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# *The Struggle for a Goan Identity*

Robert S. Newman\*

**O**n May 31, 1987, Goa became the 25th state in the Republic of India. Nearly four months earlier, Konkani had been made the official language of the small territory on India's west coast, south of Bombay. Thus, 1987 was a landmark year in Goan history, the year in which Goan identity was officially recognised. Goa became a linguistic state in a nation of linguistic states and her regional cultural identity was given permanent acknowledgement by the Union of India.

This essay is about two things. First, I want to attempt a limited discussion of Goan identity. This is very difficult because I do not accept that there is such a thing as the 'Goan mind'. There is no unanimity amongst Goans as to what constitutes a 'Goan' or 'Goan-ness', nor among social scientists as to why nationalism (or political identity) takes the forms it does in particular places. Malcolm Yapp<sup>1</sup> examines writing on identity and nationalism, classing the theories into four kinds—natural, unnatural, reactive and modernising. While each type has its skillful proponents and the arguments of each can be applied to India, Yapp argues that modernising theories—those depending on a contrast between tradition and modernity plus the role of language and religion in helping bridge the gap between them—are the most useful. As this paper is not a review of theories of political identity, but an examination of how Goan identity and self-image developed over the last forty years, from the time India gained

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*\*Panoramic in its scope, this review of the evolving definition of the Goan identity appeared in the journal South Asia (Vol.77, No.1, Jan. 1989) under the title: 'Konkani Mai Ascends the Throne: The Cultural Basis of Goan Statehood'. Mr Newman, an anthropologist, was on the faculty of La Trobe University, Australia till recently.*

independence to the time Goa became a full-fledged state within India, I shall take Paul Brass' wider concepts of primordial and instrumental identity to underpin my discussion.<sup>2</sup> 'Primordial' identifications emerge from one's principal cultural identity and may exist "in the unconscious realms of the adult personality"<sup>3</sup>, while 'instrumental' identity is chosen out of the large number of possible cultural identities because it seems to offer the greatest chance of political success.<sup>4</sup> In Goa, as elsewhere, the actual situation does not provide pure examples of either kind of identity, but mixtures which tend towards one pole or the other.

Brass illustrates the two views as follows in a South Asian context: "From the primordialist point of view...Hindus and Muslims constituted in pre-modern times distinct civilisations destined to develop into separate nations once political mobilisation took place. The differences between the two cultures were so great that it was not conceivable that assimilation of the two could take place and that a single national culture could be created to which both would contribute. The contrary view is that cultural and religious differences between Hindus and Muslims were not so great as to rule out the creation of either a composite national culture or...a secular political union in which those aspects of group culture that could not be shared would be relegated to the private sphere."<sup>5</sup>

In Goa, the Portuguese colonialist rulers as well as most literary and scholarly figures took a largely primordial view of Goan identity.

Caroline Ifeka<sup>6</sup> wrote on the image of 'Golden Goa' or Goa *Dourada* that grew up in the small territory over time. She mainly discusses the early centuries, concluding that the Goa *Dourada* image that sees Goa as a European enclave clinging to the vast Indian subcontinent must be challenged and a new image of Goan culture built, "...one that emphasises the Indian contribution to Goan identity," because the real Goa is Goa *Indica*.<sup>7</sup>

Goa *Indica* can be seen as a more instrumental view of Goa while still recognising many primordial characteristics. The religious and cultural differences seen as so insurmountable by Portuguese and elite Goans are indeed "not so great as to rule out the creation of a composite Goan culture". Therefore, the second aim of this paper is to discuss the nature of Goa *Indica*, to examine the cultural basis of Goa's statehood and set forth what makes Goa a coherent region deserving to be an Indian state, other than having large numbers of activists who demanded it. (The question of whether ethnic and linguistic states are beneficial to late 20th century India will not be addressed.)

### Part I: Changing Phases of Self Perception

Goa languished for centuries under Portuguese colonial rule. The Portuguese government did little besides maintain order. Economic development was minimal, educational opportunities were lacking for the majority of people, and political liberties lagged far behind those available in the British territories across the border. These conditions turned Goa into a land from which its people migrated and went into exile. Men sought work and higher education in Bangalore, Belgaum, Calcutta, Karachi and above all, Bombay, where a huge Goan colony still reflects the impoverished conditions that prevailed in Portuguese Goa. Gaining English language skills and familiarity with British bureaucratic or industrial procedures, Goans moved out of India to government and private sector jobs in British colonies in East Africa and onto British passenger ships as stewards, cooks and crew. Goans who resented the authoritarian, censoring ways of Salazarist Portugal became political exiles, usually also in British India, where they founded the Goa National Congress in 1928. Migration and exile for thousands of families and more thousands of single men created and sustained a nostalgic longing for a beautiful but, perhaps, imaginary Goa that was talked and sung about from Kampala to Macau. Goa was the special golden homeland of swaying coconut palms in the moonlight, of tasty dishes like *sorpatel-sanna* and *bangdda recheado*, of violins and the *mando*, whitewashed churches, *intruz*, *ladainha*, and red, fertile soil. The Portuguese, many of whom genuinely fell in love with the place, helped to maintain this image too...Goa *Dourada*, golden Goa. But, in addition to being a land of little economic opportunity, 19th and 20th century Goa was a land of rebellion and frequent bloodshed. Goans were never passive or submissive, even if many (as in every other European colony) cooperated with the ruling powers. The peaceful, 'golden' image was a product of nostalgia, wishful thinking and propaganda.

The Catholic elite wanted to imagine themselves as apart from India, more a cultivated branch of a worldwide Portuguese civilisation. Up to 1947, the Portuguese perception of Goa still reigned supreme among Catholic Goans, at least those who were educated. The Portuguese radio station, *Emissora de Goa*, opened each broadcast with "*Aqui Portugal*" (This is Portugal), and indeed, Portuguese perceptions were just that. For example, J de Freitas, writing in 1960, remarks, "...the Goan has created a life-style that is *sui generis* different in many ways from ours in Europe, but totally distanced, by an insoluble problem of mentality, from that followed by the inhabitants of neighbouring India..."<sup>8</sup> Goa was seen as part of the

Lusitanian world; Portuguese-speaking, Catholic, with fondnesses for *fado*, festivals, football and Fatima, not to mention wine.

Goan postage stamps, for example, depicted Catholic, Portuguese themes without a single hint that Goa was in India, had a majority of Hindu citizens, and very few Portuguese speakers.\*

The stamps accurately reflected the image favoured by Portugal, an image accepted by many Goan Catholics, that Goa was distinct from India and no assimilation would ever be possible.

