



An Unusual Guardian

Interactive Storytelling through Digital Game Design

Communication Design Project III

By

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Under the guidance of

Prof. Jayesh Pillai



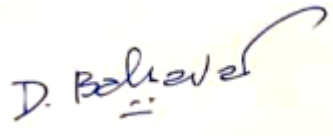
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Approval sheet

This project report entitled “An Unusual Guardian - Interactive Storytelling through Digital Game Design” by Shreyas Vernekar, 216450013 is approved for partial fulfilment of the requirements for Masters of Design Degree in Communication Design.



Project Guide: **Prof. Jayesh Pillai**



Internal Examiner: **Prof. Deepa Balsavar**

Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where others' opinions or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the sources.

I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated any idea/data/ fact/source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been appropriately cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

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Acknowledgement

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have been instrumental in the creation of this project.

First and foremost, I extend my deepest thanks to my guide, Prof. Jayesh Pillai, for his unwavering guidance, wisdom, and support throughout this journey. Your expertise and encouragement have been invaluable. I am also grateful to Prof. Sudesh Balan for providing valuable inputs in refining my game storyline.

To my friends and family, thank you for your unwavering support, love, and belief in me. I am truly grateful for your constant encouragement. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the enchanting Konkan region and its rich culture. The mesmerizing landscapes, vibrant traditions, and warm-hearted people have been a constant source of inspiration.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who has been directly or indirectly involved in this journey. Your contributions, feedback, and support have made this project a reality.

Abstract

“While walking down the road the other day, I heard a thumping noise and a rattling of ghongroos. Instantly, I knew he was patrolling his village, and I dared not cross his path,” the person recounted. “He’s 10 feet tall and would squish anyone walking on his route with his long legs.”

Another individual shared a contrasting experience: “He helped me reach home. I thought he was someone from the village.” They described a recent incident: “The other day, I was extremely drunk and passed out. I remember someone lifting me and dropping me at my house.”

Rakhandar, the mythical protective spirit of the area, demonstrates a fascinating duality in its identity. It can be mischievous, unforgiving, or fiercely protective towards the region’s residents. This multi-faceted nature adds depth and intrigue to the legends surrounding Rakhandar, making it an enigmatic figure in local folklore.

This project aims to bring the rich folklore and mythology of the Konkan region to a broader audience, focusing on the fascinating and enigmatic figure known by various names such as Rakhan-

dar, Rakhnau, Naas, Rakhno, Devchar, Daivata, and more. These names represent a consistent spirit god believed to patrol villages, protect their inhabitants, and assist those in need. The project seeks to create an interactive and immersive environment that transports users to rural Konkan, with abundant coconut trees, shimmering springs, and numerous Rakhandar shrines.

By sharing these local stories on a broader platform, the project aims to preserve and celebrate the cultural heritage of the Konkan region while fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of its mythology and traditions.

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Introduction

Who or What is a Rakhandar?

The concept of a protector spirit responsible for cultural, ecological and social preservation is widespread in and around Konkani Region. The Konkani, also known as the Concan or Kokan, is a stretch of land on India's western coast that runs from Damaon in the north to Anjediva in the south, with the Arabian Sea to the west and the Deccan plateau to the east.[1] With such a widespread belief in such an entity, very little is known about the accompanying culture of such belief in protector spirit coexistence. In my experience, Based on various accounts and personal experiences, I have heard numerous stories about colossal anthropomorphic spirits that are consistently described across different sightings and encounters. These entities are commonly referred to by different names, including Rakhandar, Rakhnau, Naas, Rakhno, Devchar, Daivata, and several others that vary across different regions and dialects. For the sake of consistency in this report, we will use the term "Rakhandar" as it is widely recognized and commonly used in mainstream contexts. While there is a substantial amount of audio and video content available online, there is a dearth of well-researched and written material that can withstand the test of time. Given the significant presence of these sto-

ries and beliefs within the community, it is crucial to ensure that they are not forgotten due to the limitations of traditional indigenous storytelling methods.

Limitations of existing mediums

The United Nations (2018) highlighted the significance of preserving both physical and intangible aspects of culture. This focus is especially crucial in disadvantaged areas of the global South, where cultural traditions and historical stories are steadily disappearing (Turin 2012). [2] Many narratives, folklore, and accounts are spread through spoken word. However, oral transmission can make it challenging to preserve stories accurately over time, as they are vulnerable to changes, omissions, or alterations with each retelling.

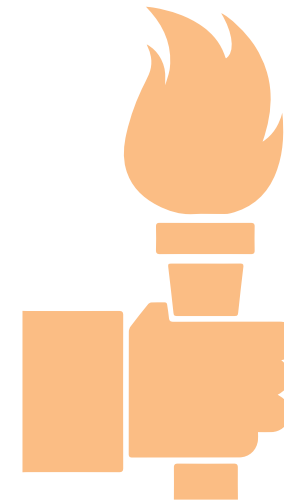
Traditional storytelling relies heavily on a community's cultural context and shared knowledge. This can make it difficult for people from other cultures to fully comprehend the underlying meanings, symbolism, and cultural significance embedded in the stories. Oral tradition, dance, and live performances are traditional storytelling mediums with a limited reach beyond the immediate community. This can hinder the spread of indigenous stories to a broader audience, limiting opportunities for cultural exchange and understanding.

Motivation

Personally, I have been deeply impacted by these stories, actively participating in them and being in awe of the stark contrast between the rituals of Brahmanic deities and Pre-Brahmanic spirits/deities. The utilization of items such as fish, meat, alcohol, and beedi, which are considered Tamsik food and are seldom included in religious rituals, fascinated me. Being from a coastal region myself, I have made attempts to capture the sight of these Rakhandars at night and was equally terrified in the process. Indian religions diverge from the typical emphasis on a binary dualism of good versus evil, as seen in many other cultures. In these religions, certain fearsome and undead beings are actually worshipped and revered, while conversely, deities like goddess Kali are depicted as formidable entities adorned with skull garlands and skirts made of severed legs.[3]. This inherent duality within the belief system captivated me as I grew up, and eventually, I wholeheartedly embraced this culture with all its idiosyncrasies and peculiarities. The stories surrounding these entities were undeniably eerie and enthralling, making them an irresistible fascination for a devoted horror enthusiast like myself.

Intervention

To overcome the limitations of traditional indigenous storytelling,



incorporating modern storytelling mediums, such as literature, films, digital media, or interactive platforms like video games, can help preserve and share indigenous narratives more effectively while addressing language barriers and cultural context and widening the audience reach. By leveraging these mediums alongside traditional storytelling practices, indigenous cultures can find new avenues to maintain, revive, and transmit their rich heritage to future generations and a global audience.

In a world facing rapid population growth, migratory processes, and globalisation, there is an increasing interest in supporting intercultural education. [4] One effective way to foster intercultural understanding and learning is through the medium of video games. By creating an immersive virtual environment centred around Rakhandar culture, players can engage in an interactive and educational experience that transcends traditional boundaries. Within this virtual world, users will encounter moral dilemmas, learn about towering issues, participate in local offerings, and experience the significance of community dependencies.



Research

Secondary Research

Imagine my excitement. I got an opportunity to realise my childhood obsession with stories surrounding spirits, deities and demigods. I turned to the available literature on the subject. What I discovered was a departure from the conventional sources of scholarly research. Instead, I found myself navigating the uncharted digital landscape, where a diverse array of resources awaited my exploration.

Blogs

Amongst the trove of information, I uncovered a significant presence of online blogs. These platforms served as digital repositories of knowledge, where enthusiasts and devotees shared their insights, experiences, and interpretations of this ancient tradition. Excerpts:

Excerpt 1

"A Vetaal (or Betaal in Hindi) is considered to be the King of the spirits. The spirits (pishachh) are considered to bow down to and obey the Vetaal. A vetaal is generally summoned by the priest (bhagat) in case of



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What AI thinks he looks like

Using Midjourney

Prompts

Rakhandar, Goan, Demigod, Village God, Character design, folklore, Rakshas, Devchar, cinematic composition



possession, and it is believed that the Vetaal enters the body of the priest and drives the spirit out of the possessed person. The spirit has no option but to obey his King and leave the body of the possessed. In local lingo, it is also called 'Vetoba' and has temples dedicated to it."[5]

"Devchar spirit is considered to be of the Shudra caste. A person who dies soon after marriage is considered to become a Devchar. This spirit resides on all four sides of a village, hence possibly the word 'char' i.e four, is included in its name. This spirit can be appeased and pleased by making it an annual offering of Coconut, Sugar and Chicken. It is considered that if a Devchar is made happy, he will protect the community from all harm that comes their way."[5]

Excerpt 2

"Generally, Devchars are considered to be benevolent spirits, known for their shape-shifting ability, but they are also notorious for creating a nuisance for people. Thus if someone is a troublemaker, then it is asked in jest, "Has Devchar possessed you?" Although feared by children, elders know Devchar is a harmless and also foolish spirit who can be easily tricked. The tale shows how the memory of spirit-god is kept alive through folktales."[6]

Excerpt 3

“Every time I visited my grandparents’ house in Salcette Goa, I would accompany Thomas, who worked in our house, to the shrine outside the village. In reality, there was no temple or a shrine or even an idol at the spot, but a huge Banyan tree with a hollow base which looked like it was the entrance into a tiny cave. Unlike other temples where there is an idol which is decorated with flowers and perfumes, and the place is buzzing with devotees, this shrine was stark, empty and devoid of any decorations. However, there were signs that oil lamps were being lit regularly as dark soot had blackened the roots of the Banyan tree.

Every Wednesday, we would walk up to the village boundary where the tree was located with a bottle of country liquor and a roti or bread made of husk with a preparation of meat placed on top. We would also carry a small bottle of oil to light the lamp. I had also seen people leaving leather shoes and rough woollen shawls (kambal) under this tree. Thomas would light the lamp and then ask me to place the food and liquor at the base of the tree. Our offerings were always made after sunset. Before leaving, we would fold our hands in reverence, circumambulate the tree once and quietly walk away without talking. Thomas would warn me not to look behind.

Using Midjourney

Prompts

Dark, boding, atmospheric, the shrine outside the village, huge Banyan tree with a hollow base, this shrine was stark, empty and devoid of any decorations.

What AI thinks he looks like

Using Midjourney



Prompts

Rakhandar, Goan, Demigod, Village God, Character design, folklore, Raksho, Devchar, cinematic composition

What AI thinks he looks like

Using Midjourney



Prompts

Rakhandar, Goan, Demigod, Village God, Character design, is believed to wear a white dhoti, carry a bamboo stick, has dark black colored skin, nature, red lips.

Curious about the entire proceedings, I once asked my granny: “For whom do we carry this food?” She said, “He is our Rakhno.” Rakhno in the language of the region (Konkani) means protector. A guardian spirit. For us, Rakhno was a village spirit who protected all of us. We worshiped him and, at the same time, feared him.

Excerpt 4

No one knew how he looked, but there were many opinions — some said that he was a tall man who was dressed like a shepherd. He wore a woollen shawl on his shoulders and carried a wooden staff. Some believed that he carried a sword, rode a horse and always moved with a band of followers. What everyone agreed on was that he had a fearsome gaze and that if you looked into his eyes, you would either end up dead or crazy.”[7]

Excerpt 5

“Then it was one night, all of a sudden, say maybe at about 11 pm, I could distinctly hear the loud barking of the dogs in the neighbourhood. Out of curiosity, I went to the window to see, but nothing could catch my sight. It was then that I could hear a sound as if someone was tapping a stick on the road, and the sound seemed to pass by. Though I had focused my eyes on

the road, I couldn’t really see what the dogs seemed to bark at. It continued until the stick hit the road almost 4-5 times until everything seemed so silent again.

For a minute, I shrugged the thought off, thinking it to be my imagination. But the next night, the same thing could be heard again, the dogs barking, followed by the sound which seemed to be like someone who passed by while tapping the stick on the road at the same time. Since then, every day, these same things are heard. Even as I am writing this, I can still hear the sounds.

When I asked my roommate if she could hear the same, she said yeah, even she could hear at times. Upon discussing with my friends about this, they say that in Goa, every village or city has a protector known as the “Rakandhar” who roams around the village protecting it.

