CHAPTER V

THE AGRIS OF BATIM
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The Village

The Geographical Location

Batim is a village that lies off the highway linking state-capital Panaji with south Goa (Margao and beyond, and to Vasco). The village lies between two other villages of central coastal Goa, namely Goa Velha and Curca. The boundaries of Batim are the Siridao River on the west, village Gancim (Ganzvim) on the north east, Lira-O-Pequeno (Neura) on the south east and Goa Velha on the south.

Etymology of Batim

Bhati, a Konkani term, refers to a furnace. In another context, the same term refers to the place where traditional alcohol (feni, urrack) is processed in Goa. Salt-producing villages of Goa have a hamlet or a vaddo which is referred to as Bhati - for example in the village Nerul (which has the ward called Bhatier, close to salt-pans) and Arpora. This term could originate from the reservoirs that go alongside the salt-pans. These are also known as the heaters or the Tapovanim, and get used in salt-producing villages to heat the saline water while extracting the salt out of the brine or salt-saturated water.

Another possible meaning of a 'Bhati' is the place where the rainwater runoff from various places meets. In Portuguese, the word has got rendered as Batim (with the final 'm' almost silent in pronunciation).

In the museum of the Asiatic Society at Mumbai, three copper plates bear inscriptions in the Sanskrit and Nagari script, referring to the donation made before
the deity Narayana, of a paddy field in the village of "Salibhatti" situated to the North of Gopakapuri, which is presided over by the deity Goveshwar. "Salibhatti" corresponds to Batim (Gomes Pereira: 1978: 40).

Map No. 5.1
BATIM Location Plan

[Map showing the location plan of Batim with various labels such as villages, roads, and other geographical features.]
There could be other possible reasons for the name of the village. Goa was ruled by the Portuguese from 1510 to 1961, who came along with the intention of spreading the Christian faith. One of the possible reasons's for Batim's name emerges in this context. The word Batim could have originated from Bhatle in the local Konkani language, which meant “got converted”. Incidentally, if asked about their ancestors' religious conversions many generations ago, the salt makers of Batim say to this day, “Ami maas uddoile Kristanv” (“We are converts who turned Christian as our wells were polluted with flesh and blood of animal’s meat”).

The Earliest Settlers

The earliest settlers of Batim village are believed to be the Mitt Gauddas. Before the coming of the Gaunkars, who later settled in the Gaunkar vaddo in Batim, the Mitt Gauddas are believed to have been the original settlers. Later, however, they were forced to move to other areas of the village and beyond by the Gaunkars who reside in the Gaunkar vaddo area.

Another reason for the Mithgaudas to flee from Batim could be due to plague. The sixteenth century co-founder of the Jesuits religious order and the Catholic missionary-saint Francis Xavier preached in this village, when there was a plague in Ganvxiim, the adjacent village to Batim. Oral history gives us an idea of the Batim of those times, and narrates those entire families were buried together in common graves at the time of plague, while the skeletons are still visible there.

Currently, however, residents of Gaunkar vaddo term those outside their area – i.e Agris – as “Sokoile” (those from beneath). They consider them as the lower members of the society, since the salt making occupation was considered to be of a low social status by them.
Most of the Agri respondents in Batim have come migrated to this village sometime in the past from areas like Telaulim in Navelim, Zuari and Uddi from Goa-Velha, Merces, Anjuna and Santa-Cruz. Some were brought here to do salt work and others came here because of family disputes in their respective villages.

Some of the original owners also, meanwhile, reside outside the village in areas like Goa-Velha, Siridao, Bicholim and the like. Some used to stay in Batim several years ago, but due to problems like the plague - or so they recall - they slowly moved to other villages like Goa-Velha. It is not known from oral history as to where exactly the original salt makers from Batim moved out to.

There are two possible explanations for the original Mittkars (salt makers) of Batim having disappeared, and for no longer continuing in the area. Firstly, unknown causes like diseases, plagues, wars and epidemics and secondly, the inquisition. Since there was deficiency of labour in salt pans in Batim, the owners brought the labourers from Telaulim (Salcette) and Anjuna to Batim. The people of Telaulim who came as labourers went back home to collect their zonn (i.e. the annual share they received on grounds of being male members of the village communities, or comunidades) in their own village. People currently explain this by using the Konkani explanation of "Tari pailean vorun dovortale" or "They collect and store it across the river".

The zonn earnings received by the people was so meagre that it was only enough to pay the boatman his charges so people eventually stopped collecting the zonn. Some respondents from Batim who have migrated from Telaulim-Navelim used to collect the Zonn from Navelim. They had to spend four annas to collect their zonn. So the zonn amount would be less than the amount that was spent in the travel, and the belief is that, as a result of this, people slowly stopped going to Telaulim to collect the zonn.
The Village Settlement

Batim names of properties and places or village hamlets (vadde or wards) apparently have a history that go back to remote times. The village currently consists of eight wards:

- The Church Ward, or Igroz Vaddo, is also the Gaunkarvaddo. That is, it is home to the Gaunkars, who claim to be the original or dominant owners (nizaache) of the village. The people from other wards are not allowed to reside in this particular ward.

- Maina Ward initially belonged to the neighbouring Ganvxim village, but is now part of Batim, and its residents are mainly toddy tapers (render).

- Portel Bhatt was the commercial ward of the oil extractors (locally known as the teli).

- Chinel Bhatt is where a Portuguese saukar or landlord resided. There is a belief or mythology that, before leaving, he gave some of his wealth to the people who worked for him. The people of Gaunkarvaddo were jealous of that, and, in order to secure what the Agris had received, told a person residing there to take his wife’s chinel (which in Portuguese meant slippers) when he was getting his daughter married. The Gaunkar gave the Agri his chinel and took his signature and kept the Agri in debt. In a few years time, the Agri was asked to return the chinel which was by then worn out and thrown away. The receiver said that he cleaned the house, (“ghor zaadlem”), yet, the chinel was nowhere to be found. In this way, the story goes, the Agris surrendered themselves to the Gaunkars saying, “mhoje mai, mhoje mai, atam kor zaiem"
tem" (Mother mine, now do what you want!). The Agris were made to pay whatever amount was prescribed to them by the Gaunkar. This ward, thus, got the name Chinel Bhatt.

- Ulhem Bhat (*Ulolem bhatt*) or the remaining piece of land.
- Sovoskai ward was called *Zogllem* Bhatt earlier. Originally *zogllem* refers to the blade used on the plough. The people later called it *Zogddem* Bhatt (fighters' ward). The then parish priest Fr. Pedro F. Pereira thought it was a depreciative term, and converted it to mean *Sovoskai* Bhat, meaning a land of peace.
- Ruma Bhatt. In the Portuguese language, 'ruma' means pomegranate. Since this ward had many *ruma* plants, it got the name of Ruma Bhatt.
- Motassai ward; inquiries did not reveal any significance for this name.

**Daily Routine**

Batim's daily life routine is different compared to elsewhere in Goa. This, in part, is due to the predominance of the salt making work in this area. According to their caste and social status, village people are always engaged in some or the other kind of activity. From June to December, they are engaged in paddy cultivation and pisciculture and from December to the beginning of June with salt-pan activity.

Their meal consists of large quantity of coarse boiled rice and fish curry (*xith-koddhi*, literally rice-and-curry). After the lunch break, they return to work at around 2 p.m. and toil in the heat. At 6 p.m., while returning home in groups, they again go to the favorite tavern, as country liquor shops are known here, where they spend an hour or so and debate, sometimes heatedly too, on topics uppermost on their mind.
Religious Compositions and Conversions

As a result of the religious conversions, which took place around the sixteenth century thereafter in Batim, which lies not far from the old capital of Old Goa, Christians form the bulk of Batim's population today. The Christian of Batim from Gaunkar vaddo has European-origin surnames – as do other Goan Catholics. These are believed to have been handed over to them by those who stood sponsors for their ancestors at the time of baptism. Given the manner in which religion shaped it in Goa, at the time of baptism, the converts were required to give up their Indian names and surnames and were given Portuguese names. Hence the Christian population of Batim has surnames like Braganza, Paes, Pires, Pacheco, Gomes, Pinto, Vaz, Fernandes, Da Cunha and Ferrao. Thereafter, following a Portuguese edict, it was considered an offence for a Portuguese to even address them by old Hindu names (Priolkar 1967: 10).

Local belief has it that in the past, during the early phase after conversions, the people of the village seldom went for Mass. So the parish priest of that time, Fr. Pedro F. Rodrigues, also known as Lokond Pedru ('Iron Peter'), went to the fields to get these people to church and bought their agricultural implements to church so that the people would not be able to work in the field. For the people who were at home, he used to tie them to a rope, Razuvaak bandun igorjent hattallo, and forcibly get them to church, so goes the belief. The penance was to keep them in a dark room in the church without food.

Going by the lore again, it is said that the Agris, who were wearing kashti i.e a modest loin cloth, were ashamed to be seen in church; so the Parish priest offered them Western clothes to wear to church.

Cunha Rivara (D'Souza 1975) is critical of the doings of his earlier
compatriots when he remarks: “In the first heat of conquest, temples were destroyed, all the emblems of the pagan culture were shattered to pieces and the books written in the vernacular were burnt for being guilty or suspected of containing precepts and doctrines of idolatry. The properties of Hindu temples were confiscated and given to the missions for the upkeep of the Christian churches. The demolition of the temples, the confiscation of the properties of the temples, the decrees of banishment and discriminations caused mass migrations of the Hindus to the neighboring areas outside the Portuguese territories and in this even the new Christians joined probably with the intention of escaping the attention of the Inquisition. The Hindus took away their gods with them and built temples in their new places of settlement.” (D’Souza 1975: 150).

Moren De Souza (1994) in his book ‘Tisvaddecheo Igorzo’ states that in the sub-district of Tisvadi, the task of preaching was begun by Dom Pedro Mascarenhas in 1554-55. The island was divided up between the Dominican and Jesuit priests. Villagers from the eastern side such as Dauji and St. Bras, Banastarim, Agacaim, Chorao and Divar came under the Jesuits. Some villages were distributed to the Franciscan missionaries, writes Jesuit priest Antonio dos Quadros (De Souza 1994).

Different early accounts of religious conversions, written in a manner that reflects the ideologies and beliefs of their authors, are still available, including covering the area of Batim.

In 1560, some sixty Brahmin boys came to train to become catechetical legionaries, who went to distant villages on Sundays. They taught the doctrine in palm leaf huts, to which other children, old women, and young mothers with their babies trooped. One young man is said to have walked into Guadalupe Church (Batim) one evening and asked for an explanation of the paintings on the walls. Among them
happened to be Christ's baptism in the Jordan. Next morning, the youth was back to the parish priest, telling him that all night he had been haunted by the explanation he had received; and to admit him for baptism (Mascarenhas 1987: 98-100).

Malu Camotim and Ramu Camotim of Batim were among the chief gaunkars of the leading villages of the islands of Goa who on June 28, 1541 attended the meeting held at the palace of the governor for the purpose of conversion (Xavier 1993: 122).

After the Jesuits reached Batim, Goa Velha was under the jurisdiction of Batim. Students of the St. Paul College, which was set up in the early colonial phase in the Portuguese colonial capital of the East, would come to teach catechism. By the year 1560, the Jesuits spread Christianity to all those villages which were under their possession. On July 28, 1560, Br. Martin Da Silva, a Jesuit, along with his companion fellow Jesuit, came to Batim to propagate Christianity. They had discussions with influential people of the villagers and took them to the Governor and they had to let know their vision and their work so they approached other priests in the college at St. Paul's College. The message was "so convincing" that they asked for Baptism and requested to be converted. The then Bishop was from Malakka, Dom Jorge de S. Luzia. The chiefs and gaunkar of this village went to Old Goa to request the missionaries to Baptize them in the same manner people of Goa Velha requested to be converted, the people of Batim were baptized on August 25, 1560 (Souza 1994: 139).

The letter of Luis Frois dated November 13, 1560 has mentioned that mass baptisms in Batim took place on August 25, 1560. It claims that when the priests who had been sent to make preparations for the christening were asleep, at midnight of August 24, more than two hundred persons, men, women and children knocked at their door and declared that they wished to become Christians. The women were very
well dressed and wore plenty of gold. The men were also well dressed with feathers in their caps and guns on their shoulders. The group was led by one man called Camotim (Kamat). He wore scarlet satin pants, had a silver sword at his waist and a gun on mentioned day. These people belonged to the Chardo class, consisting of warriors, men of a “much better personality” than the Brahmin (Gomes Pereira: 1978: 40, Mascarenhas 1987: 98)

Of course, this history is hotly contested. Depending on one’s ideological perspective, the narration changes strongly from what is portrayed above. For instance: The destruction of the Hindu temples did not suffice to satisfy the fanatical zeal of the Portuguese rulers. Attempts continued to be made to convert the local population to Christianity and it was only natural that these should provoke stubborn resistance from their leaders (Priolkar 1961: 69).

The part played by group leadership in the conversion of Goa to Christianity is significant. The earliest appears to have been some solidarity in the menial classes that found leaders to form the vanguard of the first wave of Christian converts. They totalled twelve thousand at the mass baptism of January 24, 1560, and counted the entire villages of Daugim, Batim, Moula, Carambolim and Mercondim, with 2,270 from Agassaim and Ancient Goa (Goa Velha) (Mascarenhas 1987: 97).

“With evangelization becoming the leit-motif of Portuguese rule from the mid-sixteenth century, entire villages were converted to Christianity. The functions of the gramdevata (village deity) - of ensuring, for example, a bountiful harvest - now came to be appropriated by the parish church with the costs of being defrayed by the gaoponn as in the past. The syncretic dimensions of theology, visible particularly in the Santeri-Shantadurga-Milagres worship, and in religious festivals like the Hindu zatras and Catholic feasts, must be examined not only as cross cultural meeting points

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between the two religions, but also as statements about the resistance offered by the Hindus. The *shakti-pitha* image of Goa - one of the ubiquitous places of cosmic power consecrated to the female deity - continues in the convert community with the worship of the local forms of the Virgin Mary, the *Saibin Mai* of the Goan Catholics” (Kamat 1999: 70).

The traditional Goan caste system was integrated into Christianity in spite of the latter’s tenet of universal brotherhood of man. Marginalized castes within the traditional Hindu hierarchy accepted the new religion with hopes of social and economic upliftment; while the elite caste groups did so with a view to protect their lands, privileges and even status (Kamat 1999: 72).

Although the Agris of Batim visit Pilgao before starting of the salt season to invoke the blessing of the deity Chamundeshwari. This temple was founded by the ancestors of the present Mahajans. It is affiliated to Gomeshwar, Kalbhairav, Khetrapall, Nirankar and Purusha. The Mahajans belong to the Vani or Vaishya class. The statutes of this Devasthan do not refer to the fact that the main deity belonged to Goa Velha of Ilhas taluka (Gomes Pereira 1978: 136).

The researcher also went to Pilgao in Bicholim along with the Agri from Batim. In spite of the Catholic Church being strict in wanting to avert cross-religious beliefs, the salt makers still visit their *gram devi* (traditional village deity) in Pilgao. The temple priest acts with due consideration towards the salt makers and the other Christians who come from Batim, as if acknowledging the historical and pre-conversion links.

But now-a-days, in Batim, a new trend is noticed wherein medicant women come with a statue of the goddess, claiming to have come in from Pilgao. Since the Agris cannot immediately counter-check at Pilgao, they prefer to offer some alms to
these women. When the researcher enquired with the temple priest from Pilgao whether such women had been sent by the temple, the latter replied in the negative.

At present, there is no Hindu temple in Batim. The temples which existed earlier in pre-conversion times in Batim were Bauca-Devi, Ravalnath, Santeri, Bhairao, Narana, Ramnath, Betall, and Brahmann Purus (Priolkar 1961: 69). The temple of the deity Narayana was situated at the site of the present Church Of Our Lady Of Guadalupe. There are no vestiges of the transference of its deities. In the old records, a reference is, however, made to Gaunkars with the surname of ‘Camotim’ (the Portuguese spelling for Kamat).

There is another community – the migrant Agers who come in from Karnataka – whose religious background needs to be noted too. Agers who have migrated to Batim from nearby Karnataka are technically considered Hindus by religion. However, the Agers do not belong to the Varna system. They in fact are part of the Scheduled Castes, who fall beyond the Chatur Varna (four-fold system of varnas or hierarchical stratification). They worship the Murkunde as their village god or gram dev. Their kul dev or the family god is Entramen in Pandharpur They also worship Sabnamali god. While based in Goa, they worship the god Ishwar, a shrine to whom is located at Santana village close to Batim. On the day of Shivrartri, they offer coconut, flowers, agarbatti (incensed sticks) and bananas to the village god. With their busy schedule, the labourers hardly get time to go to the village temple.

