , so to get more statistics and facts about the culture ,gender dynamics ,caste and religion ,so these all data will help future generations students to know what is exactly culture to village people and how it is practiced and performed, because culture is identified very unique in each different places and there are different meanings, reasons and tales associated to it.

In contemporary, these all things are fading away gradually, to preserve the cultural identity, I sticked to this topic to study on how caste, gender and religion plays important in village people's life so these will give some glimpses of Goan cultures for coming future generations.

1.2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

According to the writings of Pandurang Phaldesai in his book 'Goa: Folklore studies' (Phaldesai ,2014) he described that for him folklore is an anesthetic product of society and described some untold stories of fertility rites, various rituals,symbols and practices of various sections of the Goan community. (Phaldesai, 2014) in a folklore community song and music is a necessity in almost all rituals festivals(Phaldesai, 2014 pg.7) mentioned about folk songs of the fields celebrated by the Hindu *kunbi* community folk song *Gudulyam parab* around Canacona, sanguem and kepem talukas of Goa. The author described that most of the hindu and Christian festivals and celebrations in Goa are interrelated, this is because both are of the same nationality.The author added that music and songs is essential for all the rituals festivals of the folklore tradition, that such efforts this book describes some of the countless stories Much research has been done to prepare this book. It can be said that it is the result of his intensive field research in the villages of Goa for about four decades.

In book 'Drowning values: India's fading Culture' written by Mann Dave this book aims to explore the various facets of India's declining culture and to examine the reasons behind (Dave, 2023) book tries to explore various aspects of the declining culture of India and its reasons he says that decline is not limited to any aspect of culture, but can be seen in various areas of society, from the erosion of traditional values to the neglect of cultural heritage(Dave, 2023) mentioned that Several factors have contributed to this decline, including globalization, rapid urbanization and the influence of Western culture.In this book (Dave,2023) also emphasizes the importance of preserving India's cultural heritage and the need for concerted efforts to reverse the trend of cultural decline. Dave uses

historical narratives, contemporary analysis and personal observations to provide a comprehensive picture of the current state of Indian culture.

Sahoo in his book observes that due to industrialization and with media explosion the conservatism has been demolished (Sahoo, 2022) mentioned that Their unwritten tradition is passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. Folk customs include both material and material folk culture, which began from the life of hunter-gatherers, through the history and customs of agriculture to its settlement patterns, dialectology of the vernacular, folk architecture, folk food, folk clothing , to the concept. society, folk religion, folk medicine, folk leisure, folk literature, etc. Popular means the perfect way of life of the community, the violation of which is sometimes punished by the community. Popular culture is the result of popular customs. Folklore is part of popular culture. Folklore is the artistic and aesthetic side of popular culture. Folklore includes myths, stories, songs, proverbs, proverbs and generally other audiovisual folk art. However, (Boro, 2006) argued that identity and its uniqueness are complex issues in the current context. Identity, like any other social practice, is a questionable concept, except that it reflects ethnic, linguistic and cultural signs and differences in a symbolic form.He argues that in a globalized cultural space, identities cannot remain pure and uncontaminated because each community continues to learn from other communities and thus the process of acculturation continues, leading to hybrid identities.He argues that in a globalized cultural space, identities cannot remain pure and unpolluted because each community continues to learn from other communities unlike (Sahoo, 2022) added that media is responsible for erosion of folk culture but here (Boro, 2006)instead of destroying cultures worldwide the media can help popularize and preserve ethnic cultures. Language,

customs and culture can indeed be preserved with the help of technology. In addition, globalization brings world-class technology and, by providing autonomy and influence, can enable self-representation.

According to the explosies book of 'Caste matters' written by Suraj Yende first generation Dalit scholar educated across continents, challenges deep seated belief's about caste and unpacks its many layers (Yengde, 2019) his gut wrenching experiences of growing up in a Dalit basti, the multiple humiliations suffered by Dalits on a daily basis, and their incredible resilience enabled by love and humour As he brings to light the immovable glass ceiling that exists for Dalits even in politics, bureaucracy and judiciary (Yengde, 2019)provided an unflinchingly honest account of divisions within the Dalit community itself from their internal caste divisions to the conduct of elite Dalits and their tokenized forms of modern day untouchability all operating under the inescapable influences of Brahminical doctrines This path-breaking book reveals how caste crushes human creativity and is disturbingly similar to other forms of oppression, such as race class and gender At once a reflection on inequality and a call to arms, Caste Matters argues that until Dalits lay claim to power and Brahmins join hands against Brahminians to effect real transformation, caste will continue to matter.

Durkheim 'The elementary form of religious life' wrote the book because (Durkheim, 1912) believed that scientists studied religion in the wrong way, assuming that primitive people already had concepts like 'god' and 'soul' this seemed unlikely to Durkheim so He wanted to discover the basic expressions of the religious impulse, and that would require serious effort. First, he wanted to study the rudimentary forms of the religious life and how & What makes religious life religious??. Secondly Durkheim (1912)

wanted to identify the origins of the basic concepts of religions. Durkheim believes that totemism is the most primitive form of religion. In totemism, a clan believes itself to be descended from a plant or animal that it worships and admires and how totemism plays an very important role in aborginies people lives and how they are connected through it holistically.

Risman (1998), identified three different theoretical traditions that contribute to the understanding of gender and sexuality. The first tradition focuses on gender issues whether gender differences are due to biology or socialization. This focus is on the individual level of analysis and includes social identities (Risman,1998, pg.16) argued that all theories of the gender self affirm that until adulthood most men and women have developed very different personalities, with women becoming nurturing, kind. oriented and child oriented while men became competitive and work oriented.

Natarajan, Balmurli Routledge in 2011, In India caste groups ensure sustainability in an age of multiculturalism by formally presenting caste as cultural difference or ethnicity as unequal origins. This book (Routledge, 2011) questions the dominant social theories about caste and deals with the questions of how caste persists in the system that created it. Based on original fieldwork, the book shows how the cultural landscape captured by the new caste grammar animates the castes into cultural communities in which caste cultures are born, organized and naturalized through the transformation of jati or kinship ties.

According to Beyer work entitled as Religion and Culture: Revisiting Close Kin (Beyers, 2017) Mentioned that religion and culture are always closely related, along with aesthetics and ethics, religion shapes culture. When ethnicity becomes part of close concepts, the relationship with religion needs clarification. This article aims to emphasize

that the study of culture is indispensable in the study of religion. (Beyers, 2017)argued and justified in three ways the first one as global cultural migration, second as religion as a sign of cultural identity that blurs the boundaries between culture and religion, and third as place of religion in culture makes religion act as a guardian of culture . culture this leads to a situation where any sign of cultural hostility is interpreted as opposition to religion all three arguments require an examination of ethnicity in the study of religion.

In the book 'The tulsi and the cross anthropology and colonial encounter in Goa by Perez she opposes to Dumont notion of a hierarchy stratified into endogamous group called reversibility (Perez, 2004)fieldwork in Goa among the devadasi of the Hindu temple of manguesh in ponda tulaka provided new data based on understanding of Caste (Perez, 2004) mentioned that in Goa caste holds whether one adopts a catholic or a Hindu perspective (Perez, 2004) mentioned here the caste discrimination,social status, food habits and marriage restrictions in Goa which she interviewed (Perez, 2004) ethnographical research shows that Goa was dominantly Hindu and perception of Goan society and special focus on a group of devadasis (kalvants) of a Hindu temple, also mentioned here the gender role of women in the temple belongs to the caste of bailadeira and bhavins and how discrimination were taken place among women's in temples of goa,their dressing styles and how devadasi women unlike other Hindu women as widows will be permanently inauspicious. In Goa a devadasi never attached to a man who was not Brahman but this is different from the bhavins who may accept lower caste men and remain faithful throughout their lives.

In the book `Religion in Sociological Perspective' written by Elise Robert contains an introduction to the term religion the structure and dynamic process system structure

and meanings(Robert, 1984 pg.24)Explained what is religion and social construction of religion explaining the different definitions those are substantive, functional,symbolic and invisible definitions and explain how these all plays role in People's Life.(Robert, 1984 pg.34) distinguished between religion and magic, He mentioned there are worship experiences where people believe in magic rather than religion.The author mentioned religion is something that people worship God because God is God or the measure of value but in magic people are influenced by the supernatural forces and seeking those forces working for them and not against them, magic involves supernatural forces of manipulation (Robert, 1984 pg.144) illustrated between myths and rituals also mentioned about ritual and myths are close integrated to each other where rituals were expressed in very different way compared to myths that of same rituals. The authors sociological perspective is that the ritual and myths have different meanings attached to each other in each communities (Robert, 1984 pg.432) described the role of gender, ordinanation of women in terms of religion where the gender role are controlled by the larger society and pressure from religious groups and women negotiated gender barriers in organised religion.

M.N `Srinivas social changes in modern India' describes the procedures of Sanskritization and Westernization to understand religious, cultural and social change in contemporary India(srinivas, 1963)Srinivas stand against the following assumptions about Indian society, the static and general structure of the four varnas of Indian caste system, the mobility and dubiety of castes, and the widespread acceptance of Western influence(srinivas, 1963)explained about the process by which lower castes or tribal groups adopt the customs, rituals and ways of life of a higher caste or upper castes and

points out throughout the monograph that the mobility offered by Sanskritization was a change of position rather than a total structural change.