Though religious discrimination in Goa did decrease after the Republic of 1910 in Portugal, "the Portuguese policy of suppressing the local language and enforcing the Portuguese tongue on Goans never underwent a great change during the four and a half centuries of their rule".<sup>9</sup> Konkani was downgraded and scorned as a crude 'native' language of no importance. As a consequence, Konkani did not develop a literature as full as other Indian languages, and for lack of official policy, four scripts were used to write it, further dividing Goans. The term '*Konknnno*' was used to describe uncultured hicks and often had an anti-Hindu sense as well. Portuguese was made the language of culture and education: those who mastered it might go to study in Portugal and reach extremely high office in the mother country or in other colonies. Both Hindu and Catholic elites, as opposed to the common people, turned to other languages: the Catholics to Portuguese, most Hindus to Marathi.

Educated Hindus often identified with the ancient and intricate traditions of neighbouring Maharashtra—the music, poetry and arts associated with bhakti; the exploits of Shivaji, saints like Ramdas and Tukaram—while educated Catholics looked to Camoes, Eça de Queiroz, Pessoa, and the glories of the Age of Exploration in the 16th century. The images held by both educated elites, Catholic and Hindu, reflected the influence of their classical literatures and the results of centuries of colonial indoctrination. By insisting on Goa's being Catholic and Portuguese, the colonial rulers forced the Hindus ever further towards glorifying the past and adopting the regional culture of neighbouring Maharashtra. The same process prevented the Goan Catholic elite from recognising its own Indian-ness and encouraged cultural dependence on Europe, the perceived centre of learning and civilisation. Such dependence could never, for the majority, be more than a superficial smattering of Portuguese or Western cultural traits. In this way, many Goan Hindus came to define themselves as Maharashtrian, Marathi-speakers, while many Goan Catholics thought of themselves as (variously) Western, Portuguese-speakers, or non-Indians.

The Portuguese neglect and suppression of Konkani has had repercussions up to the present time, while it must be admitted that their divide and rule tactics certainly worked, since educated Goans did not share among themselves even a common perception of their land, history and culture. However, the majority of Goans, Catholic and Hindu, remained untouched by questions of language or Westernisation. They simply lived in their traditional way, speaking Konkani, within a common socio-economic system, with similar and overlapping religious beliefs and world view. We shall return to this subject in the second half of the paper.

The next part of the essay is organised along historical lines, based around three milestones: starting from 1947, the year of Indian independence, when Goa was still part of the Portuguese imperium; moving to 1967, year of the opinion poll that showed with dramatic, decisive certitude that Goans wanted to maintain their separate identity; and finally stopping at 1987, the year of statehood. Since events in one year are obviously related to what has gone before there are 'interim' sections to link the three milestones.

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*\*Editor's Note: In 1851, there were 2,189 Catholics and 128,824 Hindus in Goa—63.82 percent and 35.41 percent respectively, of the total population. The numbers were almost equal in 1900, with 262,648 Catholics and 260,144 Hindus. The Catholic population started decreasing in real terms thereafter, whilst that of the Hindus rose steadily. By 1950, there were only 230,984 Catholics (42.20 percent) as against 307,127 Hindus (56.10 percent). In 1961, the Catholics numbered even less (227,202 or 38.07 percent) whereas the Hindu population soared to 384,378 (59.92 percent). The Catholic population has increased in real terms since the Liberation, though it has become progressively smaller as a percentage of the total populace. The 1971 census counted 270,126 Catholics (33.97 percent) and 496,389 Hindus (62.43 percent); in 1981 the figures were 315,902 (31.25 percent) as against 646,986 (64.20 percent); and whilst the break up for 1991 is not yet available, it is estimated that Catholics comprised 28 percent and the Hindus 68 percent of the total population at the start of this decade. (Sources: Gazetteer of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu, Govt. of G. D&D, 1979; Anuario Estatístico, Estado da Índia, Portuguese colonial administration; and Statistical Pocket Books, Govt. of G. D&D, yearly.)*

### 1947—Indian Independence

As India won independence and moved onto the world stage as a major new power in Asia, Goans were concerned that anything had changed or would soon change in Goa. The Portuguese gave paid no attention to either appeals from Goa or the appeals made by Dr Lalia. Though 1947 was a year of division for the rest of India, in Goa the Portuguese pretended that nothing had happened in their historic rule. Up to 1910, their rule had been largely non-Catholic, denying Hindus and Muslims the right to attend Portuguese schools and the right to be employed in government positions. Even after the Republic was declared in 1910, very few non-Catholics earned the benefits of a public service job. As India gained freedom, the Portuguese began measures to bring non-Catholic Goans and other employees or into the professions. As Indian progress progressed over the next fourteen years, Portuguese efforts in this direction amounted to far too little, too late.

From 1947, Goa felt a steadily increasing atmosphere of pressure against Portuguese rule. Between 1947 and 1951, mostly non-Goans, were shot, beaten and imprisoned by the Portuguese army. "The period between 1955 and the Liberation (1961) is full of cruelties, misdeeds, and murders that the Portuguese justified in order to save their Empire in the East."<sup>10</sup> Goa is so small that it was easy for the Portuguese to exercise nearly total control, killing or exiling anyone who protested against them. A large number of Goans, centred in Bombay, carried on the struggle to end the Portuguese by mainly diplomatic-political means. They formed a number of groups, including the National Congress (Goa), the Goa People's Party, the United Front of Goans, the Azad Goans (Free Goa), the Goa Children, the Goa Action Committee, and the Goa Liberation Council.<sup>11</sup> "The splinter groups of freedom fighters... made no attempt at any stage during the years 1954 to the end of 1961, to come together and present a unified front."<sup>12</sup> They remained such in year 1961. It is extremely important to note that large numbers of Goans in the forefront of the liberation movement were Catholics, including many who spoke Portuguese or had been educated in Portugal.<sup>13</sup>

Between the 1940s and 1961, the rise of pro-Indian sentiment rose in Goa (though there were some who were talked of an autonomous entity, apart from India). The absolute and authoritarianism of the aging Salazar's regime grew increasingly odious. F. D. Galvado, a Goan surgeon married to a Portuguese (and who served time in jail in Portugal), wrote that at the time: "As far as I could judge, most people in Goa were in favour of integration with the rest of India.