**Land and Conversions:** Till very recently – possibly even the start of the 20th century – land in Goa was commonly owned and not private property. During Portuguese rule, however, village communities were permitted to sell land, which till now was held in common ownership by the communities.

In the early stages of Portuguese rule itself, the rulers confiscated vast
properties from the temples and mosques and donated them to influential high-caste members who made up the neo-elite of society as inducements for their conversions to Christianity. This, together with changes in the land-ownership structure in areas of Goa which were also not ruled by the Portuguese for long (the 'New Conquests'), brought into effect large scale landlordism in Goa.

Land could henceforth be bought, sold, mortgaged etc. Land became a market commodity and this rise of landlordism created a new class of landlords in the Goan society (D’Souza 1975: 197). It is possible that the salt pans owned by the landlords of Batim might have been gifted to the people of the Gaunkar vaddo after conversion. Some Hindu landlords have also bought land from the Catholic landlords in the early part of the twentieth century.

Conversion plays an important role in the history of Goa. As such a brief reference to the Christian origin is made vis a vis Batim church to illustrate the role of religion in the present context.

History of the Batim Church

The church has its roots in a primitive small chapel, which itself had its beginning before 1541. This original chapel, which was located near the cemetery (see photograph), was demolished in 1859. The present church, whose foundation was laid in 1860, was rebuilt and blessed on June 30, 1867. (Lourenco 2006: 53, De Souza 1994: 139).

Besides this pillar there is a *kurkut* (cave) where there is a small Hindu god. At the entrance of this place there is a grave of Salvador Pires, who is identified as "Bramane escriovao". Near the Batim church, there is a carved cross with the following inscriptions in it: *Louvado Seja o Santissmo Sacramento* (Praise to Holy Blessed Sacrament)

The present church was constructed on July 30, 1867. Its foundation was laid in 1860 and the previous church was demolished in 1859. The patron of this church is Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe, a 16th century icon of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, who represents a Marian apparition according to belief appeared on a peasant's cloak near Mexico City in 1531. There are two alters on both the sides; on one side of the altar there is Our Lady of Assumption carved on wood and on other side there is a crucifix of Jesus.

There are a few more historical dates available. German Jesuit historian George Otto Schurhammer states that the church was built in 1539 by a lay person, Miguel Vaz, who was then the Vicar General of Goa Archidiocese. He had reached Goa in 1533 during the tenure of Dom Joao Afonso de Albuquerque. This church was converted into a parish; but according to Msgr. F. X. Gomes Catao the previous chapel was demolished in 1859 and the new church was constructed on November 5, 1867.

**Caste Composition**

Catholics in Goa too follow a caste system, even though this is not ritually sanctioned. Caste has mainly social and marital implications. The traditional village structure - dominated by the vangors or clans who formed part of the gaunkaria or comunidade - consisted of 14 vangors, four of which are extinct. The sixth vangor
belongs to those with the surname of 'Camotim' (suggesting Brahmin roots) while all the remaining gaonkars belong to the Chardo caste. (Gomes Pereira: 1978: 40)

Over the years the caste composition of the village has obviously changed, even if the gaunkaria/comunidade tends to keep its doors open to the dominant communities. Besides the salt-making Agri community today, the other castes in the village are the Chardos and Brahmins. There are also a number of migrants who work in the salt-pans, and trace their roots to the neighbouring state of Karnataka in the most. This section will be covered later in this chapter.

A large part of the population consists of the lower-middle class who eke out a living as cultivators and labourers. In the fields, they toil very hard, and lighten their drudgery at times by indulging in banter or gossip on different matters like their landlord's character or talk relating to the parish and some current issues from their daily life. Around noon, they obtain a short break for the midday meal, which is usually preceded by a visit to the nearest liquor shop for a drink of the local brew *urrak* or *fenny*. Due to this demand, and also perhaps to the government licensing policy, bars or liquor shops have been on the increase in this village, which is the cause of some social problems, as noted elsewhere in this chapter.

**Land Use Pattern**

Batim is, till now, known for its rice-paddy fields and salt-pans. Salt production requires easy access to sea water, open pans and ample sunlight. A tributary of the river Zuari flows right into Batim village, which makes it convenient for salt production.

The river which supplies water to the salt pans originates from the streams of Talaulim, Ganvxiim and Moula region and runs a distance of eight kilometers to join
the Zuari River at Goa Velha. It may be noted that some important ancient villages, frequently mentioned in the Kadamba and Vijayanagara records, were situated close to this river.

The normal course of the four rivers joining the Siridao River have been silted and distorted over the centuries. The salinity of the Siridao creek increases rapidly near the Batim region, and several salt pans have been developed along the river by constructing sluice gates and bunds for salt making and pisciculture.

Education

The Agris-Historical Background

In order to get an idea of the Agris of Batim and understand the traditional roots of this saltmaking community, the researcher tried to use various secondary sources and collating an oral history of the people from Batim. It is nonetheless difficult to find out the precise origin and exact date when the Agris settled in Batim. There are also no answers to the question of how the original salt makers disappeared. Oral tradition gives a number of hints and potential answers. It is not clear whether the Mithgaudas or the Agris existed in Batim prior to conversion. It is also not clear whether they were displaced by other settlers, such as those of Gaunkar vaddo, or whether people simply migrated to the other villages as a response to a natural calamity or other such phenomenon. The Agris themselves give a number of differing answers to these questions. One version which people give is that some disease spread in the village and the original people may have migrated.

In the North Konkan, the community which engaged in salt manufacturing on the coast was called Agris. The saltpans are called Mithagars. Hence, the people working on them have been designated as Agris (Mitragotri 1999: 60). But apart from the similarity in nomenclature, the Agri respondents of Batim have no link with the
Agris of North Konkan, as opposed to the Mithgaudas of Agarvaddo who do have a link with the Mithgaudas of South Konkan.

Most of the Agri respondents in Batim have come in from Telaulim in Navelim, Zuari and Uddi from Goa-Velha, Merces, Anjuna and Santa-Cruz. Some were brought here to do salt work and others came here because of family disputes in their respective villages.

Some of the original owners reside outside the village in areas like Goa-Velha, Siridao, Bicholim and the like. Some used to stay in Batim several years ago, but due to problems like the plague - so says the local history - they slowly moved to other villages like Goa-Velha. But it is not known where the original salt makers from Batim moved out to.

There are two possibilities for the original Mittkars (salt makers) of Batim to have disappeared, and for no longer continuing in the area. Firstly unknown causes like diseases, plagues, wars and epidemics and secondly, the Inquisition. Since there was deficiency of labour in salt pans in Batim, the owners of Batim might have hired the salt makers of Telaulim (Salcette), which was the highest salt producing village in Goa in those times, and from Anjuna (Bardez) must have brought these workers to Batim.

Workers from these villages went back home to collect their zonn (i.e. the annual share they received on grounds of being male members of the village communities, or comunidades) in their own village. The respondents from Batim who had migrated from Telaulim-Navelim used to collect the Zonn annually from Navelim. People who were originally from Telaulim say “Tari pailean vorun dovortale” or “They collect and store it across the river”. The zonn received by the people was of such a small quantum that it was only enough to pay for the canoe.
charges. So, over time, people stopped collecting the *zonn*.

One respondent said that a salt maker went to get his *zonn* in Anjuna, and, while returning, he would bring a goat or a cow out of the money that he received out of the *zonn*.

**Occupation**

The main occupations of the Agris of Batim are agriculture, cultivation, pisciculture and salt production. Toddy tapers residing in Maina and the Gaunkars are engaged in white collar jobs. But nowadays, people no longer undertake farming; the salt work is done mainly by the migrant workers coming from Karnataka.

The Agris now take up white collar jobs, some have moved abroad and others have taken citizenship in the United Kingdom, or other European nations. As a result, people are switching over to new sources of income and occupations. Lives of the people have changed. This was evident when the researcher was administering the interview schedule on the respondents. The relatives, family members and neighbours of the respondent were either abroad or worked on other jobs besides salt making. The people have constructed two-storey houses, and the lifestyle of the people too has changed altogether.
Nature of Family

All the respondents interviewed in this village were married. The average age of marriage among the Agri males is 24 years and for females is 22 years.

However there were different opinions on the issues of marriage. All the Agri respondents are in favour of intercaste marriages. Members however mostly get married within their caste. Children from the Agri community feel that they can marry outside their caste. If economic incentives are provided, they believe this would lead to more intercaste marriages. They do keep relations with people who have married outside their caste. They permit widow re-marriage and approve of divorce, even though divorce is not much visible in the community currently. The average number of children in the family is two to three. They do favour conversion to any other religion and feel that participation in elections can increase a person’s prestige. They feel that children and womenfolk should also join politics.

Only known people are invited for the marriage. Villagers - both Agris and others - are aware of, and practice, family planning.

Due rituals are performed at the time of marriage. Marriage negotiations tend
to be undertaken by the parents of the bride and the groom. When the "seeing of the bride" takes place, a gold ring is given to the girl, followed by another exchange of rings at the time of engagement. They also invite to social occasions the people married outside their caste. People who can afford dowry at the time of marriage usually give some money and gold ornaments in the form of necklace, chain, bangles, earrings, etc. whereas the poor may not give anything.

As elsewhere among the Catholic community of Goa, for the purpose of marriage, the Agris have an exchange of rings. They invite people, and have a ross (bathing in coconut-milk) ceremony, and a bikrem jevonn (special meal for the poor) around the time of the wedding. They also perform rites meant for the bride and the bridegroom. The nuptials are performed by the priest in the church.

In contrast, among the Hindu landlords in the older generation, "bride seeing" did not take place. The groom would usually see the bride only on the wedding day. There were no rituals performed at the time of engagement. There were direct marriages. Rites meant for the bridegroom, the bride, and for others were performed at the time of marriage. Marriage rites are officiated by the temple priest. Dowry is given in the form of ornaments. Marriages are usually arranged by the parents and inter caste marriages are allowed. They invite people from outside their caste for marriages, because, the landlords say, they respect the people of other caste.

The data that was gathered through the interview schedule from the Agris is divided into four sections. The Agri respondents interviewed were between the age groups of 50 to 60 years and 70 to 75 years, since it is people of this age category who tend to be more involved in the salt production. The younger generation appears disinterested in salt production, probably since it involves backbreaking work, low social prestige, low returns and is also labourious.
Jobs in the salt pans involve family labour. The Agris had joint families earlier but now they are slowly shifting to a nuclear pattern. An average Agri family consists of four members.

**Religion and Associated Practices and Rituals**

The temple of goddess Chamundeshwari was originally in Goa Velha, and is the goddess which the Agris of Batim worshipped prior to their conversion to Christianity. This temple of Chamundeshwari was founded by the ancestors of the present mahajans. It is affiliated to Gomeshwar, Kalbhairav, Khetrapall, Nirankar and Purusha. The mahajans belong to the Vani or Vaishya class. The statutes of this devasthan do not refer to the fact that the main deity belonged to Goa Velha of Ilhas taluka. (Gomes Pereira 1978: 136)

But while a sense of community is observed during various festivities, there is also an element of discriminations in various forms encountered by the people through various institutions for social welfare set up by the Portuguese, such as the confrarias (confraternities), the Santa Casa de Misericordia (The Holy House of Mercy) and the Hospicio Real (Royal Hospital).

The confrarias were organizations of a brotherhood of sorts meant to assist the poor and the sick and founded in almost all churches in Goa. But in these organizations of charity too, caste-based and even racial segregation was a guiding principle. For example, in around 1613, two confrarias were set up in the Casa Professa de Bom Jesus, one for the Portuguese noblemen and officers and the other for Goans. It was only in 1720 that the first Indian Christian was admitted as a "brother" of the Misericordia (with his appointment being approved by the Crown as late as 1743), and even then his European or Eurasian colleagues were entitled to a
host of privileges which were denied to him. European membership to these bodies was scrupulously maintained even to the extent of preferring semi-literate or even illiterate Europeans to erudite the Goans (Kamat 1999: 92).

Caste-based divides were a reality too. Till not long back, the dress of the Confrad (opa musa), a cape used by members of the confraria for ceremonial occasions, was of a different colour for the Gaunkars and the Agris of Batim. The Confrad dress or the opa musa is a unique two piece garment in which the mus was white for both the groups and the opa was red for the Gaunkars or the landlords and blue for the Agris. This distinction made in the colour of opa led to protests over it. Since then, there has been the formation of a single confraternity in Batim wherein both the Agris and the Gaunkars wear white colour for both opa and musa. Nowadays some prefer not wearing the opa and musa at all.

Indian native Christians were not admitted to the Royal Hospital of Goa although they were employed there in menial capacities. They were treated at another hospital meant exclusively for the coloured people. In the prison of the Goa Inquisition, too, a distinction was maintained between inmates on the basis of racial considerations; while Goans were made to subsist on cooked rice and fish alone, the Europeans were offered a more varied fare (Kamat 1999: 92).

The Catholic Church has itself been accused of perpetuating racism in Goa despite its avowed tenets of equality, liberty and universal brotherhood of man. Colour prejudice coupled with politico-economic consideration was chiefly responsible for denying to the Goan clergy admittance into the Religious Orders and suppressing them in the diocesan set up (ibid: 93).

Such differences are witnessed in the village of Batim too. One argument put forth is that the people of the Gaunkarvaddo contributed to the construction of the
church in the form of money and land. Therefore, they claimed to be justified in having had more privileges in church matters. They also had separate benches to sit in the church, which is a reflection of their perceived superiority.

Gods and the goddesses worshipped: The Agris of Batim, who are traditional salt makers, have more recently acquired a *nouveau riche* status; resultantly, those who are unable to reconcile with the system have moved out of a 'socially low' profession. They worship the Christian as well as Hindu gods and they now own land and have become land owners.

The Agris worship Our Lady of Assumption, Jesus, Our Lady of Guadalupe and Orgaonkarin Chamundi. The Goddess Chamundeshwari is worshiped by the Agris till date after so many years of conversion. The researcher accompanied the salt maker to Pilgao in Bicholim, where the salt makers offer *naal, pod* (coconut, rice) and some amount of money to the goddess to protect them in their salt making business. The Hindu landlords worship their *kuldev* (family deity) Vaman Dhavlli and Ramnath in Ramnathi. The Catholic landlords worship Jesus, St. Anthony and the popular Goan religious figure from nearby on the route to sainthood, Father Agnelo at Pilar.
The Syncretism Practices in the Salt Pans: Among the converted Christians of Batim, for some time, there was little understanding of the new religion. Consequently, ritual practices of the pre-conversion Little Tradition continued, with the objects of devotion now situated in the Christian greater tradition. This is visible in the annual ritual cycle of the lower castes. While the gods (the Christian Trinity), spirits and ghosts (bhuts and the family dead) feature as personal powers of spells, evil eye, black magic had to be dealt with by “specialists through breaking of coconuts and sacrificing cocks” (Kamat 1999: 69).

Syncretism influences are also visible in the religious art and architecture in Goa, with Hindus and Christian artisans being involved in the construction and decoration of each other’s shrines. In the context of the recent socio-economic transformation of Goa, a search for such syncretic aspects of Goan culture located in the Little Traditions of both Hinduism and Christianity becomes a meaningful assertion of the common identity of the Goans (ibid: 69).

Some of the recent pressures that the region has been facing include the emergence of a political culture that is unscrupulous in its misuse of language, religion and caste: the presence of regional variants of the policies of mandir and mandal (referring to the increased communal and casteist politics that reign supreme in India today and increased communal and casteist politics that reign supreme in India today): the carnivalisation of Goan culture for touristic gains; the emergent Goan-Bhaylo (Goan-versus-migrant) tension; and the consequent crisis of Goan identity. However, historically, in the context of forced conversions, such syncretic practices can be regarded as forms of resistance offered by the Hindu community to Christianization, by appropriating the Catholic’ replacements’, and to Lusitinization by continuing with some of the customs of their forefathers (Kamat 1999: 73).
Social and Religious Practices and Salt Making

Certain practices are undertaken before the start of the process of salt making. Villagers kill a pig then they make a *gaanthon* (fish or meat pieces tried to a string) of it, cook it in a *thovlli* (small earthen vessel used in the cooking of curries). In the month of November or December, they kill a chicken. Earlier, the Agris used to offer two betel leaves, half a coconut shell, *sorro* or liquor, two *beedis* (Indian cigarettes made of tobacco wrapped in leaf), bread and bananas for the *devchar* (the local spirit, either benevolent or malevolent). But now-a-days, this custom of offering has been discontinued.

*Tiatr:* Tiatrs, or Konkani dramas, are staged for ward feasts. On such occasions, a temporary stage is set up, along with an enclosure for the audience. Actors taking part in the drams are usually recruited from the same village, but nowadays, the dramas tend to be brought in from outside the village, and the drama is offered free of charge to the people since it is usually sponsored by well-to-do-families. Due to the introduction of modern mass media like the T.V., and video, the popularity of the tiatr - once the only form of entertainment for locals in a language they could understand easily - is slowly dying out in the village.