In 'Caste Class and Power' written by Andre Bateille analysed how caste is different from class and what are the similar characteristics between class and caste system (Beteille, 1965)argued that inequalities related to different castes have been completed detached in journey of time but socially and culturally caste system still be Ling in the minds of people's in contemporary (Beteille, 1965)observed that the power has become individualistic of class to a greater extent than in the previously.The author studies of the village sripuram revealed political and economic formations are increasingly being differentiated from caste system.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the absence of records regarding the traditions, rituals, customs those performed and practiced in the village of *Patnem* Canacona, Goa, it is very difficult to understand significance entirely without doing research of this village. Thus the research question aims to know and explore the inter relationship between the religion, caste and gender with reference to the festival of *veeramel* and *Shigmo utsav* and its significance in the life of the villagers, also to know the culture of this region with the motive of preserving this old age heritage of Goans.

1..4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. to know the socio and demographic profile of Patnem village of Canacona

2. to know the rituals, customs and beliefs associated with the *shigmo utsav* and *veeramel* festival at Patnem, Canacona.

3. to explore the association between the religion, caste and gender with reference to the festivals of *Veeramel* and *shigmo utsav*

1.5 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

The study aims to understand how *dhakto shigmo* festival is celebrated in south portion of village Canacona, what are the similarities and differences seen in each different communities of groups, how caste and gender plays an major role during the time of festival of *dhakto shigmo* and *veeramel* in southern portion of Canacona, Goa, India.

This study is a quanlitative ethnographic study and the data has been collected through interview method. Ethnography study means a methodology that combines qualitative approaches into a clarification for dealing with the weaknesses of traditional methods when tested to substantial data.

To collect substantial data the researcher, conducted continuing of data generated through observations, conducted multiple interviews, participated in research settings, built strong rapport with the interviewers in her selected field of research over extended periods of time.

I conducted interviews based on interview schedule and interview guide. Interview schedule is where the researcher asks questions based on his dissertation topic and respondents responds according to their pre planned interview schedule, where the research interviewer, collects all data and keep and use purposive sampling technique

means where the researcher was selective to some areas of her research field area to collect all the required data before conducting any interview with the respondents.

1.6 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH AREA

Canacona is an administrative district in the South Goa district of the Indian state of Goa. Canacona is one of the six subdivisions that make up the South Goa region. It is bounded by Quepem taluka to the north, Sanguem to the northeast, Karnataka state to the south and the Arabian Sea to the west. Chaudi town is the administrative headquarters of Canacona taluka. Canacona was incorporated into Goa in AD 1794.Canacona taluka includes villages namely Patnem, Chaudi, Palolem, Poinguinim, Loliem, Polem, Agonda,Coatigao and Gaondongri and many others. Among the most peaceful and isolated beaches in South Goa is Patnem Beach. This beach, which is part of the town of Canacona, is a tiny bit of heaven. Along with the area's delicious seafood, the beach is well-known for its serenity and beauty. The famous Palolem Beach is located in Canacona.Goa's most famous chili is the bright red *Khola* chili that grows exclusively on the hillsides of Canacona taluka in South Goa. Also known as Canacona chili, this variety takes its name from the hill village of *Khola* where it is grown.*Mallikarjun* Temple is located at *Shristhal*, about 2.5 km from Chaudi on the main road to Karwar.

Locally, *Mallikarjun* is a popular deity as reflected in the names of local educational institutions. This centuries-old temple was renovated in 1778.There are paramount restaurants, general stores, bars, resorts, beauty salons and many others.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Time allotted for the research was not sufficient enough to gather all detailed data of the research problem

2. To convince the respondents for a proper interviewing process was also very difficult

1.8 CHAPTERIZATION SCHEME

1. Introduction

2. socio demographic profile of Patnem village

3. The religion,caste and gender association in *veeramel* and *shigmo utsav* festival

4. Rituals and beliefs associated

5. Conclusion

CHAPTER II

SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CANACONA,

PATNEM VILLAGE

Goa is indeed a small state filled with paradise-like beaches, vibrant culture, and rich traditions. Its unique blend of Portuguese and Indian influences makes it a captivating destination for tourists from around the world. Goa's stunning coastline, historic architecture, delicious cuisine, and lively festivals attract visitors seeking relaxation, adventure, and cultural experiences.

Every year in Goa, different types of festivals take place which are a phenomenon in nature in cities and in villages of Goa, but the practices and traditions are totally different and unique in their own way from each other. Festivals like *Shigmo utsav*, Carnival - these two are famous in Goa and a huge number of Indian tourists as well as many international tourists get together to witness the beauty of these two festivals especially in cities. In villages, especially the *dhakto Shigmo* happens in a different way than *'Vhadlo' Shigmo* in cities.

2.1. ETYMOLOGY OF VILLAGE PATNEM

Patnem is a village located in Canacona South Goa taluka of Goa,India.It is located 20 km towards Palolem Beach and its neighboring places are Palolem, Agonda, *Galjibagh*, Loliem, Poinguinim, and Rajbagh tarir. Patnem Village consists of a municipality.

The village of Patnem has a total population of people according to the 2024 census. The Hindus are the majority in this village, followed by Catholics and non-Muslims. Patnem village has a lower literacy rate compared to other talukas of Goa. Patnem village of Canacona. Patnem is also famous for its Beach, is known for its unique culture that takes place here every year, featuring two festivals these are *Shigmo utsav*, known as *dhakto Shigmo*, and *Veeramel*.

This Patnem village is famous for its beach called Patnem Beach, and a large number of Indian and international tourists visit every year. On the coastal beaches of Patnem during the season from October to March, they are lined up with beach huts and shacks near the seashore 12 kilometers away. This village is largely dominated by the Hindu population, making almost 97% with a total of 301 males and 340 females, adding up total to 641 people. This village has one school named Primary Medium School, a Hindu Community Hall, a chapel, small sacred groves called *devasthan* which means sacred grove of local deities or Gods in the village. Along with these, there are many small grocery shops, restaurants, bars, hotels, resorts, and beauty salons.

Furthermore, the surrounding areas green spaces and sacred woods are in danger of being harmed by forthcoming construction projects for major buildings. The Municipality and local residents both provided information for this study.

For this particular village, some of the locals go by the names *Quepewada* or *Quepyak* because there is one river that runs between this village so this village ward 8s known as *Quepewada*. There are also plenty of Indian-run yoga retreats nearby, where students can receive paid instruction from international teachers. There are lots of palm

trees in this area. This village has steadfastly held onto its place and is well-known for both its unique blend of tradition, culture, and modern tourism trends, in addition to its tourist attractions.

Table 2.1

Caste and Religion wise classification of population

Sr.no.	Surnames	Caste group	Total number of houses
1	Komarpant	Kshatriya	11
2	Desai	Kshatriya	6
3	Pagi	-	9
4	Warik	Kshatriya	2
5	Fondekar	Kshatriya	5
6	Naik	Kshatriya	1
7	Bhandari	Kshatriya	5
8	Kamat	Brahmin	7
9	Fernandes	Catholic	10

Map 2.2

Taluka map of Goa showing patnem ,Canacona

Source: https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=17/14.99837/74.03556&layers=C
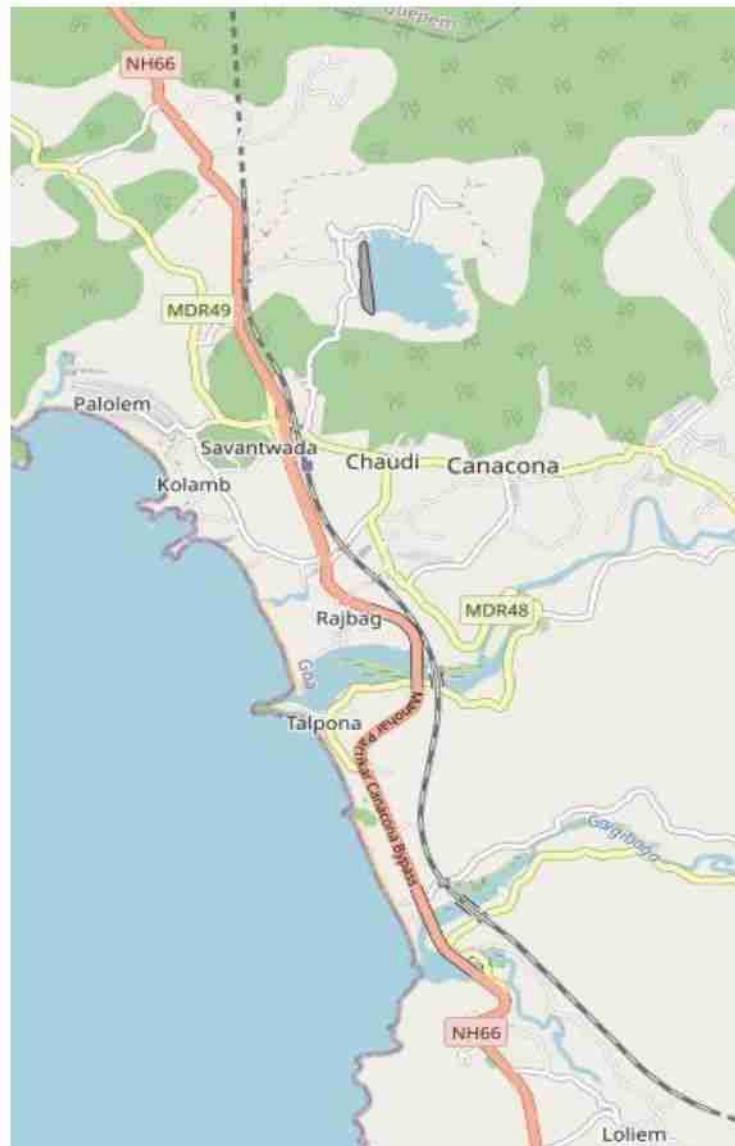
Map 2.3