According to my friends, it’s the Rakandhar’s passing by”[8]

Excerpt 6

“People who break the law or destroy his land suffer the brunt of his fury. There are special traditions that are almost paganistic but ritualistically practised to avoid disfavour with this legend. These traditions

would differ from village to village. In some places sur, kharem and pao are offered, while others might offer rott (rice roti) and, still others, the sacrifice of fowl. The place of offering would be borders of villages, bridges and fields. His pathway is as sacred as his comfort. People believe that his pathway was not to be interfered with. No building or any other development was allowed in these areas.”[9]



Audio and Video Narratives

Additionally, I encountered a wealth of audio narratives uploaded on the Youtube platform, where captivating tales of Rakhandar and its worshippers came to life through the spoken word. These auditory journeys offered an immersive experience, transporting listeners into the dark nights of the Konkan. The power of storytelling, intertwined with the rich cultural heritage, allows the listeners to visualize and connect with the nuances of Rakhandar worship in a profound way.

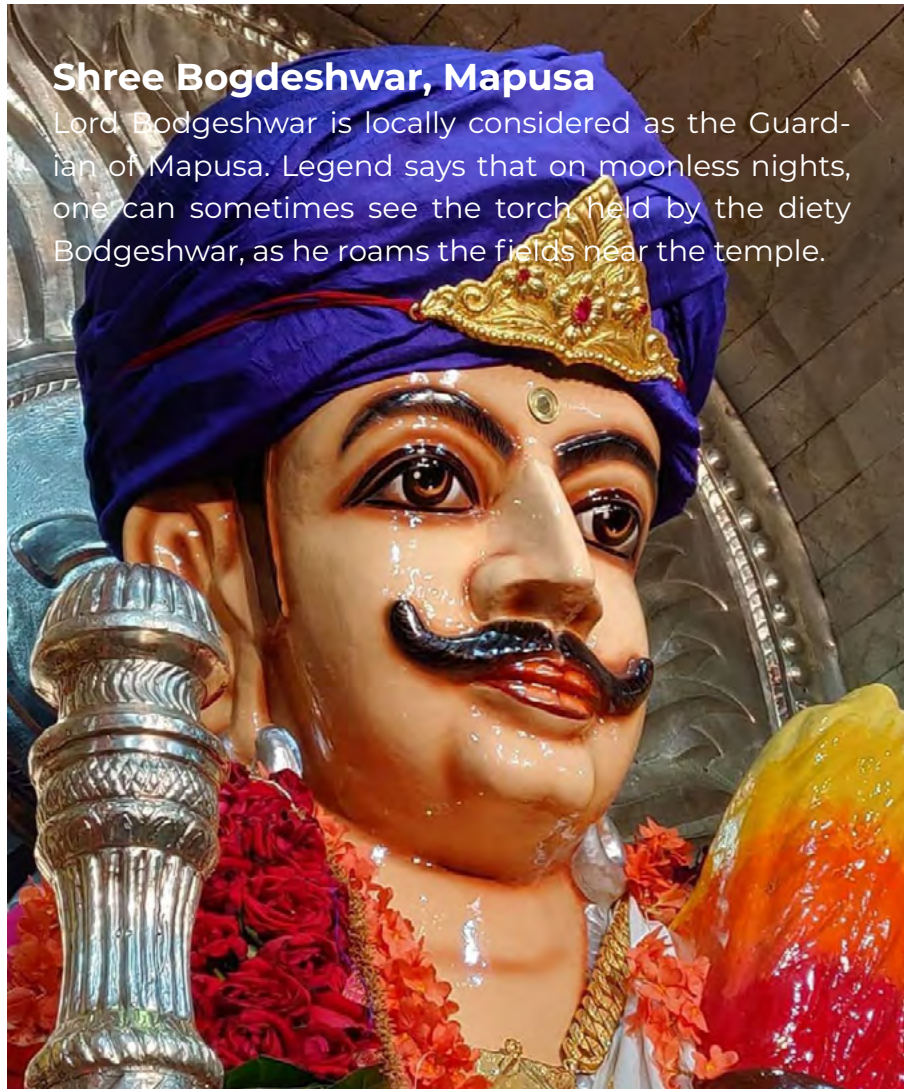
There are numerous religious songs, bhajans, and kirtans dedicated to Rakhandar. These compositions are regularly sung in prominent Rakhandar temples and shrines.

Excerpt 1

An excerpt from a song related to the revered Rakhandar Shri Bogdeshwar of Mapusa, Goa, goes as follows:

“Deva Bogdeshwara, Rakhandara dhavat yo re bap, Kripa kara”, which translates to “Oh God Bogdeshwara, Rakhandara, please come fast, oh father, bless us.”[10]

This verse beautifully portrays the role of Rakhandar as a local patriarch, elevated to the stature of a dependable deity.



Shree Bogdeshwar, Mapusa

Lord Bogdeshwar is locally considered as the Guardian of Mapusa. Legend says that on moonless nights, one can sometimes see the torch held by the diety Bogdeshwar, as he roams the fields near the temple.

Excerpt 2

"Just like Rakhandar takes care of the villagers, they also expect certain rules to be followed in return. These rules serve as guidelines for maintaining a harmonious relationship with a protective spirit. They are as follows:

Respect the village: *It is important not to litter along the path that Rakhandar traverses. Keeping the surroundings clean shows reverence for the spirit and the land it protects.*

Avoid obstacles: *Do not sleep or place any objects that obstruct Rakhandar's route. Clearing the way ensures smooth passage for the spirit and signifies cooperation with its presence.*

Maintain tranquillity: *If one happens to witness Rakhandar at night, it is advised to refrain from talking or shouting. Loud noises can disturb the spirit and put it in a foul mood, disrupting the tranquillity of the surroundings.*

In case someone unintentionally violates these rules, Rakhandar may visit outside their house as a warning. The sound of ghongroos rattling and footsteps can serve as a reminder to adhere to the established norms. However, if the rules are repeatedly broken, Rakhandar may take further action and administer ap-

proprate punishments to the defaulter, emphasizing the significance of respecting the spirit's boundaries and expectations.”[11]

A contemporary perspective on why these stories might have been propagated is that they could have served as a means to promote cleanliness within the village. By instilling a sense of respect and fear for the Rakhandar, who is seen as a protective spirit, people may have been encouraged to adhere to certain behaviours, such as not littering the Rakhandar's route. The belief in the consequences of violating these rules, such as receiving a warning visit from the Rakhandar or facing punishment for repeated offences, could have incentivized villagers to maintain cleanliness and uphold community standards. In this way, the stories surrounding the Rakhandar served as a cultural mechanism to promote desirable behaviours and reinforce the importance of cleanliness within the community.

Books

During my research visit to Margao, my hometown in Goa, I had the privilege of exploring a local bookshop renowned for its extensive collection of literature on regional subjects. To my delight, I discovered literary works dedicated to the exploration of supernatural entities in India. Particularly intriguing was the abun-



Ghosts monsters and demons of india

An encyclopedia of evil entities and folkloric fiends from across India, from Ladakh to Kerala, Lakshadweep to Nagaland, Naraka to Tuchenkwaka



Devchar

“Devchar, also called Zagevoilo or Bandevoilo, is a spirit of the Konkan coast. He is variously described as a guardian deity, a devil, a mischievous spirit, the ghost of a man who died soon after marriage, or as a forest-dweller who lures people to follow him. Those who do follow Devchar into the woods are sometimes found dead, other times alive; if they survive, they are likely to be discovered far from home, unable to explain how they got there.

The Catholic Church of Goa translated the Portuguese Diablo (“Devil”) into Konkani as Devchar, so the spirit has often been equated with Christian devils, or with Satan himself. However, many Hindus, and those with syncretic beliefs, reject this. Instead, they revere Devchar as a protector who resides at the four corners of a village boundary. This Devchar is propitiated with offerings of feni (the local Goan liquor made from coconut or cashew). He also likes toddy, leavened bread, and country cigarettes. These offerings are sometimes left quietly behind Christian crosses, such as those placed at the sites of road accidents.

Devchar is also associated with Rakhondar, another guardian deity of Konkan villages; with Betal, the king of ghosts (see under Vetāl); and with the demon-god Maru.

In the Spring, during Shigmo, Betal temples hold a festival called Gadyachi Zatra. During this festival, in the middle of the night, Devchar is said to appear as a faceless, shadowy form. He delights the crowds by holding flames in his palms and walking in the air. Cameras are strictly forbidden at the festival, and there are several modern legends about photographers falling unconscious or deathly ill.

Male devotees, called gade, play hide-and-seek with Devchar on the nights of Shigmo. They roam through the forest following his torch, or else go searching for another gade whom the spirit has captured and hidden. On the last night of the festival, the gade visit cremation grounds and cemeteries, gather up bits of corpses, bring them back and dance with them for some time, before finally returning them to the graveyard. There are stories of Gade disappearing during this festival, or being so well hidden by the Devchar that they are only found the following year.

According to a belief current among the Kumbri Marathi tribe of Karnataka, the Devchar are usually kind spirits. However, if taboos pertaining to purity and cleanliness are not followed, they can cause great affliction. In the Kumbri Marathi pantheon of demons, the term Devchar is also applied to certain types of Balishtamaru, in particular the Rav, Devati, and Akashmurchi.” [12]

Maru

“Maru is a demon god of the Konkan coast who lives on hilltops and in banyan trees. He is sometimes associated with Devchar, and also with the deity Kshetrapala, the guardian of the farmland (see Khetor). If worshipped properly, he can be a village protector; if insulted, he can be very dangerous.

He is propitiated with small clay horses.

Among the Kumbri Marathi people of Karnataka, Maru (plural: Marava) has the more general meaning of “spirit”. In this belief, there are many kinds of Marava, including Barochemarava or benevolent spirits, Padosomarava, and Balishtamarava.” [13]

Rakhondar

“The Rakhondar is a (usually) benevolent guardian spirit, a protector of villages along the Konkan coast. He is associated with the spirit Devchar or with the Holy Ghost of the Catholic Trinity. Rakhondar walks the village late at night, on the lookout for any enemies. If someone is lost, he may appear to them as an old man with a lathi, and lead them home. When they turn to thank him, they find he has vanished in a puff of smoke.”[14]

Goa: The Betaal Deity

"In Goa and parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka, the god Betal is worshiped. He is said to be the king of ghosts. He is a powerful protector, since all evil spirits obey his command. His idol appears as an emaciated man with large fangs, holding a sword and wearing a garland of human heads. Traditionally, he was always naked, though today the idol is some- times dressed in a dhoti.

Offerings to Shri Betal are made in the form of liquor, meat, cigars, and Kolhapuri chappals (leather sandals), which the god is said to wear when he roams the town in the dead of night. Betal shrines are usually constructed without a permanent roof over the deity, as it is believed this will bring bad luck.

One legend says that Betal arrived in Goa after conquering twelve kingdoms. He was about to conquer Poinguinim as the thirteenth and the inhabitants to the sword, but a local chieftain named Nagizan intervened. He asked Betal to stay and reside in the village as its guardian. Betal agreed, on the condition that a sacrificial offering be made: he should be given a two-legged animal, a four-legged animal, a ten-legged animal, and a fetus.

Nagizan agreed and offered Betal a chicken, a buffalo, a crab, and an areca nut palm sprout (which has an

uncanny resemblance to a human fetus). Thus Betal was tricked into staying on as protector.

While Betal is generally thought to be merely an alternative pronunciation of Vetral, there is at least one shrine in Dharbandora Taluk of Goa where Betal and Vetral are worshipped as two separate gods, with their idols joined at the feet. Here Shri Betal is considered an incarnation of Shiva, while Shri Vetral is the ghost god.

The Betal temples of Goa celebrate a festival every three years known as Gadyachi Zatra. During one such festival, four male devotees (called gade) are pierced through the back with hooks, suspended from a wheel high above the ground, and rotated. It is said that in ancient times, the wheel was rotated until one of these men fell to their death, and his body was given as a sacrifice to Betal; but that practice has been banned. During the Gadyachi Zatra, the gade play a game of hide and seek with the devil called Devchar. Fifty-two devotees run in all directions while he appears and does tricks with fire. Worship of Betal may be very ancient, originating with the Adivasi tribes of the Konkan Coast or possibly from far beyond. The Raji tribe of Uttarakhand worship a god named Betal too, and there is a Betal temple in Srinagar, Kashmir as well."[15]



Primary Research

The primary research for this study involved firsthand accounts gathered through personal interactions with individuals who had either heard about Rakhandar or had direct experiences related to this fascinating entity. Additionally, a visit was made to the Rakhandar shrine, located in close proximity to my residence. Through these interactions and observations, a wide range of narratives surrounding Rakhandar worship were collected, encompassing both chilling and humorous anecdotes. The inclusion of firsthand accounts in this research contributes to the richness and authenticity of the findings, providing a nuanced perspective on the multifaceted nature of Rakhandar worship. The interviews were completely informal, and they were only asked about any experiences with Rakhandar. The goal was to get interesting stories surrounding this entity which could further shape my narrative.