*Zagor:* The Portuguese, in their long rule over Goa of four and half centuries, brought with them a number of traditions and cultures. But one popular festival of purely local origins is called the Zagor. This festival is only meant for men and boys. The word derives from the term ‘zag’ ('wake') and the staging of *zagor* occurs through the whole night (Mali 1968: 99). Zagor was also staged by the Agri community in Batim. This is one of the old cultural activities of Goa, which has been preserved by the Gaudda community. People beat the *gumott*, a percussion musical instrument made of an earthen drum covered on one end with the skin of a monitor lizard,
New salt is removed at Batim, after religious rites

Animal sacrifices at the Batim salt-pans. Earlier a pig or goat would be sacrificed, but with the arrival of the migrant workers, a rooster is offered.

Salt storage in the home at Batim, called the 'kondo' or 'koronn'.

Avorad (band) being played on the feast day in Batim.

Corn-cutting festival called 'Neiem'.

Procession of devotees in Batim for a feast procession.
which is not otherwise played in the church, but at home on feast days. The *gumott* has a small hole on the reverse of this pot which controls the high and low pitch of the sounds. Men drink liquor or else, the belief is, they are not able to sing (*tallo suttona*). Women also participate as spectators. The *gumott* is played only by senior members. People break a coconut, and make fire with the help of palm leaves, broken earthen pot (*koilacho*) and kerosene. They also keep *agarbati* (incense sticks) and a lamp (*pontti*). In the broken earthen vessel, they put in cow dung, coconut shell and kerosene and light the fire. They perform a litany (*ladinh*) for St. Cruz (the Holy Cross) at Portel Bhatt. They go home for dinner and return at around 10 p.m. The local religious community head (*zolmi*) lights the lamp and breaks the coconut. Meanwhile, they play the *gumott* and sing the *noman* (benediction).

**Caste Configuration**

The salt-makers belong to the Agri sub caste and belong to the Shudra category, being engaged in the manufacture of salt. The name of the caste is derived from their occupation. It is a self-employed community.

Catholic landlords from the Gaunkarward are Brahmins, and the area is also incidentally called Bamonnvaddo, Others belong to the Charddos and claim Kshatriya status. The Hindu landlords belong to the Brahmin caste too. Most of the Agris are not the members of any political organization, with the exception of one respondent who joined the Congress party. His neighbour had inspired him to join this party. The Agris have never ever contested the Assembly and Parliamentary elections.
Marriage: Norms, Practices, Customs and Rituals

Earlier, the marriages would usually take place in the village itself. Given the occupation they follow, this community does not allow their girls to move out of the community, since they say they need them for salt-work.

Marriage earlier used to take place within close cousins and at times with the next-door neighbours. Once the girl would attain the age of marriage, the boy would make a proposal saying, "Tum mhojem" ("You're mine") and in this way escort his future wife. The Agris would continuously observe a hardworking girl who would be suitable for them in the salt work. Agris had a belief among them ‘Amkam bhaili chedvamm nooch', meaning “Girls from outside the village are not meant for us.”

But, nowadays, it appears that young women also move out of the village in marriage, since they do not work in the salt pans. As noted above, the jobs in the saltpans have been performed now by the migrant labourers from Karnataka. Society is changing from a traditional one to being a bourgeois capitalist one.

The day of engagement is called the Mudhi (literally, “the ring”). The to-be-married couple exchanges rings. There is denem on the same day, wherein the trousseau is brought over to the bridegroom’s house. Sometimes, the bride comes along with the denem, sometimes there is aachar - meaning superstition, for example they were not allowed to get married on a Friday. One respondent said ‘atam te achaar mandnai’ (they do not follow those outdated superstitions now). The ring which is used for the engagement is the same as the one which is used for the nuptials, but, if they can afford it, a couple would buy a separate ring. Sometimes a priest is brought in for the mudhi ceremony. Vojem (an offering of fruit and traditional sweet) is shared with neighbours and relatives in the form of Bol-Doce (local sweets) and bananas on the engagement day.
Bangle-wearing ceremony: The bangle-wearing ceremony that is held before the wedding for the bride to be is called the Chuddo. Bangles symbolise the married life for the bride, and they are broken only on her husband's coffin, once she is widowed.

Among the Agris, the bangles chosen are of four colors. These bangles signify the different stages of women's life: red signifying happy married life, green signifying fertility, yellow signifying middle age and white old age.

The Chuddo among the upper castes consists of a set of seven glass bangles of green colour on each wrist. In a normal case, these bangles are put on her wrist by the bangle seller. Other relatives and those present at the ceremony are also given, by the bangle-seller, a pair or more of their choice free of cost. Offerings of money in token of blessing are put into a tray placed before the bangle seller. The money collected thus is taken by the bangle-seller, over and above the payment that he gets for the work done. The bangle-seller charges a higher-than-usual rate for the chuddo, which is paid for by the bride. Generally, on this day, they would pay whatever amount the bangle seller asks for. Whilst going home, the maternal uncle gives the vojem to the bride, consisting of one boshi (plate) full of doce (sweet) and one dozen bananas. This vojem is distributed to all the brides' neighbours.

The chuddo ceremony is performed once the chiiti vachop — reading of the banns, announcing the intending marriage — is done in church. It is done at the mamager, i.e. at the bride's maternal uncle's house. The same day, they apply ross (coconut juice) on the body of the bride. Later, as per the wishes of other relatives, ross is applied to the bride at their house too on some other day. They have the ross ceremony for the bride and the bridegroom in their respective homes on the day before the wedding, in unison with the singing of verses in Konkani in praise of the
bride and groom and their relatives. Women, who are expert in singing special marriage songs called *zothis*, are sometimes employed for the occasion. They may also throw across taunts to the couple and other people of the home, i.e. people who are related and those who would shortly be related. The younger generations of women are unable to sing the traditional *zothis*.

*Bhikrem jevonn* (literally, the Beggars' Meal) is a meal given on the day before the wedding. In this event, the dead of the family are remembered and food is served and gifts are given to the poor in the hope of appeasing the spirits of the dead ancestors. People brought in to partake in the meal are called as *Bhikari*. They are often from the same village or from the neighbouring villages of Siridao, Goa Velha or Agacaim. For the *bhikrem jevonn*, a family would traditionally cook *chonem* (grams), *dukra maas* (pork), *sannam* (traditional bread), *tendlim* (local vegetables), *doodhi* (pumpkin), *dalliche godxem, undde* (local bread made by the *poder* or baker) and some fruits, wherein bananas are a must. Nowadays, instead of offering the *bhikrem jevonn*, people prefer to offer some money as a gift to the *Azilo* (home for the indigents) or the Home for the Aged.

On the wedding day, there is nuptials ceremony called the *Resper*, which takes place in the parish at which the bridegroom is affiliated. The groom’s relatives come in with a *pett* (suitcase), with all the *nesounn*, i.e. brides’ clothes to be worn for the nuptials, to the bride’s house. The bride’s relatives have to put some money into the suitcase, ‘*Pettenth khuxi te ghalop*’. (Place what one wishes into the suitcase.) This is done before the bride and the groom go for the *resper*. They take *besanv* or blessings from senior family members, friends and neighbours.

Decorations and the other church arrangements are traditionally done by the bridegroom. The church service is prepared by both the families. The bridal couple
then goes to the groom’s house, where they give the *saddo* (a special red-and-white coloured flowery dress) which is stitched for the bride in both the houses. The dress stitched in the groom’s house is worn by the bride in her house and that which is stitched in the bride’s house is put on her in the groom’s house after the *resper*. This is called as *oklelo saddo*.

Nuptials are followed by the reception, which would take place at the bridegroom residence. It would be conducted through the whole night until dawn. A local band is usually bought for the wedding, and people would dance through the night. Neighborhood womenfolk would help with the cooking and the preparing *doce*, and men would help to put up a big *mattou* (large tent or temporary pandal to accommodate the guests) in the vicinity. The *mattou* is draped with white decorated sheets brought in by the *mattovkar*. He was generally hired from the neighbouring village of Goa Velha. The chairs and tables and the band stage is all set for the reception. The dance floor was all sand-filled and packed with leaves to allow for easy dancing. But nowadays, the people of Batim prefer to have their reception in a professional wedding hall.

On the day after the wedding, the bridal couple would go to the bride’s house. This is called as *Portounem* (The Return). At lunch time or late in the evening, there is a get together held for the close relatives, friends and neighbours in the bride’s place. The newly married couple along with the relatives and friends is received at the bride’s place and there may be a dance or a litany (*ladinh*) and a small get together where drinks and food are served.

Earlier, the bridal couple would stay at the bride’s house for two to three days. They had to take ‘*paanch okhtaa*’ — five meals — in the bride house. But nowadays, given the pressures on time and the changing reality, they stay for one day and have
dinner in the night followed by breakfast then some meal before lunch, and then lunch and evening tea. In short, five meals are condensed in two meals.

This can be seen as a parallel to the Hindu custom where the couple goes to stay in the bride’s house which is called as paanch dis, meaning five days. When the bride returns back to the bridegroom’s house they give the sotti - ‘Naal ani kellim bandun hankeam ditai’. Pieces of the coconut and small pieces of banana are then distributed to the neighbours.

In the past, the tradition was to give vojem to the bride before departing to the groom’s house. This vojem consisted of doce and bol (both are local sweets) and one or two thousand bananas. Later on, the bananas that were given in the vojem were only five hundred in number. Nowadays, this trend is slowly changing wherein they give this vojem on the day of denem. After few days of the marriage, the newly married couple is invited to the bride’s ancestral home to stay for a week; and whilst going back they are gifted with dos (a local sweet) as vojem.

When the bride gets pregnant, she is once again brought to her mother’s home in the seventh or the ninth month; but if they cannot afford then the in-laws keep her at her husband’s home. She remains there till her delivery and goes back with the baby after confinement for baptism. Vojem of dos and banana is again given to her when she returns back to the husband’s house for the christening of her first child.

For baptism, a madrin and padrin i.e. godmother and godfather are selected by the child’s parents. The godmother and the godfather also give a gift of vojem for the baby – like the baptism clothes for the baby, a wine bottle, cake, bananas and doce.
Applying Ross (coconut juice is applied on the bride)

Blessings are given by the elderly to the would be bride

The newly married bride is presented with a red and white colored dress (saddo)

They give coconut and bananas to the bride

PORTOUNEM meaning the bride returns to her maternal home on the next day of marriage
Education

A majority of the older Agris from Batim are uneducated, although some are educated up to the seventh standard (i.e. approximately seven to nine years of schooling). The younger generation does take up higher education, often up to the degree level. Landlords, on the other hand, often have education up to the degree level.

The Agris feel their community should get education because it would help them to learn to read and write, there would be fewer crimes, they would earn more income, get more access to employment, and be in a better position to face competition and employ labourers in the salt pans. The Agris also felt that the girls of the community should get education so that they will become independent and know of their rights and get good proposals for marriage. The parents of the Agri respondents were all uneducated. Some of the younger generation Agris have an education up till the twelfth standard (12 to 14 years of traditional schooling) while a few others have taken up education up to the post-graduate level.

Language

The Agris of Batim speak Konkani and sometimes English, whereas the landlords speak languages like Portuguese, Konkani and English. Konkani is their mother tongue and the dialect used by the Agris of Batim appears somewhat different as compared to the other Konkani speakers of Goa.

The Konkani language has been the predominant language spoken in Batim for the last hundreds of years. There are also dialectical variations though, as noted above. This is evident from the various words and phrases used throughout this chapter too. For example *Hei, fui voita go eia?* (Hey, where are you going?) *Maiee*
Feasts and Festivals

Post-conversions, the Agris of Batim celebrate feasts like those of Our Lady of Assumption or Neiem, Our Lady of Gaudulupe, Our Lady of Gloria, and the feast of St. Francis. Christian landlords celebrate the procession of saints. Hindu landlords also celebrate the feast of Jesus of Nazareth at Siridao. The feast of the patron Our Lady of Guadulupe Feast is celebrated on December 19 in Batim. The feast of Our Lady of Gloria is celebrated in the last week of April. Elsewhere in Goa the feast of St. Francis Xavier’s feast is celebrated on December 3, but in Batim this feast is celebrated on August 16.

A typical culture has emerged which may be termed the Agri culture. It consists of the Alvorad (musicians moving around the village playing music to announce the feast day), feasts, tiatr and the zagor. By conversion, people created their own culture. They gave to church what belonged to it and continued their old practices at home followed before conversion.

Alvorad: This ceremony begins early in the morning. The alvorad (musicians) move around the village playing music to announce the feast day. The alvorad starts from the house of the president, and then goes to the church and ends at the president's house again, where the musicians are treated with snacks and tea. Sometimes, the people who play the alvorad would spend the previous night in the president's house.

The alvorad was played for the feasts like Our lady of Guadulupe, feast of The
Blessed Sacrament, *Neiem* (harvest festival) on August 24 and all the chapel feasts of the wards in Batim. The *Neiem*, the corn-cutting *neiem* ceremony celebrated on August 24, is one of the important feasts of Batim. On this day, the new corn is cut as part of the harvest feast.

The *alvorad* described above first proceeds to a place in a procession to the locality of Maina where the villagers cut the new sheaf and take it for blessing. The procession along with the *alvorad*, the parish priest, the president and the members of *confraad* go to another earmarked area to ceremoniously cut the corn. They cut a new sheaf and take it for blessing in a procession which is then offered in the church. The tray of the cut corns is kept at the altar. The Agris prepare *fhau* (beaten or pound rice) and beef on the day of *neiem* feast. On that day, they play a special game called as *Naal Fottai* wherein coconuts are hit, and the winner gets a prize. One person holds the coconut in one hand and hits on another coconut held in another person's hand. Whichever coconut breaks first is the loser.

The Feast of Our Lady of Assumption is celebrated each year on August 15, and also marked with the preparation of a special local sweet called the *patholli*. The popular Christian festival of Easter, which falls around March-April each year, is another prominent feast that is celebrated by the Agris of Batim. If new salt is prepared during Lent, the 40-days period of penance preceding Easter, the Agris of Batim do not kill a pig in the salt pans due to the abstinence from eating meat during Lent.

The other prominent festivals of the Agris are Christmas, New Year's Day, and the three days of Carnival proceeding Lent, which falls in February or March. Besides this, ward feasts of the ward chapels are also celebrated. There is a marked difference between celebration of the festive mass in the church feasts and ward chapel feast.
People tend to enjoy the chapel feast more; since it is closer to the communities they live in and are part of.

The Salt Making

Location of Salt Pans

The different agars with their names and the names of landlords and tenants are given below.

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Salt Pan</th>
<th>Name of the Landlord</th>
<th>Name of the Tenant</th>
<th>Total no. of salt pans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Maina Agor</td>
<td>Marso Menezes</td>
<td>Narba Anton Pereira</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Vangod</td>
<td>Upendra Zuwarkar</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vhodli Cantorli</td>
<td>Joao Andrade</td>
<td>Sabastiao</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Igorjecho agor</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Sabastiao</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dhakti Cantorli</td>
<td>Joao Andrade</td>
<td>Sabastiao</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Novo Agor</td>
<td>Sinari</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lumbod</td>
<td>Vaikunth Zuwarkar</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Bhakra agor</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Jincho (Jinka)</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Jinka Agor</td>
<td>Upendra</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Jinka agor</td>
<td>Salvador Fernandes</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Vhodlea Ganvcho</td>
<td>Communidade</td>
<td>Emiter Vales</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Anop (1 share)</td>
<td>Communidade</td>
<td>Emiter Vales</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Morgado</td>
<td>Morgado</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Anop</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Antonio Vaz</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of the Salt Pan</td>
<td>Name of the Landlord</td>
<td>Name of the Tenant</td>
<td>Total No. of salt pans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Novo Agor</td>
<td>Bought at auction by</td>
<td>not known</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Jamito)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Fol Agor</td>
<td>Communidade</td>
<td>Jamito</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Dhakto Ganvcho</td>
<td>Communidade</td>
<td>Antonio Cunha</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Anop</td>
<td>Communidade</td>
<td>Victoria Fernandes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Vhodlo Agor</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Zogul Agor</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Lelis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Correilo Agor</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Paixão Vaz</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Chavcho Agor</td>
<td>Tito Menezes</td>
<td>Felicio Fernandes</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Anop</td>
<td>Tito Menezes</td>
<td>Lourens Cunha</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Budto Agor</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Personal findings by the researcher

Ownership of Salt Pans and its Use

Most of the saltpans are owned by the landlords from Gaunkarvaddo. But some of them have moved to other places like Goa-Velha. There are also Hindu Brahmin landlords who have purchased the land and saltpans from the landlords from Batim.

One respondent said that some of the salt pans in Batim owned by the church were donated by the people of Gaunkarvaddo since they did not have anybody to look after them. Some salt pans in Batim are also owned by the comunidade, which, as noted above, comprises mainly gaonkars of the Chardo caste group.