Google map of Patnem showing its boundaries

Source: https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=17/14.99837/74.03556&layers=C
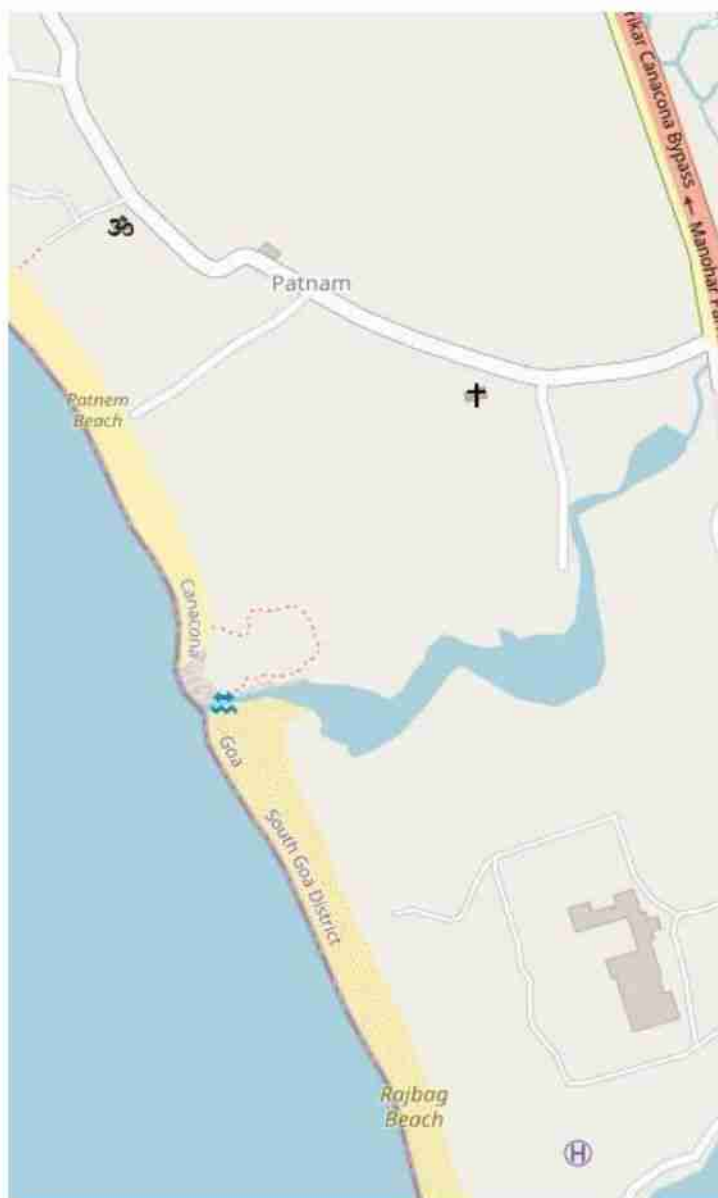
2.2. GENDER ROLES

In the lives of those living in villages, gender is significant. The communal behaviours that are scheduled by society which may be minor but have cultural significance—are referred to as gender roles. In multiple facets of the festivities and customs surrounding this *dhakto shigmo* and *veeramel*, each gender has a different function to play. Women are not permitted to engage in some rituals and traditions, nonetheless men are permitted to take part within specific rituals and traditions that are strictly enforced at *Shigmo Utsav* and *Veeramel* festivals.

2.3. CASTE

In specific aspects of culture, caste is essential, especially within rural areas where it is considered as a vital component. A distinct caste is assigned a ritual to be carried out; if that group of people fails to carry it out, the ritual is considered to be incomplete.

2.3.1. *Bhatkars* and *Mundhkars*

The word *'kar'* represents the person who owns the property, while the word *'bhat'* indicates the acre of land that they own. This is where an enormous amount of *bhatkars* reside. *Bhatkars* are people owning large land holdings. In the village, *bhatkar* holds in great esteem. A *bhatkar* is a person who holds a large amount of land. Religion has nothing to do on this; only Hindus are eligible to be *bhatkars*. Whoever possesses paramount land is referred to as a *bhatkar*, whether it a Christian, Muslim, or Hindu. This has nothing to do with caste. It is an exquisite thing to learn about and an extremely understanding relationship between *bhatkars* and *mundhkars*.

In order to enable the *mundkars* to take care of his "*bhaat,*" the *bhatkars* offer the *mundkars* just a few acres of their land on which they can build a house and live permanently. Since for both parties gain from this situation where the *bhatkar* gives *mundhkar* land to live on, and the *mundkars* afterwards take care of the land by looking to the coconut trees, irrigation of crops, cultivating vegetables, and many other things there is no selfishness involved. Due to the fact that *Mundhkars* acquire a few acres of land, they are additionally referred to as "*Kul*" in Konkani, which means "the caretakers of the land" or "*Bhaat.*" *Bhatkars* give a small part of their land to the *Mundkars* to build a house on it and to stay permanently there, so the *mundkar* can take care of his *'bhaat'*.

For the purpose to ensure that *Bhatkar* and *Kul* always have sufficient coconuts to eat, it is necessary to remove any coconuts that dry up from a coconut tree. If that is not the case, *bhatkars* will have to purchase coconuts from the market. When a landowner has a long row of coconut trees, they either hire four toddy tappers, known as "*Padeli,*" or they do it personally. People with tiny plots of land require two *Padelis*.

The land's property transfers into the names of the owner's son and daughter after his death. The son of the *bhatkar* is also called *bhatkar* with dignity, and the daughter is referred to as *bhatkani*. The wife of the *bhatkar* is called *bhatkani*. The *bhatkars* have started leasing their land in the contemporary period, particularly to Indian tourists who come to Goa for vacations. These *bhatkars* are now selling their property to those that want to implement a business because they wish to get their own land. The *bhatkars* either provide the lands on lease or sell them for exceptionally high rates. The word *bhatkar* is starting to disappear overtime.

The harvested coconuts are utilised in recipes such as fish and seafood curries and *pole* (dosa). After a period of time, the remaining coconuts that are kept in the storage facility naturally dried up. subsequently the coconut is cracked on both sides and split into two pieces, a Konkani word known as "*khobre*." These slices are kept for six days in the rays of the sun. Here, the factory is given dried coconuts in order to extract oil. Small babies are strengthened by massaging this oil and given this oil to eat since it is very good for their psychological health and hair.

2.4 TRADITIONAL OCCUPATION

The majority of the villagers make their livelihoods from agriculture, specifically from cultivating paddy. Paddy was only grown by people with agricultural land; those without it purchased rice from the market. In addition to paddy, also grew vegetables, onions, and chilies in addition to other veggies.

The farmers witnessed the cycles of development of crops, which usually took place in January and February. The process of raising plant seedlings began in January and lasted up until the end of February, when the vegetables and harvests were ready to be extracted. shortly after working in the fields, women would return home and cook delicious meals for their husbands and kids. Everyone ate dinner together in the field, which was simply rice and fish curry.

2.4.1. *Porus /Kulaghar*

The residents of this *Wado* have *porus* next to or close to their homes. Something similar *Kula ghar*. The *porus* seems like a little garden that has been formed into a circle and is tightly bound with wooden stakes,because the owner would suffer a loss after putting in

effort on growing those crops and vegetables for their livelihood, this prevents animals from entering in and consuming all the crops.

Very few homes have *porus* in front of them, so people don't always have to rely on purchasing vegetables from market vendors. In the past, residents of the village mostly women used to grow a variety of spices in their *porus* and prepared *garam masalo* (spices) at home.

During special occasions, such as the festival of *dhakto Shigmo* and Ganesh Chaturthi, they would utilise these *masalas* instead of ready-made one from the market because the spices would provide more flavour. But these days, many buy ready-made spices instead of cultivating themselves.

These days, because most of the villagers have given up growing spices on their *porus*, people have switched to purchasing spices from each other's homes within the hamlet. "Why put in so much effort to grow when it takes so long for the fruits and vegetables to ripen?" is a common question.

Since *masalas* are now widely accessible in the market, people have gotten lazy because they believe that everything can be found there. Why should we put in the effort to cultivate *masalas* at home? People have stopped generating spices and masalas in their porches as a result of this way of thinking. While some people have stopped, not all of them have,but some people also keep growing because these *masalas* provide a level of taste.

2.4.2. *Supari* business

Some residents make an earnings by selling Supari, or betel nuts. Among the few who benefit from betel nuts are owners who have an enormous amount of betel nut trees. The

semi-hard outer husk layer of the betel nuts is cracked in order to remove the rough surface after they have been sun-dried for ten days. They are then delivered to the plant. Sometimes the inside of betel nuts deteriorates and the price drops, leaving owners without the money they had expected.