There was therefore no question of any deep-seated pro-Portuguese feelings in Goa.<sup>14</sup> He went on to say that about 200 privileged families did support Portugal and the Portuguese gave great play to their sentiments in international forums.<sup>15</sup> I think, however, that Gaitonde rather underestimated the support enjoyed by Portugal, though nowhere near a majority of Goans were actively pro-Portuguese. Given the cultural and religious perceptions already discussed and the economic advantages of Goa's duty-free import policy in the 1950s, the new opportunities for education, employment and pensions, if many Catholic Goans wished for a freer political atmosphere, they did not necessarily burn with desire to give up their privileges and share the economic fortunes of India, which at that time were not bright.

### **First Interim—Growing Self-Awareness**

The cultural situation and Goan self-perceptions underwent many changes in the years between 1947 and 1967. The Portuguese, up to their last days, were still devising plans to induce Goans to learn Portuguese and they still hoped that Goan Hindus might become Catholics, given sufficient motivation. The result of this policy, never backed up with sufficient educational facilities, was that while the Brahmin elites among both Catholics and Hindus learned Portuguese, the common people learned Marathi or English, if they went to school at all. When the last Governor General, Manuel Antonio Vassalo e Silva toured rural Goa, he was dismayed to find large numbers of English-language primary schools affiliated to the Bombay Board of Education while Portuguese primary schools were scarce. "He could only communicate with the school children in English. But, most of all, he was very disagreeably surprised at the existence of Marathi schools in every village, however small. He found that these children were supposed to learn Marathi at a very early age, before attending any Portuguese or English school. And worse still, the alphabet used was the Devnagari."<sup>16</sup>

Gaitonde wrote: "...the clear aim of the Portuguese Government in Goa was to change Goans in such a way that they should regard a foreign language like Portuguese as their own; forget their history, their culture, their sentiments and behave in every way like Portuguese. They had forgotten that this had been tried in earlier times by their forefathers, using every method at their disposal, including force, but without much success. Undoubtedly, there had been a small percentage of Goans who, in past centuries, had been denationalised, but they were now trying to re-integrate themselves into the mainstream of Indian life."<sup>17</sup>



When Liberation finally came, in 1961, it happened virtually overnight. After the initial shock, Goa began the real process of integration into India, from which it had been politically separated for 451 years. The Indian Army quickly handed over power to civilians. Economic and political developments began immediately. Within two years, Goa had a popularly-elected government under the leadership of D. B. Bandothkar, a rich mine owner and 'social worker'. His government was in power for the twentieth anniversary of India's independence, twenty years during which Goans' perceptions of themselves had been called into question more than ever.

Class consciousness can be said to arise from many people in a society sharing common interests and a common experience. Such consciousness is often moulded at times of social upheaval. For example, the origins of the English working class as a class stem from being pushed or pulled off the land and into the cities to work in terrible conditions for low reward. I would argue that changed or enhanced ethnic and regional consciousness can also arise from socio-economic or political upheaval. As mentioned at the start of this paper, Yapp points out that as societies make the transition from traditional to more modern structures, identity can undergo many changes.

Even if Goans, as landlords, peasants, officials or labourers, had primordial feelings about 'being Goan' for centuries, their identity as such often appears to have been subordinate to caste or simple religious status. They were Goans only as opposed to 'Europeans' and 'Indians'. Between 1947 and 1967, however, three things occurred which heightened Goan self-awareness or developed a nascent demand to be recognised as a separate people. First was the freedom struggle. It forced many Catholic intellectuals and thoughtful people to come to terms with their Indian-ness. They had to ask themselves who they were. Most accepted that they were Indian, not Western, rejecting centuries of Portuguese indoctrination to the contrary. Part of a poem by Telo de Mascarenhas illustrates what were not uncommon sentiments:

*This land is ours,  
legitimately ours,  
an old inheritance,  
we are proud of her.  
We struggled and suffered  
to liberate her.  
In the bosom of Mother India*

*we want to live,  
because we are her legitimate sons;  
for the sake of unity  
we will not let anyone subvert  
our identity.*<sup>18</sup>

The 'Indian' identity adopted and hoisted as a banner by many of the Catholic elite, however, was instrumental, often based on Gandhian interpretations of Indian culture. It was not rooted in any particular region of India, hence it resembled the vaguely 'Indian', politically selected identity of other sections of the subcontinental elite. Apart from these somewhat romantic declarations of Indianness, the Goan Catholic elite remained quintessentially Goan, but without any other image of that status than the old Goa *Dourada* one. Goan writing in this period, and after 1967 as well, only too often reflected the Goa *Dourada* image. The selections in Nazareth (1983), for example, only infrequently question the 'golden Goa' view of the homeland. The Goan Hindus had no trouble in identifying with India. They had done so for centuries, often at considerable cost. But the freedom struggle threw them together with educated Catholics and gave both a rare common objective. Both groups gained new perceptions of the other and themselves as Goan.

The second factor that heightened or developed Goan awareness was, of course, the Liberation itself. The Portuguese power was destroyed and soon the Portuguese themselves, along with most Eurasians (called *descendentes*) and many of the most pro-Portuguese Goan officials and families, sailed away to Portugal, thereby eliminating, at a stroke, the most virulent proponents of Goa as 'non-Indian' or 'European'. Goa was occupied by the Indian Army, which on the whole was well-behaved, and by numbers of Indian bureaucrats. With the best will in the world, these two groups could only serve as foils for locals to realise that though Goans might be Indian, they had a regional identity of their own. From the start, some Goans felt that this identity had to be asserted or it would be submerged.

Finally, economic changes began immediately the Portuguese were expelled. The vast scale of all such changes is outside the scope of this paper. Change continues to be rapid up to the present and Goa has been transformed from a sleepy traditional-colonial society to a bustling bourgeois-capitalist one. New classes have risen, old ones have declined or disappeared. The age-old dominance of the upper castes, especially Brahmins, among both Hindus and Catholics, has been challenged as never before. Their particular images of Goa, their dictat as to what is 'Goan', have also been questioned but not

seriously as yet. Established ways of life and modes of conduct have been threatened or transformed. The youth, like their counterparts in so much of the world, began, from 1962, to live in a different world than their parents had known. The pace of change has only increased over the years. Economic and social turmoil produce political upheaval and in Goa's case, this was accompanied by the rise of a new Goan consciousness demanding recognition and preservation of what was Goan before all was swept away in the flood of changes. The new consciousness, however, did not produce a definite and widely accepted instrumental identity, neither could it rely on primordial identities without creating serious friction along religious lines. Thus, up to 1967, the new Goan identity was not well developed, nor had it gained much recognition.