There have been no developments on saltpans in Batim – like having an express highway, real estate, dams, or having their land being taken over by the government etc. The pressure on land is somewhat lower as compared to that in the
other villages in Goa. Batim has the maximum number of saltpans used for salt production. Very few saltpans have been used for pisciculture. The Agris have not abandoned the salt pans since they get the work done in the salt pans through the migrant workers from Karnataka.

Nature of Jobs Performed and Duration of Work

Economic profile of the family: Male Agris in the age group of 60 to 80 years are employed in salt work, agriculture, fishing and olericulture (vegetable growing). Females are involved in housework and floriculture and some also worked as cooks.

Male Agris in the age group 40 to 60 years are mostly no longer involved in salt work. They have taken jobs abroad on board the ship and other jobs in offices in the cities. Most of the female Agris in this age group are housewives.

Younger generation Agris in the age group of less than 40 years are taking up higher education and are slowly moving up in the upper rungs of the social ladder. Landlords mostly got income from their properties; some are also doctors, medical representatives, advocates, teachers, computer engineers, businessmen, female nurses and housewives.

Among the Agris half of the family members are employed. The main source of livelihood among the Agris of Batim was salt making and farming. But now it has changed with the younger generation switching on to new sources of income like jobs in the private and the government sectors, migrating abroad, taking up jobs on the ship, etc.

Total income of the family: The Agri respondents refused to comment on the income that was generated out of salt. But they would reveal the income of the other family members who were in service. And their income ranged from Rs 25,000 to Rs
2, 40,000 per annum. The original owner’s income varied from Rs 100,000 to Rs 20,00,000 per annum.

The Agri assets are mostly in the form of small landholdings, comunidade fields, and saltpans. The Agris usually avail of credit facilities from the landlords, bank and sometimes from their married daughters.

The organizational structure in relation to the saltpans is that the original owners or landlords are at the apex, the Agris below them, followed by the migrant workers from Karnataka. The saltpans are not ancestral but they possessed them from the landlords, comunidades and the church. One respondent said he had 44 saltpans or twenty-two dhavam (one dhavam equals two khungo, meaning saltpan). Some of the Agris have now started buying off the saltpans from the landlords.

Duration of work varies from one saltpan to the other. There are no regular timings followed in the saltpans. But, during the peak season, they work from 7.30 to 9.30 a.m and in the evening from 2.30 to 5.30 p.m.

Younger agris usually do not perform any jobs in the saltpans but the salt work has been performed by an earlier generations. Males usually undertake work like chikoll ghuddaithale (smashing of the muck), fhoem odtalle (loading salt in the vehicles).

But salt making work is no longer undertaken by the younger generations and the older generations have discontinued the work due to health problems and old age. Now, even as migrants are employed, the Agris would prefer their children to take up work outside of the saltpans - like in government service, small business, clerical job, job on the ship or whatever else they could get. The older génération of womenfolk used to also participate in the salt-related work like loading salt from the saltpans to the bunds. The employee-employer relations between the salt-making Agris and the
migrant worker, is good.

The Agris do not have any organization and are also not a part of any co-operative societies. There are no special schemes for the salt workers. The Agris also do not avail any special loan or credit facilities. Majority of the money is spent on food, hiring labour from Karnataka, on liquor, clothes, household items, children’s education, etc.

Salt Production and Marketing

Every year, from the month of March to May, pickups carrying locally-produced salt move from village to village selling local salt which is produced in the saltpans. The rates of the salt sold in the pickups are the same as that sold in the saltpans. It is sometimes believe by locals that this is possible because the amount of salt sold via the pickups was less than the quantity promised. This was done by denting the tins used to measure the salt sold. As one respondent mentioned, *Latthaak cheppaam galtale* (“They would dent the tin,” and thus give the customer a lesser quantity of salt.)
Salt Storage and Transportation

Batim's saltpans lack a proper road to connect them; this causes transportation problems. At the back end of their homes, people in the villages store local salt during the rainy season. Salt is stored outside the house because it otherwise tends to corrode the walls of the house. As noted later on, there are no storage facilities for the Agris to store salt in the saltpans, as a result of which the salt decreases due to the moisture on the salt.

The Rituals Associated with Salt Making

Several rituals performed at the salt pans have changed over recent times, a reflection in a sense of the process of social changes that is underway. On the first day when salt was harvested, in the past people would go around in the village, carrying the salt and distributing it in each and every house. While doing so, they would sing and play on the gumott, the traditional drum of Goa. But now, the hired laborers take the salt to the owner’s house, burn crackers and the owner will give them something in cash or kind.

On the same day, in the saltpans, the people celebrate a feast of sorts, wherein a pig is cut and cooked there in the saltpan itself. Small pieces of each part of the pig are tied to a string (ganthon) and cooked. This pork is eaten with bread on the saltpans, in a function to which many people are invited. In all the saltpans of Batim, the tradition is to kill a pig; except in one saltpan where the slaughter of a pig is forbidden, and instead a goat is killed. Now, however, the migrants are given chicken, keeping their dietary preferences in mind. They kill and sprinkle the blood in the saltpans and cook and eat the chicken on the salt pans.

There is a ritual associated with salt making wherein a package known as the
ell is kept under a sacred tree close to the saltpan. The ell consists of the ganthon described above, a match box, paan, supari, liquor (soro), banana, agarbatti and candles. But this trend is slowly changing, wherein the labourers keep all these above mentioned items without the ganthon. On the feast day, a small vessel is made out of coconut leaves (chuttechem kondul) in which they put some salt and flowers. It is kept on the pan. But nowadays the migrant workers instead light agarbathis and candles on the salt pans.

Another impact of in-migration may result from the process of acculturation of the migrant groups in the new setting. Those coming in to work on the salt-pans as immigrants acquire some of the local cultural traits and new skills which they might introduce in their own social set up, thus, initiating a change process at their native villages. (Gupta 1988: 19)

**Modern Technology and the Future of Salt Making**

There have been no technological changes that have taken place here that could add value to the product, like the iodisation of salt. This is mainly because the Salt Commisioners office is in Jaipur and there is not even a regional office in Goa it is affiliated to the Deputy Salt Commisioner office which is based in Mumbai. Secondly, the salt pan holdings are too small to employ the modern techniques of production found outside Goa.

In the 1990s, there had been a government proposal to iodise the salt produced locally, but it was found to be not feasible and subsequently dropped. There has been no positive impact on the salt production and trade and the Agris employ outdated methods of salt production. If the saltpan industry closes down, it would have a significant negative impact on the socio-economic life of the Agris. There is little or
no competition for the Batim salt in the market..

The Agris of Batim face a lot of hurdles, especially transportation problems. There is no proper road connected to the salt pans. Migrant workers have a major problem when it comes to water and electricity. Now-a-days, the Agris are facing the problem of a lack of skilled labour. However, although the Agris do not perform the job in the salt pans themselves, they are not planning to give up or convert the salt pans. There are no storage facilities for the Agris to store salt in the salt pans, as a result of which the salt decreases due to the moisture on the salt.

**Economic Condition**

**Migrants and Salt Making**

The Agris do not perform the work in the salt pans but employ migratory laborers from Karnataka. The second section of this chapter will focus on the migrant workers that Agris of Batim employ in the salt pans.

Migration: According to Ravenstein, migration was the product of the interplay of the forces of expulsion and impulsion released by industrialization: the factors which both pushed people to move from areas of deprivation and then pulled them in particular directions from their rural areas and small towns towards the ever-increasing urban and metropolitan centre's (Siddle2000: 3).

The migrants from Karnataka, the Ager (not to be confused with the Agri of Batim) are involved in the process of salt making in Goa. These migrants intend to stay only during the salt-making season, since their presence is not required during the monsoons. Here, the migration is seasonal and limited only to the salt making season; it never becomes permanent in nature.

As noted earlier, Agers who have migrated to Batim from nearby Karnataka
are part of the Scheduled Castes, who falls beyond the pale of the Chatur Varna (four-fold system of Varna’s or hierarchical stratification).

Migration into Goa is incidentally seen by locals as having negative connotations, and the migrants coming in from other states tend to be looked down upon. Some of the derogatory terms used to describe migrants in Goa include *bhaile* (outsiders), *ghanti* (those from across the hills), *voile* (those from out there) or *bingtakar* (peanut vendors). But in Batim, migration is seen in positive terms by the locals. The Agris are not prejudiced against the migrant salt makers, because they do not fear job competition from them.

The Agris of Batim used to perform salt work in earlier years, but due to the social transformation in their community and the overall area, they employ the seasonal migrants from Karnataka who are referred to as the Agers, and belong to the Dalit caste. The Agers are a relatively unknown community in Goa. They are mainly engaged as labourers in the manufacture of salt. The term *Agar* in Konkani literally means salt pans and the name of the community is derived from their occupation. Their traditional and primary occupation is salt making, and this kind of migration is internal or interstate migration. Since this migration is seasonal, political parties too leave them out of their agenda as they do not constitute a viable vote bank.

Opportunities for employment are limited in their area because they get salt making work for only six months in a year i.e. from November to June. Thus migration is the only available option for them to survive.

They come to Goa to work on the salt pans, a task which involves laborious work. Back home, salt workers in the lean period, i.e. from the end of June to October, resort to farming either as landless laborers or marginal farmers. When this community migrates, it is influenced socially, economically, educationally and
culturally; they are exposed to a new social milieu since migration is just not a physical migration of people but it involves a host of other factors like a transfer of ideas, culture, language and the like.

This migrant community is often referred to as ‘Gantti’ or ‘Maanai’ by the local people. They get annoyed if they are referred as gantti, because it is used in a derogatory sense in Goa. So they prefer to be called as maanai (labourers). Their subsidiary occupations are agriculture and other labour work. They are a landless community.

The analysis of data indicates that there are differences prevailing in the basic socio economic characteristics of the migrant and non-migrant population. The Ager which are employed by the Agris are migrants who are Hindus who are mostly from the Bankikodla, Gokarna and Ankola areas of Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. They assist the Agris with their work in the saltpans. These are temporary jobs. A middleman in Karwar and Bankikodla in Karnataka sends across labour in the form of bonded labour, and gives them a small loan at a high rate of interest. The agent earlier used to charge the local salt pan owner a sum of rupees fifty, but now they charge Rs 500 to recruit a labourer. If there has been any grievances regarding the labourers, the owners report it to the agent. But since the agents are seen as being involved in cheating the Agris, some salt pans owners personally go to Karnataka and bring in labourers in time for the season.

Agers forms endogamous community. They do not allow marriages with the Moger which is another Dalit caste in Karnataka and is considered to be lower then the Ager. But recently, there have been a few marriages with other communities. Early marriages have been stopped, as is the trend in the rest of Goa too. At present, the age of marriage varies from twenty to twenty five years for girls and twenty five to thirty
years for boys. Monogamy is the present norm. But exceptions are found in their society. The marriage of the Agers is solemnized by the temple priest. They distribute sweets like jilebi, ladoo and godshe (traditional sweets) for the marriage. At the time of the wedding they give their daughter utensils of copper, large utensils of copper (aandho ani kallso), chain, earings for the bride and chain and finger ring for the groom.

As far as their food habits are concerned, R.V. Enthoven observes that these caste men eat at the hands of all castes except Mahars, Chamars, Lingayats, Jains and Holleers. No caste eats with them and they rank below the impure castes (Souza 2005: 35).

At times, the migrant workers take some advance from the saltpan owners and bring in additional labourers during season time. They may even fail to return this advance, and if asked could reply saying very humbly, “Zaina patranv,” which means they cannot afford to pay.

The labour comes here in pairs and is paid also in terms of pairs. Each pair consists of husband and wife, father and daughter, or mother and son. An interesting characteristic of these migrants is that the majority of the pairs spend their time working together in a pair in the salt pans. The salt pan work involves the division of labour in terms of sex. The salt making occupation was the traditional occupation of the Ager. there are fixed tasks that have to be performed by men and women. Men perform all the tasks in the salt making whereas women usually collect the salt gathered at the end of the saltpans and fill it in the baskets and lift it onto the man’s head; they also perform the task of letting the water into the salt pans.

The jobs that are usually performed by the men folk are those of the bunding process; the leveling of the pans by stamping, smashing and mixing the muck with
their feet; then, with the help of a plank with wooden teeth, the marshy-soil (chikol) is raked up to increase the surface area of crystallizing pans. There is also need for a sprinkling of salt on the top layer, and the collection in one corner of the salt pans of the layer of salt crystals which gets formed on the top. Women, meanwhile, gather salt crystals and keep them on the intersections of the bunds, and soon after the completion of the jobs by men the women let the brine water into the saltpans.

Workers build their huts on their salt pans and live there. Their dwellings are temporary in nature. They are made of thatched, coconut leaves. The material that is required to put up the huts is provided by the owners. Other material needed for day-to-day essentials, including the cooking utensils, are also supplied by the owners.

There are no basic infrastructural facilities like electricity, health and water supply. Previously, there were home deliveries but nowadays they send pregnant women to the maternity centers. Close relatives and neighbours assist the mother of a newly-delivered child in taking care of the newborn and the household chores, free of cost, in their hometown. Sometimes, the pregnant mothers come to Goa since the facilities at Goa Medical College are considered to be better than those available in their hometown. Salt pan owners help them to reach the pregnant woman to the hospital for delivery. Workers sometimes come even with very small children and live near the saltpans. The children are not enrolled in schools.

The Agers have to fetch water from far off places from the village well, so they are unable to wash their clothes. Sometimes they have bath with the salty water available near the salt pans. They also develop sores on the feet and palms due to the nature of their work. Their feet often get burnt with the hot water in the salt pans. Children who accompany their parents from the village to the salt pans are not bathed regularly, since they have to walk for long distances to fetch water for them amidst all
the other competing work and struggle to cope with a tough life. In earlier years, if the owners gave them second-hand clothes, the Agers would use it without even washing them; but now the situation is slowly improving. There are social problems in the villages like alcoholism, poverty and domestic violence.

**Language and Dress Habits:** This community speaks Kannada language at home. But after coming to Goa for several years, the Agers can speak Konkani and Hindi as well. They address their employers as Patrao (for males) or Bai (for females), showing a respectful attitude. Men use a loin-cloth, locally called the Kashti, and wrap a towel on their waist and a patgaa on their head; but nowadays the younger men wear a pant and shirt whereas the older women wear a saree tied with a knot, without wearing a blouse. The modern generation wears saree with a blouse, while the younger girls wear salwars and western dresses, since the salt-pan owners give them hand-me-down second-hand clothes from their household.

**Food Habits:** Their habitation is characterised by the coastal environment, which favors them for extracting salt. The land receives the south-west monsoons and has high humidity and sufficient rainfall, which are characteristics of a rice zone. As a result, rice is their staple food. They eat rice twice a day along with fish curry. The food that is taken by the people consists of rice and curry and vegetable. They are non-vegetarians but abstain from beef, pork and the flesh of buffalo. But some men have started consuming pork in Goa.

Their menfolk tend to be addicted to alcohol, which is available relatively easily and cheaply in Goa. In their native village there is a ban on selling alcohol which is prepared out of jaggery. Following protests over growing alcoholism by women in Karnataka, the manufacture and sale of country liquor has been banned in
A young migrant girl spends her time at the salt-pans, while her parents are at work.

Men and women work jointly for some operations in the salt pans. Both in the photo above are migrants from Karnataka.

Migrant workers and their children at Batim.

A typical Ager couple outside the temporary hut in Batim.

A worker shows a contused and injured hand and another shows his leg, the result of much work in the salt pans.
Water being fetched from far off places by the agris wherein they have to walk for one to one and a half hour for water to a nearby village well.

Migrant life in Batim, showing the traditional clothes of the agris and the inside of an ager dwelling. Bottom right photo is of a Ager who sells fish in the home of the villagers which adds to the income of the migrants.
some areas. Other kind of liquor is also available in liquor shops which are far more expensive than the country liquor, and this has to be consumed in the shop itself. A few women also imbibe alcoholic drinks but feel shy to consume liquor publicly in the bars.

Their relations with the other people, i.e. the Agris in the village, are reciprocal. In fact, their relations with the other villagers are cordial too. Owners take care of the needs of the migrant workers. If they are sick or the pregnant, the women are taken to the hospital by the owners. Money that is got through selling the salt in the salt pans in the owner's absence is given by the migrants to the owners. They display a sense of trust in the labourers. Sometimes they even offer them the transport as a way back home to Karnataka.

Migrant workers are paid by the owners of the saltpans in Goa, at a level of approximately Rs 1200 per month, in addition to four and half paili (approximately ten and half kilograms) rice and rupees two hundred for a week. They work from 5 a.m. to 8 a.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The time in between is utilised by them to work as manual labourers in the village. Besides this they also get an additional income of rupees seventy for filling one pickup of salt.