Excerpt 1

"Oh, definitely! So, there was this incident that happened while I was riding my bike through Mudgeri one night. Picture this: no headlights, pitch black darkness, and my bike suddenly decided to break down right at a crossroads where three paths met. Talk about bad luck!

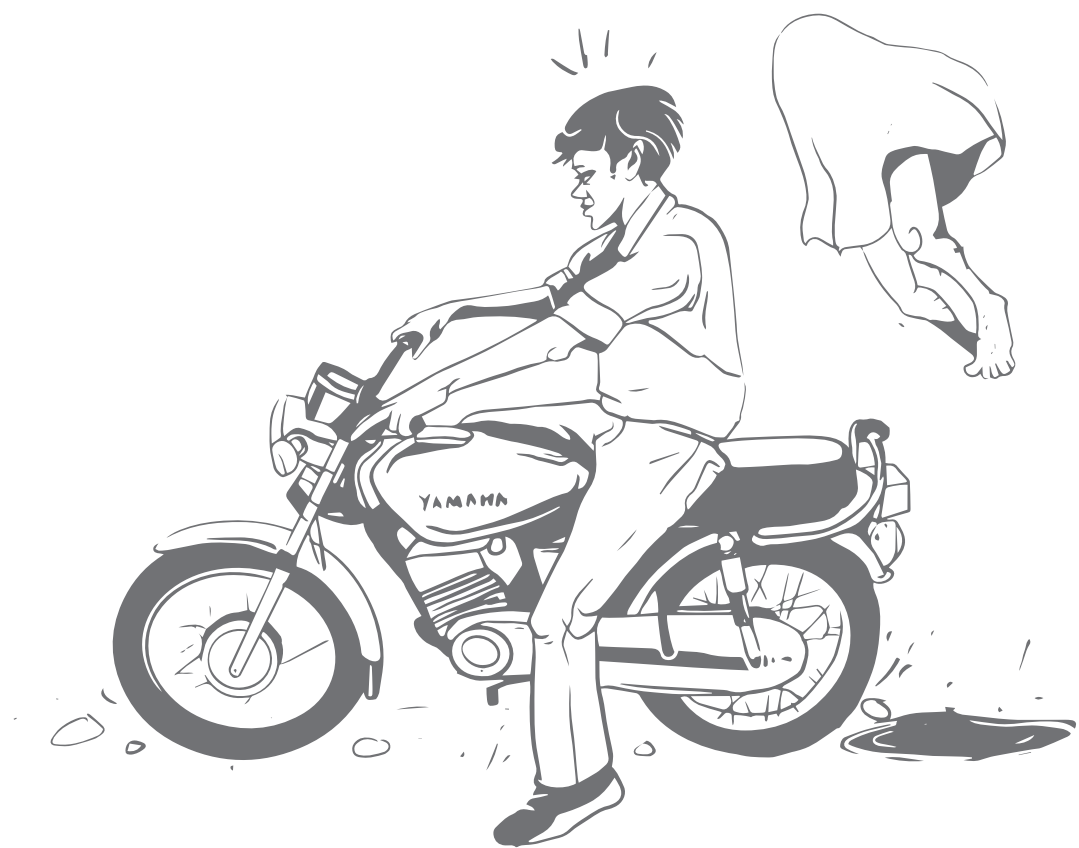
As I was standing there, feeling a bit spooked, an old man appeared out of nowhere. He seemed insistent on sitting on my bike. At first, I politely refused, thinking it was a strange request. But before I knew it, he had hopped onto the bike without any warning, and then just as quickly, he jumped off.

I can't even begin to describe the fright I felt at that moment. My heart started racing, and I unleashed a fury of kicks on the bike's kickstart until it finally roared back to life. I wasted no time in zooming away from there, trying to put as much distance as possible between me and that eerie encounter."

- 32-year-old male(translated from Konkani)

Excerpt 2

"I haven't had any experience, but I visited a shrine. This temple was tucked away, adjacent to a larger and more popular temple in Goa. The shrine itself was crafted from rocks. The walls were covered in a layer



of soot.

But what really caught my attention was a sign that stood out boldly: “No Woman Allowed.” Naturally, I couldn’t resist the urge to find out more. I approached the temple caretaker and asked about the intriguing restriction.

He shared with me a captivating belief associated with the temple. In the early years, pregnant women and menstruating women experienced discomfort or pain if they entered the shrine. Due to such repeated incidents, the decision was made to restrict women from worshipping inside.”

- 23-year-old male(translated from Konkani)

Excerpt 3

“Oh, let me tell you about this spirit we have near our house called Brahmyacho. Brahmyacho roughly means the one who serves Brahma. He is apparently always dressed in the whitest white dhoti, and he has this peculiar routine of wandering through our backyard to take a bath in our well late at night. Can you imagine?”

My grandmother used to share these stories with us. She would often wake up in the middle of the night and hear water splashing in the well. It was always

around 3 am, like clockwork. She found it both fascinating and a bit spooky.

One night, our grand-uncle had a bit too much to drink and ended up passing out near our backyard. When we couldn’t find him the next morning, panic started to set in. We searched high and low, calling out his name, but no luck. Then, out of the blue, we heard this strange muffled sound coming from the well.

Naturally, we rushed over there, filled with a mix of curiosity and concern. And guess what we found? Our uncle, looking absolutely terrified, perched on a small step inside the well! Can you imagine the shock? It turns out he passed out on the Brahmyacho’s route, and the next thing he remembers, someone dropped him in the well. Needless to say, he stopped drinking after that!”

- 60-year-old Female(translated from Konkani)

Excerpt 4

“There are tales we have about these creatures called Naas that roam around our area at night. They’re massive, towering over the trees, and you can hear them approaching from a distance with their distinct chann chann sound, like the jingling of ghongroos, mixed with the stomping of bamboo.

Legend has it that if someone, knowingly or unknowingly, walks through their legs, the Naas will swiftly close their legs, crushing the unfortunate soul. It's a chilling thought, really. There have been stories of people who went for a walk in the night and never returned. One person from Hosali village, for instance, went missing after encountering these Naas. Another individual came back, but something changed in him—he stopped talking altogether.

Despite their intimidating presence, the Naas actually patrol the village and take care of its cows, animals, and people who show them respect. They have a protective role in the community. However, we must tread carefully and always be respectful of them because they can quickly get angry. It's like walking on thin ice, you know?

Back in the day, sightings of Naas were more common. Villagers used to hear their distinct sounds and encounter them frequently. But nowadays, it's become rare to hear about Naas's sightings. It's been years since I last heard any stories about them. I remember when I was a kid, though, these tales used to circulate a lot."

- 60-year-old Female(translated from Konkani)

Analysis



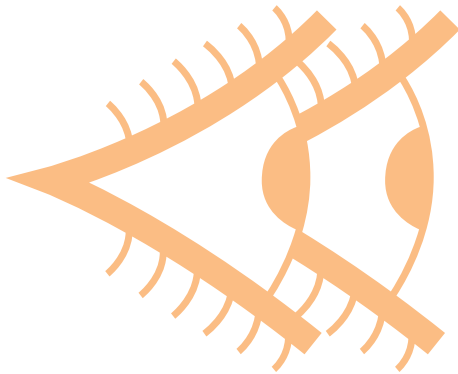
Origin

Adivasi tribes of the Konkan Coast or possibly older.
Holy Ghost of the Catholic Trinity
Demon god of the Konkan coast
Spirits who were tricked into serving god



Traits

A benevolent guardian with a temper
Occasionally playful or prankish
Has a long memory for offences
Believes in warnings before punishment
Adheres to strict guidelines, dislikes rule-breakers
Prone to being deceived on occasion
Intimidating presence with a compassionate nature
A morally ambiguous entity
Shows affection for creatures, acts as their safeguard
King of spirits
Follows a set schedule and dislikes disruptions
Enjoys indulging in meat, bread and alcoholic beverages



Perception

Scary spirit
Devil: Portuguese Diablo ("Devil")
Wouldn't want to face him
Dependable during tough times
Respected yet feared
Respect his boundaries
Reverance
A tall, towering supernatural entity
Environmentally conscious
Product of a person dying soon after marriage



Unclear Identity

Unclear identity
Maru
Vetaal
Devchar
Naas
Brahmyacho
Just a Wise elder?



Activity

Paganistic, practised rituals
Bread, alcohol, Local cigarettes, Blanket, bread
offered
Avoid Women's intervention in rituals
Cleanliness and Purity ensured
A rarity in Rakhandar sightings
An essential part of folk tales

Conclusion

Rakhandar appears to be a revered and feared guardian spirit in the Goan region, based on the information provided. Rakhandar's beliefs reflect a complex blend of local traditions, religious influences, and cultural practices.

Rakhandar's rules and rituals emphasize the importance of cleanliness, respect for boundaries, and adherence to certain behaviors within the village. To appease and honour Rakhandar, devotees make offerings such as food, spirits, and other items. Failure to abide by these guidelines may result in warnings, visits, or even punishment from the spirit.

Rakhandar's role as a guardian spirit can be viewed culturally as a way to reinforce community values and maintain social order. The belief in Rakhandar's presence, as well as the potential consequences for violating established norms, may have served to promote desirable behaviours such as cleanliness and respect for communal spaces. Rakhandar, in general, represents an intriguing aspect of Konkan folklore and belief system, embodying the intersection of cultural practices, spirituality, and community dynamics.

Similar Projects

Kantara(2022)

In the captivating movie “Kantara,” viewers are immersed in a timeless clash between modern development and cherished traditions. The film beautifully explores the delicate balance between greed and ambition, captivating audiences with its thought-provoking storyline. At the heart of the narrative lies the fascinating concept of Bhoota Kola, local guardian spirits in Northern Karnataka, whom the villagers deeply respect and consult.

As the plot unfolds, tensions escalate over the ownership of the villagers’ lands, with powerful individuals driven by a desire for personal gain. The struggle to bring these once-free lands under government control creates a compelling backdrop for the film’s central conflict. Throughout the story, the spiritual presence of Panjurli, a benevolent entity, and the malevolent protector spirit known as Guliga take center stage, exerting a profound influence on the unfolding events.

“Kantara” offers a delightful and contemplative viewing experience, drawing audiences into a world where ancient beliefs and contemporary ambitions collide. The film skillfully delves into the



intricate dynamics between tradition and progress, raising important questions about the value of preserving cultural heritage in the face of rapid societal change.

However, both projects explore the theme of the coexistence of supernatural beings with human communities and the impact of their presence on the lives of the people. They shed light on the intricate relationship between humans and these guardian spirits, emphasizing the cultural significance and belief systems associated with them.

Bramble the Mountain King (2023)

Bramble The Mountain King takes players on a harrowing journey through a captivating realm influenced by haunting Nordic folklore. Prepare to embark on an unforgettable adventure as you delve into the beautiful yet treacherous land of Bramble, all in a desperate attempt to save your sister. Brace yourself for encounters with grotesque creatures that inhabit this twisted world, and navigate through its wondrous landscape to ensure your survival.

Both the game and the legend of Rakhandar draw inspiration from folklore and mythology. Bramble The Mountain King is influenced by dark Nordic fables, while Rakhandar is rooted in the beliefs and traditions of Goan villages. They both incorporate elements of supernatural beings, spiritual entities, and local guardian spirits. Bramble The Mountain King and the Rakhandar legend, the main objective is to embark on a perilous journey to rescue someone. In the game, the player's goal is to save their sister, while in the legend, Rakhandar serves as a protector who warns and punishes those who violate the village's rules.

Both the game and the Rakhandar legend share a dark and atmospheric tone. They create an immersive experience that blends elements of beauty and danger, evoking a sense of mystery and suspense.