### 1967—The Opinion Poll

Goan politics in the 1960s still reflected both primordial and instrumental identities. Political parties and political life were, above all, concerned with whether Goa should remain a separate region of India with its own identity or be merged with neighbouring Maharashtra and disappear forever. The debate on this issue dominated Goan politics to such a degree that parties based on issues of any other sort—economic development, cultural reconstruction, ecology and, especially, ownership of the means of production and resources, and capital-labour relationships—never arose. This situation was created by colonial rule, both through favouring some groups over others for political and economic benefits and through the description and definitions of Goan society produced by government, church and intellectuals and given to Goans as 'fact' or 'truth'.

Almost every author over the last century who described Goan society wrote as if it were composed of discreet units, quite separate from one another. Hindus, Catholics and Muslims succeed one another on their pages, usually sub-divided according to caste group, whose peculiarities of dress, food, occupation and religious or daily ritual are painstakingly listed. Portuguese writers followed this pattern throughout—Braganza Pereira (1923), Gonsalves Pereira (1954), Soeiro de Brito (1966), and Feio (1979). Of these, only the last made very minor reference to facts that might draw a reader to conclude that religious and caste boundaries are not ironclad. Writers in English on Goa have not differed much. Up to the present day, most of the scholarly literature on Goan society paints a picture of Goa as a conglomeration of separate communities.

That these divisions exist is undeniable, but the question is one of interpretation, and the general way in which Westerners have long examined and analysed Goan society or, on a larger plane, South Asian societies. The communal nature of Indian politics in this century, besides its relationship to modernisation, is directly related to the British (and Portuguese) divide and rule approach to Indian society as well as to the tendency of Western nationalist sentiment to label different religions and customs as hallmarks of different peoples, who thus require separate but equal access to power.

Former British India had already gone far down this road, starting from the division of Bengal in the early years of the century, proceeding through separate electoral rolls for Muslims, Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans, and Sikhs (and demands heard for further separations), winding up in the holocaust and bitter division of Partition. By 1961, independent India had organised linguistic states and, although separate communal franchises were abolished, politicians had utilised previously existing structures and sentiment to build communalist parties in every corner of the country. Goa could not escape.

The Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) or 'Maharashtrian Goa Party' was formed in June, 1963 during a period of great confusion in the Indian National Congress, Goa branch.<sup>19</sup> While the Indian National Congress, the all-India party, dithered on the question of Goa's future, the National Congress (Goa) which had been in existence since 1946, dissolved itself and formed the MGP "with the avowed objective of fighting the [1963] elections on the merger platform".<sup>20</sup> Essentially, this new party denied the existence of a Goan regional culture. It echoed the Portuguese claim that Konkani was a non-language, a useless dialect of crude toddy tappers and fishermen, a mere minor variant of Marathi.

The MGP claimed to represent the oppressed Hindu lower castes and strove to garner votes by attacking Hindu Brahmins and the Catholic community. It sought to discredit everything that pointed to a separate Goan culture. Disowning the Goa *Dourada* image was not sufficient, Goa itself had to be denied. The MGP appealed to the poorest and least literate sections of the population. Though an anti-Brahmin assertion of lower caste and lower class rights could be seen, in part, as an ideological struggle, the MGP did not adopt revolutionary rhetoric. It exploited the fact that though all Goans had suffered under Portuguese colonialism, particularly low caste Hindus who "had lived in almost semi-feudal conditions under the Portuguese,...were exploited to some extent by the caste Hindus, and were not happy with [Portuguese religious policy]".<sup>21</sup>

With the MGP taking an anti-Konkani, caste and religion-based mergerist position designed to wipe Goa off the cultural and political map, it is not surprising that the main opposition too was not an ideological party (given also the total disarray of the Congress party). The United Goan Party (UGP) took the stand that (1) Goa had its own identity, (2) that identity went beyond any one caste or religious community, (3) that Konkani should be developed as a proper vehicle for Goan cultural identity, and (4) Goa should never be merged with Maharashtra. Attempts were made to practise what they preached, viz. "out of 24 candidates (in 1963) set up to contest the Assembly seats, eight were Hindus and one Muslim".<sup>22</sup> The communalist polarisation was begun and propagated by the MGP, though it was inevitable that many people would think of the UGP as basically a Catholic party.

These two parties symbolised, in political form, the views and identities held by Goans in the early 1960s. Neither attempted to build a new image of Goa or create a positive political identity. The MGP wanted only to tear down what existed while the UGP did not go beyond general 'liberal' platitudes that Goan identity did not belong to any particular sub-group. The real test of where sympathies lay on the issue of Goan identity came on 16 January, 1967. After a long campaign, fiercely argued among the proponents of merger and separate identity, the Government of India held an Opinion Poll on the question of Goa's future. Voters had to choose between merger with Maharashtra or continuing as a Union Territory. Other options, such as statehood, independence, or merger with Karnataka (then Mysore), were not offered. Even though the same voters had returned an MGP government in 1963, when it came to terminating Goa's separate identity, they seemed to hesitate. Over three days of high drama, Goa's future as a politically separate region of India was sealed as 54 per cent of the people voted to remain a Union Territory.

Sarto Esteves captures something of the mood at the time. The day after the Poll, "...Goans rushed in large numbers to Panjim to witness the counting of votes at the Menezes Braganza Institute. The crowd of nearly 25,000 included men, women, students and workers. Braving the burning sun, they stuck to their spots till the close of the count on each day for three days, cheering wildly as the results were announced."<sup>23</sup> R.K. Saxena, writing of the occasion, says: "The people expressed their pleasure [in good order]. They danced on the roads, embraced each other, smeared colours and wept out of joy. Their victory was great and their emotions were uncontrollable. Thousands of crackers boomed across the river Mandovi..."<sup>24</sup>

Sixteen out of 28 electoral districts voted for Union Territory status. Though Goans today remember the Opinion Poll as a time of drama and emotion, and some Catholics patronisingly say things to the effect of "our Hindus voted against the outsiders when the chips were down", it must be said that it was a close call, not an overwhelming victory. Many voters spoiled their ballot and a large percentage of the electorate did not vote. Things might have been different. Whatever the case, the 1967 Opinion Poll represents a major milestone on Goa's march to statehood. After it, there was no turning back. Though the MGP and its mergerist, anti-Konkani, Marathi chauvinist position continued to dominate local politics for another twelve years, its original *raison d'etre* was gradually reduced to token slogans and insistence on using Marathi at public gatherings.