In Sanikatta, each Ager labourer is paid rupees one thousand five hundred a month or rupees four hundred a week for which they have to work only for three hours a day in the morning i.e. from 4 a.m. to 7 a.m. so the employer does not have to provide them sunglasses or gumboots during the day. Money that is meant to be paid to the labourers there is divided into three parts - one part is paid to them every month; second part is paid to them during the time of the festivals like village zatra, Chaturthi, Diwali etc. The third part is paid to them during the time of their retirement. The company also pays them a bonus of Rs 1000 to Rs 1500 to them at the
end of the season.

The Sanikatta salt society is a salt owners cooperative society; it is the only big licensed unit and the only salt owners co-operative society found to be registered in the entire Karnataka state. It has employed nearly 140 salt workers, including about 20 iodised salt workers. The salt pan workers who have been employed by the society receive the wages under the Minimum Wages Act and are entitled to the benefits like provident fund, and bonus. They also earn leave wages, national holidays and apart from rotation holidays. In the existing salt pans in the Sanikatta, mostly Agers are employed. (Souza 2005: 46, 61)

Those who worked as migrant workers preferred to come to Goa thirty to forty years ago, since in those days the employers at Sanikatta used to hire labourers from Mumbai so local people were made to work as daily wage labourers, but now the situation has improved wherein the local people employed there get all the incentives like bonuses, provident fund and other benefits even after their retirement. The migrants of Karnataka repent for not getting these facilities which their counterparts now get at their hometown.

We can say that inspite of their neglected state of the socio-economic condition of their community, the response of the Agers to the development programme is positive. Their children go to schools although very small children accompany their parents to the salt pans and miss school for roughly six months in a year. Schools and universities which are situated very far from their village. Some of them, including girls, have taken a keen interest in education. They participate in political activities and they are not reluctant in sending their girls in politics.

Low income and landlessness are the main causes of their indebtedness. And, this, in turn, is the main cause of their poverty. Poverty is their main constraint in
higher education. They have fully adapted themselves to the modern medical facilities and in case of a disease they visit either a government hospital or a private doctor. In Karnataka, they send a pregnant woman to hospitals and also respond to family planning programmes.

An ailing person is immediately sent to a hospital in Kumta or Karwar. Their village is electrified and connected with roads. Some of them have radio and television sets. They are aware of the development programmes launched by the Government in their localities. The facility of ration (fair-priced commodities) is used by them regularly in Karnataka.

The salt pans involve laborious work that mainly depends on nature. They work is also affected by the unpredictable breach in the salt pans, which results in a flooding of the salt pans. And secondly, if it rains during the peak season, the saltpan owners suffer financially because of the decrease of temperature in the salt pans the salt crystals do not get formed in the salt pans. Sometimes they have to resort to other means, like deploying of electricity water pumps to drain the excess water from the salt pans, resulting in an approximate loss of one or two pickup per day per saltpan owner. In such circumstances, the loss is attributed to the owners and not to the migrant labourers - if they do not pay the laborers their share they will abstain from returning the next year.

There are gender differentials in the tasks performed in the salt pans. Although this community is a backward community, it has a comparatively better status. Unlike in many parts of Goa, where in-migration is seen as a major threat, they are not even seen as a necessary evil as they do not pose competition on the Agri community.

Salt work has acted as a catalyst in Goa in attracting the Ager community to a few parts of the state. The manner in which the locals address them is symbolic of
how they are seen. This is a transition phase for them too; they are getting some access to education, and possibly venturing into politics. There is a hope that this will move upwards and improve their status.

Several rituals performed at the salt pans have changed over recent times, a reflection of the process of social changes that is underway there too. On the first day when they get the salt, in the past people would go around in the village, carrying the salt and distributing it in each and every house. While doing so, they would sing and play on the gumott, the traditional drum of Goa. But now the hired labourers take the salt to the owner’s house, burn crackers and the owner will give them something in cash or kind. This is a reflection of the changing culture of the workers in the salt-pans, and how this shapes the local mode of celebration, in turn.

There is a ritual associated with salt making, described earlier, wherein Ell is kept under a sacred tree close to the saltpan. The ell consists of the ganthon described above, a match box, paan, supari, liquor (soro), banana, agarbatti and candles. But this trend is changing, wherein the labourers keep all these above mentioned items without the ganthon.

On the feast day, a small vessel is made out of coconut leaves (chuttechem kondul) in which they put some salt and flowers. It is kept on the pan. But nowadays the migrant workers instead light agarbathis and candles on the salt pans.

In-migration is not the only change being witnessed at the salt-pans of Batim. As in other parts of the state, here too the salt-economy has been consistently devalued for a century and more. Technological up gradation is not happening. There are signs of the younger members of the Ager community not wanting to continue in the profession. As tradition slips away, the uncertainty of the future stares the salt-pans of Batim.
CHAPTER VI

THE GAUDDIS AND BHANDARIS OF ARPORA

Location

Arpora is one of the salt producing villages which is situated in the North of Goa, in Bardez taluka, near the Anjuna-Baga-Calangute tourism belt. The three neighbouring localities of the area – Arpora, Nagoa and Baga – are palm-bedecked coastal hamlets, clustered together to rig up a revenue village. It is the most prominent North Goa centre of tourism, as the nearby Anjuna (a former 'hippy capital', which once made Goa as famous as Ibiza in Spain and Kathmandu in Nepal, in the 1960s and 1970s) and Calangute villages which are famous for tourism in Goa.

Arpora is located in Bardez taluka. It is located towards the west of the sub-district, six kilometers from taluka headquarters. Its area is around 419.43 hectares and the total population is 4280. There are 2479 houses, flats and bungalows. Its main post office is in Calangute, which is two kilometers away, and it has a branch office at Arpora which was started on June 21, 1977. It is sixteen kilometers from the Panjim Kadamba bus-stand. Its closest taxi stand is at a distance of two kilometers i.e. at Calangute.

It has four schools, including St. Joseph's Higher Secondary School (credited with being the first English-language school set up in Goa in 1887), one government high school and four government primary schools. There is one church in the vicinity, the four-and-half century’s old Holy Trinity Church. (The village of Arpora does not have a church but it comes under the jurisdiction of Nagoa church.)
The different wards in Arpora are Kuddos vaddo, Viegas vaddo, Trindade vaddo, Mainath Bhatti, Diwan Bhatti, Sankwadi, Tambudki, and Baga. There are several place names which defy analysis with ease. A systematic research is necessary to trace their roots back in the remote past. The Portuguese on setting their foot on the Goan soil, aimed at systematically colonizing the Old Conquests and simultaneously
tried to replace the old names by the Portuguese names or named them after Christian saints (Singh 1993: 240). There are four chapels in Arpora - St. Anne's Chapel, which is situated on the border of Apora-Baga on the river banks, a part of it also falls in Calangute as Arpora is connected to Calangute by a bridge; St. Francis Chapel, situated in St. Francis Xaviervaddo; and St. Sebastian's Chapel situated at Trindadevaddo.

Professor Pissurlencar (quoted in Priolkar 1961: 83) gives a list of the temples that existed in Arpora before their destruction during the phase of religious intolerance of Portuguese rule. They were Santeri, Vetall, Vanadeuta and Chourungo. The ancient temples of this area are of Santeri, Vetall, Vana devta and Chourongo (Gomes Pereira 1978: 66). But now there are temples dedicated to Sateri at Arwaant, Ganesh at Diwan Bhatti, Arveshwar at Diwanbhatti and Chowranga at Ximer, Hanuman situated at Sankwadi and recently a new temple at Arpora Baga dedicated to Ramdas Swami located at Arpora Baga. Besides these temples there are other small temples in Arpora.

**Etymology**

Fr. Moreno D Souza, a Jesuit priest and author, in his book "Bardezcheo Igorzo" (1999), cites that Arpora was originally called 'Hadpaddem' or 'Hadd-Phoddem' or 'Vhodd-Phoddem' as this village had large open spaces of fields and properties which were referred to as Phoddam.

These Phoddam or large open spaces of fields and properties were also known as Chovkonnam or square blocks. Translated into English, the word Phodd connotes a place of public business; the spot at which field produce is collected. Till today there are such large fields in the village.
Another version that comes as an explanation for the place getting its name is that it comes from Hadap+vadem, a place of Hadap who used to be an attendant of the king or his subordinate authority to serve betel (Singh 1993: 233).

Village Settlement

Various wards of the village arpora as described below:

Kuddos Ward: In Konkani the word Kuddos is derived from “Kudtar” (Moryo Kaso) meaning a small ward. Initially there were only Christians who were residing in this ward, who migrated to different parts of the world, as Goa particularly the sub-district of Bardez is known to have a high level of out-migration from its shores. In Goa, members of the Catholic community were the first ones to migrate in large numbers to Africa, the Gulf, other parts of India and the other countries (Mhamai 2000: 187). Many people of this ward have migrated abroad from this ward. Now a majority of Hindus reside here. This hamlet's name could also come from Khursa vaddo (named after the Holy Cross, a religious icon) since many Christians lived here once upon a time in this ward. Kuddos could be a corruption of Khursa, i.e cross in Konkani language.

Viegas Vaddo: This ward is apparently named after the Viegas clan, believed to have been landlords and resident here and hence the reason for its name.

Mainath Bhatti: It is called as the Modvaoche Bhatt, or the place where dhobis (traditional laundrymen) reside. The Nath cult had been widespread in Goa during and after the time of Dnyaneshwar from the 12th century onwards. In the Nath cult, only the Siddhas pursuing the Adinath tradition are called Nathas and the rest are simply called Siddhas, like the case of Mainath Bhati in Arpora (Singh 1993: 234). Several place names called Maina are to be traced in this region. The name is derived from the
Sanskrit word *Mahi*, meaning land or ground. So the place name is probably derived from Mahi+ van- Mahin. Main means forest land (Singh1993: 225). It is situated below the hill in Arpora.

Diwan Bhati: It was also called as *Vaniachi bhatti-Diwan ghar*. According to the Konkani dictionary *Diwan* refers to the residence cum office of a revenue officer. The comunidade office of this village existed in this ward. The *Karkoon*, or the secretary, of the comunidade used to sit in this office and hence the name Diwan Bhatti according to the respondent.

Baga Ward: Generally the word *Baag* means garden (Singh1993: 225), which was also mentioned by a Bhandari respondent who believe that there was a landlord residing in here he had a very big *baag* (garden) wherein there were lot of flowers. So the river Baga derived its name from the same. This is the near near the river Baga, from where a tributary flows through the Arpora village. The river Baga flows at the northern border of Calangute. It roughly separates the villages of Calangute and Arpora (D' Souza 1997: 9).

Sankwadi: The name is derived from ‘*Sankov*’, means a small bridge. There is a local saying which says *Pravaas korunk vaat naasli bamboochi shidi ghali*. This suggests as there was no way to cross the flowing rivulet, a ladder of bamboo was made to cross the river – at three different places where the Baga River touched Arpora and hence the ward name Sankwadi.

Tambudki: This ward's name is probably derived from *Tamdi Maatih* (red mud, in Konkani), a reference to the colour of the soil in the area. Mostly the Hindu Brahmins resided in this ward.

Rautavaddo: People with the surname Raut lived in this ward. The Rauts belong to the Kshatriya Maratha community (Singh 1993: 222).
Gharbhatt Ward: *Gharchea Bhattant* meaning household property. The landlords had given this name.

Map No. 6.2

ARPORA: Wards Location Plan
Migration Pattern

Many Catholics earlier resided in places like Kuddos vaddo. People went abroad and opened up new avenues for employment; the fact that Goa's first English medium school is based in this village was not coincidental to the trend to migrate abroad, from all over Bardez, Arpora too. The younger generation migrated to Mumbai and other metros of India. Some went abroad in search of jobs in order to escape from the traditional jobs that they had to perform in the village that was once upon a time performed by their ancestors. Previously in Goan society particularly occupations were performed by particular castes. For example, the Sudir performed the job of agriculture; the Kharvi performed the occupation of fishing as a part of hereditary occupation. Such occupations were often considered to be of low social status and low incomes too.

Some people even went to Persian Gulf, drawn by the higher salaries there. With the money that their jobs fetched them abroad, they could somewhat adapt their social status in the village. During this time when the locals were migrating to the different parts of the globe, including Africa, their place was taken up by the Bhandaris who have migrated into Arpora.

The Bhandaris of Arpora

The term ‘Bhandari’ refers to farmers and toddy-tappers. There are two sub-castes: Bhandari proper and Poin-Kape (toddy-tapper) Bhandari. The Poin-Kape distills local liquor and is known in the Velhas Conquistas as reinderos (an Indo-Portuguese word that comes from the word 'render' or toddy-tapper).

The name Bhandari is derived from the word ‘Bhandar’. Since navigation was their prime occupation, and as they looked after the Bhandar as store men, they came
to be known as Bhandari. Some opine that the word comes from Bhandar which means treasury. Another version put forward by others is that for collecting neera for preparing toddy, a peculiar shaped vessel (bhande) is used by them (Singh 1993: 124). The word Bhandari could also have been derived from the Sanskrit word mandharak, for distiller liquor tapping and selling was the special work of the Bhandaris. It is said they were experts in navigation during the rule of Shivaji. They are also engaged in liquor contract, timber sawing, hand pounding etc (Mangelekar 2006: 126).

Those who were once employed for the protection of the king’s treasury were also called Bhandari. Now-a-days, Bhandaris call themselves Kshatriya Bhandari. During the Peshwa period, from the eighteenth century onwards, they are believed to have played a significant role in the Maratha Navy. Subsequently, when the Navy of the Peshwas disintegrated, the Bhandaris who had been earlier employed by them faced unemployment and took to toddy-tapping. Sometimes, they prepare at home the fen i brew from the cashew fruits, or sur for fermented juice i.e tadi (or toddy) that is obtained from coconut trees. Hence they were called coconut cutters (Maddcape) or cutters of seed in the florescence of coconut (Poicappe). Since the coconut tree is considered Kalpvriksha (or the bountiful tree, due to the immense utility of its many products), cutting its seed in flourecence was treated as good as cutting a human embryo, a bad deed. Hence the Naiks of the area distanced themselves from the Bhandaris (poicape), putting a stop to marital alliances as well as other relations with them. They further treated them low in status (Singh 1993: 124, 126).

One respondent said that the term Bhandari has evolved from the term bhonnde, meaning immature, unripe or useless coconuts, seen as an allusion to this caste’s involvement in the toddy-tapping process in a situation where physical labour is looked down upon. The majority of the respondents said they belonged to
the Render community and they are Bhonde kape. Some did jobs of taking on fruit-bearing trees on hire rendaak (Arrament) ghetaale. They belong to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) as per the list made by the Goa State Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation Limited on April 2, 1990.

The precise population figure of Bhandaris is not available in the census record. However, it is believed to be the community with the largest population group in Goa followed by combined groups of Gauddas (Singh1993: 125).

According to one recently translated work (Couto 2008), the surnames of the Bhandari across Goa are: Sanvol, Kanshe, Metor, Kudav, Raul, Zoshi, Kanoji, Esgi, Dhuri, Bisgi, Gaunde, Raoji, Koloji, Sidgi, Dadgi, Pokre, Karbe, Kale, Bodje, Lanshe, Ponvar, Naik, Pandre and Dabale. But the Bhandaris of Arpora involved in the salt making occupation bear mainly the following surnames: Kandolkar, Mayekar, Diukar, Satelkar, Shirodkar, Oshelkar, Pilankar and Govekar.

The Bhandaris had migrated from different places in Arpora and this is evident from the fact that the family god of the Bhandaris is often located in some other village.

For example the Diukars have their family god is Kaal Bhairav, Saptakoteshwar from Bicholim. The Pilankar family god is Shantadurga from Naroa. The Simepuruskars have their family god Sathpurush in Morjim. The Sathelkars have their god in Satheli in Vengurla, Maharashtra. The Shirodkars have as their family god Sateri in Siolim and their main family god is Mulgao in Bicholim; the Khanolkar family god is Shantadurga Khanolkarin in Nanora, near Assnora. However they visit different religious places like Shirdi, Dharmasthala, Gokarna, Gangapur in Karnataka, Kolhapur, Pandharpur, Tulapar etc for the purpose of worship. Some of them were
not in favour of conversion since they felt *dharm saambhallun dovrunk zai* meaning “we need to protect our religion.”

One of the Catholic respondents the landlords said that they were originally from Mapusa since they were getting the *zonm* (an annual dividend from the comunidade) from Mapusa. Another said they were originally from Cuncolim.

**Sources of Income**

The Bhandaris in the village were earlier entirely dedicated to salt making based on toil with hardly many profits from the occupation. Especially in the rainy season, when it was not possible to carry on their salt-work, they had to depend on what little savings that generated out of salt. The job was accepted as a part of life and the older generation trained their young one into it right from the childhood. But nowadays things have totally changed mainly due to tourism, the salt makers and their children are no longer interested in salt work. They see jobs in the salt pans as tedious and offering only low incomes, on which they have to eke out a living for the whole year.