2.5. SACRED GROVES

There are other sacred groves in this village where the traditional incarnation of *Mallikarjun Tarangana* is held, and the villagers identify these locations by various names. There are three sacred groves known as *devasthan*, which are worshipped by members of different castes in the local community. However, there is no discrimination here as a result of the belief that a particular caste must perform certain rituals as a symbol of respect to the God, which has been passed handed down from generation to generation by the elderly *Zantelyani Kele* in Konkani.

where the *Komarpant* and *Pagi* community have been worshipping "*Thalapuris*," and where *Yelip* or *Velip* holds significance in carrying out an annual ritual known as *Zagovap* or *Zagayta* as (awakening).

It has been claimed that *Thalapuris* is the incarnation of God *Mallikarjuna*. Shree *Mallikarjun* is a well-known south Goan temple that is located near *Sristhal* Canacona Goa, India. Many residents in this ward, including the kuldevta of Komarpant, Pagi, and Desai, see the god *Mallikarjuna* as their *kuldev* or *devta*. However, I am going to go into more detail on the *Velip* or *Yelip* community from the village who discovered this *Mallikarjun* God linga in my upcoming chapter.

There are two sacred groves in patnem one is *Thalapuris* and another is *Nirankar* and these both are believed as the incarnation of God *Mallikarjun* and both are worshipped

on monday and people do offerings too.*Shree Mallikarjun* is famous temple of south Goa situated at *Sristhal* Canacona Goa,India.God *Mallikarjuna* is considered as *Kuldev* or *kul devta* of many people of this ward such as *kuldevta* of Komarpant, Pagi and desai.But the one who found this God *linga* of *Mallikarjun* belongs to *Velip* or *Yelip* community from other part of village called *Gaondangri*, this am going to explain in my next chapter further.

Figure 2.4:*Ghumti* of God *Thalapuris*

Source: photography by the researcher

2.5.1. *Rakhandar /devchar*

In this village, the protector spirit roams around the village to protect the people. He is known as *Rankhandar / Rakhno* or *Devchar / Nass* in Konkani. There are many such protector spirits in the village roaming around every Wednesday and Sunday at midnight. It is believed that the *rakhandar* roams around the village at night to protect the people and the village. There are many *rakhandars* like this who protect different wards of villages

and are known by different names such as *Quepya nass*, *marangana nass*, and *amenas*. However, in this village at Patnem, there is only one *Rankhandar* called Quepya nass or *Quepya dedko* and very few people can see this *rankhandar* at midnight.

Here in this village, there is one river which connects to the sea,near this river, *rakhandar* arrives at mid night and flies a fish net in the water so that people know he is nearby and he indicates them to get out of his way as quickly as possible in order to prevent meeting into *melo* (spirits) along the road.

Local people of this village *wado* offer food to *rhankhandar* like *bhakri*, made from rice flour called *tandlya peet* in Konkani. To prepare *bhakri* for *rakhandar* there is systematic and sacred process. To make *bhakri*, *keli Pana* use two pieces of (banana leaves),*kolshe* (hot charcoals), and *tandalya peet* (rice flour).

The *bhakri* is made outside the house, not inside, according to the scriptures, without salt in it *alni* in Konkani. People have been following this tradition since decades. The *bhakri* is prepared by women, and the offerings are done only by the men. There are also restrictions before offering the *bhakri* to the *devchar*. If a man's wife is menstruating, he should not offer *bhakri* to *rakhandar* as it is believed to be impure in konkani *bhashtpana zavap*.

Soro (liquor) is poured into a *kati* (coconut shell). One cigarette in Konkani called *vidi* along with a lit stick is given to him so he can light the cigarette with the help of that stick and dried fish in konkani *suke bangdo* is given and kept near by the house in the evening time. *Rakhandar* is a tall, dark man who walks around with a wooden stick called a *beth* in his hand and he wears a white *dhoti*.

He is only seen to a select people at midnight. Behind *devchar*, there are spirits known as *melo* or *mel*. When *rakhandar* encounters someone on the road at night, he pushes them away to prevent negative energy from harming them. Otherwise, the person becomes ill, dies after several months or spins erratically.

2.5.2. Local Goddesses

Here in this village, like the *rakhandar* the protector spirit, there are also women deities appearing in this village, and the local village people also make offerings to them. There are two women deities, one is *Quepyanaikin* and the other one is *Chavli Devi*. It is believed that this goddess protects the village.

This deity goddess is seen by few people as she takes a bath near the well. Her hair is very long, and she wears a red-colored saree called *kapad* in Konkani and along with green-colored bangles in her hands. Whenever this goddess dries her hair here, the sound of the bangles on her hand is heard. When people listen and look around, she becomes visible, but only to very few people.

Village women go there to offer her *Pana vido* (betel nut and betel leaf), *halad* (Indian saffron), *kumkum* (vermillion), and kohl. Women who have husbands or widows are not restricted; anyone can make these offerings to her. The goddess appears in their nightmares and asks, "Why didn't you worship me?" if no offering is presented to her. and *Chavli Devi* is the other one. Few people in the village knew who she was, and she used to reside here.

And the second one is *Chavli Devi*. She used to live here in this village and was visible to very few people of the village. She used to come near *Bhaant* house because there was a well close by. She would visit the well at night to take a bath. As she left, the

sound of *paizana* (anklets) could be heard. The next day, the well water would turn yellowish. People realized that she had bathed there. This narratives I got from my research field and they still do believe this and all sacred rituals are followed and offerings are made on time to these goddesses.

2.6. TRANSITION IN VILLAGE OF *PATNEM*

Earlier, in this village, people used to domesticate animals like buffaloes, cows, and rabbits, and the people of this village also gained a lot of benefits from these animals, such as cow dung and cow urine. *Gayi pachav* (Cow urine) plays an important role in Hinduism religion, as it purifies and has sacred meanings attached to it. However, in contemporary times in this village ward, But, as people are now more concerned with progress, wealth, and managing enterprises, and because they feel embarrassed of domesticating cows and buffaloes, residents in this village ward have ceased raising animals like buffaloes and cows.

Wells are no longer as freely accessible as they once were, and people now have to deal with difficulties and search everywhere. There used to be just two wells in this village ward, and people utilised them for cooking and drinking water. Nowadays, everyone has placed taps in their homes and has stopped using wells.

The wells are not being adequately maintained as they once were, but they are nevertheless utilised in the event of a water scarcity. Because some people use the well water to wash their clothing outside and to clean their god's dishes for *Pooja*, these wells are kept intact. The modern residences in this village additionally consist of very different structures. It's not the same as it was. House designs and constructions were much simpler in the past. However, large houses have recently been constructed and are being rented out to tourists

Gradually, the family transformation is taking place in this village as the joint family is evolving into a nuclear family. Most individuals are heading internationally for employment opportunities and for additional educational opportunities. Nuclear families are formed when their sons and daughters marry, move away, and settle themselves there. It is unpleasant watching it happen. One positive aspect, though, is that people still respect their traditions and heritage when God *Mallikarjuna Tarangana* enters to the region and people return in order seek blessings from him.

Many individuals are going abroad for their higher studies and for jobs. After marriage, their sons and daughters move to new places and settle there, resulting in the formation of nuclear families. It is disheartening to observe.However, one positive aspect is that when God *mallikarjuna tarangana*, arrives to the village, people return to seek blessings of God no matter how far they are,people still respect their culture and traditions.

Since agriculture was the main sector in this hamlet in the past, all families including wives of farmers, their kids, uncles, and aunts—used to labour together in the fields. In order to make the work in the field feel less like a hardship, they used to collaborate with one another. "*Ekvot*" (togetherness) was there , however in the modern world, everything has changed or been diverted. People no longer practise nomadic lives since they have shifted to the tourism industry/businesses.

CHAPTER III

RITUALS AND BELIEFS OF *SHIGMO UTSAV* AND

VEERAMEL IN PATNEM

3.1. TALE OF GOD *MALLIKARJUN*

The story of *Mallikarjun* is unique, especially to know about how this Idol of God *Mallikarjun* existed and to whom it was first found. Since in earlier times people in villages used to work in the fields with their `gorva` means cattles and working inside the *porus* and this small piece of land *porus* where vegetables are cultivated known as *Kamat*.

Everyone in the field was working, and one of the men was excavating. He felt something was beneath the surface because he had hit the axe on a hard substance, but it didn't come up. Curious, he hit the axe harder to dig down farther into the ground and was eager to find out what the hard substance was, so he hit again with force to remove it.

Later, he noticed that from one side of that stone blood flowing out and from other side milk that was flowing out and he got panicked and shocked but than he notices that it was *linga* of God. The man immediately sat on ground and apologized and showed the *naveidya (*Prasad*)* of food to *linga*, which they brought meals for them to eat after working called *bhoothi*, this is how God *mallikarjun* found and he is believed as the '*avatar* of *shiva*'.

3.1.1.*Kuldev*

Kuldev means family God or clan God/Goddess. if it's male God than local people referred him as *Kuldev* and if it's Female goddess than it's referred as *Kuldevi*. These deities are revered for their blessings, protection, and guidance, as they are protectors of the family. Every *somar* (Monday)this god has been worshipped by the people.*Mallikarjun* is the *Kuldev* of many villagers such as *velips,Komarpants, Desai* and *pagi*

As God *Mallikarjun* is believed as *Kuldev* of many villagers of *canaconkars* residing over there. This God *mallikarjun* belongs to specific group of local people.It is said that when god *mallikarjun* was found to *Yelip* which means *Velips (schedule tribes)*, after that those people came around and said that this God belongs to every Canacona who are the actual settlers.