Bramble - The Mountain King

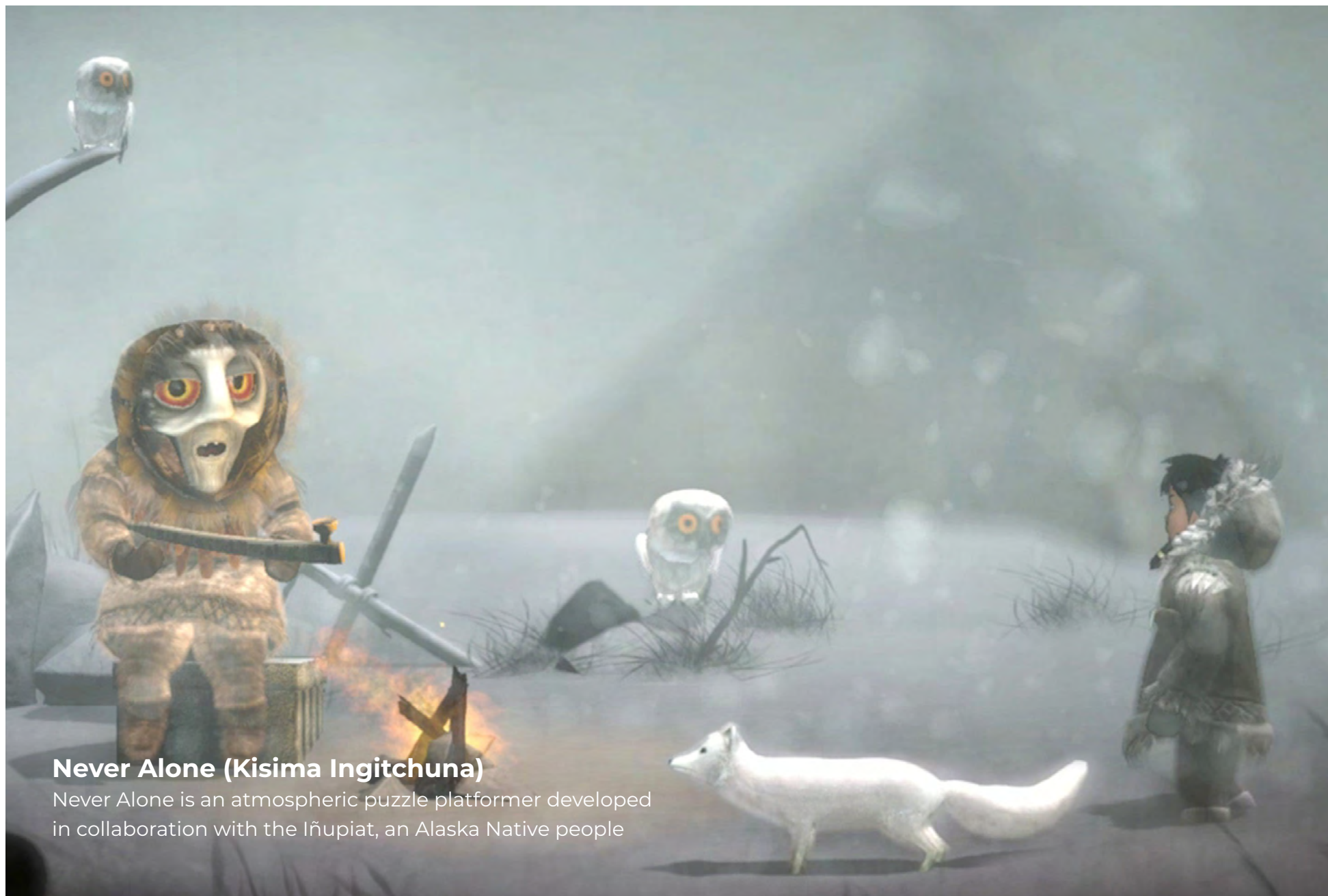
Bramble The Mountain King is a grim adventure set in a world inspired by dark, Nordic fables.

Never Alone - Kisima Injitchuna (2015)

Never Alone, also known as Kisima Injitchuna ("I am not alone"), is a captivating puzzle-platform adventure video game created by Upper One Games and published by E-Line Media. It draws inspiration from the traditional Iñupiaq tale known as "Kunuksaayuka," initially recorded by the renowned storyteller Robert Nasruk Cleveland in his collection Stories of the Black River People. The game invites players to embark on a journey through eight chapters, navigating a richly depicted world while switching between the perspectives of Nuna, an Iñupiaq girl, and her faithful companion, an Arctic fox.

Never Alone fosters a deep appreciation for indigenous storytelling and folklore, offering players a glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of the Iñupiaq community. By delving into the tale of "Kunuksaayuka," players embark on a personal quest for survival and gain a greater understanding of the power of friendship, cooperation, and the enduring spirit of resilience.

Overall, Never Alone - Kisima Injitchuna is a testament to the importance of preserving and sharing traditional stories. It provides an immersive and captivating experience that bridges the gap between gaming and cultural exploration.



Never Alone (Kisima Ingitchuna)

Never Alone is an atmospheric puzzle platformer developed in collaboration with the Iñupiat, an Alaska Native people

Swadesh (2004)

Set against the backdrop of rural India, Swades tells a compelling story of self-discovery, social responsibility, and the power of grassroots efforts. Disillusioned with his life in the United States, Mohan Bhargava revisits his roots in India. He is driven by a deep sense of connection and a desire to uplift the underprivileged and marginalised communities in the village of Charanpur, where he spent his early childhood.



Both Swades and the stories of Rakhandar emphasise the value of rural communities and their contributions to society. They shed light on rural India's rich cultural heritage, resilience, and simplicity. These narratives serve as reminders to appreciate and respect the rural way of life, acknowledging the importance of sustainable development, education, and empowerment for the nation's overall progress.

Design Process

Stage 1

I started with detailed research, reviewing different materials available on this topic. I also explored the Mhadei River project dispute between Karnataka and the Government.

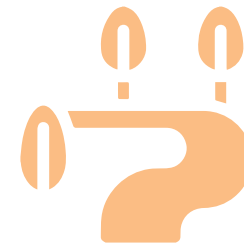
The Mhadei River

The Mhadei River dispute is a longstanding conflict between the Indian states of Goa and Karnataka over water sharing from the Mhadei (also known as Mandovi) River. The Mhadei River originates in the Western Ghats of Karnataka and flows through Goa before joining the Arabian Sea. Both states have competing interests and differing opinions regarding the utilization of the river's water resources. The Mhadei River dispute is a longstanding conflict between the Indian states of Goa and Karnataka over the sharing of water from the Mhadei (also known as Mandovi) River. The Mhadei River originates in the Western Ghats of Karnataka and flows through Goa before joining the Arabian Sea. Both states have competing interests and differing opinions regarding the utilization of the river's water resources.

The conflict primarily revolves around Karnataka's

plans to construct dams and divert water from the Mhadei River for irrigation and drinking water purposes in its own territory. Goa, on the other hand, opposes these plans, expressing concerns about potential adverse impacts on its ecological balance, biodiversity, and water supply. Goa argues that such diversion of water by Karnataka would disrupt the natural flow of the river, leading to adverse consequences for its fragile ecosystems and the livelihoods of local communities dependent on the river.

The Mhadei River dispute serves as a poignant reminder that environmental consciousness and the belief in protective spirits like Rakhandar can go hand in hand. By striving to safeguard the river and its ecosystem, the villagers could demonstrate their commitment to both their cultural beliefs and the sustainable future of their village. Understanding Rakhandar's love for the land transcends human boundaries and extends to the preservation of the natural environment.



Why should we care?

The proposed project poses a significant threat to the delicate ecology of Goa, affecting both the land and marine life as well as the hydrological system. The river plays a vital role in the region's ecosystem by carrying alluvial deposits during the monsoon season, enriching the soil and supporting agricultural productivity. With the project's implementation, this natural process will be disrupted, leading to a decline in fertility and agricultural output.

Additionally, the mixing zones where fresh and saline water converge will experience increased salinity levels, directly impacting the diverse marine species within Goa. This ecological imbalance will have adverse effects on the local biodiversity and disrupt the delicate balance of the coastal ecosystem.

Moreover, the proposed project will have social and cultural implications. Riparian communities that depend on the rivers for their livelihoods will face significant challenges, including reduced land fertility and limited food resources. The rivers hold great cultural significance, with numerous rituals and community activities centered around them. The loss of these traditions and the disruption of the community's way of life would be a profound cultural setback for the region.

It is crucial to consider the long-term consequences and explore sustainable alternatives that prioritize ecological preservation and cultural heritage in order to protect the unique and fragile ecosystem of Goa.

Narrative

I had planned to design a non-linear interactive story centred around Rakhandar culture, comprising two distinct parts. The first part immersed the player in the captivating world of Rakhandar Rituals, allowing them to experience and anticipate the arrival of Rakhandar. Through various interactions with the villagers, the player gained insights into the nature and significance of Rakhandar.

The focal point of the narrative was the rituals themselves, which involved offering peculiar items to the deity. These rituals sparked engaging conversations between the main character and the villagers, deepening their understanding of Rakhandar's importance. As part one drew to a close, the main character had collected all the necessary objects for the ritual, which were then presented to the matron. This segment of the story heavily emphasized Rakhandar's benevolent nature, highlighting its role as the protector and nurturer of the village.

The second part delved into the contrasting aspect of Rakhandar's duality. Set in an atmospheric and horror-inspired environment, the main character encounters a series of chilling events. Eventually, they reached the sacred Rakhandar shrine and confronted the developers who intended to construct a dam

in Rakhandar's territory and destroy the surrounding forest. A climactic confrontation unfolded, with Rakhandar manifesting as a colossal supernatural entity, frightening off the contractors who posed a threat to the main character's aunt. The player's choices led to two distinct endings: confronting the goons head-on or devising a plan to rescue the aunt without causing harm. Opting for confrontation resulted in the goons destroying the shrine and its environs, inciting Rakhandar's wrath and leading to the destruction of the contractors and their equipment. Choosing an alternative approach allowed Rakhandar to intimidate the goons, driving them away without inflicting any damage to the natural surroundings. This emphasized the intriguing duality inherent in Rakhandar's character.

Unity Workflow

I decided to utilize Unity as the game development platform for this project. My familiarity with the Unity environment, as well as my knowledge of game design and scripting using C#, played a significant role in this choice. I had previously worked on a game development project during the semester, which further enhanced my understanding of Unity.

While Unity may have slightly lower graphic performance compared to Unreal, I found that the abundance of online support available for Unity outweighed this drawback. Unity's extensive community and resources provided me with the necessary guidance and assistance throughout the development process. Additionally, Unity is versatile and can be used for game development across various devices, making it a suitable choice for creating an immersive and interactive experience around the Rakhandar culture.

Although I briefly considered Unreal for this project, I realized that its system requirements were quite demanding. My current setup was not optimized for Unreal's high-end gaming requirements, making Unity a more practical and accessible option for my development needs.



In conclusion, the combination of my familiarity with Unity, its extensive online support, and its compatibility with a wide range of devices made it the ideal choice for bringing the world of Rakhandar to life through interactive storytelling.

Map building and terrain sculpting

For the construction of the game environment, I utilized the Terrain Builder package within Unity. This powerful tool allowed me to create intricate landscapes consisting of hills, valleys, and rivers. With careful consideration of the local significance and cultural aspects, I marked specific areas where the player would interact with different characters within the game.

The sculpting process involved shaping the terrain to reflect the importance of these interactions. For instance, I crafted a picturesque riverside mango tree as the focal point of the Rakhandar shrine, symbolizing its sacredness and spiritual connection. Additionally, I sculpted a riverside location for the fishermen, highlighting their role in sourcing fishes for Rakhandar worship. The hills surrounding the village were carefully crafted, emphasizing their proximity to the community and the vital resources provided by the flowing river.

By using the Terrain Builder package, I was able to bring to life a visually captivating and culturally immersive game world. The meticulously designed landscapes not only served as a backdrop for the player's journey but also played a significant role in enhancing the overall storytelling experience.



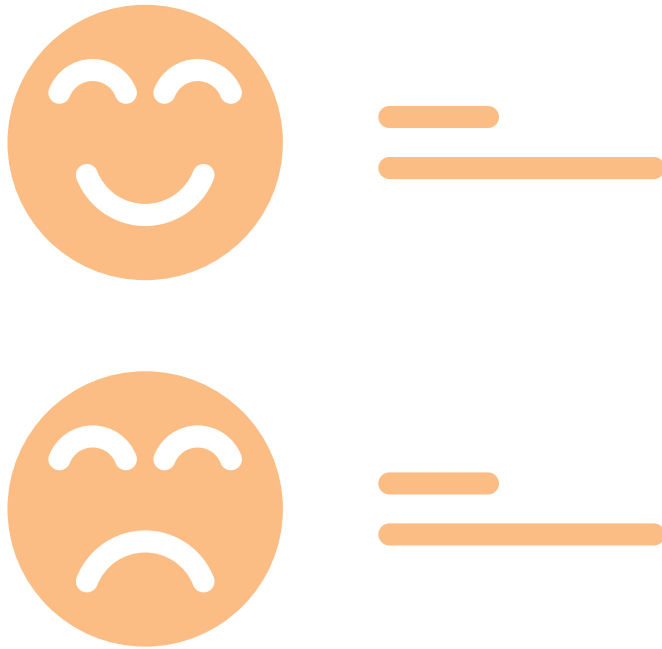
-  Blanket
-  Rakhandar Shrine
-  Alcohol distillery
-  Beedi
-  Fisherman
-  Drowning dog
-  Starting point



Character Design

Character design for the main protagonist, Sarvesh, and the Rakhandar was carefully executed, taking into account their distinctive traits and characteristics. Sarvesh's design was crafted to reflect his role as the central character of the game. His appearance, attire, and body language were meticulously developed to portray his journey and growth throughout the narrative. In contrast, the design of the Rakhandar aimed to capture its essence as a supernatural entity. The visual elements were inspired by the folklore and cultural references associated with Rakhandar. Intricate details were incorporated to highlight its dual nature as a benevolent protector and a fearsome entity.