Secondly, some salt pans have disappeared and got converted into being
recreation places by the starred hotels and they prefer to work in the tourism related jobs which are much easier than working in the salt pans. The Bhandaris usually sell agricultural products previously they sold salt. The tenants would pay the landlords in cash or kind viz. Rs 32 and a cartload of salt.

The Gauddis own properties and salt pans which serve as a source of income.

Population

Arpora consists of one Communidade and the old gaunkars were mainly persons who had the surname of Naique or Naik (Gomes Pereira 1978: 66). The comunidade consisted of seven vangors (clan groups) of which three still exist in the village. The gaunkars are of the Chardo, Sudra and the Gauddo castes.

Besides the traditional village population, the growth of tourism in the area and real estate too has led to the entry of people from other villages, States and even countries settling in Arpora for part of the year or the whole year.

Religion

The name of the church is Holy Trinity (Santissma Trinidade, in Portuguese). This church in Nagoa was founded in 1560 by the Catholic religious order of the Fransiscans. This church came to be called as the Matriz (Mother) – for its jurisdiction at one time extended over five neighbouring villages of Parra, Anjuna, Assagao, Siolim, Oxel, and Saligao, which were subsequently raised to the status of independent parishes. In 1679, the reconstruction of the church was carried out and it was further improved in 1893 (Lourenco 2006: 117). The feast is celebrated two weeks after Easter.

Conversion plays an important role in the history of Goa. To gain an understanding of the history of the villagers, and the origin of the community, one has
to see the historical forces that operated in that village. For example, a look into the
history of the village church enables one to understand when the conversion in that
village took place and who the original inhabitants were prior to conversion.

The Bhandari respondents of Arpora believe that the Holy Trinity Church in
Arpora was a temple of Nagnath and the St. Sebastians chapel was a temple of Saat
Purush. *Teka bhattoilo ani Sanse Bostiao kelo,* meaning Sath Purush the God of
Hindus was converted to a Christian God.

**Land Use Pattern**

Land in Arpora, like in other parts of Goa, was controlled collectively till a
century back, approximately. But the comunidade institutions, which managed the
land, were not egalitarian; neither did they allow membership to women.

In the nearby village of Anjuna, for instance, the Brahmins have the right to be
enrolled as *gaunkars* (members and shareholders of the comunidade) at the age of ten,
whereas those from the Chardo and Gauddo castes at fifteen (Gomes Pereira 1981:
116).

Arpora was one village under study which has been witnessing a steady
decline in the salt pans and salt production due to various reasons.

Saltpans have been bought by those wanting to convert the area into a tourist
hotel or for some business, which obviously earns huge returns, at a level which the
traditional economy of salt cannot compete. Some salt pans are currently being used
exclusively for pisciculture, while some are flooded.

In addition, there is a peculiar ownership pattern prevailing in Arpora, wherein
even one tamarind tree could be owned by sixteen different landlords. This may be
due to the fact that under the Communidade system the land and other resources in the
village were owned in common. The *bhatkaars* also owned salt pans in Arpora under common ownership. Salt pans are owned by two different sets of permanent tenants - one of whom performed only pisciculture and permanent tenants who harvested the salt.

**Salt Pans and Salt Production (Ownership Patterns)**

The names of the salt pans which are found in Arpora are Vhodlo *agor*, Markacho *agor*, Firgueancho *agor*, Antaacho *agor*, Padricho *agor*, Kodoncho *agor*, Khojo *agor*, Telgaancho *agor*, Costaancho *agor*, Nevo *agor* and Juulli *agorli*.

Out of all the above *Agors*, Padricho *Agor* was the main and the biggest in size and would extract good quantity of salt. One respondent said *Padricho Agor soglleam lokank sustence kortalo*, meaning most of the salt makers were thriving on Padricho *agor*. These *Agors* were owned by the *bhatkars* or landlords but nowadays many tenants have bought over the saltpans and have now become the owners of the salt pans. The Catholic *bhatkars* of Arpora belong to the *Gauddi* caste, are Christians and dress in a European manner. They often live in huge heritage-type houses like the ones used by the higher castes Catholics of Goa.

The salt pans in Arpora are owned by multiple owners. There are some diverse beliefs over their ownership. One of the salt pans, for instance, still called the Paadricho Agor was gifted to a priest so that he could offer Masses in favour of certain souls. Giving a Mass in Catholicism is generally considered a means of ensuring that the soul is prayed for.

Other views see the control of property as engineered by dominant groups in the locality by controlling the official press. Sometimes a landlord having many children could not suitably have them all continue in the salt-works, so he would sell it – and this is seen as another factor responsible for the multiple ownership pattern in
Arpora.

According to a document that the landlords say they possess, they were originally Naique in pre-conversion times. Historical records also show that the original gaunkars of Arpora were also Naique.

Regarding the question of ownership of properties and salt pans in Arpora one theory is of the Gauddis owning the properties and saltpans in Arpora is due to the marriage of the locals with the Portuguese. Other respondents felt that they were regidors during the Portuguese period, which might have led these people to own the land.

Right at the early phase of Portuguese rule in Goa, in the sixteenth century, while the Portuguese rulers were establishing their administrative and judicial machinery, the Christian missionaries were engaged in the activities of conversions. Already by this time, the first Portuguese Governor of Goa, Afonso Albuquerque had propagated arranging marriages of Portuguese men of good character with the widows and daughters of Muslim and Hindu who were killed in battle. With a view to providing the newly married couples with the means of livelihood, the Portuguese administration bestowed on them properties confiscated from the Hindu temples, village communities and from individuals who ran away from their village to escape religious persecutions at the hands of the Portuguese. The abandoned shares of the village comunidades were conferred on the Portuguese who married the local women and established themselves in the colony. (D’Souza 1975: 177)

One Bhandari respondent said that the Gauddis of Arpora owned lands since there might have been mixed marriages of the locals with the Portuguese, leading to the ownership of the salt pans. But it is difficult to establish the veracity of such beliefs in the case of Arpora.
The table below shows a listing of the salt-pans in the village, giving their ownership structure. **PT (Permanent Tenant)** refers those who work for the landlords on the landlord’s land. **OO (Original Owners)** is a reference to those who own the salt pans and sometimes perform jobs on their own. **OT (Original Tenants)** those which have bought the salt pans from the landlords and have now become the owners of the land.

### Table 6.1
Names of the salt makers in Arpora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Person</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedro Fialho</td>
<td>Viegas Vaddo</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucian D'Souza</td>
<td>Tambudki Vaddo</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narahari Kandolkar</td>
<td>Baga</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyaneshwar Satelkar</td>
<td>Baga</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rekap Almeida</td>
<td>Tamudki Vaddo</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandurang Mayekar</td>
<td>Mainath Bhati</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanda Divkar</td>
<td>Sankwadi</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahadev Divkar</td>
<td>Sankwadi</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailu Shirodkar</td>
<td>Sankwadi</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyaneshwar Shirodkar</td>
<td>Sim Vaddo</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaidev Divkar</td>
<td>Sim Vaddo</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanjeev Oshelkar</td>
<td>Sankwadi</td>
<td>OT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anil P. Pilankar</td>
<td>Sankwadi</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khemu Govekar</td>
<td>Kudas Vaddo</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmaram Diukar</td>
<td></td>
<td>OT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory Almeida Paulo</td>
<td>Sim Vaddo</td>
<td>OT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.2
Names of the Original Owners in Arpora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the person</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erasto Viegas</td>
<td>Viegas Vaddo</td>
<td>OO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Mack Pereira</td>
<td>Saturday Nite</td>
<td>OO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Moniz</td>
<td>Marinha Dourada</td>
<td>OO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abreu</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>OO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnaldo Cruz</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>OO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silveira-Madgaonkar-Moniz</td>
<td>Amonkar-Maizon</td>
<td>OO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobo- Santan Fialho</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>OO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naguesh Gaad</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>OO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnelo Braganza</td>
<td>La Goa Azul</td>
<td>OO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Personal findings through fieldwork

Note: Original owners above are those who are either original bhatkars (landlords) or those who have purchased the saltpans and have become the bhatkars. The salt pans have also been bought by some quarters either for salt harvesting or for conversion to real estate or for some business.

The present Gaunkars of Arpora bear surnames like Hodfoddkar, Gaonkar, Polle and Fialho but people who bear the surname Hodfodkar, Gaonkar and Polle do not currently engage themselves in salt production whatsoever. The Fialhos do engage themselves in the salt production in Arpora.

The Gauddis

Caste is fundamental to village community, just as kinship is fundamental to
caste. The great rituals, events of the life cycle, marriages and funerals bring together the members of kin, that is, caste fellows. When a person goes to another village, he usually visits his caste fellows there. Communication between villages is largely between people of the same caste (Mandelbaum1972: 321). As stated in the introductory chapter one should not mix the Gauddis with the Gauddas of Goa. The Gauddis of Arpora was the only jati out of the five jatis which were the landlords as well as involved in extraction of salt from the salt pans.

They are however very few in number. Some of them work abroad; some were old and unmarried some did not want to be interviewed so the researcher had to rely on very few persons to get the information of the landlords.

The Mithgaudas who were converted, especially in the Bardez taluka, attained socio-cultural heights as priests, lawyers, journalists, doctors etc. The Mithgaudas in the Catholic community who refer themselves as Gauddis in Arpora, have fused completely into the Catholic mainstream without leaving any trace with the exception of a few who still toil as labourers in the fields (Singh1993: 165).

It is not known when the converted Mithgaudas were referred as Gauudis. When enquired with a respondent regarding the caste he said they belong to the Chardo caste which corresponds to the Kshatriya caste in the Hindu varna hierarchy. As lifestyles changed in Goa, traditional salt producers have found newer means of livelihood, a trend which has also adversely affected the number of people in the profession.

The Gauddis of Arpora, on conversion to Christianity, could have taken with them their pre-Hindu salt-making skills. For some reason though, in the past, the people of Arpora would give the salt pans of Arpora on contract to the people of Agarvaddo, and take a share of the earnings. It was not clear as what precise caste
grouping the Gauddis in Arpora belonged prior to their religious conversions. But as stated earlier in the introductory chapter according to Gomes (1996), generally speaking, those of the Vaishya-Vani who could not get them merged as Christian Bamonn or Chaddhe, still appear as the “Gauddo”. In places in the Bardez, this caste is still considered as one of the three twice-born castes.

When asked, respondents from Arpora said that they are Gauddis which however is not to be confused with the aboriginal Gauddas of Goa. In one respondent’s house, a Gaudda respondent had married a Gauddi groom. But from this single case, it is not possible to generalise at a wider case in Arpora, since it was only one family in Arpora that the researcher had witnessed. The woman tried to distinguish by saying that her family was different from the one she married into as she belonged to a category of rostte ba kortat toslim Gauddas (the Gauddas who build roads, and undertake other manual jobs, as against the other, landowning caste).

Another respondent when asked about the distinction of the two Gauddas and the Gauddis said that they were a separate category wherein the Gauddis were the landowning caste in Arpora, who were landowners as opposed to the Gauddas who they referred to as Kunbi-Gauddas. They said that they do not intermarry with the Gauddas of Goa but have their own relations with whom matrimonial alliances are built in Bardez, in places like Mapusa, Bastora, Guirim and Corgao in Pernem.

Goa is known to be a place for heavy out-migration. During the British time when their services were eagerly sought on land and sea (Hall 1995: 57). There were many Christian families from Arpora, especially around the St. Cruz Church, who migrated to Pakistan, Karachi, Nairobi and Africa. Following the migration, some Christian homes were taken over by Hindus.
But the Christian families of Arpora are known to own some palatial residences. There is no clear idea on how this came to be, villages in Bardez tend to have a limited number of palatial homes. One theory regarding the ownership of palatial houses and ownership of land and saltpans by the Gauddis of Arpora is in part because they worked in professions such as Regidors (the Portuguese equivalent of the village Patel) for the Portuguese, as a result had access towards issues pertaining to land control. This is not a fully satisfactory explanation, because other dominant castes had similar access to officialdom, but not all grew similarly and neither did it reflect in the palatial homes as witnessed at Arpora.
Marriage System

Marriage Customs

The institution of marriage leads to the formation of a universal and primary group – the family (Maruthi 2003: 45). The marriage customs rituals and ceremonies vary from society to society. The marriage among the Bhandaris is usually arranged by the parents of the bride and the bridegroom, and the relatives or it could also be in some case as a love marriage. There is usually a belief that uneducated people attach great importance to rituals and customs during the time of marriage.

The average age for boys is 30 to 35 for boys and 19 to 28 for girls. There is an engagement ceremony called the sakarpudo prior to the wedding in the groom’s house or the bridegroom’s house. They make use of a cone of sugar (saakricho pudo) in this ceremony, which is why it is referred as sakarpudo. Sugar is distributed to the people symbolizing the alignment between the two families. Rings are exchanged during this ceremony sometimes a gold ornament is given to the bride. An auspicious day (muhurt) is selected for the wedding. Before the wedding day turmeric paste is applied both to the girl as well as the boy called as the halad lavap. After the wedding ceremony is over the bride and the groom visit the brides place along with their friends and relatives where they are served grand non vegetarian food and liquor is served to the guests. Invitations are not restricted to family and relations but also friends, even those belonging to other castes.

Feasts and Festivals

The Gauddis and the Bhandaris celebrate many festivals which are celebrated by the Hindus and Catholics of Goa. But only those feasts which are specific to the Gauddis and Bhandaris will be dealt in this chapter. Feasts and festivals are an
integral part of the socio-cultural ethos of a community. A study of these aspects of
the socio-cultural life enhances our understanding of the community.

St Sebastian’s feast in Arpora deserves a special mention in Arpora since Catholics and the Hindus observe St. Sebastian’s Feast (Saint Sebastian, died c. 288, is believed to have been killed during the Roman emperor Diocletian’s persecution of Christians). St. Sebastian later became a saint and martyr, who is said to have been killed while the Roman emperor Diocletian engaged in the persecution of Christians in the third century. When he tried to convert the people to Christianity, the emperor killed him and left tied to a tree. He is commonly depicted in art and literature tied to a post and shot with arrows. The feast of St. Sebastian is celebrated on January 20, every year.

One can feel the unique religious harmony between the Christians and the Hindus of the village at times like during the St. Sebastian’s Feast. What makes this unique from other feasts celebrated in Arpora and the rest of Goa is that the Hindus as well as the Christians of Arpora participate in this feast.

One of the respondents even went to the extent of telling the researcher that this feast was celebrated by the Hindus since St. Sebastian was a Hindu God Sat Purush (Nekkad Vaani) who was himself converted to Christianity. The Hindus have great devotion to St. Sebastian, as they feel and say that toh amcho dev teka portuguezani bhasi, meaning that he was a Hindu who was converted to Christianity. When the researcher wanted to probe into the same and put some questions to a Catholic respondent, the latter turned angry for enquiring about the history of that chapel. This researcher tried to find out the history of St. Sebastian. When the researcher tried to investigate and find out about this aspect, the Christians of Arpora were annoyed or perplexed with same question. The once-holy sites that
suffered destruction at the hands of the Portuguese and were subsequently converted into Catholic places of worship, also attract devout Hindus (Kamat: 1999: 72). The elderly respondent went on further to state that their family God in Naroa temple and the Hindu shrine of Saptakoteshwar on the island of Divar have a similar dome as the one which is of the St. Sebastians chapel in Apora. Hall (1992: 110-112) says that the chapel of Our Lady of Candelaria which was the former Saptakoteshwar temple in the village of Naroa. The Saptakoteshwar temple was built in Naroa in the middle of the 12th century and was destroyed by the early Muslim raids. However the linga was saved and somewhat ignominiously, buried in a paddy field for safety. During the Vijaynagara period the temple was rebuilt by the conquering General and Governor Madhav Mantri in 1391. In addition, the Portuguese took away stones for use in their own buildings some of it going to Old Goa to become parts of the complex of churches and monasteries. The researcher also visited the present temple of Kaal Bhairav Saptakoteshwar at Bicholim and the Our Lady of Candelaria Chapel in Naroa and found visual similarities in all three domes i.e. of St. Sebastians Chapel in Apora, Our Lady of Candelaria Chapel in Naroa and the present temple had similar dome.

This was significant for the researchers study to understand the religious syncretism which took place in Apora after conversion. This aspect of syncretism shall be explained in greater details in the later part of the chapter.