3.1.2. Restrictions on people belonging to *mallikarjun Kuldev*

Due to the conflict between God *Mallikarjun* and God *Betal*, the residents of *Kuldevta Malikarjun* in Canacona, South Goa, are obligated to closely observe a few restrictions. People who have any connection to the deity *Kuldev* are strongly advised not to visit the *betal* temple located in Poinguinim, Canacona.

According to narrations in my field by the respondents said that, *Betal* invited God *Mallikarjun* for lunch at his Poinguinim residence where he prepared ox meat for meal to convert god *mallikarjun* from Hinduism but fortunately *mallikarjun* denied to attend. In order to convert *Mallikarjun* from Hinduism, *betal* travelled to Sristhal, along he bought cooked '*redya mass*' (oxe meat), and kept outside the temple at Sristhal and kept waiting till god *mallikarjun* arrived.

Fortunately what happened was that when *mallikarjun* was coming   towards the temple,he did not see the *amlas* which were kept to dry under the sunlight and accidentally *mallikarjun* slipped over the *amlas* and knocked the plate of ox meat kept outside the

Figure 3.1: statue of God *betal* in Poinguinim Canacona, South, Goa

Source: https://images.app.goo.gl/6r7sbCaiDcMS2tBC8

Figure3.2:pic of God *shree   Mallikarjun* at Sristhal Canacona,South ,Goa

Source: photography by the researcher

very aggressive and there the fight between God *Mallikarjun* and God *betal* begun and with anger *mallikarjun* cursed *betal* saying that from today my village devotees will not step inside your temple and your devotees will not step inside my temple ,this curse was given to god *betal* by God *mallikarjuna* and because of that till today, people belonging to *kuldev mallikarjun* are prohibited from going there and the people those belonging to god *betal* are prohibited from entering the temple of *mallikarjun*.

Also,it's believed that the person who belongs to the *mallikarjun* god should not marry someone who belongs to the *betal* god. Because it causes a lot of trouble to couples after marriage.

There is another restriction abides on both the genders by god, as before entering his temple nobody should wear *chambada* belt (leather belt) or any leather related things are strictly prohibited before entering *mallikarjun* premises at *sristhal*,canacona.

3.2. Traditional *Naman* of *Komarpant* at *Devgipurush Maand*, Patnem

3.2.1. Significance of *Naman*

People from the Canacona villages gathers at *maand* to perform traditional melodies honouring the gods and recite *naman*.A few elderly people treasure these tunes that have been passed down from their ancestors.This *naman* is regarded as the crucial and fortunate start before to the *dhakto shigmo*.

3.2.2 *Maand*

During the primary celebration in the villages, *Maand* is a sacred place where the locals undertake sacred and religious rites and customs. Each community has a maand where practices particular to that community are carried on.

To create the commencement of *dhakto Shigmo*, all the male members of every household gathered at *maand* during the time of *naman*. When conducting religious and sacred gifts to God devgipuris, the person who is performing the rituals wears a white dhoti, ties a *tuvalo* (white towel) over his head, and places a *khanvale* (shawl) on his shoulder as a sign of respect. This devoted guy holds a sacred coconut in his left hand and a sickle in his right, and on the day of *naman*, he takes each group of *Mel* present and says to them, "I am breaking the coconut."

Each group should respond with a person who says, "*fhodh* " which is shorthand for "yes, break the coconut." The man takes the names of *sath Wadekars* (seven wards) village people, including

1. *Mangankar*

2. *Quepekar*

3. *Devunbagkarmu*

4. *Colombhkar*

5. *Malakar*

6. Nalkondkar

7.Darmyadekar

The *Kshatriya* caste is included of all *sath Wadekars'* groups of *Mel*. The term "*nalpankar*" refers to the religious man who breaks this sacred coconut.Following the *nalpankar* at *Maand* breaking the coconut, this guy distributes two pairs of wooden sticks to each group of *mel*, present there. Additionally, each group of *mel* is given different musical instrument, such as *mangankar Mel tonyo* is given, along with mel for *nalkondkar*, *Quepekar* (*Ghumat*), *Devunbakar* (*Ghumat*), *Bayldelar* (*shamel*), and Colombhkar (*tonyo*).

Each mel receives the same traditional instruments for playing each year, hence *Shigmo Utsav* occurs every year. Following the divine man's gift of these customary instruments to each group of *Mel* members, all of the male members assemble in a circle at the maand and begin to play and sing together. Therefore, before to the start of *naman Khel* at *Maand*, the male members who receive *Ghumat* ,*Shamel* and *Kasal* form one circle, while the male members who receive two pairs of *Tonyo* make another circle next each other. After that, the *khel* starts at *maand*, which is where "*shigmyachi survat zata'* which means *dhakto shigmo* begins.

3.2.2 Teravi Garvai

Garvai means people in the villages belonging to one clan or *ek kutumbh* and this *garvai* are the incarnation of their local people *kuldevta* Since these gods are regarded as the guardians and protectors of the family line, people worship them to get their blessings, protection, and guidance.

The name *Garvai* refers to a religious place in *Maand.* In the community, there are various garvai located at various holy areas. *Devgipuris* Garvai is the name given to the just one garvai located in Patnem. This was once a small, respected location called *Devasthan*, but now it has been renovated. This *Garvai* is a part of the *Bhaanth,* Warik, and *Devigili* groups, which are from this Patnem village ward. Each of these three have meaning in this *devgipurish garvai.*

The person who undertakes religious activities at this *garvai devasthan* preaches or invokes the names of these three groups the *Bhaant,* the *Warik,* and the *Devigili.* During sacred religious ceremonies. These are just three groups to which this *devgipuris garvai* belongs.

This *garvai* encompasses sath wades during *shigmya mel,* and they strictly have to play all seven house *sath ghara (* seven house) in this village ward of every family belonging to the same *garvai.* There are total 14 *wade* but unfortunately these 14 splited into two groups and become two group of *mel* these two groups are *Kalasa mel* amd *devgily.* The *shigmya mel* belonging to this *devgipurush garvai* including all *sath wade* is called *kalsa mel* and the *mel which* played in other *sath wade* belonging to *devabagh garvai* is called *devgilya mel.*

These different *garvai* have their different separate group of *shigmya mel* playing different house in villages and different *shasr* (rituals and customs) associated to it.

3.2.3 Restrictions at *maand*

Every culture has specific beliefs, customs, and rituals related to its festivals. Similar to this, there are rules that must be followed by all villages before they can access *devasthans* or sacred areas. These rules indicate what can and cannot be done.

There are several restrictions that the villagers must abide by during the *dhakto shigmo* prior *naman* taking place and during the beginning of the *dhakto shigmo mel*. If the guidelines are not followed correctly, then people would suffer many *admalyo* (consequences) in their future lives.

3.2.5 *Devaspan karpi*

Every year during the *dhakto shigmo utsav*, one man has to remain *shuvrakh* (vegeterian) entire six days during *shigmo* till last day of *shigmo*. Because he is regarded as pure, in contrast to other groups of *Mel* members, he is the one who performs sacred ceremonies near God *devgipurish* on the first day of *Naman* and has the permission to do so. He cannot eat anything since he is holding a *kari naal*, a sacred coconut. This man is worshipping God at *maand* during naman, and wearing dhoti is deemed mandatory since it is believed that if one does not wear *dhoti* during sacred rituals, God will not accept worship.

Figure 3.1:*Devgipurish maand* at Patnem

Source: https://www.google.com/search?client=ms-android-samsung-gj

3.2.6. *Sath wade*

The *tonya mel* or *khel* by each members of *sath wade* have to play each *Sath wade* of villages and it is mandatory to all members those who were present at the time of *naman* at *maand*.

3.2.7. Khel

Male members of each communities perform a variety of dances and sing songs while playing with pair of *tonyo* (wooden sticks) with their both hands. This is a community celebration where only male members participate it in and this is called *khel*

3.2.8. Kari Naal

The devaspan karpi man, who performs ceremonies, holds this coconut in his both hands and walks along with *kari naal* in all the *sath wades* along with *shigmya mel*. This coconut, known as the *kari naal*, is said to be sacred and powerful.

3.2.9 Tonya mel

Tonyo means wooden sticks which are made of *chandana zhad* (sandal wood tree).*Tonyo* plays important role during the time of *dhakto shigmo* this is also called *tonya mel*

3.2.10. *Shigmya mel*

Shigmya mel mean the group of male dancers, those goes to house to house to dance every year in the month of *phalgun*.These all *shigmya mel* are the male dancers who performs in the all *sath wades* in village wards of Patnem.

3.2.11. *Daiji kutumbh*

In essence, "*Daiji*" refers to a concept similar to g*arvai*, signifying a particular community or lineage.*Daiji kutumbh* denotes a family belonging to the same *garvai*, necessitating adherence to the same rituals, beliefs, and customs as other members of the community.

When someone from this *daiji* kutumbh passes away, it is customary for the family not to celebrate any auspicious festivals or light the sacred lamp *divli* (sacred lamp) in front of God for a period of ten days, it's not mandatory to strictly adhere to this tradition, it is a belief within the community that lighting the *divli* during this mourning period may bring negative consequences into their lives.