To optimize time and resources, it was advised to use existing character models instead of creating custom characters from scratch. This decision allowed for more emphasis on refining gameplay mechanics and enhancing the overall player experience.

In order to streamline the game and ensure a more cohesive and polished result, it was recommended to limit the number of endings. This would reduce complexity and enable better resource management, resulting in a more coherent and satisfying gameplay experience.

Stage 1 Feedback

In order to enhance the storytelling aspect of the game, the feedback suggested utilizing storyboarding techniques to visualize the key moments of the story. This approach provided a clearer direction for the development process and helped in conveying the narrative effectively.

Stage 2

The Stage 1 presentation feedback was successfully incorporated into the project. The number of endings was reduced to streamline the gameplay experience, ensuring a more focused and cohesive narrative. Storyboarding techniques were employed to visualize the flow of the game, providing a clear roadmap for its development.

Furthermore, the implementation phase commenced using existing character models from Mixamo. This decision saved time and resources while maintaining the quality and visual appeal of the characters. By utilizing these pre-existing assets, the development process advanced smoothly and efficiently.

The incorporation of the feedback from the Stage 1 presentation demonstrates a commitment to creating a well-designed and engaging game. The adjustments made have enhanced the overall experience, resulting in a more polished and captivating gameplay journey for players.

Character Creator

Character Creator tool proved to be an invaluable resource in the creation of game characters for this project. Its compatibility with Unity and extensive range of

default animations allowed for seamless integration and efficient workflow in animating the characters.

The tool's versatility and customization options enabled me to finely tune the traits of the characters, from their skin color and hair color to their eye colors and facial features. This level of detail helped in creating unique and diverse characters that added depth and realism to the game.

While Character Creator provided an extensive library of clothing options, there was a limitation when it came to finding inbuilt cloth objects that represented traditional Indian attire. However, this challenge was overcome by exploring alternative solutions and incorporating customized cloth objects that better aligned with the cultural representation required for the game.

Overall, Character Creator greatly facilitated the character creation process, offering a wide range of features, animations, and customization options. Its seamless integration with Unity ensured a cohesive and visually appealing experience for players, bringing the game characters to life in a dynamic and engaging manner.

Revised Storyline

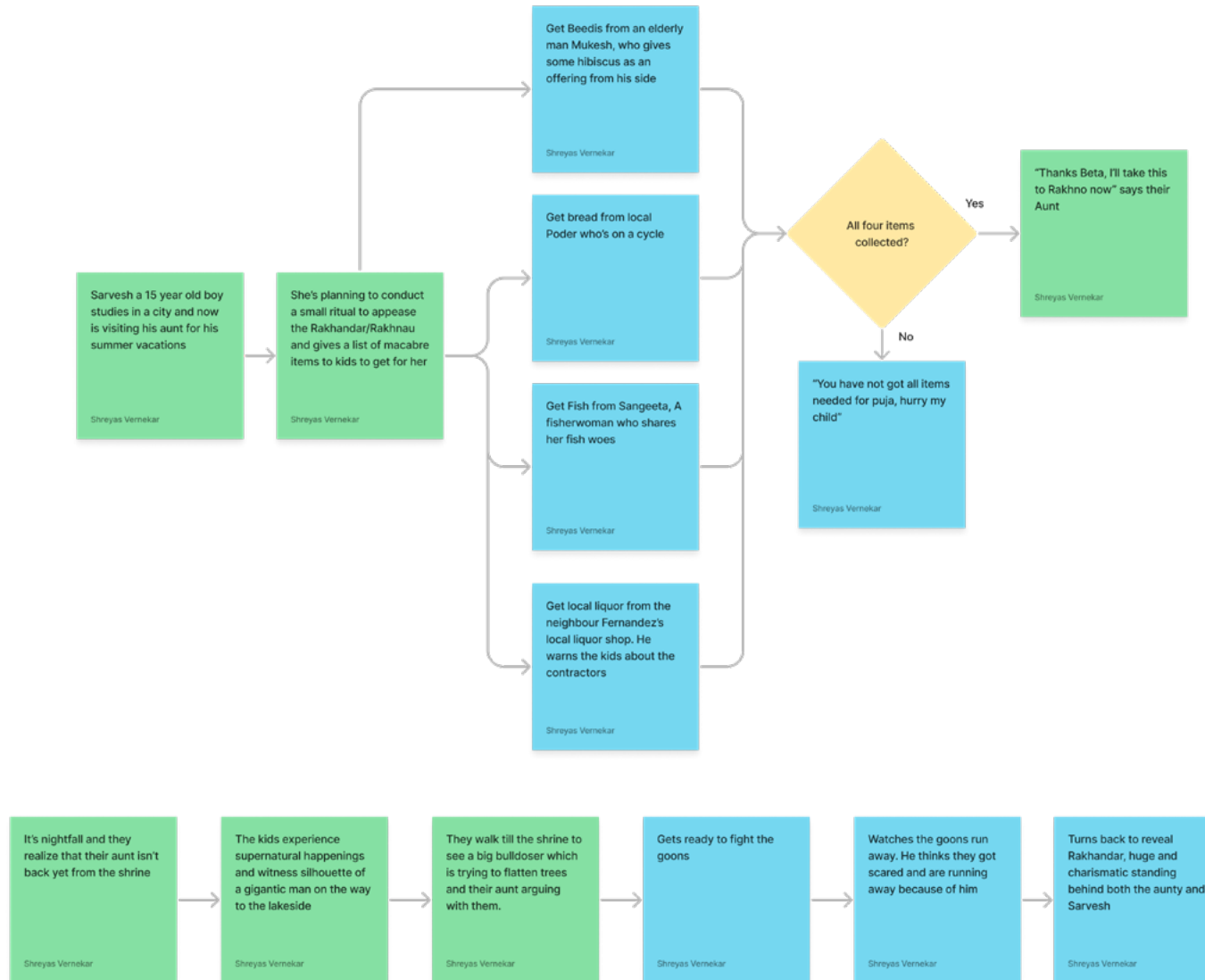
The original journey underwent several changes to enhance the player's experience by maintaining a sense of discovery and curiosity within the game. The decision was made to avoid spoonfeeding the story with excessive detailed background information about the village and other parameters. This approach aims to immerse players in an environment where they actively explore and uncover the narrative elements on their own.

To ensure coherence with the overall narrative and the project's scope, certain events were trimmed. For instance, the encounter with the drowning dog was removed to streamline the gameplay and maintain focus on the main themes and objectives. While the event might have added an emotional element, it was deemed necessary to prioritize the core elements that drive the cultural immersion and moral exploration.

These changes were made to create a more cohesive and engaging experience for players. By allowing them to discover the story and the cultural intricacies of the Konkan region on their own terms, the revised journey aims to foster a greater sense of agency and exploration. Players will have the freedom to make choices, navigate through the narrative, and witness the consequences of their actions, all while preserv-

ing the aura of discovery and curiosity that makes the game experience truly immersive.





Companion Design

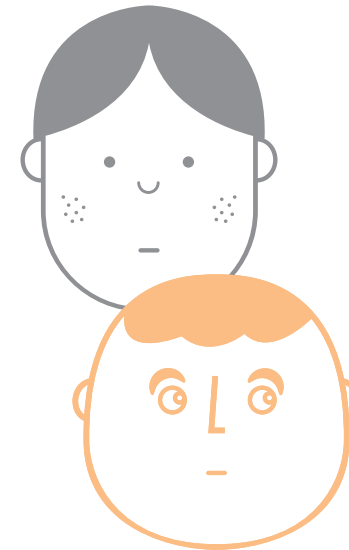
In order to provide Sarvesh, the city boy protagonist, with a guiding companion throughout his village journey, we introduced Pranav as a contrasting character. Pranav, a roughened village boy, was designed to juxtapose Sarvesh's urban background. To bring Pranav to life, an AI Companion agent was implemented.

To enable Pranav's movement and navigation, the NavMesh component in Unity was utilized. This component allowed for the creation of a navigable mesh, accurately representing the terrain's height and incline. By replicating real-life navigable areas, Pranav could seamlessly traverse the village environment, accompanying Sarvesh on his exploration.

To enhance Pranav's personality and eccentric nature, animations were sourced from the Mixamo platform. These animations were carefully selected to exaggerate Pranav's movements, adding a touch of whimsy and charm to his character. This attention to detail ensured that Pranav's animations truly reflected his unique traits and enhanced player engagement.

By incorporating Pranav as an AI Companion agent with realistic navigation and expressive animations, the game achieved a more immersive and dynamic experience. Pranav's contrasting nature to Sarvesh

and his lively animations added depth to the gameplay, fostering a memorable and enjoyable journey through the village.



Local asset creation

To ensure an authentic and immersive experience, several localized assets were explicitly created for the game. These assets, including the Feni distillery and Rakhandar Shrine, were not readily available on other platforms, necessitating their creation from scratch. Blender, a powerful 3D modelling software, was employed for this purpose.

Through the utilization of various tools in Blender, such as cloth simulation, the assets were meticulously crafted to resemble their real-life counterparts closely. Reference photos served as a valuable resource during the asset creation process, allowing for a high level of accuracy and attention to detail.

By investing time and effort into creating these localized assets, the game was able to capture the essence and authenticity of the Rakhandar culture. Players could visually immerse themselves in the Feni distillery and Rakhandar Shrine, enhancing their connection to the game world and enriching their overall experience.





Adding more game elements

In order to enhance player engagement and provide a more immersive experience, I implemented additional interactive elements within the game. These elements went beyond simple player conversations and offered engaging activities for the players to participate in.

One such element was the interaction with the Feni distillery. Players were given the opportunity to explore and interact with the distillery, taking on the task of retrieving a bottle filled with local liquor. This not only added an interactive gameplay element but also provided a glimpse into the traditional process of Feni production, allowing players to engage with the Rakhandar culture actively.

Another engaging element involved the interaction with the Beedi seller. The main character was tasked with assisting the seller in gathering raw materials for beedi-making. This activity presented a challenge for the players, requiring them to navigate obstacles and overcome hurdles in order to retrieve the necessary materials successfully. By incorporating these tasks and challenges, players were encouraged to revisit the game and further immerse themselves in the world of Rakhandar.

These interactive elements served to deepen the players' connection to the game world, fostering a sense

of agency and involvement. By providing meaningful tasks and challenges, the game offered an engaging and rewarding experience that complemented the exploration of Rakhandar culture.

Stage 2 Script

[Rakhandar-an Unusual Guardianv1.0](#)

Cutscenes inspiration

Kaavi art, is an unique form of mural art predominantly found in the Konkan region, particularly in temples located in Goa, parts of coastal Maharashtra, and Karnataka. This traditional art form also adorns the walls of old houses and small shrines.

