History of goa

Ancient period

The discovery of rock art engravings on lateritic platforms and granite boulders from Usgalimal on the banks of west-flowing river Kushavati River, has shed light on the prehistory of Goa. The rock shelter at Usgalimal has enough space for 25 to 30 people. The perennial stream in the vicinity which might have served Stone age man for centuries as a source of water. An anthropomorphic figure of Mother goddess and tectiforms resembling tree-like motifs have been found. This site was discovered by Dr P.P.Shirodkar. Exploration of several Mesolithic sites of the Mandovi-Zuari basin, at other sites such as Keri, Thane, Anjuna, Mauxim, Kazur in Quepem, Virdi, has led to the discovery of several scrapers, points, bores, cones, et cetera. A hand axe has also been found at Usgalimal. Further unifacial choppers were recovered on a flat-based pebble of quartzite from a pebble conglomerate at Shigaon on the Dudhsagar River. Shirodakar made a detailed study of the rock engravings and dated them to Upper paleolithic and Mesolithic phases, or to 20,000-30,000 BC. These discoveries have demonstrated that the region had been supporting a population of hunter-gatherers well before the advent of agriculture. Evidence of Palaeolithic cave existence can be seen at Dabolim, Adkon, Shigaon, Fatorpa, Arli, Maulinguinim, Diwar, Sanguem, Pilerne, Aquem-Margaon et cetera. Difficulty in carbon dating the laterite rock compounds has posed a problem in determining the exact time period.

Archaeological evidence in the form of polished stone axes, suggest the first settlements of Neolithic man in Goa. These axes have been found in Goa Velha. During this period tribes of Austric origin such as the Kols, Mundaris and Kharvis may have settled Goa, living on hunting, fishing and a primitive form of agriculture since 3500 BC. According to Goan historian Anant Ramakrishna Dhume, the Gauda and Kunbi and other such castes are modern descendants of ancient Mundari tribes. Dhume notes several words of Mundari origin in the Konkani language. He describes the deities worshipped by the ancient tribes, their customs, methods of farming, and its overall effect on modern-day Goan culture. The Negroids were in a Neolithic stage of primitive

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culture and were food-gatherers. Traces of Negroid physical characteristics can be found in parts of Goa, up to at least the middle of the first millennium.

The Proto-Australoid tribe known as the Konkas, from whom is derived the name of the region, Kongvan or Konkan, with the other mentioned tribes, reportedly made up the earliest settlers in the territory. Agriculture had not fully developed at this stage and was being developed. The Kol and Mundari may have been using stone and wood implements, as iron implements were used by the megalithic tribes as late as 1200 BC. The Kol tribe is believed to have migrated from Gujarat.

Formations of Gaumkaris

The theocratic democracy of Sumer was transformed into the oligarchic democracy of village-administration in Goa known as Gaumkari, when it overlapped with the practices of the locals. The agricultural land was jointly owned by the group of villagers, they had right to auction the land, this rent was used for development, and the remainder was distributed amongst the Gaukars. Sumerians view that the village land must belong to the village god or goddess, this was the main feature of the Gaumkari system where the village's preeminent deity's temple was the centre of all the activities. It consisted of definite boundaries of land from village to village with its topographic detail, its management and social, religious and cultural interaction. Gaumkari thus were in existence long before constitution of the state of Goa itself.

Thus even before any king ruled the territory, oligarchic democracy in the form of Gaumkari existed in Goa. This form of village-administration was called as Gaumponn, and despite the periodic change of sovereigns, the Gaumponn always remained, hence the attachment and fidelity of the Goans to their village has always surpassed their loyalty to their rulers (most of them were extraterritorial). This system for governance became further systematised and fortified, and it has continued to exist ever since. Even today 223 comunidades are still functioning in Goa, though not in the true sense.

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Satvahanas rule in goa

The Satavahana dynasty which ruled supreme over the deccan and south of Indian surinhg the 2nd century A.D., held sway over Goa through their feudatories, the Bhojas, who had matrimoial relations with their overlords. The Satavahanas began as vassals of the Mauryan empire but then declared independance as the Mauyran empire declined. Maharashtri prakrit was the Satavahana language of administration, which is said to have influenced medieval Konkani to a great extent.

Krishna Satakarni, the brother of the Satavahana founder then annexed the Konkan territories of the Bhojas of Chandrapur, present day Chandor. Remains found in Chandor around its old fortress walls, of old bricks, shards od pottery of rind shaped forms and bowls of a nature similar to the ones found in Kolhapur and tiny nuggets of gold panned from the rivulet nearby during the monsoons and the particular types of tiels found there attest to this probability.