Esteves' analysis of the anti-merger victory is interesting. He attributes it to the fact that "the leaders of the Anti-Merger Front, consisting of citizens from all walks of life, saw to it from the very inception that its doors were kept open to Goans of all religions, castes, sub-castes, Scheduled Castes and Tribes and also to citizens from all parts of the Territory...The Front included not only Congressmen, United Goans and others but also representatives of communities like *Mahar*, *Chamar*, *Kunbi* and *Gavde* (lower castes)...The large number of voters who voted against merger in what were considered ...strongholds of mergerites, fully confirms the non-communal, non-sectarian, representative character of the anti-merger forces."<sup>25</sup>

However, there were other factors that must have played a part in inducing many potential mergerist voters to change their minds. For example, if Goa were to be merged with Maharashtra, liquor laws would have changed and thousands of toddy tappers would have been put out of their livelihood. Goa would have become a small, remote district of a big state; investment, jobs and long-protected opportunities would have disappeared. Government servants could have been transferred hundreds of miles away from home. Central government pay scales would have been replaced by the lower Maharashtra ones. Because merger was defeated, none of these things happened. Over the next twenty years, people came to take Goa's separateness more for granted. The political expression of Goan identity came to revolve around two issues: language and what we may call the 'locals vs outsiders' issues.

### Second Interim—Big Business behind the Scenes

The interim between the Opinion Poll and Statehood, as far as the development of Goan identity and culture goes, was a period of confusion, turmoil, conflict and inaction. The MGP leader, Bandedkar, raised his daughter, Shashikala Kakodkar, to high political power and on his death in 1973, she became the chief minister in his place, continuing in office up to 1979. Both, father and daughter, in addition to insisting that Marathi was the rightful language of Goa, talked often about 'Bahujan Samaj' or the lower strata of society. Though this section of society certainly improved its lot over the years after Liberation, central government funds and the general transformation of Goa from colonial to bourgeois-capitalist society undoubtedly played a larger role in the process than MGP action.

Goa houses a number of big business families with fingers in almost every pie.<sup>26</sup> The MGP rule benefitted these families, permitting them to continue expansion into fishing, mining, ore processing, manufacturing, and import-export. A few other capitalists, Goan and Indians from other states, also enjoyed the sympathy of the MGP. When popular protests arose over issues such as the severe pollution caused by an agro-chemical plant or the displacement of traditional fishermen and destruction of their livelihood, the MGP unflinchingly took the side of big business<sup>27</sup> and tried to suppress the protests.

The experiences and awareness emerging from the protest movements, the continuing neglect of the poorer sections of Goan society, the influx of thousands of even poorer labourers from beyond Goa's borders, the land grabs of industry, mining, and big tourist complexes, the failure of land reform or the mismanagement of what was legislated, the continuing large-scale pollution of land and water by iron ore tailings and the inordinate power of bus owners in the halls of government led, by 1979, to the formation of the People's Democratic Front. This group appealed to Goans across all communal lines and called for action on ideological rather than caste or sectarian grounds. It had no great success, but it is cited here as a first glimpse of a new image of Goa on the horizon.

During the same period, the *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* (Konkani Language Group), worked for the extension and development of the language spoken by about 90 per cent of all Goans. It long remained a small group of intellectuals unable to pressure the government to do anything, especially an MGP government still mouthing outworn pro-Marathi slogans. The People's Democratic Front also supported Konkani. In a broadsheet handed out in March, 1979, on the streets of Panjim, calling for anti-government demonstrations, the Front

said: "The Konkani language, which is the language of all the people of this Territory, should be the prime criterion while granting employment both in the public and private sectors, so that first preference is given to the sons of the soil." Goan identity, not yet firmly established, was already defining itself by excluding people whose exclusion was to some political or economic advantage.

In the meantime, Konkani had hardly been developed. The MGP government did nothing for Goa's long-neglected language, but Goans themselves were ambivalent. Only a small number of Goans ever favoured Konkani as the medium of instruction in schools, most preferring English or Marathi. As opposed to what they said in public, the way Goans behaved was and still is even less favourable to Konkani. In 1986, out of 1537 primary schools in Goa, only fifteen used Konkani, while 984 were conducted in Marathi, the other 538 being mainly in English or Urdu.<sup>28</sup>

The Congress (I) government that came to power after Kakodkar's fall in 1979 has been in office ever since (till the time of writing). One could trace the long history of struggles over Konkani and the inexorable rise of 'Goa for Goans' sentiment<sup>29</sup> as workers from neighbouring states poured in to benefit from Goa's high living standards and job opportunities. At the same time, the steady migration of Goans continued, to the Gulf, to join relatives in the Anglophone countries of the industrialised world, and to Bombay or to Bangalore to work in the modern sector of Indian industry or business. The Congress (I) government was content not to rock the boat, doing only what was politically necessary. Nothing was done to settle the language question.

Looking back at the changes in Goa's image and identity over the years, we find a slow but steady change.

During the Portuguese period, Goans saw themselves as oppressed or colonised people, but some identified with India while others felt closer to a Luso-Indian ideal. A romantic and realistic 'primordial' image of 'golden Goa' captivated a certain section of the Goan Catholic and Portuguese elite, particularly intellectuals.

Throughout the colonial period, Goans (and Indians) were defined consistently on sectarian, caste, and linguistic lines by their rulers for very self-seeking reasons. As freedom to mobilise politically grew, so did the Western-derived tendency to mobilise along communal lines.

I say 'Western-derived' because the British government created communal electorates and because British rulers and intellectuals consistently emphasised the diversity of society in the subcontinent



instead of asking what had kept Indian civilisation together for millennia and had prevented the rise of nation states. Jonah Raskin writes, for example, that "(Rudyard) Kipling suggests the heterogeneity of India. He saw no dominant single culture in the land."

To E M Foster too, "India is an enigma. A hundred Indians, a million Indias. Diversity...Foster is uncertain what to make of this subcontinent. It is chaotic, confusing, irritating. Nothing ruled out in clear lines, with sharp boundaries...Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, Christians, Brahmins, Untouchables. The catalogue of Indian castes, religions and sects would stretch around the globe..."<sup>30</sup>

This was the paramount fact to both British and Portuguese, for the Portuguese saw India (from the evidence of their writing), as did the British, to be a land lacking in 'cohesion'—that is, without a tradition of ethnically based nation states, usually having a single religion. They never tried to see what was common to India. They were victims of their own basic premise that homogeneity was the norm and that real nations were not heterogeneous. Indians and Goans were, of course, conscious of the differences among themselves. We cannot pretend otherwise. But they have not formed political identities or a self-image along linguistic and religious lines.

