Chapter - I

INTRODUCTION

Location

Goa (15° 48'-14° 53' North and 74° 20"-73° 40" 33' East) narrow strip of land having a length of 105 Kms from north to south and about 60 kms wide from East to west. It is sandwiched between the mighty western ghats and Arabian sea, had a peculiar geographical setting drained by number or rivers and often traversed by the off shoots of western ghats against the lush green vegetation and blue sea waters, attracted the early farming communities though impregnable. It not only nourished the early culture, but also became a coveted area for outside conquerors to hold the sway over this region especially during medieval times.

Origin of Land -- Goa

A well-known Meteorologist Alfred Wegner says, since all continents seem to fit together like Jigsaw puzzle, they all were once part of a super continents resting on gigantic slabs called plates. These plates float on magma which is molten rock heated liquid. Magma moves up and around and down again in tectonic slow that pulled super continent a part and created two smaller mother continents 'Lurasia' in the north and 'Gondwanaland' in the south.
According to this story, GondawanaLand existed about 200 million years ago and the availability of similar composition of rocks, existence of some fossils indicate that South America, Africa, Antartica, Australia and India, did huddle together in the great continent of Gondawana land. The eastern and western edges of the Deccan plateau were two ridges of mountains known as Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats. The mountain wall of Western Ghat also is called as Sahyadris. The Sahyadris formed like a ‘sword’ inbetween Eastern and Western Ghats and became familiar with different names such as Sahyadri hills in the Western Ghats, Chitrardurga hills in Karnataka, Nallamalai hills in Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh and Simhachalam hills in Vishakapatnam district (A.P) in the Eastern Ghats.

The Middle Pleistocene era of Late Tertiary is traced out in Indian context with the arrival of early man with the tool kit of choppers, handaxes, cleavers, flakes of Acheulian type of lower Palaeolithic period. Similar types of tools are also found in Goa. With the results of above geomorphic factors and finding of Palaeolithic tools, Goa was conceived to be 200 million years old.

Geographic Features of Goa

Geographic features of Goa can be characterized into three distinctive zones such as 1. The Sahyadris in the East. 2. The Central low broad valley with undulating high lands and 3. Western coastal plain and the Arabian Sea.

The Western Ghats also known as Sahayadris, occupy an area of about 600 sq. kilometres. This eastern boundary of Goa was considered as a storehouse of forest wealth, which attracted pre-historic communities to settle there.
Prominent mountain peaks which are adorned like arc towards Northeast to Southeast Goa, are Sonsogad peak (3827 ft), Catlanchimauli (3633 ft), Vagheri (3500 ft), Morlemchogor (3400 ft), in Sattari taluka Morpila at Quepem, Chandranath at Paroda, Consid at Astagrar and Dudhsagar at Latambarcem. Goa also gave birth to two famous waterfalls such as Dudhsagar in Sanquem Taluka and Aravalem in Bicholim Taluka and well-known lakes like Carambolim, Mayem, Chimbel, Calapur, Cacora and Curchorem. In addition, the land of Goa is intersected by number of fine navigable rivers.

**Riverine System of Goa**

Goa has an excellent network of riverine system, which drains major parts of its lands. These rivers are perennial in nature, good sources of transportation in all seasons. The topography of Goa shows east west tendency from Western Ghats to Arabian Sea and flows towards west. The largest river Mandovi is 77 Kms long, whose ancient name was *Gomati* and second largest river Zuari 63 Kms long also called *Aghanāshini* in ancient times are the principle rivers in Goa and are responsible for developing some important cultures like Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic in Prehistoric times with their perennial tributaries. River Terekhol and River Chapora drain the land of Goa in the north, and River Zuari, Maina Paroda, Dudhsagar, Kushavati, Khandepar and Sanguem in the central part, and River sal, Talpona and Galgibag in the south. Goa waterways always have been the main means of communication from the sea to inland settlements. These waterways developed fishing industries, transport and defensive system of forts. Forts such as
Terekhol, Chapora, Aguada, Marmagoa, Reis magos, Cabo de Rama, Cabo fort were built on the Arabian Sea coastline, while forts like Chandor, Banastari, Rachol, Naroa, Colvale, Tivim, Corjuvem, Old Goa (one and upto Banastari and another at Kadamba platue can be seen now), Nanuz, Alorna, Kumbharjuva, are safeguarding the inland settlements.

These forts are built in laterite rocks, which are covered, by a mantle of laterite thickness of 25 meters along the coast in the west. Forts in coast line were cheiseled in the thickness of laterite out crop upto a suitable level and remaining carvings, offsets and other structures etc., were made with different sizes of laterite blocks.

Though the plan and elevation of the Forts in Goa are simple, they were of greater importance for safeguarding the inland settlements as well as coastline upto 20th century.

**Derivation of name Goa**

The land between Western Ghats and Arabian Sea, Sawantwadi Ghats and North Canara occupying the area of about 3700 sq.kms is known as Goa. Bhismaparva of Mahabarata and Vishnupurana mentioned this land as Goparashtra. Sahyadrikhand refers as Gorāstra and Gomant. The place Aparant that covers the western coast of India includes the part of Goa. This name was mentioned in epic story of Mahabharata, Buddhist literature Baveru Jataka, Kalidas’ Raghuvamsam, Vatsyayana’s Kamasutra and Kautilya’s Arthashastra. Girnar inscription of Maurya Ashoka reveals that Aparanta was the border of the Arabian Sea.
Goa is also called as *Gomanchal* since the land is situated in hills. It is also mentioned as *Gopakapattana*. Pattana means port city in Sanskrit language. Hence *Gopakapattana* was a port city of the Kadambas, which was well fortified. The Greek geographer Ptolemy (160 AD) mentioned it as *Kouba*. Arab traders and Persian writers mentioned Goa as *Gouba*. The celebrated Arabian traveller Ibn Batuta (1325 AD) mentioned Goa as *Sindabur*, while 16th century traveller Ludovico de Varthema called Goa as *Goga*. Goa also called as *Goem* in Konkani and *Govern* in Marathi.

However, the Etymology of *Gomant* has attracted the attention of many scholars because River Mandovi was called as *Gomati* in ancient period. The origin of *Gomati* was traced to river *Gomati* like *Hindustan* is traced to the river *Sindhu*. In addition, adoption of names of rivers, mountains, Gods, and Goddesses to places and persons are common in Indian continent, and the continuation of the ancient tradition can be seen in the present day Indian society.

**References and Notes:**


4. Idem.

5. *Dakshina Bharata Desa Charitra*, Telugu Academy, Hyderabad 1982


7. n.1,p.4.


FAMOUS RIVERS IN GOA

1. River Teracol
2. River Chapora
3. Bay of Aguada
4. River Mandovi
5. Chodan Island
6. River Dudhsagar
7. River Naroa
8. River Sanquelim
9. Bay of Marmagoa
10. River Zuari
11. Kumbharjua
12. River Nanus
13. River Mahadai
14. River Khandepar
15. Dudhsagar falls
16. River Dudhsagar
17. River Sal
18. River Sal basin
19. River Sanguem
20. River Parenda
21. River Talpona
22. River Galgibaga