3.2.11. *Vhole*

Vhole in simple words means inauspicious. People in villages follow this very strictly during the time of any auspicious festivals in villages taking place especially during the festivals of *shigmo* utsav and *veeramel.*

If someone passes away before any sacred or festivals than that family which belonging to same *garvai* of that house who is passed away is termed as *vhole* as during *dhakto shigmo*, the house are kept as *vhole* (inauspicious) and *shigmya mel* is not played at their houses in the courtyard and also food us not served and these house people are also not allowed to go to someone's house for *shigmo* or to consume food, it is not mandatory but people do follow this at least for four days. Boys or man are not allowed to participate in *shigmya mel* during the time of *vhole* and not allowed to enter inside *maand* as believed as *bhashtpana* (impure).

3.3. *PAGI MAAND* AND PRE RITUALS

Before beginning of *naman* these group of people first take *kaul* (prasad) from the *avatarpuris* (incarnation of God *Mallikarjuna*) at patnem and this *kaul* is taken by two people from these group. There pre rituals which this community of group does before beginning of *dhakto shigmo*

3.4. *DESAI MAAND* AND PRE RITUALS

The group of Desai community, all the male members gathers at *maand* called *Raz angan* at *kinlya* and the head of the village called *bhudvant* performs all religious activities before *naman*. *Bhudvant* holds one coconut and pray infront of the God at *raz angan* that they are beginning with *naman* and keep the *kari naal* down infront of *tulsi* and than they begin with *naman* and after doing these all rituals than the *dhakto shigmo* begins.

3.5. BELIEF AND RITUALS ASSOCIATED TO *VEERAMEL*

Veeramel festival believed to be very auspicious and people have fear in them during this festival which takes place every alternate year in the village of Canacona,South,Goa.

In the beginning of *veeramel* festival, total number of 18 *gades* gather at one sacred space place called *siriwadyar*. They begin with *sangani* (prayer) before moving from *siriwadyar* that without any obstacles this festival should over.

3.5.1. *Veeramel*

The festival of *Veeramel* is believed to be a very auspicious which takes place in village of Canacona. This festival doesn't takes place at *Sristhal* where temple of *Mallikarjun* is situated but this festival takes place in other sacred places *devasthan* and this sacred places are called as *deva zago* . This *Veeramal* Festival is celebrated every alternate year, after every one year, in village of Canacona, South Goa, during the full moon month, according to the Hindu calendar.

This *Veeramal* Festival is not celebrated at *Sristal*, but other parts of Canacona village wards, such as *Sirivada* (*nagarcheim*) ,*Mata Kaden, Patnya* (patnem), *palolya* (Palolem) and Nagarcheim.This *Veeramel* every year begins from *Nagarcheim* and end at *Siriwadayr*.But this year in 2024, after 20 years, the begin of *Veeramel* rituals took place from *matakoden* and *visarjan* took place at *sirivadyar* according to the *tith*.

The *Gades* do not goes to every house of each village wards but only to *amki ghara or mul ghar* (specific houses) they goes and perform their rituals in the open courtyard.

The places like *Nagarcheim* where this *veeramel* begins than moves to other places such as *ponsulem patnem,bhalyawadyar,sawantawadyr,palole* (palolem),*Devabhagh* and at the end for *visarjan* they moves and gather at sacred space *siriwadyar*.

3.5.2. *Tith*

The term "*tith*" in Hinduism may refer to an auspicious time or day according to the Hindu calendar. This designation is determined and observed by the priest in the temple who oversees rituals and sacred activities. It's believed that all religious activities and rituals performed during *tith* are particularly auspicious, as it's considered a specific and significant day of the year for conducting such practices. This emphasis on timing underscores the importance of aligning religious activities with celestial and spiritual energies.

3.5.3 Sangani

Sangani is a significant ritual involving all 18 *gades* coming together to pray for a successful festival and to resolve any potential peacefully without any *vign* (obstacles).This demonstrates the importance of unity and spirituality in overcoming challenges. It seems that *sangani* plays a crucial role in the *Veeramel* festival, both before its commencement and after its conclusion.

This highlights the significance of *sangani* in ensuring the success and smooth conduct of the *Veeramel* festival, possibly through prayers, rituals, or other ceremonial practices aimed at promoting harmony and resolving obstacles.

3.5.4 *Gades*

Gades are male devotees dressed in white dhotis and tie white cloth around their heads   in konkani called it as *ermar* around their head.These *gades* do not wear *chapal* or *zoti* (sandals) when they moved out from *sristhal* temple as they believe that if they wear zoti ,it's a disrespect of god *mallikarjuna* so until the *zatra* of *mallikarjun* these all *gades* roams

barefoot as a mark of respect to godThese all gades remain pure vegetarian till *zatra* (pilgrimage festival) at *sristhal mallikarjun*.

The g*ades* play a significant role in the *Veeramel* festival, serving as the major performers of the rituals. Including three *devli* (religious entertainers),three *bhagat* (religious man),three *mhalshi* holds (*tarangana*),three *Petaro* holds(*nirankar*) and six are the *gades* who holds the *tarangana khaam,* hence the number comes to 18 *gades*. Figure3.3: pics of *gades* performing rituals

Source :photography by the researcher

The belief that the incarnation of *Mallikarjun* god possesses them, allowing them to perform the sacred rituals automatically, highlights the spiritual significance attached to their participation. This phenomenon, where individuals are believed to be temporarily

inhabited by divine entities during religious ceremonies, is not uncommon in various cultural and religious traditions around the world.

This *gades* remains pure vegetarians for one month till *nastpadwo*(gudi padwa) where the *gades* in north in some parts of bicholim side they are unlike these south *gades* the *gades* in north side they are non vegetarians.

3.5.5.Bhagat

Bhagat holds a significant role in the *Veeramel* festival, *bhagat* is considered as major religious man as *gado* in Konkani. These *bhagats gades* are entrusted with conducting sacred rituals and customs during the festival of *veeramel*.

Bhagat's role in the *Veeramel* festival involves significant rituals and responsibilities, including being the first to enter the village house courtyard where the *pujari* stands. During this ritual, *bhagat* enters inside the courtyard while the *bhagat* places *vido* (betal nut) money inside the *tambo (urn)*.It is crucial for the money to fall inside the *tambo* (urn) without falling down otherwise, it is believed to bring serious issues for the villagers or within the house. This ritual likely carries deep symbolic and spiritual significance within the context of the festival.

3.5.6. Mul Ghar

Mul ghar, as the main house in villages, holds a sacred and ritualistic significance, often serving as the venue for important ceremonies like *Veeramel*. It's believed that only specific houses within the village wards host these ceremonies, where *gades* enter and perform their

rituals before moving to another *mul ghar* to repeat the process. This reinforces the spiritual and communal importance of these designated houses in village life and the continuity of traditions passed down through generations.

3.5.7. Vido

Vido means a worship plate which consists of *tin podh* such as *tin naal* (three coconuts), *panna vido*, betel leaf and betel nut, *payshe* (money) not round figure, and flower called *tripath*. This that [plate] is considered as sacred. This *Vido* plays an important and major role during this festival of *Veeramal* as it is believed as very auspicious thing.

3.5.8. Vaat dakovapi

Vaat dakovapi refers to individuals who are chosen to guide the *gades* during a procession, ensuring she doesn't mistakenly enter someone else's house. Selected villagers, who remain *shuvrakh* (pure vegetarian) for the entire day and strictly he should remain vegeterian entire day, if he wants to stand along the roads at midnight to fulfill this sacred duty, reflecting the community's belief in their spiritual purity and commitment to honoring the *gades*.

Rituals performed during *veeramel* festivals

Veeramel festival believed to be very auspicious and people have fear in them during this festival

In the beginning of *veeramel* festival, total number of 18 *gades* gather at one sacred space place called *siriwadyar*. They begin with *sangani* before moving from *siriwadyar* that without any obstacles this festival should over

After that one fruit known as *Kuvale* is cut down into two pieces and this *kuvale* which is cut down into two pieces,it should rejoined and should come back in same shape as normal than only this festival takes place without any obstacles

3.5.9.Kuvale

Kuvale is a fruit which is believed to be very sacred and auspicious during the festival of *veeramel,*as this fruit has been cut into two pieces by the *bhagat at sacred* place first and this fruit joins automatically while *gade* starts moving to every specific *mul ghar* (houses) of each *wado* in villages,if it does not joins back than it is considered as inauspicious for the people of villages.

Figure :*kuvale* fruit /ashgourd fruit

Source: https://images.app.goo.gl/Xj8p2FDqhHHadFA98

CHAPTER IV

INTERSECTION OF RELIGION, CASTE AND GENDER IN *VEERAMAL* AND *SHIGMO UTSAV*

4.1. RELIGION AND GENDER

Religion teaches moral values, behavior, and fosters harmony. However, within the same religion, rituals, customs, and beliefs vary, particularly in rural areas. Despite sharing a religion, caste divisions result in diverse practices within communities living in the same village.

In many cultural and religious contexts, traditional gender roles and rituals may persist, often with a strong emphasis on adherence to established customs and beliefs. While there may be movements for gender equality in other aspects of life, such as education, employment, and politics, challenging or altering deeply ingrained cultural or religious practices can be met with resistance due to the reverence and authority attributed to spiritual powers and traditions. Indeed, gender refers not only to socially constructed roles and norms but also to individual identities and the expectations placed upon individuals by society.