There is a small chapel of St. Sebastian which is owned by the Pinto family who lives in a heritage house called the Grand Pinto Mansion, opposite the St. Sebastian's chapel. As told to the researcher by the Pinto family that the statue was installed in this chapel, since one of the ancestors of the house made a vow and put a wooden statue of the height of a child who was sick. But later, this statue is believed to have been robbed and then was replaced by another one.
This feast is a solemn one and a very important event in Arpora. To celebrate this feast, there are nine days of preparation from January 11 to 19, termed as novenas. The novenas are celebrated ward wise on all the nine days. But on the ninth day, i.e. the last day before the feast, vesper is celebrated by the Hindus of Arpora. This is followed by the litany which is offered by both the communities. After the Mass, a special invocation song, which is dedicated to St. Sebastian, is sung beseeching him to shower his blessings on the *Hadpadkaars* (residents of Arpora). There is a belief that the protective shield of St. Sebastian helps to ward off sicknesses and he cures diseases, as a result of which there is no medical doctor in this village except one homeopathic practitioner who is originally from that area. But there is a belief among the Christians as well as the Hindus of Arpora feel St. Sebastian is considered by them is *voiz ancho voiz* (biggest doctor) and he cures all their sickness. *voiz ani chambar tigona* meaning a doctor or a leather worker from outside the village comes to set up base here, his practice will not survive for long, as was told to the researcher by one of the devotee who was present for the vesper ceremony in Arpora. Following their traditional deference, the Hindus leave their footwear outside the St. Sebastian’s Chapel when they enter the chapel on the vesper day, a custom which is followed otherwise only in a Hindu temple in Goa and not usually observed in the Christian places of worship in Goa. Despite the long period of Portuguese colonization in Arpora, the Hindu festivals have retained their unique Goan character and are celebrated with deep fervour.

Later the Christians as well as the Hindus join for some snacks and refreshment outside the Chapel. The religious ceremonies (novenas) are followed by some musical programmes and fireworks, the expense for which is met by taking contributions of the local communities.
On the feast day, a special Mass is offered by the villagers, after that there is a *pursanv* (procession taken around the chapel) with the priest carrying the statue of St. Sebastian, with musicians playing the brass-band instruments like the trumpet and the drum. The practice of playing the drum was apparently continued by the neo-converts after the conversion to Christianity.

Author Maria Aurora Couto (2004) points out that the Church in Goa succeeded in bridging the differences between Christian practices and the Hindu socio-cultural practices which the converts still followed, when, “unable to control the converts” continued adherence to old customs and rituals which they practiced clandestinely, the Church authorities devised a shrewd rationale which would appeal to the populace: they replaced Hindu religious rites and symbols with Christian ones, substituted many festivals of the Hindu calendar with feasts of Christian saints and Catholic liturgical celebrations. A connection was established between life cycle events and rites performed in the church so the traditional social and religious needs were drawn into the ambit of the new religion (Couto 2004: 123).

This feast of St. Sebastian is unique across Goa in other ways too: all Hindu married daughters return to visit their maternal home for the feast and, secondly, the Hindus of Arpora prepare *sannas* (a traditional form of bread) for this feast which was usually prepared only by the Christians. The researcher had witnessed a similar event during the Siolim Zagor were the Hindus too prepared the sannas in Siolim for the zagor.

Besides this, a lot of Hindus from the neighboring villages flock to Arpora to sell fresh *sur* (toddy extracted from the coconut tree) early in the morning in front of the chapel the day before the feast. Hindus prepare *sannas* for the feast, as done by the Christian community in some, other Bardez villages. In other parts of Goa, the Hindu
substitute for sannas is the idlis – which adopt a similar preparation process, except in the place of using the toddy urid is used. Cosme (2009) in his book Apostolic Christianity in Goa and in the West Coast has associated the term sanna with sadhana which means union with god. Fr. H.O. Mascarenhas in this book says: ” In ancient times, in their temples in Goa, inorder to signify the union of the devotee with god, a special white round preparation of rice and sur was baked and distributed. Union with God meant Sadhana in the Sanskrit language, and so the rice preparation is today known as ‘Sanna’; only the people of Konkan have the custom of preparing the sanna on festive occasions, which meant the devotees union with God, or being one with God i.e. ‘sadhana’. Would this be a reminiscence of the Eucharist preserved from ancient times, due to lack of priests in the Konkan? (Cosme2009: 68,69).

This feast is celebrated with great pomp and gaiety. It unites both the communities and builds up a bond of love, peace and above all a feeling of oneness among them.

Incidentally the second-last day of Dhalo celebration of the Hindu culmination takes place on the night of the feast of St. Sebastian.

DHALO - A Folk Dance - It is an important element of folklore as it has mythological importance. The Dhalo is performed only by the women of the community. The word dhalo stems from the word dha lok which means ten people. Besides, a particular community performs it. Most of the other village community members are not associated with it (Majik 2002: 54).

The dhalo, celebrated during the Hindu calendar month of Poushya, unites the saltmakers of Arpora. Since this unity includes the salt makers of Arpora this festival is discussed in this chapter.
The female winter folkdance festival is the “Dhalo” while the male-dominated spring festival is the “Shigmo” (Phaldesai 2004: 24). Dhalos are held to pray for divine intercession to extricate any evil, improve relations and have peace in the village. If Shigmo is a male festival, the Dhalo could be seen as an entirely female festival. Its influence and prevalence extends from Goa to the Konkan.

The Dhalo is a dance form performed by the Kunbis, Bhandari, Naik, Gabit and Gaudi communities. Legend has it that Radha used to sing love songs (dhalos) to Krishna. In the beginning, the Dhalos referred only to the love of Krishna and Radha. Later people gradually developed the songs and they started to sing praises to other gods too.

The Dhalo festival is celebrated in Arpora every year from January 16 to 21. One person who carries a coconut falls under a trance. Women dance the fugddi for five days in the temple.

The performance takes place at the maand (a sacred, open space), where the village folks gather to sing, dance or play music as part of ritualistic performance. Womenfolk dress up as bride and bridegroom on the last day of the dhalo, as the ritual demands. The Shigmo and Dhalo have few things in common, like the offering of a coconut or lighting the lamp and distribution of prasad (food offered to the gods).

On a moonlit winter night, all the women, bedecked with flowers, assemble and light an oil lamp in front of the temple. Sometimes, Dhodd meaning a medium sized water container made of copper or brass is also placed at the centre of the courtyard and worshipped. Women who make a vow come with the dhodd filled with water and pour it on the maand which is called as maand xipap. The widows also participate in the Dhalos but there is no distinction made between the widows and the married women during the dhalo.
For every other religious occasion, Hindu widows are kept aside but the widows in Arpora are allowed to participate in the dhalos. Normally, in this dance, two rows of women face each other by prancing forward and backward while singing and narrating the stories of their life and the contemporary society.

At dawn, the woman who dresses as Pingli (the beggar), goes from house to house around the village, and collects alms. This is how Dhalo is celebrated in Arpora.

These festivals and feast could be seen as basically uniting the people of different communities. The venue where these are held becomes a meeting place for a number of people, especially women. Moreover, through these feasts and festivals, the unique traditions and customs are kept alive and passed on to the next generations.

**Shigmo Festival - Dhakto** Shigmo, says the Gazetteer, can mainly be considered as a festival of folk songs and folk dances. On the other hand, the Vodlo Shigmo is considered a festival performed in the village temple. It is celebrated in different temples on different dates, around the same period. There is dhulvad (throwing colour on each other). Celebrants also apply rang, meaning colour, to all those who participate in the Romat. On the first, the village deity is bathed and dressed in saffron robes. After the offering of food, the feast is held.

**The Romat** — a parade of young men dressed in traditional costumes carrying Jhende banners and umbrellas — is a part of this festival. It takes place on the second and third day of the festival. Dol and tasha are the drums, some huge in size, which people travel with, from door-to-door, dancing to its beat. Money is placed in the plate
carried by the performers, and a song called the *tali* is sung after this is done, wishing the donor well. On the last day of the festival, it is believed that a spirit enters these persons who dance, and this is known as the *gade padne*. *Mand Thevane* refers to a collective bath taken after the festival comes to an end.

Celebrants also play the *Dhol Tashe* i.e. musical instruments. The procession is accompanied by a series of dances, performed by the Bhandaris of Arpora. The banners are taken and tied in the *sim* i.e. the border of the village. Those participating collect money from door to door. The ladies too join the *Romat* in a line.

**Pallkhi:** Every year, depending on the Hindu calendar, sometime between the end of January and the end of February, the Bhandaris ceremonially fetch back the goddess Bhumika from Nanora - which is considered her *mahera* or maternal house - to Arpora. She is kept in the Hanuman temple at Arpora for five days.

The Devi, dressed in traditional costumes and jewellery, is taken around the entire village through all the temples in a floral decorated palakhi (*palanquin*). Local *bhajan* artists take pride in reciting *bhajans* (devotional songs). During the procession, there are halts at particular fixed places. Married women decked in nine-yard saris and jewellery perform *votti bharap* which comprises of five fruits, a coconut, the *khann* (blouse piece) and flowers. At all these halts there is a *karputaarti* with recitation of Vaidic Ashtak and devotional music. After the completion of the round, when the palakhi enters the sabhamandap, an *aarti* is performed before the deity's statue and a "coconut *ovalani" (expression of love and affection by waving tiputed lamps around somebodys face or an image of god) is made. *Devibhaktas* (devotees of the deity) enjoy special viewing (*darshan*) by moving below the *palakhi* seeking blessings and the palakhi enters the temple. After that, the priest takes the statues inside the
garbagriha (sacred interior of the temple) keeping some “flower prasad” for the palkhi bearers. When the statue is placed in the original position in garbgoriha, the devotees who had been following the palkhi until then take their seats and the aarti begins. An auction is held of fruits that are received during the procession and the prasad is distributed to everyone. Bhaktas (devotees) will then join up in the bhajan mandap (main hall) for food and leave with a hope to attend next year’s palakhi.

During this occasion, there are nataks (dramas) organised during these days in the Hanuman temple. On the fifth day, the deity is returned back to what is considered her maternal house in Nanora.

**Hanuman Jayanthi:** Hanuman Jayanthi is performed according to the tithi (lunar day) in the Hindu calendar by the Bhandaris. The actual programme begins in the Hanuman temple two days before the Hanuman Jayanthi. Devotees have recently done the sthapna, or the establishment of this temple.

On the first day, devotees have the Maharudra followed by a vegetarian meal. On the second day, there is Abhishekh again followed by vegetarian food in the temple and, on the third and the final day, the devotees have the actual putting of the statue of lord Hanuman in the cradle. This begins early at 5 a.m., after which follows the Jaap Karta and saying of mantraas (religious chants). At around 6.30 am, the laying of the baby Hanuman in the cradle is undertaken. Womenfolk have to rock the cradle, an act which is called zakho dita for their wellbeing. The women have to wear the traditional nine-yard sari on this day and wear flowers and jewellery too.

**Ramanavmi:** On the festival of Ramanavmi, a coconut is treated as a substitute for the baby Lord Rama by the Bhandaris.
Festival of Lord Chouranginath: In Arpora there is a temple of Chouranginath. In the present day it has become a tourist spot, where thousands of tourists come to visit this temple. The festival of this temple is indeed a prominent one.

History basically says that the main idol of Chouranginath was taken to Nanora in Assonora some four hundred years ago, to avoid persecution by the Portuguese. Sankwadi at Baga is at the centre of the worship. This place is also home to the chovtto (a primitive form of the early panchayat or village council). The new temple of Chouranginath was built before fifty years ago, now in Arpora. Now it is the main temple for Nagoa, Arpora and Baga. Devotees bring in the devi’s palkhi (palanquin of the deity) in the month of Magh.

A grand five-day celebration takes place in Arpora during this festival. During these days, Marathi dramas and other forms of entertainment draw people from different surrounding villages. Chouranginath’s other palkhi (palanquin) is taken out on the Padvo day. A Satya Narayan pooja is conducted accompanied by another three nights of Marathi dramas and Divzan zatra.
A man in a trance offers advice to women at the 'dhalo' festival.

The three domes: left, Saptakoteswar in Narao, top right, Our Lady of Candelaria in Narao, and St Sebastian's Chapel in Arpora bear a strange resemblance to each other. One elderly respondent says the similarity is because the three belonged to the Bhandari community.

The 'dhalo' is the festival for women at the Hanuman Temple at Sankwadi, in Arpora.

A Hindu woman sells toddy to the Bhandaris on the St Sebastian vespers days. On that day, the Hindu Bhandaris of the village prepare 'sannas', which are a traditional Christian form of kind of bread-making.

Non-Catholic Bhandaris cast ewarship at the St Sebastian chapel in Arpora.

The palkhi (palanquin procession) moves into the village, after being brought in from Nanora village in Bardez. After which, it visits all the village temples.
Rituals Associated with Salt-Making

From historical records and ethnographic studies we find that all societies have some form of religion though specific beliefs and practices vary widely. Some groups attribute power to ghosts and ancestors, others to supernatural forces; some see gods as their benevolent and others see them as mischievous, hostile or indifferent. Some seek affirmation of their faith in solitude and wilderness; others erect pyramids, cathedrals or other monuments and maintain hierarchical priesthodonts to communicate with the divine (Maruthi 2003: 101).

Rituals are very important in every society. Sociologists and anthropologists are interested in the study of the rituals and practices of various groups and communities. Rituals associated with birth puberty, marriage and death is important in every community. On these occasions the family undergoes new experiences and hardships. The friends, kinsmen and other members of the community depend on the observance of these rituals. Arnald Van Ganep has regarded such rituals and practices as “Rites of passage’ (Maruthi 2003: 108). In Arpora, the Bhandari community is very faithful to their religious rituals associated with salt making. At the beginning of the rainy season just before Sravan season, the Bhandaris gather near the agor (salt pans) and sacrifice two roosters in the agor as a ritual. They consider it as agraacho maan, or dechaaracho maan or the paying of respect to the salt pan.

This offering of the fowl was performed by both the communities’ i.e. the Hindus and Catholics. There is a fixed person in the village referred as Ganvkar, who is always the man to perform this sacrifice. This sacrifice is performed on Sunday or on a Wednesday. Since these two days were considered as days of the Devchaar (protector) by the Goan Hindus. He is appeased for the protection of the salt pans. The ganvkar makes a sangnem or “intercession”, wherein liquor, beedi, agarbathi, two
bread and two quarters of country liquor is offered in a kotti or coconut shell since liquor loses its effect in other containers except glass. Soro(liquor) and beedi are considered as apavitr(unholy) by the Hindus and are liked by the Devchaar.

The blood of the cock is let into the saltpan. But among the Catholics the blood of the fowl was let on the foot of the cross. Liquor offered is also consumed.

When the researcher had gone to interview the ganvkar of Arpora he refused to comment much on this aspect, since he said he was a reporter for one particular newspaper and felt it would not be fair on his part to narrate anything about that aspect. When the researcher asked a Catholic bhatkar of this village about this, he replied he voiced his disbelief in this, and sought to question the practices of the Hindu community in the salt pans in Arpora. One particular Gauddi respondent of Arpora said he stopped performing this sacrifice since the year 1986 and since then he offers mass at Pilar.

During the sacrifice, the Ganvkar recites all the names of the gods. Normally these gods are seen as the Rakhondar (protector) of that particular place. The Devchar (spirit) is considered to be the Rakhondar of the village. Once the cock is sacrificed, it is given to the ganvkar. It is believed that through this ritual, the villagers would get the necessary blessings and protection required to carry on the salt-farming work. The amount to be given to the Ganvkar is not fixed, but it depends on the salt makers to give. The Ganvkar has no right to demand a particular amount.

In the Catholic community makes a cross of two sticks in the salt pans if there is no cross in the salt pans, lights candles and recites the rosary. Similarly, a mixture of salt and jaggery is given to all present.

Before and at the end of the salt extracting season, the Hindus and the Catholic community gather near the Cross. They recite a rosary to offer their thanksgiving.
They put a garland for the God and offer a sacrifice of salt and jaggery salt is offered as a symbol of celebration and jaggery to sweeten the mouth bring good luck, *Foolaancho tooro nesaitat ani devak mitt ani god mhunn neivedh ditat.*

They also have recitation of the Rosary where the Litany is sung. After prayer, sweets, boiled grams are distributed by both the communities. Each salt maker contributes generously, according to his ability. Some offer a mass before the start of the season, perform a rosary and then distribute boiled grams and liquor. Some give donations to Don Bosco or other religious charities.

**Caste System**

Landlords (Gauddis) of the Arpora saltpans also knew the art of salt-making, used to employ the Mithgaudas from Agarvaddo earlier to perform salt work. But later on, the Mithgaudas ceased to work in the saltpans in Arpora; as a result, the Bhandaris slowly learnt the art of salt making and started performing salt-related work. The Mithgaudas claim to belong to the Kshatriya caste and consider the Bhandaris low. However, the Bhandari also consider themselves higher than the Mithgaudas, in spite of belonging to the O.B.C. category and performing the salt work themselves. As an endogamous community, the Mithgaudas prohibit marriage with the Bhandari community.