The Satavahans were an established maritime power and contacts with the Roman Empire were established due to the coastal trade from Sindh to Saurastra and Bhadoch to Sopara where Greek and Goan Ships woudl halt during voyages. This is attested by Roman amphora, pieces of glass and coins, housed at the museum at Pilar. After the fall of the Satavahanas in the 4th century A.D., the sea borne trade on the western coast of India suffered a decline. Many Greek converts to Buddhism settled in Goa during this period. Buddha statues in Greek styles have been found in Goa.

In the year 150 A.D., Vashishtiputra Satakarni of the Satavahanas was defeated by his son-in-law, the Kshatrapa King Rudradaman I who established his rule over Goa. This dynasty ruled Goa until 249 A.D. Thereafter the dynasty's power seems to have been weakened by their generals, the Abhiras. Thus the Satavahana dynasty was replaced by the Kshatrapas and the Abhiras. The Bhojas also took advantage and fortified themselves after the end of Satavahana Empire and soon declared independence.

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The Bhojas

The references to Bhojas are found in the edicts of Asoka. 6Bhojas were ruling in Vidarbha region. But the relation of the Konkan and Vidarbha Bhojas is not known. The Bhojas are mentioned in BhavishyapurTina. It seems Bhojas as well as Maghas came from Sakadvipa (Iran) to India. Both were the worshippers of Surya. Maghas were instrumental in V- spreading sun worship in ancient India . Maghas did not assimilate themselves in Indian society. However, the Bhojas were absorbed in Indian society and in some regions of India they became rulers.

As far the Bhojas of Goa are concerned their capital was Chandrapur. Sivapura was the capital of the Bhojas who ruled in Uttar Kannada region and it is 20 kms. away on the north east of Sunkeri." It seems that Devartija of Siroda copper plate was contemporary of Banavasi Kadamba ruler Mayuravarman. However, no epigraphs mentioning their relations have been found. The Banavasi Kadamba king Ravivarman could establish influence in the region of Halsi which was under Bhojas of Uttar Kannada after two centuries.

This might have caused conflict between the Banavasi Kadamba and the Bhojas. The Bhoja ruler Kapalivarman gave a measure of land to the chief named Svamikaraja. He may be Svamikaraja mentioned in the Badami Chalukya plates. He was made chief of Iridige Vishaya by Kirtivarman. But he was killed by Mangalesa in a war. From this it is evident that Kapalivarman, and Sliamikaraja were contemporary or Mangalesa.

During the reign of Asamkitavarman the territory of the Bhojas extended upto Dharwad district. Kaikeyas who were ruling in Hanagal region of Dharwad district were the vassals or Kapalivarman. Kaikeyas had matrimonial relations with the Bhojas. The elephant is depicted on the seal of the copper plate or Kapalivarman. The coins discovered in Gujigatti of Kalaghatagi taluka of Dharwad district bear elephant symbol. Buddhist consider elephant as an auspicious symbol. The epigraphs of the early Chalukyas do not mention about the defeat of the Bhojas. Hence some scholars believe that they became the feudatories of the former. However, it is mentioned that the Bhojas

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were defeated by in Konkan Mauryas. As the evidences for this suggestion are lacking, it is still an open question.

Konkan Mauryas

The branches of Maurya dynasties have ruled Rajputana and Konkan. These Mauryas claimed descent from the Kumar viceroys of Ujjain and Suvarnagiri. On the West coast, three epigraphs of Konkan Mauryas have been discovered so far. The first copper of Konkan Mauryas is that of Chandravarman and it was incorrectly ascribed to Kadambas earlier. This record on palaeographic grounds can be dated to c. 5th century A.D. and it registers . the donation to Buddhist Mahavihara of Siroda. The second copper plate of the Konkan Mauryas is Bandora plates of Anirjitavarman. This refers to the Khajan land. (rice field made by erecting embankment preventing sea-water entering the field). On palaeographic group' the copper plate belongs to 5th or 6th century A.D.

In addition to the two aforesaid copper plates from Goa, a stone inscription was found at Vada to the north of Thana near Bombay and it is in the custody of Prince of Wales Museum Bombay. This stone inscription refers to Suketavarman of the Maurya dynasty.

Chalukyas of Badami

After the rule of the minor dynasties namely of the Bhojas and the Konkan Mauryas, the first major dynasty, to establish themselves on the coast was the Chalukyas of Badami.

All the dynasties of the Deccan Plateau were eager to control the sea-coast. Chalukyas were not an exception to this. The Chalukyas of Badami established their regional head quarter in Iridige Vishaya reddies of Sawantwadi taluka Sindudurga district) which is on the northern borders of Goa. Redi might have been an entreport of Chalukyas of Badami.

There are seven copper plates of Badami Chalukyas found in the region of Sawantwadi. One copper plate of Satyawesraya Dhruvaraya Indravarman of the govern of Badami Chalukya is also found in Goa. Invocatory verses of the copper plates mention that Chalukyas belonged to Manavya Gotra and they were Haritiputr;s. They were nursed by

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