As India gained freedom, Goans too began to assert their political identity as Indians and 'children of Mother India'. The Indian Army and the bureaucrats who swiftly arrived after 1961 provided a contrast startling enough for many Goans to define themselves as 'Goans' vis-a-vis some 'Indian' stereotype. In the years just after Liberation, Goan identity went through a 'split personality' period with politicians trying to gather various caste or religious groups around themselves to win power. Goa's image was still mostly romantic and sentimental, but its rising economic prospects and general well-being helped create a new image of a prosperous, small territory without many of the problems that beset other parts of India.

Goans liked to think of their land as especially favoured. After Bandodkar's death, though, in this second 'interim period' between 1967 and 1987, most of the problems found elsewhere in India emerged in Goa too—corruption, pollution, exploitation, overcrowding, and language or religion-based disturbances. A large number of Goans came to see Goa as a threatened place, very different from the image of the peaceful haven that lasted so long. Some people even began to identify themselves as Goans first, rather than members of a particular religious or caste group. Their number is still small. We might construct a chart to summarise the historical process discussed here.

### 1987—Official Language and Statehood

The forces in Goan society that had been involved in the unsuccessful People's Democratic Front and *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* found a much stronger vehicle when they coalesced around language and ethnocentric feelings. The fears of being submerged in their own traditional home helped create the *Konkani Porjecho Avaz* (KPA) which, in the words of one Goan observer, carried on protracted agitation for Konkani and Statehood, helping to "highlight the problem[s] not only to the rulers in New Delhi but also to a large section of Goans themselves".<sup>31</sup>

The situation began to snowball and went out of control, culminating in the destructive riots of December, 1986 that caused one death. (A near total breakdown of law and order allowed a village feud to claim six more lives.) As Goa reeled from its first major upheaval since Liberation and the language agitation still continued, the Goa government rushed an already tabled Official Language Bill through the Assembly, passing it on 4 February, 1987. Konkani was given sole official status, though the bill allowed Marathi to be used at the discretion of 'the administrator'.

Neither the active proponents of Marathi or Konkani were wholly satisfied, but the common man appeared to feel that justice had been done. After centuries of suppression by the Portuguese and 25 years of neglect by Goan governments, Konkani Mai (Mother Konkani) ascended her rightful throne at last. The self-evident fact that Goans speak Konkani had been recognised. Statehood was the next step, as *O Herald* pointed out some weeks later.

"When the Official Language Bill making Konkani the exclusive official language of...Goa was passed,...the first blow was struck for the preservation of the Goan identity. Now, with an indication from the Centre that Statehood for Goa is imminent and may be secured during the current session of Parliament, the task of reinforcing the unique and separate identity of *amchem bhangarachem Goem* ('our golden Goa'—still!) is in the process of completion. Konkani is the soul of the red soil of Goa. Statehood will be the body which will provide a home for the soul. For, only with Statehood will the unique identity of Goa be guaranteed forever. For, only Statehood will give a permanent burial to the ghost of merger with Maharashtra."<sup>32</sup>

Goa was granted Statehood on 31 May, 1987, with Konkani as its official language. Although the writer of the editorial just quoted argued that Statehood would guarantee Goa's identity, I do not feel so sanguine. Rather than develop the rich and ancient veins of gold

in Goan culture, Goan intellectuals have been content to continue composing odes to 'Golden Goa', at least metaphorically speaking. Meanwhile, Goan identity often continues to be narrowly instrumental, delineated by politicians and journalists who define 'who we are not' rather than 'who we are'. This is a common trait of all nascent nationalisms or ethnic revivals, but given the depressing catalogue of conflict engendered by such phenomena, the future is anything but golden unless Goans can develop an identity which can include all 'sons of the soil' and give them confidence to meet other Indians on an equal footing.

The contradictory images of 'Golden Goa' as also a state 'under threat' have not gone away. No sooner did the threat of merger with Maharashtra disappear, after a quarter of a century of struggle, than the new threat was perceived - the 30% of Goa's population originating in other states. M V Kamath, writing in *Goa Today*, says, "A time is bound to come when the peculiar identity of the Goan would have been lost. The Goan-to-be would then be an amalgam of Konkani and non-Konkani cultures. I am not sure at this stage whether the transformation would be painless or accompanied by much suffering. The ultimate 'Indian' no doubt will some day have to emerge."<sup>33</sup>

It seems to me that Goan culture and identity are stronger than what is implied here. Having lasted (encompassing changes) for centuries, it will not be lost in a few decades. Goans have money, they have a good number of educated people and most of all, they have an abiding, strong (primordial) love of their beautiful little region of India. Goa certainly deserved to be a state. It comprises a compact geo-cultural region with a common language and history. There is also a basic foundation of common culture—Goa *Indica*—the image never developed, the identity never grasped to the bosom of the mainly Brahmin, Westernised intellectuals.

Goa *Indica*, it appears to me, is the ideal instrumental identity for Goa, the way in which the majority of Goans can be bound together for political stability, providing in addition, the avenue for the absorption of the 'newcomers' who are 'non-Goan' today but whose children must surely be Goan tomorrow for Goa has absorbed outsiders before and managed to retain its own identity. The common Goan culture still exists, though under strong pressure from Western style media and education. Most Goans still participate in that culture, even if they have never written about it.

## Part II: Cultural Basis of Regional Identity

Circumstances have always been against the emergence of Goa *Indica* as opposed to Goa *Dourada*. First, the society is divided by caste and class, with two major religious groups and one minor one (Islam). Goa's multilingual nature, too, is beyond question. Second, there is a long history of oppression, including the Inquisition, and discrimination by Catholics (both Portuguese and Goan) against the others. Third, upper class landlords and government officials during colonial times and landlords, industrialists and businessmen in recent times have exploited the lower or working classes—tenants, miners, dockworkers, toddy tappers, servants, factory hands, waiters and drivers, for example—so that alternative images or views of Goa have been very slow to emerge. The class interests of the opposing groups have long been far apart and some of the so-called freedom struggles of the past were really attempts by powerful landed clans to exploit their erstwhile 'subjects' without Portuguese interference.