**Status of Women**

**Women's Education:** The Old Conquest areas of Goa have a relatively higher rate of literate women. Among the Old Conquest talukas, Bardez had the highest literacy rate among women, probably due to male migration brought the people into
greater contact with the outside world and gave the inhabitants a better standard of living.

Consequently, this encouraged many more parents to start sending their young daughters to school. The ability to read and write helped women to communicate their absent husbands, fathers and brothers who were away from home for a considerable time (Gracias 2007: 101,102).

New factors affecting dominance have emerged in the last eighty years or so. Western education, jobs in the administration and the urban sources of income are all significant in contributing to the prestige and power of the particular castes groups in the village (Srinivas 1987: 11).

The Bhandari respondents were generally not educated in Arpora with the exception of a few respondents who took to higher education. They felt that the Bhandaris need to go in for higher education since they feel that Shikilean raste kallta ani shikshan konnachean vorunk zaina meaning that if you are educated you are empowered and no one can snatch away ones education. They felt that even the girls in their community should take up education since they felt Ginean mellta meaning if they get educated they get better knowledge and they get upgraded. Younger generation had generally taken education till S.S.C.

Since the Gauddi respondents were landlords they had access to education; their parents and grandparents had got Portuguese education. Some of them could not recall their grandparent’s education. Women did housework.

The Economic Organisation

Salt making has been providing employment in such areas. This is a seasonal occupation, which offers work for six months. For Arpora, the salt season begins a
little later as compared to the two other villages under study. The season here is from January to June, while salt-makers adopt some other occupation for the remaining six months. Thus, they also get a break from doing the same monotonous type of work.

In the distant past, extracting of salt was indeed a lucrative job as the demand for this type of salt was very high. The salt industry in Goa was flourishing as the salt was exported to different parts of the world. The Bhandari community was into this occupation for more than 70 years. It was their livelihood and their source of income.

The younger generation of the salt makers in Arpora has taken loans and has bought tourist taxis, which they feel offer a much better source of earnings than working in salt pans. It is seen as a lucrative job as the income is comparatively higher. Some have purchased two wheelers to be rented out to the foreigners, others sell petrol to the foreign tourists, some have stalls which sell readymade garments. There are yet others who sell various items in the Saturday night markets which are held in Arpora.

As far as immovable assets go, there is a unique ownership pattern that exists in Arpora. One salt pan is owned by multiple owners. Besides this, the salt pans are leased by the landlords to one permanent tenant during the salt production season, and during the rainy season. They are leased by the Landlord to different tenants who undertake fishing during the rainy season.

The employer employee relation i.e. between the landlords and the Bhandaris was cordial as one respondent put *Aaddhi ami bhatkaraache utrar choltale*.

Naturally prepared salt costs far less compared to the processed iodized salt available in the market. This allows fishermen to store their excess fish in salt, when they have a huge catch. Fishermen cannot afford to use the higher-priced factory salt.

Two varieties of salt that are produced i.e. one variety which was reddish in
colour which is usually produced in the beginning of the season that was used as fertilizers for mango and coconut trees, and the other variety was used as a food item.

Landlords used to sit in the hut and mind the labourers, maintain the border of the bandh and take care of the fish so that outsiders do not fish in the salt pans and also cultivate the fields during the rains.

As noted earlier, the salt pans were sold about eight years ago to a person, for converting it into a restaurant. In the days of yore, the people shared and owned the salt pans in common. But now, after selling the salt pans, they got a very small share of salt pans for themselves.

Arpora Salt's Decline

Out of 17 families which were till recently involved in salt making occupation of salt makers, only one family has continued with the occupation till date. Tourism's growth in the area, and the alternative economy it brings in, is one of the chief factors that have affected the salt makers.

Although tourism has brought in economic benefits to Goa, in Arpora it meant a slow decline of the salt making occupation. Salt pans in Arpora have attracted the real estate developers. Saltpans have been taken over by the real estate developers and many starred hotels have emerged in their place. Salt pan areas in Arpora have increasingly been used as recreation area of the starred hotels. One particular hotel has utilized the salt pan area for boating and for fishing for the hotel customers. One respondent from Arpora who is a permanent tenant and lost his land remarked, "Ami Chikol Mostunk urle" ("We remained downtrodden," literally, we're still stuck in our muck.)

One salt pan has been converted into a Saturday market site. A landlord from Anjuna sold it to a person and he converted the surrounding area into the Saturday
night market venue. Now it is known as Mackies Saturday Night Market. Only some salt pans have been used exclusively for pisciculture. According to one of the landlords, there could be a lot more resorts of water park in the place of the salt pans. Better employment opportunities and modern education has also contributed to the younger generation losing an interest in salt work. The older generation performed various tasks in the salt pans but the younger generation prefers to take up jobs outside the salt pans.

Another reason for the decline of Arpora's salt is the unusual – and probably unhelpful – pattern of ownership pattern that prevails there. There is a pattern of multiple ownership and multiple leasing of salt pans where the salt pans are owned by multiple landlords. In one particular case, a salt pan in Arpora was left without extraction of salt or fish in Arpora because the landlord sold the saltpans. There was a problem as far as the sale of saltpans has been concerned, because the same salt pans were used by two different tenants during two different times of the year. The saltpan was then sold to the tenants who previously used it for fishing. The persons using it for salt-farming were upset with the landlord and filed a legal suit against the other set of tenants who had bought the saltpans. Later, a permanent injunction was imposed on the use of these salt pans. This meant that they can be neither used by the tenants who farm salt or those who used it for fishing.

Another factor for the decline of salt here is that it is seasonal in nature; returns are earned only for six months. In a monetised economy – unlike in the past, where barter trade of sorts worked in Goa even a generation earlier – this makes the situation very tough. The remaining six months of the year sees the salt farmers idle as the landlords lease the same salt pan to another tenant during the rainy season.

Yet another reason is that traditional methods used in the salt pan earn only a meagre
amount of returns on the salt production. Salt makers in Goa in general and Arpora in particular, till date, have been using traditional methods which have been explained in greater details at the section where the stages of salt making are taken up.

Delayed beginning of the salt making season leads to reduced time availability for production of salt. Since the salt makers begin their work in the salt pans late, the salt producing time is also less as compared to the other villages. Salt production usually begins around the end of November or the beginning of December or even January. Salt work starts a little later in Arpora compared to the other two villages studied, because if the work begins in November month then during high tide the water gets collected in the fields and *khavte* (breaches) are formed in the salt pans, leading to delays in getting the work started. The work during the first three months is more tedious as it involves hard physical labour, as compared to the work which is involved during the actual salt production. The salt production season is also reduced in this village.

Salt pans are used for fishing during the monsoons and during the rest of the year it is utilized for salt production. If the salt makers continuously use the salt pans for pisciculture, then there is a lot of damage done to the salt pans as a result of which the salt makers are not in a position to use such salt pans for salt production again. One respondent said *zavallnin booraak zata, ho kiddo gain dov kaso taka naarge mhonttaa*. The *Naargo* worm formed in the salt pans creates a hole through the mud ridges making the entire salt pan unfit for salt production.

Some used the salt pans for pisciculture i.e. rearing of fish in the salt pans. At the beginning of the rainy season, the pans (*agor*) are filled with sea water, and small fishes like the *Gollxio* (local name), *vaggleo, kurleo* (crabs) and tiger prawns are reared in it. The eggs of the fish are brought from the government-run Benaulim hatchery by
availing of a subsidy, while some even bring in eggs from the Priya Hatchery located at Honnavar in coastal Karnataka. The entire expenditure incurred of buying and selling fish as well as the labour force involved would be estimated to cost around Rs 30-50,000 or above. Their profit from this operation can be rupees one lakh and above. But sometimes, due to some reasons, the fish do not breed well, resulting in a loss for the salt makers.

   Water pumps used are hired by the salt makers. Rental charges are very high, which are fixed by the pump-lender. So these costs imply more investments and fewer outputs as compared to the time, money and the efforts that are put in the making of salt.

   Another factor is the nature of jobs in the salt pans involve hard work. Besides this, working in the salt pans means staying without any off-days and leave since the jobs have to be performed every day. One has to labour for roughly seven hours a day, often in the hot sun, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and from 3 to 6 p.m. Due to this too; most of the families who have had a choice about their occupation have given up this one. The younger generation of the Bhandari families is relatively more educated than the earlier one. Even their parents do not want them to work in the salt pans, saying that it is a tedious job.

Shortage of Migrant Labourers

   To manage to bring in migrant labour means one needs to have a certain area of salt-pans, for such operations to become viable. There should be at least hundred kunghes saltpans to employ the migrant workers; otherwise it is not worth the trouble for the owners to employ migrant-workers on a limited number of salt pans. All the money that is generated from the salt pans would go to these labourers if the salt pan area is limited in size.
Present position of the salt pans in Arpora

Former salt pans that have since been converted for tourist recreation purposes in Arpora, Bardez. Photo: G. Henn (Source: Ambio, a journal of Human Environment: http://www.bioone.org/doi/abs/10.1579/0044-7447-31.4.295)

Salt-pans taken over for landscaping and leisure activities for tourists. Starred hotels are seen in the background

Salt-pans taken over for landscaping and leisure activities for tourists. Starred hotels are seen in the background

A Saturday night market, one of the two in the village, set up in a salt-pan area and its adjoining 'bundh'

Tourist centres that have come up in areas adjoining the salt-pans, shifting the economics of the locality drastically

An exotic bar by the poolside, of a hotel Marinha Dourada, renamed Agor
Need for labour from other states has become another concern for the Bhandari community. Hiring labourers from other states are often a tedious task. In order to get the labourers to work in the salt pans, the Bhandaris and the Gauddis have to pay them an advance. Sometimes it so happens that these labourers take the advance but don't show up. Also, workers from other states coming to work in the salt-pans, end up preferring to work in shacks or hotels which offer a higher earning potential. Resultantly, the salt-pans from Arpora have to hire locally-available daily wage labourers from Calangute, who are migrant workers but who charge a much higher casual day-rate of rupees two hundred a day.

One more factor is the increasing demands made on the landlords by the tenants. The Bhatkars have also given up their salt pans, as in recent years they have faced problems due to their tenants, as they find their demands difficult to fulfil.

Another factor is the emergence of multinational companies, who are believed to have decided to lobby against consuming organic salt. The central government introduced a ban on organic salt on 17th May 2006 which introduced the sale on the ban of non iodised salt in the country. This was introduced on the grounds of rising number of iodine deficiency disorder cases among the people of the country. Though the restriction on the sale of iodised salt was imposed on the entire nation. The decision had a drastic consequence and effect on the large number of salt makers throughout the country and the Mitagars of Goa. The central government imposed ban on the sale of non iodised salt in the market. All states imposed this ban except Kerala, Gujarat and some districts of Maharashtra. The state of Goa too fell under this imposition. This period of ban on the local salt for edible salt and government means to propagate the ill effects of organic salt through mass media led to a decline of local salt consumption in Goa. Many organizations and welfare groups came to the rescue.
of the Mitagars in Goa and the central government had to lift the ban on local salt in Goa. *Tharaav ghetlo iodine naslele mitt vaprap nam teka lagoon ami dhandho soddlo, mitt barfhaak, khaavdik chalta, MNC valor mitaacho kami kelo.* So the state government issued a notice banning the use of salt on the grounds that research and surveys had shown that many people in Goa were getting prone to goitre. After an agitation, the government withdrew the notification and Goans are back to their beloved salt (Alvares 2002: 158). The impact of the ban cannot be gauged as primary data is unavailable. Data is to be collected by the Mumbai office (as Goa has no office despite being a salt producing state) but no records are available. Now salt is used in ice factories and other uses. There is a steady decline in the number of people in the occupation also due to the availability of iodized salt in the market. In Goa itself, once a prominent salt-exporting region, large number of people today use and consume factory-made iodized salt brought in from outside the state.

The salt production in Arpora is on a verge of slow death because a majority of the children of the salt makers have no interest in continuing this occupation as they are craving for white collar jobs. Even the salt makers don’t want their children to work in the salt pans since the income earned is not worth the hard labour put into it, as noted earlier.

Today, as the salt-pans are increasingly given over to builders, some have stopped extracting salt from the salt pans. Even though there are very few saltpans which are operative in Arpora, fetching labour is very difficult. Even if labour is procured from out of the state, the latter tends to be lured away by other kinds of jobs, which are much more paid and not so tedious.

Besides, the waste water of the starred hotels is left into the saltpans, which causes a hindrance to those working in the pans. Stagnation of water has lead to the
emergence of the mosquito menace. Some hotel owners also surreptitiously dump their garbage during the night time in the saltpans. The salt makers are also facing a problem of the bundh (traditional protective wall along the river), which has become very weak.

Changing Technology, Changing Economy and its Effect

The economy has changed quite significantly over recent years. The landscape has been transformed with the emergence of starred hotels, some of which have been emerged in the place of the salt pans. The star hotels are constructed right next to the salt pans and one hotel has converted the salt pans as recreation places for the domestic and international tourists who visit the hotels.

Of all the villages studied, Arpora has seen the most drastic changes take place in its salt-pans, in part due to its proximity from the prime North Goa tourism belt.

The occupations of the people of Arpora (Hadpadkaars) are changing too. Traditional occupations are getting replaced by new kinds of employment. For instance, the majority of the Bhandaris are involved in the jobs related to the tourism sector. Many of them are employed in the hotels, some as tourist taxi drivers for the star hotels. Even if there is no driver in their house, some have purchased taxi and motorcycles which are being rented out to the hotels and to the foreigners. Some of them run shops in the Saturday Night Market which is one of the big events in the locality. Some of them also work outside the village in nearby places like Anjuna, Calangute and some work in cities as teachers, government servants and the like. Some have started small shops in front of their houses and also sell petrol to the foreign tourists who visit in large numbers during the fair-weather, non-monsoon tourist season. There are many new commercial units which have emerged in Arpora,
which cater to the needs of international as well as domestic tourists.

Similar, if not the same, process of salt extraction has been followed over the centuries. It is an art that has been passed on from one generation to another. This occupation of salt extraction went on growing and expanding into a huge industry during the time of British. It was during this time that the salt was in great demand.

There were 16 salt-making families who the researcher has referred to as the permanent tenants in the methodology chapter and ten original owners or Bhatkars in Arpora, out of which only five had continued with their traditional occupation of salt making when the researcher had registered for her Ph. D. in the year 2006. But by the time the study was nearing completion, in the year 2009 only one original owner worked on his own by employing the other labourers and has still continued in the salt making occupations.

Out of all the three villages that the researcher had taken up for the study, Arpora witnessed a different kind of a situation where in some of the Catholic bhatkars (landlords) were actually themselves involved in the salt production which was not the case with the other villages under study.

In Hindu mythology, Goa is called the land of the gods and goddesses. There are hundreds of gods and goddesses bearing diverse names, beliefs, rituals and traditions. Most of these have remained unchanged over the years, while others have adapted to the changing times and circumstances. A legacy of the Portuguese culture is today so imbibed in the lives of people of Arpora that it's difficult to imagine Goa without its Portuguese connection. The result of four and half centuries of rule is today a Goa having a unique, rich syncretism of both western and eastern culture. This unique blend apparent everywhere, from dress and architecture to food and music, is the hallmark of the people of Arpora.
Social Problems

Arpora in the last few decades has seen rapid changes towards development chiefly because of the growth of mass tourism in the area. Everybody is busy with something or the other. Many people have started working in the Star Hotels doing all kinds of jobs. Some others are engaged in selling different things to the tourists like selling of hand made products, food, handicrafts and fuel for vehicles. A few have set up small shacks and restaurants in the village. Others have rented their houses to foreign tourists. Families have also bought taxis to cater to the needs of the Star Hotels. Quite a few houses in the village have at least a minimum of two tourist taxis. They also have two wheelers to be rent out to the foreign and the domestic tourists. There are others who put up their stalls during the Saturday Night Markets which are major events in Arpora.

In the bargain, together with the growing affluence, there are many problems that have emerged. For instance, problems like alcoholism, increased domestic violence, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS and sexual promiscuity, and child-sex-abuse have
come in addition to the traditional problems such as alcoholism, poverty, illiteracy, health issues and other related problems of the tourism industry. On the other hand there are problems of illegal constructions to cater to the tourists, destruction of the salt pans and constructing of the Star Hotels in its place, clogging of rain water, problem of sewerage and garbage problems. Waste is disposed in the salt pans. This garbage which is left in the salt pans creates a lot of nuisance and health problems for the salt workers.

Another major problem that Arpora faces during the tourist season is that of traffic congestion, which is more severe because of the two Saturday Night Markets held in the village, as a result of which the village roads have become accident prone. Local people rent out space near the houses for pay-parking. This has created a lot of problem in the village. Sometimes the road is converted into one way traffic, which also poses a problem to the local people. Arpora, a serene village of cultivators of paddy and salt is now transformed into a busy tourist township.