In many cultures, women may not challenge traditional gender roles or restrictions during festivals or sacred ceremonies due to deeply ingrained beliefs about spiritual power, authority, and reverence for tradition. Women, and individuals in general, may hesitate to challenge cultural norms or religious practices that they perceive as being backed by spiritual authority or divine will. This can stem from a sense of fear, respect, or a belief in the sanctity of these traditions. While some individuals may choose to challenge traditional

gender roles and restrictions, others may opt to adhere to them out of a sense of duty, respect, or fear of spiritual consequences.

Similarly during the festivals of *shigmo utsav* and *veeramel in* Canacona South Goa, here both the genders have restrictions abided on them and they have to adhere them strictly during this festivals in villages during the month of *Phalgun.*

4.2. CASTE AND GENDER

Caste is often assigned at birth and can play a significant role in shaping individuals' identities, social status, and participation in various rituals and customs. In many communities, caste-based distinctions persist, with different castes often following distinct rituals, traditions, and customs.

These practices can vary widely depending on regional, religious, and social factors. Certain castes may have specific roles or responsibilities during sacred rituals and festivals, and adherence to these roles may be seen as essential for upholding tradition and maintaining social order.

Likewise in the village of Canacona, South,Goa,each different group of communities belonging to different castes have different ways of practicing the rituals and they are totally different from each group of communities and the rights are given to only specific group of caste and gender. Gender roles at same time has some significance during sacred activities.

Some cultures have certain rituals reserved for one gender, but others do not. For example, women are required to participate in certain rituals, while men are not required to participate in the same rituals as women. Like gender, caste also determines what rituals

certain caste groups can perform, and certain rituals are exclusive to certain rituals. castes while others are not represented by certain caste groups.

4.3. *VEERAMEL* FESTIVAL

Veeramel is a festival which takes place every alternate year in the village of Canacona ,South,Goa. *Veeramel* is a festival where every village people have to adhere to the restrictions abided on them by the God. Here in this festival there is close association of Religion,caste and Gender where only specific caste and gender has specific roles to play.

4.3.1. *Veeramel* festival: caste and gender angle

In contrast to other places where women could have greater freedom to participat e, women in some villages, like Patnem in Canacona, observe stringent taboos and traditi ons during the *Veeramel* festival.These regional traditions and beliefs constitute the found ation of these practices, which differ from place to place.

4.3.2. Restrictions on women's

During the *Veeramel* festival, there are certain taboos that all the village womens must adhere to. *Veeramel* is one celebration, however there are several customs connected to it in a particular Canacona community. While women are permitted to watch it in certain areas, this is not the case in Patnem, where *Veeramel* is held, where people rigidly adhere to gender-specific regulations.

Women are not permitted to wear bangles in their hands during the *Veeramel* festivals in the village of Patnem because it is thought that if any of the *gades* hear a mistaken noise, they hurt themselves by swinging the sword around their body that they inflicts pain upon themselves.

This is based on a story told by one of my respondents, who stated that the *Veeramel* festival is a very sacred occasion in the village and that everyone should observe the same rules; otherwise, if any mistakes are made during the ongoing rituals of the *Veeramel*, these people will eventually have to deal with very harsh consequences.

Another incident involved where the two people riding bikes who went to search in the dark to see where the *gades* had gone. However, that day the *gades* took longer to arrive at their location, and when they were only one kilometer from their home, a *gado* suddenly appeared in front of them, pushed them very forcefully, and the two people felt into the nearby field.

4.3.3. Restrictions on men's

Men are allowed to witness the *Veeramel* festival, there are still restrictions placed on them. These restrictions include maintaining silence and being cautious with electronic devices, such as switching off mobile phones. There's a belief that if someone inadvertently breaks these rules, they may face harm from the *gades* or divine spirits, as they are considered to be in a state of unconsciousness and possessed by the gods during the festival

4.3.4. Role of Caste and Gender in *Veeramel*

Specific caste and gender plays an important role in this kind of sacred festival where special caste of people engaged into this sacred rituals those are performed by only specific caste of group and gender. There are specific caste group of people those are engaged in certain rituals right such as *bhagat,mhalshi,mahar,devli* and *Velips* .

4.3.5. Role of *Bhagat*

Bhagats are the group community belonging to *kunbi* (Scheduled Tribes). *Bhagats* are the main heads of all the *gades,* where certain rituals has to be performed by *bhagats* only.

4.3.6. Velips

Velips are the subcaste of *kunbi* (Scheduled tribe) community,*Velips* are also part of this *veeramel* festival. These *Velips* are the gades those are preparing food for all *gades,* till the time they moved away from the *Mallikarjun* Temple until the *savsar padwo* (gudi padwa).

4.3.7. Mhalshi

These are *gades* which holds the God *Mallikarjun Tarangana* and are part of *veeramel* as *gades*.

4.3.8. Mahar

Traditionally *mahar* are the one who beats the and *dhols* (drums) at the temples belongs to schedules caste and these group has the first right in religious practices

4.3.9. Devli

These gades belongs to the community group locally known as *kalvants* (religious entertainers). These are the g*ades* who beats the *dhols* during festivals.

So like these the caste hierarchy is maintained during the sacred rituals,as through my field study I collected data asking why specific caste has to perform specific rituals so they responded saying that, these caste hierarchy is not something caste discrimination but it is whole right given by the god *mallikarjuna* to perform specific rituals by specific caste group and it is mandatory that these all spiritual and sacred rituals has to to be done by

them only and people highly respect these all *gades* when they arrive in their villages or household and treat them like a God.

4.4. DHAKTO SHIGMO

The *Shigmo* festival showcases the rich diversity of traditions and customs across different regions and communities in Goa. While the essence of *Shigmo* may remain consistent, the specific rituals, beliefs, cultural practices, gender roles, caste dynamics, and restrictions can vary significantly from one village to another.

Shigmo in the village of Canacona in South Goa may have its own unique set of rituals and customs that distinguish it from *shigmo* celebrations in other parts of Goa and this *shigmo* is called as *dhakto shigmo*. These differences reflect the localized interpretations and expressions of the festival, shaped by the distinct cultural heritage, historical influences, and community dynamics of each village. This diversity within the *Shigmo* festival highlights the complexity of Goan culture and underscores the importance of recognizing and appreciating the unique traditions and practices of each community.

4.4.1. Dhakto shigmo of *Komarpant*

This people of community belongs to *Kshatriya*. *Komarpant* are the surname which only find in parts of Canacona of South Goa and in nowhere else in other villages of Goa with this surname.

There are two *mel* of *Shigmo* in this community group namely the *budhvant mel* and the other one is *Kalas mel* . These two male consist of total 14 wades and that is seven wards of *budhvant* and seven wades of *kalas*.

The *sath* wade of *kalas* are below

1.*Mangan*

2.*Rajbagh*

3.*Mallar*

4.*Quepyewada*

5.*Darmyabai*

6.*kalam*

7. *Nalkond*

These all *sath wades* (seven wards) plays the houses of all *daijis* houses in the courtyard

The *Garvai* of *kalas* is in patnem and the *garvai* of *budhvant* is in *devabagh* and that's the reason there are two *mel* (division of group) created.among themselves.These two *mel* belongs to the same group community and of same caste group.

The *sath wade* of *budhvant* are below:

1. *chavder* (Chaudi)

2. *Nagarcheim*

3. *Tembewada*

4. *palole* (palolem)

5. *survashapoth*

6.*malelyawado*

7.*Devabagh*

This *shigmya mel* is played in the courtyard of those people who belongs to this *devabhagh garvai*.

4.4.2. Shigmya mel

After *naman* at *maand* the next day *shigmya mel* begins, *mel* start playing at each *wades* of each houses but specific houses not all together. The *kalas shigmya mel* lasts for three and half days playing all *sath wade*.

> While entering the houses of each *wado* the first song is sung by the *mel* is:
>
> *Guru ji ram ram kela re*
>
> *Gurun khelachi toni dila re*

4.4.3. Meaning of song

The phrase "*Guru ji ram ram kela re, Gurun khelachi toni dila re*" is in a dialect of Goan konkani.

This song meant to be a greeting or salutation followed by an expression of respect or affection, something like "Greetings, respected Guru ji, please bless us."

Figure 4. 1 :Male members playing musical instruments

Source: Google

figure 4.2.:*Tonya mel*

source: Google

4.4.4. *Aarth* and role of women

During the *aarth* ritual, a *savashin bayl* (married women) will come out of her resident where she comes to perform the *aarth* ,the worship plate consisting *vido* (five betel leaves and one betel nut),*tandool* (handful of rice) and *pinzar* (vermillion). She then offer the *aarth* plate to a married male member from the *mel*, although it's not obligatory for a specific man to receive it; any married man from the group may volunteer but he has to be a married man. Before showing the *aarth* to the man, the women pour water on his feet five times as a sign of respect.