Finally, the Western style education pursued in Goa, both in colonial and modern times, has never allowed any place for Goan cultural studies. Pupils today learn Goan geography and a potted history, but the nature of Goan society is not discussed to avoid offending powerful groups.

Paradoxically, as Goa has won increasing freedom to assert its identity and establish the image it wants of itself, increasing Westernisation has blurred educated Goans' vision of their own society and led them to look outward, away from Goa. Emigration, films, television, sports and above all, schooling, have prevented the development of a new image of Goa, a new Goan identity. Schools have oriented students towards jobs which are mainly found outside Goa. The whole nature of the new consumerist, bourgeois-capitalist society in Goa pushes Goans to emigrate in search of higher wages despite having one of the highest per capita income rates in India. (Though one reason for the high level of income may be remittances from abroad.) Constantly looking outwards, Goans, particularly youth, often pay little attention to their own heritage.

Yet underneath the surface conflict and diversity concentrated on by many Western and Western-influenced Indian writers, Goa has basic, common roots from which the image of Goa *Indica* could grow. I would like to mention areas in particular which underpin a Goan identity and could provide a new, solid image: economic, historical, kinship, and cultural-linguistic.

### Shared Economic System

The Brahmins and *Chardos* (Kshatriya) of both major religions are usually the dominant castes of their villages and traditionally controlled the village associations, the *gaunkari* or *comunidades*. As professionals, public servants and shopkeepers as well as landowners, they predominate among the urban middle and upper classes too. It is their culture and image of Goa which has always been described and idealised as 'Goan culture'. Though the Census of India provides no statistics on caste, various sources indicate that Sudhras make up most of the village population, along with the *Gavda* or *Kunbi* groups.<sup>34</sup> The farmers, fishermen, toddy tappers, craftsmen, tenant-cultivators and labourers as well as the bulk of urban populations belong to these groups.

Despite differing religious affiliations, the people of this class share common life experiences and a common relationship with the dominant groups. Given their large numbers, one could argue that it is their folk culture that is Goan culture. The knowledge of life they gain from experience leads these Goans to symbolise that experience in a different way from either classical Hindu or classical Catholic patterns. This folk culture is a synthesis of Hindu and Catholic elements and as such is similar to other Indian regional folk cultures, cultures that are now being torn apart by the reorganisations of society on ethno-linguistic or sectarian lines and by political alignment on the same bases. The flower of Goa *Indica* will be found here, not in the stylised, imported garden of Goa *Dourada*.

### Common History

It is obvious that people whose ancestors have lived in the same place for generations share a common history. What I want to refer to here is a particular aspect of that history.

The fierce opposition to the original onslaught of the Portuguese—their smashing of temples, their forced conversions, their massacres and expulsions, the Inquisition—has had repercussions that still echo in the villages of both Old and New Conquests. (Goa is divided in two sections, one which came under Portuguese control in the 16th century, the other, mainly inland, in the 18th century.) Temple statues were spirited away from the fury of the Catholic invaders and re-erected by Hindus in new temples in neighbouring lands not under Portuguese control. Later, these lands too came under Portuguese rule. Churches were usually erected on the sites of former temples, sometimes even incorporating the same building ma-

terials or (as at Reis Magos, for example) Hindu-built staircases with decorative mythological animals.

If subaltern studies-style research were to be done on Goa, one rich vein of material would be found in the laws and prohibitions of the Inquisition. For example, edicts were published by the Goa Inquisition in 1736, after over two centuries of Catholicism in Goa, prohibiting 42 so-called Hindu practices or activities among Catholics. From this list<sup>35</sup> we learn how much synthesis of Catholic and Hindu practice must have existed. As many of the prohibited customs still survive today, we can be sure that the Inquisition was unable to shake the Indian quality of Goan Christianity. Maintenance of the folk culture under a repressive regime and official Church was thus an experience shared both by the Hindus who fled and the Catholics who remained.

For another example of the ambiguity of the so-called 'lines' that 'divide' Catholic and Hindu in Goa, there is the confusion of pronouns used by modern Goans in English, Portuguese, and Hindustani when they discuss the traumatic times of forced conversion and resistance in the 1500s. Many Catholics switch from 'we' to 'they' and back again in telling various episodes and legends from those days. 'We' may mean 'we Goans who resisted the cruel Portuguese', 'we of X village who outsmarted the invaders' or 'we Catholics who opposed the idolators'. When a person cannot decide which pronoun to use about his own ancestors and so, himself, ambiguity has reached its height.

If we look at Goa in the image of Goa *Dourada*, the lines are drawn stringently between believing non-Indians and 'heathen' Indians. If we draw a pattern of Goa *Indica*, we see that all Goans have a common history, one in which resistance and accommodation, but not surrender of the Indian heritage, can be easily traced.

### Kinship

Because intermarriage was strictly forbidden by both Catholics and Hindus—and is still rare in Goa—to talk of common kinship does not involve uncles or cousins, but relations between bloodlines, families, or clans, some of whom were converted and others not. In the changed atmosphere of modern Goa, 'some Goans have taken the trouble to go to the records of parish churches to trace and adopt their [original Indian] family names'.<sup>36</sup> Many Catholics are fully aware that the Brahmin, *Chardo*, *Kunbi* or *Gavda* worshippers or chief patrons (mahajan) at a certain temple are distantly related to them. Many Hindus know that the *confraria* members of a particu-

lar church are their distant relatives too. Some of the Gavda have gone from being Hindus to Catholics and back again, surely leaving kinfolk on both sides of the 'line'.

A spectacular example is found in southern Salcete district, in the villages of Assolna, Velim, Cuncolim and Veroda, where Catholic and Hindu *Chardo* clans openly cooperate as kin, standing against lower caste invasion of their traditional privileges.<sup>37</sup> In this case, common religious belief in the goddess Shanta Durga strengthens the feeling of common kinship and history. Such examples exist in other parts of Goa as well. When people are connected by blood, by history and by sharing in a common economic system, it is natural that they also share a common culture.

### Goa's Common Culture

In a short discussion of a particular culture, it is best to start from the *weltanschauung* or world view, to attempt to describe the kinds of sources of knowledge about the world and then proceed to discussion of how that view or knowledge is transmitted and established as identity, image or 'reality'.

In Goa, as in every society, people gain most of their knowledge and understanding from the flow of daily life. Social and economic relationships create a wealth of particular attitudes, ideals, expectations, and behaviour patterns. The understandings and values of Goan tenant farmers or labourers are similar, no matter what religious group claims their allegiance.