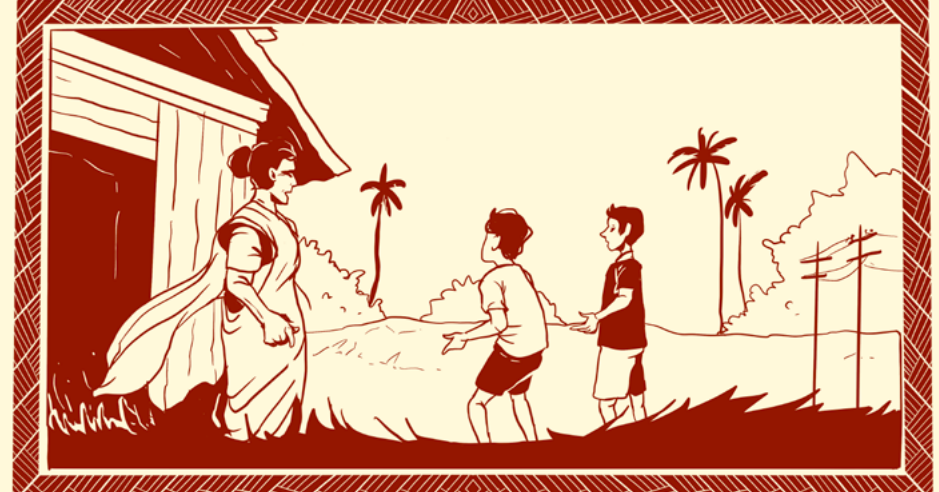
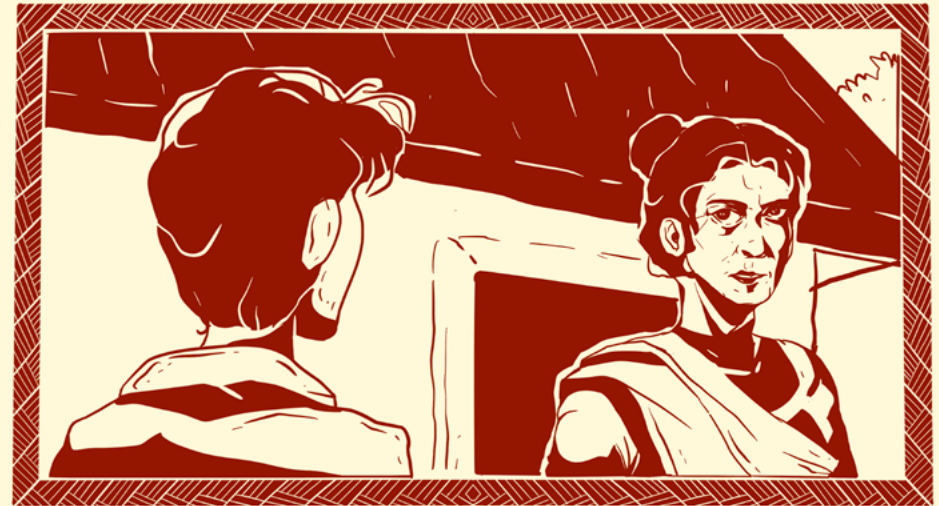
Kaavi murals exhibit distinctive characteristics that make them visually captivating. The intricate designs and motifs created using natural pigments showcase the rich cultural heritage of the region. These murals often depict mythological and religious themes, bringing stories and legends to life through vibrant colours and intricate detailing.

I planned to incorporate a captivating art style inspired by Kaavi art for the cutscenes in the game. This art style, deeply rooted in the traditions of Goa, would create an immersive and localized storytelling experi-

ence. Drawing inspiration from the intricate designs and vibrant colors of Kaavi murals, the cutscene art would visually depict key moments and narrative elements of the game. By adopting this unique Goan art form, the game would pay homage to the cultural heritage of the region and provide players with a distinct and authentic visual representation.

The Kaavi art-inspired cutscenes would serve as a bridge between gameplay segments, allowing for the seamless integration of storytelling and gameplay. The richly detailed visuals, reminiscent of the traditional murals found in Goan temples and houses, would enhance the players' immersion and transport them into the world of Rakhandar.





My issues with Kaavi-inspired cutscenes

One of the challenges encountered during the development process was the disparity between the Kaavi art style used in the cutscenes and the visual representation of the in-game characters. This inconsistency resulted in a disconnect between the cutscenes and the gameplay, which affected the overall coherence of the game's visuals.

While the Kaavi art style is visually captivating and culturally significant, it did not align seamlessly with the character design and aesthetics established within the gameplay. This discrepancy caused a disruption in the player's experience, as the transition between the Kaavi art-inspired cutscenes and the actual gameplay felt jarring and inconsistent.

Redesigning Cutscenes

To address the issue of incoherency between the cutscenes and the gameplay, a plan was devised to upgrade the cutscenes. The aim was to find a visual style that bridged the gap between the realistic game environment and the stylistic Kaavi art style. The solution involved creating stylized 3D characters that were photographed within the game environment. These characters were carefully designed to incorporate elements of the Kaavi art style while maintaining a cohe-

sive visual connection with the overall game aesthetics. To achieve this, a brown colour gradation inspired by Kaavi art was applied to the characters, giving them a distinct and visually appealing appearance.



Stage 2 Feedback

The art style used in the game did not effectively capture the essence of Kaavi art and did not align with the overall game vibe. It was important to revisit the art direction and strive for a more cohesive and visually appealing style that truly reflected the cultural inspiration of Kaavi art.

The narrative felt overloaded with information and lacked a natural flow. It was crucial to streamline the storytelling, focusing on key elements that drove the plot and character development. The narrative needed to be simplified and allowed to unfold in a more organic and engaging manner.

To enhance the depth of the characters, it was necessary to flesh out their individual traits, tropes, and dynamics within the game. Each character should have had unique qualities and interactions that made them memorable and relatable to players. Taking time to develop their backstories, motivations, and relationships would have allowed players to form emotional connections with the characters.

Stage 3

Fleshing out Characters

Considerable effort was dedicated to delving into the intricate character dynamics and their deep-rooted connection with the village. The primary goal was to ensure substantial character growth, resulting in profound transformations by the conclusion of the gameplay. Extensive planning was undertaken to explore and incorporate the characters' individual insecurities, infusing the narrative with intriguing and multi-faceted storylines. This intentional focus on character development added a layer of depth, making the overall gaming experience remarkably immersive for players. By authentically portraying their vulnerabilities, the characters became relatable and engaging, fostering a genuine sense of empathy and investment from the players.

Sarvesh

Character Trope:

New boy, Socially awkward, The Neurotic Type

Personality:

Shy, inquisitive, hesitant, caring, strong ideals

Age:

14yo

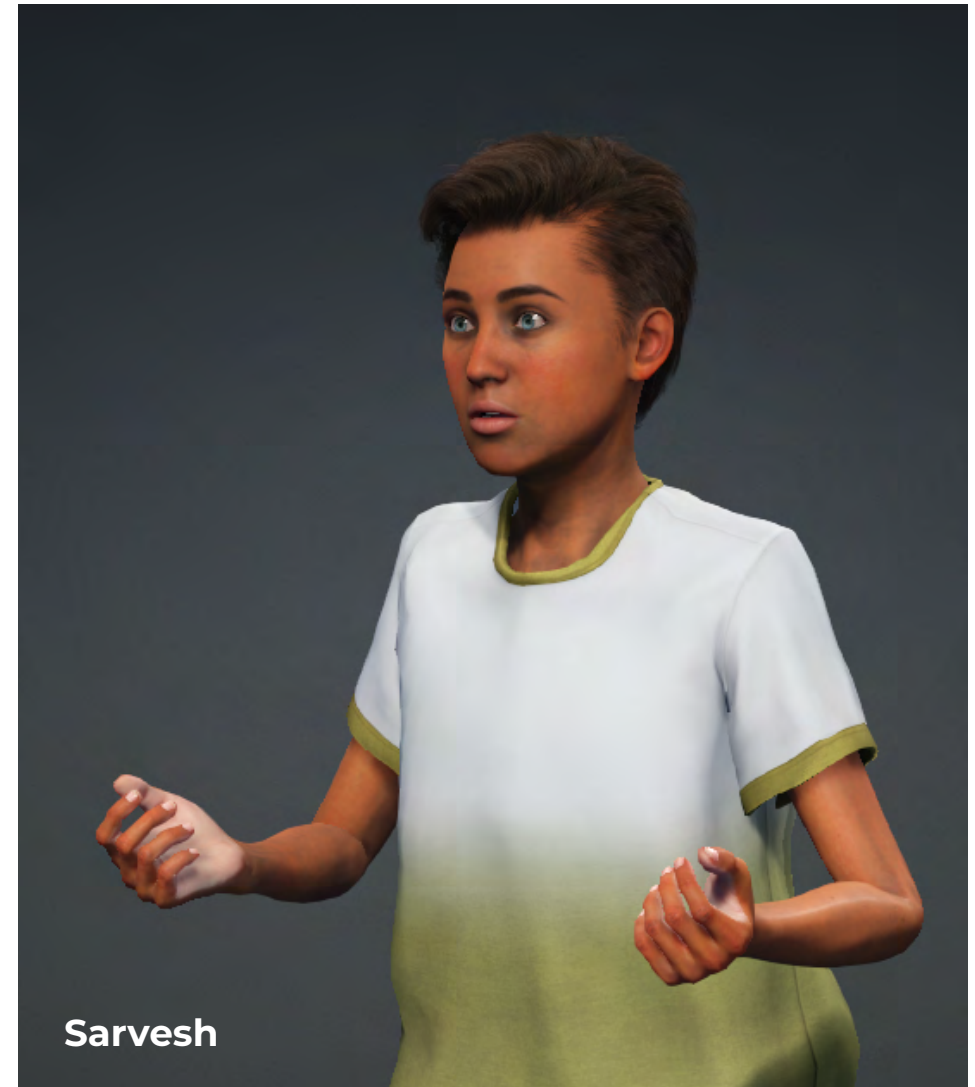
Description:

Sarvesh has strong ideals that guide his actions and decisions. He believes in justice, fairness, and equality and is not afraid to speak up against any injustice or discrimination he encounters. He has a strong moral compass and always strives to do what is right, even if it means going against the norm.

Overall, Sarvesh is a complex character. While he may struggle with social interactions, his inquisitive nature, caring personality, and strong ideals make him a fascinating character.

Dynamics:

Unlike his eccentric friend Pranav, who often behaves in over-the-top ways, Sarvesh is reserved and values social norms. Though he doesn't always approve of Pranav's antics, Sarvesh is forced to tag with him around



the village as he doesn't have any other friends/cousins in the village. As the story progresses, he starts to care for him deeply and understands that their differences make their friendship special.

Growing up, Sarvesh had a complicated relationship with his family's village. His mother grew up there, but they moved to the city when Sarvesh was young. Sarvesh's father, who had a love marriage with Sarvesh's mother, is not well-liked in the village, and he himself has never been fond of village life. Sarvesh initially shared his father's mindset that the city lifestyle was superior to village living. But as the story progresses, Sarvesh's perspective evolves. He starts to discover the hidden beauty and quirks of village life that he had overlooked before. He begins to appreciate the tight-knit community and the simplicity of village living, which he comes to see as a refreshing change from the fast-paced, often impersonal city life.

Throughout the story, Sarvesh is a character who experiences growth and change. He starts with a narrow viewpoint but opens up to new ideas and ways of life, ultimately becoming a more complex and well-rounded person.

Pranav

Character Trope:

Sidekick, comic relief

Personality:

Daring, confident, funny, fiercely protective

Age:

15yo

Description:

Pranav is the quintessential sidekick – always ready with a joke and a sense of humour, and forever eager to back up his friends. With a daring and adventurous personality, he's often the one to push the limits and take risks. He's confident in his abilities and never backs down from a challenge, which sometimes lands him in trouble, but he always manages to find a way out with his quick wit and charm.

Despite his lighthearted nature, Pranav is fiercely protective of those he cares about. He's loyal to a fault and will do anything to keep his friends safe. He's not afraid to stand up for what he believes in and is willing to take risks to protect those he loves.

Dynamics:

Pranav is a complex side character and a mischievous

personality that endears him to some, but not all. As the grandson of Nalini Aunty, he lost his father at a young age, Pranav has had to navigate some challenging circumstances, but he's always found a way to keep smiling and keep moving forward.

Despite being a mischievous child who sometimes rubs people the wrong way, many of the villagers have taken a liking to Pranav and consider him one of their own. His ability to make people laugh and his genuine nature make him someone that many people feel drawn to, even if they don't always approve of his behaviour. He also has a crush on Fernandez uncle's daughter Jenny, due to which Fernandez uncle is generally annoyed with him.

Pranav is fascinated by Sarvesh's lifestyle and the stark contrast between city and village living. Though he sometimes pokes fun at Sarvesh's more reserved nature and his habit of applying sunscreen before going out, he genuinely enjoys spending time with his friend and learning about his life.

Throughout the story, Pranav's complexity as a character is revealed through his deep love for his family and his willingness to go to great lengths to protect them. Despite his playful exterior, he has a strong sense of responsibility and loyalty that he doesn't always show on the surface.