Once the *aarth* is handed over to the man, he starts dancing with the worship plate. Another member of the dancing group approaches the *aarth* and removes the *naal* (coconut), then joins in the dance on the rhythm of the *aarth* song. The lyrics of the song are mentioned below

Aarth lyric

पर्वता डोगरा चंदन फुलालग असे सौआम्यै पौंडला गौंड पंलगार । सोमाने पाझरे

झरीचे पाणी लाएं धाजिला । तापेक न्हाणा घेठन नाराज घोक जाती। पोतांव

सुवर्णाच्या तारा जाराने आरन पुजीला अमृत असी हालत डौलत नार बाहेर सरख्का ।

खेकर आरत आणली गे गारी आसवंत| असेप काचीच्या बंकणा लोभ दर्शना सये गे

सये सये सबना पुत्रलकवर से हर

Meaning

This passage describes the beauty of nature with hill sandal flowers blooming on the mountains, creating a peaceful environment and a women attire and ornaments standing with *aarth* is described

4.4.5. Gender and caste relation in traditional musical instruments

In this *shigmya mel* only *dhadhle ani nente Burge* (male of all age group) takes part ,no women's are part of this *shigmya mel*. Here in this *shigmya mel*, two persons are specially called to play the *shenani* and these two people belongs to other caste group known as *devli (*religious entertainers) they are also locally knows as *kalvants.*

4.5. DHAKTO SHIGMO OF DESAI

This community's *dhakto shigmo* is entirely distinct from the *shigmo* of the two groups of *komarpanth* and pagi *dhakto shigmo*.For the *naman* of *dhakto Shigmo*, these *Desai* people from each ward congregate at the *maand* known as *Raz angan* (sacred courtyard).

Since he conducts all the ceremonies and starts with the *dhakto shigmo*, *Bhudvant* plays a significant role at maand during *naman*.

Instead of using *tonyo*, this *mel* group uses *rumal* (handkerchief)and *chudta* (dried leaves), where each male member lights a bundle in the courtyard before *khel* is played without the use of *tonyo*.

4.5.1. Arth

Here the *savashin bayl* (married women) comes with the *aarth* while wearing traditional attire called *kapad* or *sadi* (saree) with works plate in her hand, plate consisting of pancharat (traditional India lamp)*pinzar* (vermillion),*ek naal* (1 coconut), *fula* (any white flower),*God* or *Gul* (jagry),*Pana vido* (1 betel leaf and 1 betel nut) and *tandul* (handful of rice) to apply on the *kapad* (forehead) of *bhudvant* while *aarth*

figure 4.3:*Dhakto Shigmo* of *Desai*

source: Google

Aarth lyrics

आरती

१. शिंपली दांडो घेवन सिता धुल्ल कांडीता।

२. धुल्ल कांडीता सिते धनु गावाला ।

३. त्यागे धनुश्याचे सितेन स्वयंवर मांडीला ।

४. सभागेच्या राजआंगणी खेळ मांडीला ।

५. सभागी पौंडला घोर पलंगार ।

६. सभागेच्या घोर यऊन काय हो केला ।

७. पाच दासी घेऊन नार न्हाणगारा गेला ।

८. न्हावून गा नारीनी शृंगार केला ।

९. पाच पीळग्यांची चोळी आंगा घातीला ।

१०.   हालत डुलत नार भायर सरला ।

११.   आमच्या गडयाचो ताणे बहूमान केला

Meaning of the *aarth* lyrics

The first verse describes the events of *Sita's swayamvar* (a ceremony where a woman chooses her husband from a group of suitors) from the Hindu epic *Ramayana*. *Sita* is seen taking a simple stick in her hand and proceeding to the *swayamvar* hall where she strings Lord *Rama's* bow, winning his hand in marriage. The verse also mentions the intense competition and the bed prepared in the assembly hall.

The second verse depicts a group of five maids taking a woman to bathe, adorning her with ornaments, and dressing her in a yellow sari. The woman, presumably a bride, is then taken to her groom's house amidst the cheers and admiration of the villagers.Overall, both verses seem to narrate scenes from traditional Hindu ceremonies and rituals, highlighting elements of beauty, tradition, and celebration.

4.5.2. Jevan

during *dhakto Shigmo* this komarpanth people they prepare *jevan* traditional food both vegetarian as well as non vegetarian food is cooked for the people of *Mel* such as *nustya kadi/hooman* (fishy curry), *shith* (rice), *sol kadi* (   )chicken,mutton and also fruits are offered

4.5.3. Vatun ghalap

In all these three communities group, people follow same tradition after *mel* is played known as *vatun ghalap. Vatun ghalap* means the *Mel,* the male members gather at one place after playing *tonya mel* and than these people are distributed into each houses where *tonya mel* was played so these all people go and eat lunch at each wades of each houses this system is called *vatun ghala.*

4.5.3. Maand modap

All the male members, who were the participants of *dhakto shigmo* again here, and dance with *ambhya taale* (leaves of mango tree) in their hands and burn *holi* over at *maand* and while going back home they should not look behind as spirit tries to hide them somewhere as this spirit s are known as *melo*.

4.5.4. Pagi dhakto shigmo

Before the begging *dhakto shigmo* all the villagers of each ward of this *pagi* communities of group gather at *maand*,but before that two people from this group *bhudvant(head of groups)* and *fadtakar*(religious man and one who invites everyone to come for naman) goes to take the *kaul* (oracles in the form of rice) of God *Mallikarjun Tarangana* at Patnem of *Avatarpurus* (incarnation of God *Mallikarjuna*) and than the begin for *naman* starts.

Figure 4.4:Pagi dhakto shigmo

Source: photography by the respondent

Naman song lyrics

आदि नमन गलू अमी आदि नाता

आदि गणपति बप्पा

आदि मल्लिकार्जुन देव

आदि अवतार पुरुष देव

आदि काशीपुरसा देवा

आदि सातपूर्वा

आदि पूर्वा देवोते

आदि कारापाइक देव

आदि तनपाई का देव

आदि घोड़ा पी का देव

आदि भटवाड़ी देव

आदि गुरु प्रदेश देव

आदि कालवडे देव

आदि कार्रवाई सोना देव

आदि किनले निरंकार देव

आदि बाबरिया देव

आदि मरांगना देव

आदि महादेव देव

आदि सती माई

आदि 33 कोटी देव

समस्थाई देव

Meaning of the *naman* song

They sing these songs to show respect and offer prayers to the gods. Both at the beginning and end of the festival. At the start of the festival, this song is sung, and on the final day, a different song is sung by the members, with different lyrics, but they invoke the names of all 33 crore gods as a mark of respect.

CHAPTER V

CONC LUSION

In this chapter, the culmination of exhaustive research efforts is presented, encapsulating a comprehensive summary of the findings obtained through meticulous analysis and data interpretation.

The overarching aim of this study was to delve into the intricate dynamics surrounding the festivals of *Shigmoutsav* and *Veeramel* in the culturally rich locale of Patnem, Canacona, South Goa. With a specific focus on gender, caste, and religion, the study sought to unravel the multifaceted relationship that exists within the framework of these vibrant celebrations.

By examining the interplay between these socio-cultural factors, the research aimed to elucidate how gender, caste, and religion influence various aspects of the festivals, including participation, rituals, traditions, and social dynamics. Through a comprehensive analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, the study endeavored to uncover underlying patterns, disparities, and nuances in the festival dynamics, shedding light on the complexities of identity, tradition, and social cohesion in the local context.

In this concluding chapter, I summarize my findings and reflect back on some of the strengths of the theoretical and methodological approaches I have taken. This chapter presents the results, comparison of findings with existing studies, limitations of the research, and significance of the qualitative research on the living experiences . This study

effectively collected the necessary data from participants through in-depth interviews, ensuring a thorough exploration of their perspectives and experiences.

The major findings of this qualitative research highlight the intricate association and significance of religion, caste, and gender within the festivals of *Shigmo utsav* and *Veeramal* in Patnem, Canacona, South, Goa. The field study provided valuable insights that were previously unknown to the researcher, even as an insider of the village. This underscores the depth of understanding gained through qualitative research methods and the importance of studying one's own community from an outsider's perspective to reveal nuanced dynamics.

The research revealed that specific roles are allocated based on religion, caste, and gender during the festivals of *Veeramel* and *Shigmo Utsav*. Additionally, there are observed restrictions that both genders must adhere to during these festivals. These findings underscore the complex interplay of social dynamics within the festival traditions, including the assignment of roles and the imposition of limitations based on gender.

The festivals entail distinct rituals, customs, and beliefs that are followed and practiced exclusively by specific religious, caste, and gender groups, rather than being universal across all participants. This highlights the diversity and specificity of traditions within the community, shaped by religious, caste, and gender identities.

Exactly, within the same religious framework, there can be significant diversity in beliefs, practices, and social structures. Hierarchical arrangements within caste and different community often determine roles and responsibilities during sacred activities.

These results highlight the intricate interactions between social factors within the festival customs, such as the stipulation of gender-based roles and restrictions.

Instead of being observed by all attendees, the festivals include unique rituals, customs, and beliefs that are followed and practiced only by particular religious, caste, and gender groups. This demonstrates how the community's customs are unique and varied, influenced by factors such as gender, caste, and religion.

It is true that there can be a great deal of variation in social structures, behaviours, and beliefs even within the same religious framework. Roles and obligations during religious events are frequently determined by hierarchical patterns within caste and various communities.

It's critical to understand that in these situations, assigning particular rites to particular groups serves to maintain the integrity and authenticity of religious practices rather than to promote discrimination. It expresses a conviction that some rites are given to particular groups in order to fulfil their religious obligations and rights, guaranteeing the correct performance of hallowed ceremonies .Indeed, the customs and traditions connected to these celebrations have deep, spiritual significance for the people concerned.

GLOSSARY

Names	Meanings
Maand	Sacred space
Kuldev	Clan deity
Garvai	clan
Phalgun	Spring festival
Shith	rice
Kadi	curry
Sangani	prayer
Raz angan	Sacred courtyard
Vhole	inauspicious
Mel	Male dancers
Tonyo	Wooden sticks
Kari naal	Sacred coconut

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