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The Languages of Goa



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The Regional and Social Varieties of Konkani: Konkani of Kankon

Krupali Naik

INTRODUCTION

Canacona or Kankon (locally known as *kāṅkōṇ*) is one of the twelve *talukas* of Goa. The variety spoken in Canacona is known as *kāṅkōṇc&I kōkṇi* (Konkani of *Kāṅkōṇ*). With a total area of about 351.1 square kilometres, Canacona is located in southern Goa. It is bounded on the north by the Quepem *taluka*, on the northeast by the Sanguem *taluka*, on the south by the state of Karnataka and on the west by the Arabian Sea. The Karmal Ghat separates this *taluka* from the other regions. It is the third largest *taluka* in Goa in terms of size, and is ranked eleventh in terms of population. The town of Chaudi is the administrative headquarters of the Canacona *taluka*.

Canacona has about 26 km of rocky coastline, 644 meters above sea level. A good part of the Sahyadri range (part of the Western Ghats) is spread in Canacona, with the Ambe Ghat and Karmal Ghat being the major ghats in the area. Over 75% of the Canacona area has a forest cover, with almost 230 types of trees.

ETYMOLOGY

According to the Konkani encyclopaedia *Konkani Vishwakosh*, Kanva ascetics used to live in Canacona many years ago. Thus, present day Kankon began to be known as Kanvapur. There is another legend behind the etymology. It is said that some years ago, a traveller passing through this region asked a person the name of this region. This region was at that time inhabited by people belonging to the Velip community. Not being able to provide an answer to the traveller's question, a person from that community is said to have replied saying, "*kōṇ nāṇṇō*" meaning 'nobody knows'. The traveller (mis) understood the name of the place as being *ōkṇanṇō* which later became present day Kankon.

Another etymological explanation goes like this: *kānan* means forest and *kon* means corner. As Canacona is the furthestmost *taluka* among Goa's twelve *talukas* and also because it is the area located at the corner of Sahyadri range, it may have come to be known as Kankon.