Aunt Nalini

Character Trope:

Wise elder

Personality:

Composed, headstrong leader

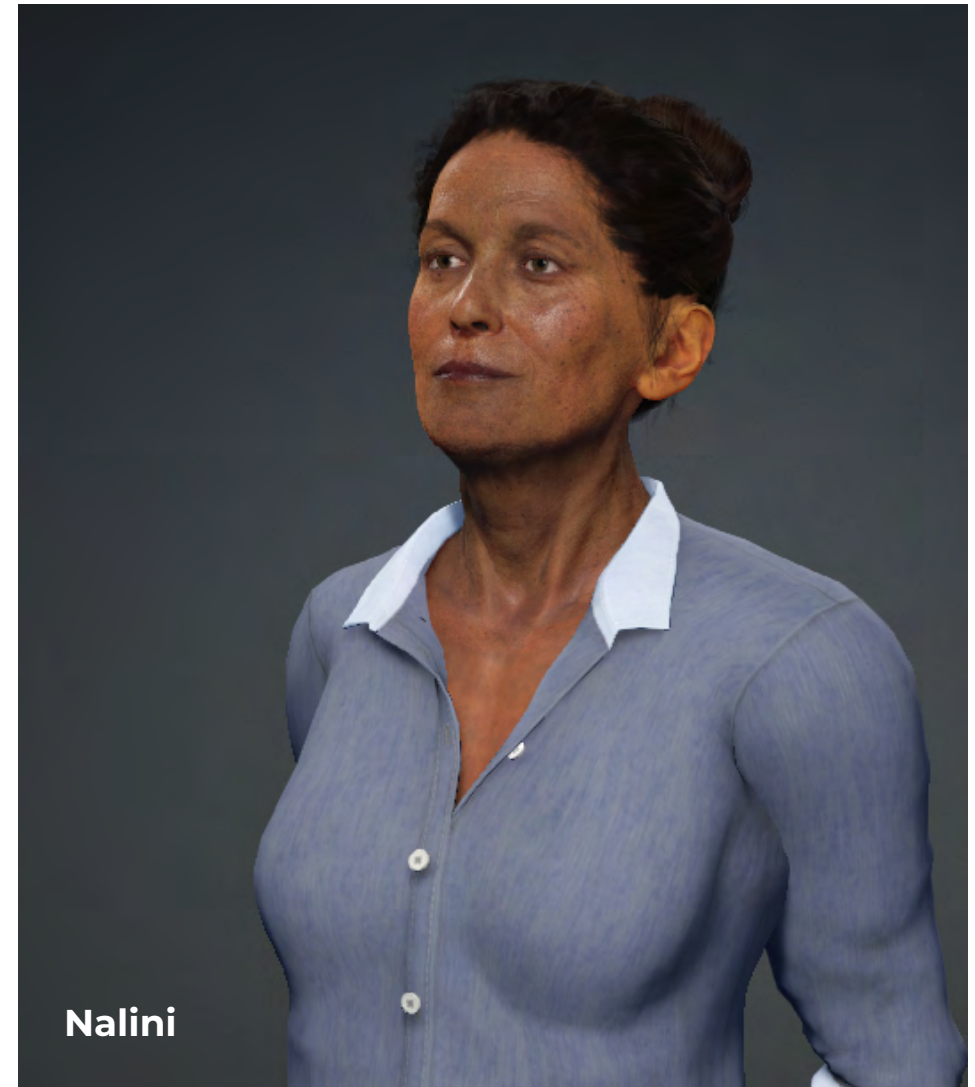
Age:

50yo

Description:

Aunt Nalini is a strong and resilient woman who has faced many challenges in her life. As the sole provider for her son Pranav after the loss of his parents, she's had to be both a grandmother, a mother and a father figure to him. Despite these difficulties, she's always maintained a positive outlook on life and has worked tirelessly to provide for her family.

Nalini is deeply rooted in the traditions and culture of her village, and she takes great pride in her heritage. She's a respected member of the community and is often called upon to offer guidance and support to those in need. Her wisdom and compassion make her a trusted confidant to many of the villagers. At the same time, Nalini is not without her flaws. She can be stubborn at times, and her traditional views can sometimes clash with the more modern attitudes. Nalini's



love for her family is at the core of her character, and she'll do anything to protect and provide for them.

Dynamics:

Aunt Nalini is a strong-willed and principled woman who stands by her beliefs, even when they're unpopular. She disapproved of her daughter Sarla's marriage to Sarvesh's father, but over time, she has come to accept them both. Nalini has developed a soft spot for Sarvesh, and she enjoys spoiling him with her love and affection.

Despite her kind nature, Nalini is not afraid to stand up for what she believes in. She's been an outspoken critic of the beedi trade in the village, which has put her at odds with Mukesh, the local beedi seller. Her headstrong personality and unwavering convictions have made her a respected figure in the community, and many villagers seek her advice on important matters.

Nalini is deeply connected to the traditions and culture of the village, and she's committed to passing these values on to the next generation. She often asks Sarvesh to help her with traditional rituals and cultural events, hoping to instil in him a love and appreciation for his roots.

Mukesh Beedi Seller

Character Trope:

Aloof businessman

Personality:

Holds grudges, easy to bribe, Good at heart, chain smoker

Age:

52yo

Description:

Mukesh is a man who exudes an air of aloofness, keeping himself at a distance from most of the people around him. However, Mukesh is also a man who holds grudges, never forgetting a slight or an insult that has been dealt to him. He has a long memory and is not one to forgive easily, which often leads him into conflicts with those around him.

Despite his rough exterior, Mukesh has a good heart and is known to be charitable towards those in need. He often donates money to various causes, such as building a community well or supporting local schools. However, his generosity comes at a price, and he's always willing to accept a bribe if it means furthering his own interests. One of Mukesh's worst habits



is chain-smoking, and he can often be seen with a lit beedi in his hand. He's aware of the dangers of smoking, but he finds the habit hard to break and often uses it as a way to cope with stress.

Dynamics:

Mukesh's relationships with the other characters in the story are often fraught with tension, due to his aloofness and grudge-holding tendencies. However, he does have some allies and associates within the village, who are able to work with him towards common goals.

One such associate is Aunt Nalini. Despite their disagreements over Beedis, Mukesh has a grudging respect for Nalini and her position in the community. Pranav, on the other hand, enjoys poking fun at Mukesh and making jokes at his expense, which often earns him Mukesh's ire. However, despite their differences, Mukesh is not one to hold a grudge against children, and he often turns a blind eye to Pranav's antics.

Another character who has a complicated relationship with Mukesh is Sarvesh's father. He didn't have any objections to Sarla's marriage. In fact, he was happy to get contacts with city ties to expand his operations. Sarvesh's father is a well-educated man with connections in the city, and Mukesh sees him as a useful ally.

Bread Seller (Poder)

Character Trope:

Jolly innocent man

Personality:

Jolly, likes to chat, shows off his bread-making skills, naive

Age:

35yo

Description:

Poder, the village breadmaker, is a jolly and friendly man who is known for his bread-making skills. He is always smiling and loves to strike up a conversation with anyone he meets. Poder takes great pride in his work and often shows off his freshly baked bread to anyone who will listen. He is a simple and naive man, who is content with his life and takes pleasure in the little things. Poder is a kind-hearted soul who is always willing to help others in need, even if it means sacrificing his own time and resources.

Dynamics:

Poder, the village breadmaker, has a warm and friendly relationship with most of the characters in the story. His jolly and innocent nature endears him to many.



Pranav, the mischievous child, loves to play pranks on Poder, but Poder always takes it in good humour and gives him extra bread to take home. Poder secretly liked Sarla, he is awkward around Sarvesh. Yet he doesn't break his jolly demeanour. Poder's naive nature often leads him to be taken advantage of by some villagers, who exploit his good nature and generosity. Some villagers may ask him for free bread or try to negotiate lower prices, knowing that he is unlikely to stand up for himself. However, despite being aware of this, Poder remains jolly and friendly towards everyone, often striking up conversations with anyone who passes by. He constantly talks about his craft, proud of the bread he makes.

Fernandez

Character Trope:

Mysterious

Personality:

Talks less, to the point, a man of principle, cares about the village, has contacts in the city

Age:

58yo

Description:

Fernandez is a man of mystery in the village. He runs a small business selling Feni, the local liquor and keeps to himself most of the time. He is known for being a stern and no-nonsense individual who doesn't mince his words. Fernandez prefers to communicate only when necessary and often get straight to the point. However, this doesn't mean he isn't approachable. He is willing to help those who need it, especially when it comes to issues affecting the village. Fernandez is a man of principle and stands up for what he believes in, even if it means going against popular opinion. This attitude has earned him respect in the village, and people often seek his advice or support in matters of dispute.

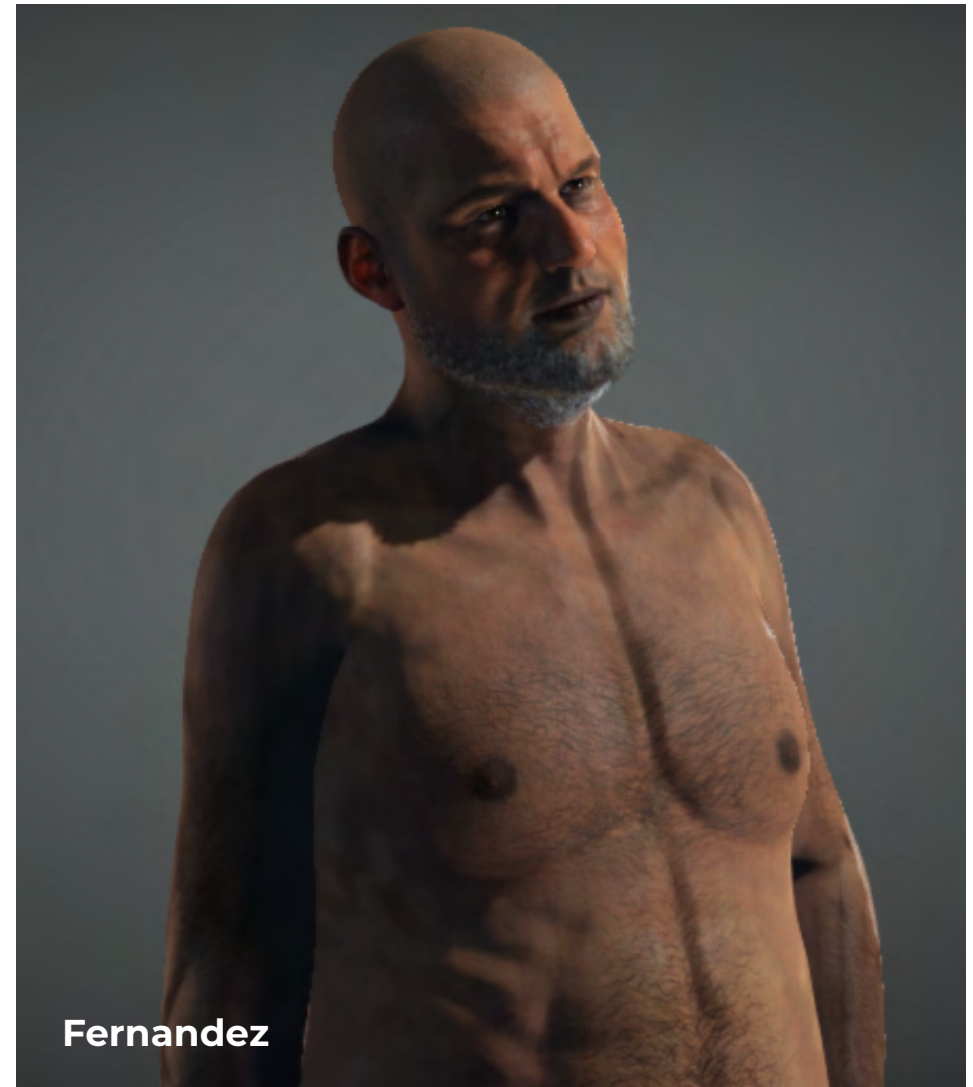
Overall, Fernandez is a complex character with a mysterious aura that intrigues the villagers. He is a man of principle, cares deeply for the village, and has the respect of the people.

Dynamics:

Fernandez the Feni seller is a man of few words, but he is respected by many in the village. He is a man of principle and cares deeply about the village and its people. He has contacts in the city, which he uses to bring in goods that are not available locally. Fernandez has a cordial relationship with most of the villagers. He is often seen sitting outside his shop, smoking a cigarette and observing the world around him. He doesn't talk much, but when he does, people listen. He is known for his stern demeanour and his to-the-point conversations.

Despite his reserved nature, Fernandez is always willing to lend a helping hand to those in need. He has a soft spot for the elderly and often provides them with Feni, the local Goan liquor, free of cost. The older folks in the village greatly appreciate his kindness and generosity.

Fernandez's relationship with Mukesh, the beedi seller, is a bit complicated. While they both run businesses in the village, they have very different approaches to life. Fernandez believes in honesty and integrity, while



Mukesh is more concerned with making a quick buck. This has led to some disagreements between the two, but they manage to coexist peacefully for the most part. Fernandez is a loving father to his 16-year-old daughter, Jenny. She is quite popular in the neighbourhood, and Pranav has taken a liking to her. However, Fernandez is not fond of Pranav's mischievous nature and often tries to discourage him from spending time with his daughter. This has led to some tension between the two, and Fernandez is always on guard whenever Pranav is around.

Sangeeta

Character Trope:

Anxious seller

Personality:

Anxious, people pleaser, worried, caring

Age:

45yo

Description:

Sangeeta is a fisherwoman who runs a small business selling fresh fish in the village market. She is a person who always has a worried look on her face, anxious about the well-being of her customers and her own family. Despite her anxiety, she is a people pleaser and always tries to ensure that her customers are satisfied with their purchases. She takes great care to select the freshest catch and make sure that it is cleaned and packed properly.

