

Welcome students under the initiative of Directorate of Higher Education, Government of Goa titled Digital Integrated System for Holistic Teaching and Virtual Orientation for developing e-content in the subject of History.

Today I will be explaining you module 3 Gaunkari system of Unit I
Sources: Archaeological, literary and oral.

The outline of this topic will be first, I will introduce the topic, then the main occupation of the people living in the villages in the ancient time, who were the settlers of Goa? Who were the *Gaunkars*? Then I will speak about *Kulacharis*, The Village Assembly which was held. Then other settlers, the village servants, types of lands, social religious practices, and lastly, I will conclude the topic.

After this module, the students will understand the significance of *Gaunkari system*. They will learn the social economic and the religious practices of the village in the pre-colonial period. Students will learn the different types of people who served the village as a community.

To begin with, let me explain you the meaning of *Gaunkari system*. As the term signifies *Gaunv* mean Village and the people who are living in the village is called Gaunkars. Gaunkari system were self-sufficient social, economic and political community. They existed prior to the European invasion in Goa. As we all know, the Portuguese came to Goa in 1510. From 1510 to 1961 for almost 451 years, the colonial period existed in Goa. But before the Portuguese,

the village settlement offered a unique historical aspect in terms of culture, norms, and traditions.

The main occupation of the villagers or the *Gaunkars* in the pre-colonial period was agriculture. The Agricultural Land was collectively owned. A person living in the village could not own land individually. Whatever cultivations like paddy, *Nachni* vegetables etc all his crops cultivated were equally shared. The annual share of the revenue of the male members of the village was called as *zon*. A share called as *zon* was only distributed to the male members of the family. The woman was not allowed, or they will not entitle to get zone. Initially the *zon* was paid in kind, but in the later period. *Zon* was paid in cash.

Let's see about who the original settlers of Goa. Gaunkars are the original settlers of Goa. As the scholar says that *Gaudas, Velip, Kunbi, Dhangars* were the original settlers. So, in the modern times, we can compare the people who are very respectable positions in the village. So *Gaudas, Kunbi, Velips* were the important people, they were. the actual *Gaunkars*. But with the emergence of the Dravidians. When the Aryans came, they confiscated the lands of the *Gaunkars* and made them tiller leading to a feudalistic set up. *Gaunkars* were not merely a resident of the village, but they also enjoyed very important place in the society. They enjoyed certain rights and privileges. Every village had an assembly consist of village *Gaunkars*. In modern terms, we can see as a panchayat of the village assembly where the chief village Headman was called as Gaunkar. The Gaunkar had a great role to play in the village administration. He was highly respected in the village community.

After the *Gaunkar* comes *Kulacharis*. *Kulacharis* were *Kumbhar* (Potter), Barber (*Mhalo*), Washerman (*Mhadval*). *Kulacharis* were not Goan origin. But they migrated. At later period but they became very important part and parcel of Goan community. *Kulacharis* had no rights over the village properties and was not eligible for zon. They could take part in the village assembly and express their opinion and did not have the right to vote. Village assembly was held either in the temple or under the banyan tree. The various issues were discussed in the village assembly concerning to the village. Now after the assembly. Whatever the resolutions which was passed was known as *Nemo*. And the decisions which was taken was unanimously agreed.

After the *Gaunkars* and *Kulacharis* there were other people who were also a part and parcel of the village such as *Parapati*. *Parapati* was the announcer of the village meetings and the other village news. Suppose if any important message or news must be given to the villages, *Parapati* who was playing a role of a Messenger.

Second was so *Sotrekhar*. He was a person who was holding the umbrella for headman Whenever the *Gaunkar* paid visit to village, sotrekhar used to hold the umbrella for him. Third was *Naneinkar*. He provides a service to the *Gaunkars* during the childbirth. Now in the village whenever there was birth of a child and as we all know that in the initial days of the birth of the child needs special kind of bath with the oil and there were a kind of community which were known as *nanaikar*, who is to provide the services to the village.

Then there was *Potekar*. He village tax collector. So, whatever the tax has to be collected from the village, so he was collecting the tax.

Then there was a *Khot* who was revenue farmer of the *Khazan land*.

Then there was *Bhaus-Cooperative* of the cultivators of the reclaim land.

Then there was *Kulkarni*. He was accountant of the village.

Then there was a *Kamat*. He was the supervisor of the Bandh or dykes.

There were different kinds of lands such as. Reclaimed land, Agri land, Ker land and *Namasy* land. Reclaim Land are the land which are claimed from the seawater. *Agris* a salt pan. *Ker* are rich fields of sandy nature in the vicinity of the seashore. *Namays* were rent free land granted to the village servants. Slice gates are *maanos* in which prawns were farmed.

The landlords were called as *Bhatkars* while the killers were called is *Munkars*. *Gaunkari system* is the best example of the smooth local administration. The Central Administration did not interfere in the *Gaunkari* administration. *Koshirvaddo* was a tribute a tax paid by the *Gaunkars* to the King.

Now let's focus on the social religious practices which was carried out in the village community before the Portuguese arrival. Under *Gaunkari System*, Village Community lived like a family. They help each other in times of need and shares values of humanity. Village participated indifferent kinds of religious functions. They worship

nature, *Roinn* and other aspects of nature. They also had a Temple mand.

Every village had a *Tito* mean, some market. *Chaudi* was a meeting place of the village assembly or a venue. *Davarne* or the stone to keep the luggage whenever the traveller is to travel when he used to take rest, is to keep his luggage on that stone and there are many differences are still existing in Goa.

Then there is a *Porsu* means Garden on the backyard of the house. To conclude the topic.

With the emergence of the Portuguese, Gaunkari system remained the same with the brief modification but later known as the *Comunidade* system. Even now, the villages such as khadde, Kazur have preserved essence of *Gaunkari System*.