Dynamics:

Sangeeta's caring nature extends beyond her business. She is a doting mother to her two young children and a devoted wife to her husband, who works as a labourer in the village. She worries about her family's financial situation and works hard to make ends meet.

She is always on the lookout for new customers and is willing to go the extra mile to make a sale. Sangeeta's relationship with her husband, Sanjay, is a bit complicated. Sanjay is often away from home, working long hours to provide for the family. Sangeeta worries about his safety and well-being and often prays for his safe return.

Sangeeta's anxiety often gets the best of her, and she sometimes doubts herself and her abilities as a fisherwoman. She looks up to Fernandez, the Feni seller, as a mentor and often seeks his advice on fishing techniques and dealing with customers. Fernandez is patient with her and encourages her to trust her instincts.

Sangeeta has a cordial relationship with Mukesh, the beedi seller, and often buys beedis from him for her husband. She worries about his health, as she knows that smoking is harmful, but is too anxious to confront him about it.

Stage 3 Script

[Rakhandar-An Unusual Guardianv1.1](#)

Rebuilding Environment

Significant efforts were dedicated to rebuilding the game environment to authentically resemble the rural side of Goa, capturing the essence of its unique charm. The introduction of localized assets, such as the Chapel, Goan fishing boat, and Goan azulejos tiles, played a pivotal role in creating an immersive atmosphere. Careful attention was given to the intricate details of these assets, ensuring they seamlessly blended into the surroundings and enhanced the overall visual appeal of the game. The new environment exuded a distinct Goan character, transporting players to the heart of a vibrant and culturally rich setting.

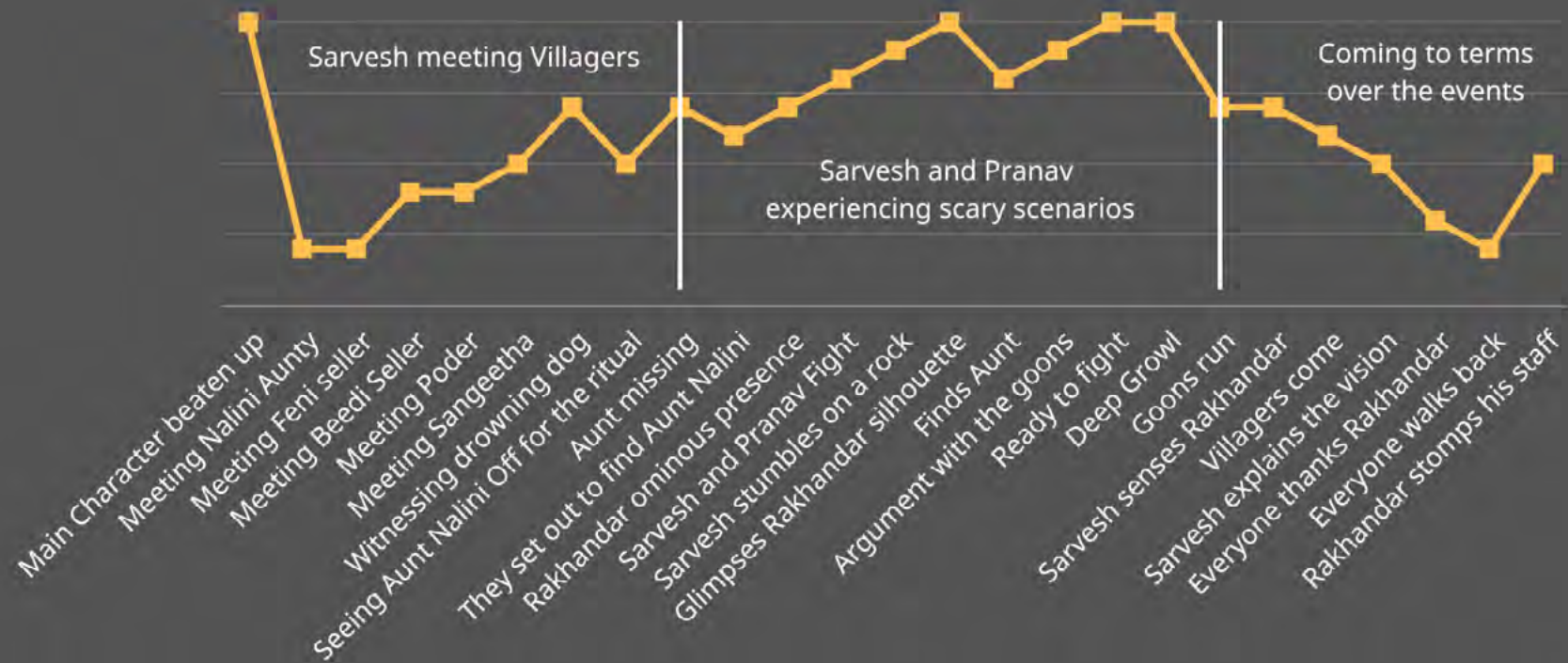


Emotion graph of the story progress

The story was meticulously structured into three acts, each carefully designed to engage players and evoke a range of emotions. The first act focused on exposure, gradually introducing players to the world of the game and the challenges faced by the characters. As the story unfolded, the stress level increased, capturing players' attention and drawing them deeper into the narrative.

The second act revolved around confrontation, where the characters faced their greatest obstacles and conflicts. Tensions rose, creating a sense of urgency and pushing players to make impactful decisions that would shape the outcome of the story. This act was crafted to heighten player participation, making them emotionally invested in the characters' journeys.

Finally, the third act offered a resolution, providing closure to the story and rewarding players for their engagement. It allowed for character growth and transformation, showcasing the consequences of players' choices and actions throughout the game. By structuring the story in this way, the game offered a fulfilling and satisfying experience that resonated with players on an emotional level.

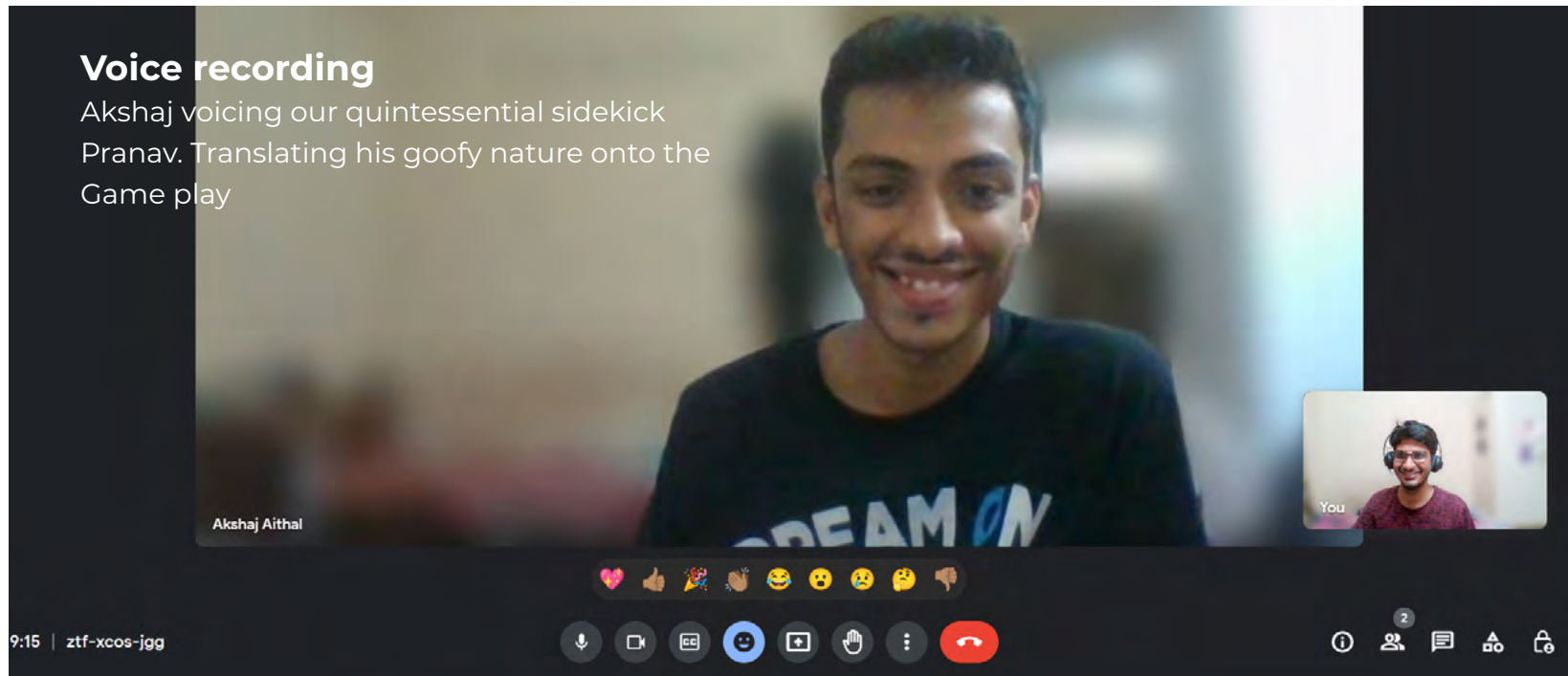


Cutscene Recording

I took the initiative to recruit talented voice actors for the key characters of Sarvesh, Pranav, Nalini, and Sanjeeta. Through remote meetings conducted on Google Meet, I connected with the voice actors and coordinated the recording sessions. To ensure high-quality recordings, we utilized the Dolby On app, which pro-

vided studio-level recording capabilities. Additionally, the app's noise cancellation feature was employed to achieve clear and professional audio recordings.

These carefully recorded voice overs will be seamlessly integrated into the game at various significant points, such as cutscenes and pivotal moments in the story.



Project Look

The final look of the game is a true celebration of Goan culture and atmosphere. The title sequence captivates players with its local flair, immersing them in the vibrant world that awaits. With the addition of post-processing effects, the visual experience feels remarkably realistic and engaging, bringing the game to life.

One of the highlights of the game is the well-fleshed-out characters who seamlessly integrate into the Unity environment, adding depth and authenticity to the Goan setting. Their vibrant personalities and interactions create a lively atmosphere that truly embodies the essence of rural life.

To enhance the overall experience, locally sourced background music (BGM) was carefully selected to capture the spirit of Goa, further immersing players in the rich cultural ambience. The exceptional voice performances by the talented voice artists elevate the game, adding an extra layer of charm and authenticity to the dialogues.

The inclusion of Pranav, the companion character, enhances the rural immersion, providing players with a guide and companion throughout their journey. The nighttime atmosphere, careful-

ly crafted to exude a sense of mystery and suspense, creates a spine-chilling ambience. The meticulously designed sound effects heighten the tension, ensuring players are constantly on edge as they navigate the game world.

In its final form, the game successfully captures the essence of Goan culture, offering players an immersive, engaging, and unforgettable experience. It stands as a testament to the dedication and passion poured into its creation, inviting players to explore and discover the hidden gems of the Goan landscape.



Game intro

We get to understand the current dynamics of Sarvesh with other characters



Interesting visuals

Chose signature warm palette to reflect the scorching hot sun of the Konkani region



Interaction

Pranav interacting with other in-game characters in their local homes



In-game activities

Pranav interacting with in game Konkani specific objects to indulge players in Konkani culture

Reflections

From the very beginning, I embarked on this project with a deep fascination for supernatural beings and a curiosity to explore the world surrounding them. Under the guidance of Jayesh sir, I found myself working on a game centered around the captivating Rakhandar culture. This journey has been nothing short of fascinating, as it allowed me to delve into game development with limited prior experience and expand my skill set along the way.

The process of iterative storytelling proved invaluable, enabling me to refine and enhance the story with each iteration. I embraced the opportunity to learn 3D modeling software like Blender, which empowered me to create localized assets that added a unique touch to the game world. Through this project, I rediscovered a sense of connection to my childhood experiences and the rich cultural heritage I grew up with.

What truly resonates with me is the idea of fostering intercultural discussions, where we can take pride in our respective backgrounds, celebrate our differences, and forge bonds through shared experiences and history. Through this project, I have succeeded in sparking conversations about the spirit guardian cul-

ture prevalent in the coastal region of Konkan.

Overall, this game development journey has been a transformative experience, both personally and creatively. It has deepened my appreciation for storytelling, game design, and the power of immersive experiences to bridge cultural gaps. I look forward to continuing this journey, further exploring and celebrating the diverse tapestry of our world.

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Dev Bare Karu