Religion too is a major source or repository of understandings and views of life. Traditionally, most peoples find meaning and motivation in their religion. Religion in any culture provides answers to big questions about the meaning of life and proper behaviour on Earth. It also provides models and emotional instruction through the various rituals, symbols and myths.

While Goan churches and temples continue to provide traditionally distinct content to the people who worship there, in form and style they have tended to move closer together over the past few centuries. There has emerged a syncretic Goan style, which must be considered an important part of a common Goan identity. This development is most pronounced among the lower castes, but large numbers of higher caste Hindus and Catholics also take part in certain key religious festivals, worshipping and honouring the same deities. Such festivals, through their many clusters of rituals, provide strong, emotional lessons on the nature of power and divinity, the sources of help

and relief, and proper methods of propitiating the deities. At festivals such as the *zattras* of *Shanta Durga Kunkallikarin*, *Shanta Durga Verodikarin*, and *Sri Damodar Zambaulim*, the *Siolim Zagor*, the firewalking at Sirigao, and the feast day of Our Lady of Miracles at Mapusa, Goans in their hundreds of thousands can feel their shared kinship and *communitas* (à la Victor Turner). The processions of umbrellas at Cuncolim and Veroda are rituals underlining in obvious symbolic form the history, kinship and common faith in Shanta Durga shared by people of that whole region of Goa.

Catholics, as well as Hindus, go to the Shanta Durga temple at Fatorpa to make offerings or pay allegiance. Many others go to the goddess to ask for a cure or help with their problems. The divinatory oracle at *Shanta Durga Fatorpekarin* temple is consulted more by Catholics than by Hindus, according to the priests there. It is hardly the only such oracle. A syncretic Catholic-Hindu sect, run by a shaman-like healer or exorcist named Miguel Colaço, has its headquarters at Christ Ashram, near Nuvem village.<sup>38</sup> Goans share similar beliefs about ghosts, about spirit possession, going into trance and communicating with spirits.

Thus, the synthesis of Catholic and Hindu beliefs in Goa is neither wishful thinking nor an academic exercise on my part, but widespread and represented by festivals, acts of worship, divination, and healing rituals. Such a body of folk practice and belief is a living wellspring for the creation of a Goa *Indica* image. That such an image does not yet exist is due more, as Kale writes about Konkani *Tiatr* (drama form), "to the scorn with which an influential section of the Goan population regards (this syncretic pattern) as being a vulgar expression of low taste"<sup>39</sup> and dubious authenticity.

From among the symbols of the folk religion, I would like to choose two examples to illustrate my arguments more clearly.

First are the multi-coloured umbrellas carried in procession at Cuncolim and Veroda. They are carried by young men of the Chardo caste to accompany the symbolic return of the goddess Shanta Durga to her original homes in Cuncolim and Veroda from which she was driven by Portuguese zealotry in the 1580s. The young men are devotees of the goddess. Whether they are Catholic or Hindu is irrelevant. The essential point is that they are devotees who publicly demonstrate their faith on at least one day a year. Each umbrella stands for a particular clan among the Chardo mahajan or patrons of the temple—twelve at Cuncolim, six at Veroda. In both villages, two of the clans are composed solely of Catholics, the Hindu having died out, while most of the other clans are mixed. The umbrellas, then, are strong symbols of the common history and kinship of the villages,



continued common devotion to a powerful goddess, and the existence of a common Goan culture that has existed for centuries.

The second example is the mother goddess image itself. Goans revere the Mother Goddess in a number of forms and have done so since long before the Portuguese arrived. *Santeri* or *Shantarupi* Devi is perhaps of Dravidian origin, while other forms are known as *Amba*, *Bhumka*, *Rohan*, *Bhavani*, *Uma*, *Parvati*, *Mahamaya*, *Navadurga*, *Vijayadurga* and *Shanta Durga*. The list is not complete. Shanta Durga is hugely popular in Goa. There were over 100 temples dedicated to Shanta Durga, *Santeri* or Durga when the Portuguese arrived and many still exist today. Of those which were destroyed, it would be interesting to know what percent were replaced by churches to one or another aspect of the Virgin Mary. Certainly the church of Our Lady of Miracles at Mapusa, whose feast day is so popular among Hindus, was previously a Santeri temple. Many others are dedicated to Our Lady or to the Mother of Perpetual Succor.

This is no accident. Goans of both official religions pray to these Goan mother goddesses, especially when illness or disaster strikes. Shanta Durga appears in people's dreams. As a Catholic priest said to me, "The picture of the Mother of Perpetual Succor is always by me here on my desk, in my room and so on. I like her very much. Mightn't I see a vision or dream of her?" He asked this rhetorically, but for non-Brahmin laymen it is a most pertinent question. Whether Shanta Durga, Our Lady, or *Saibin Mae*...they belong to Goa *Indica*.

Myths explain the syncretism of Goan faith and justify it, particularly to Catholics, whose tradition is more exclusivist than the Hindus. One I will put forward here is that seven sister goddesses lived in Goa, each with her own temple. Some people say there were brothers, others differ on the names of the seven. All say, however, that one or two goddesses were converted to Catholicism while the others remained Hindu. Hence, since all are still sisters, it is perfectly justified for people to worship at either temple or church. Given that nobody can name the original temples or converted churches accurately, the number of temples and churches involved is considerably more than seven.

The myth should not be taken as fact. It is an emotional explanation of how Goans are still one people with one culture even if, on the surface, they are divided. Thus, when I say that a majority of Goans share in a syncretic Hindu-Catholic religion—undefined, unlabelled, but mutually understood—it should be apparent that the divide based on two exclusive Great Traditions, Roman Catholicism and what is called classical Hinduism, is apart from the Goan folk

tradition. The image of Goa *Dourada* depends on this divide; the image of Goa *Indica* can be one of two traditions slowly fusing over centuries, of a lively folk tradition that is uniquely Goan. The pattern of fusion found in Goa also exists throughout the subcontinent, though the actual content of what has fused and mingled differs from region to region. What connects India under its surface diversity is the existence of this synthesising pattern.

I have left language to the last. Konkani, above all, is the cement which binds all Goans across lines of religion, caste and class. Konkani is the common, universal language among Goans and has a long history of use in church, popular literature and popular theatre.<sup>40</sup> It is no wonder, then, that the history of Goa's struggle for official recognition has been in large part the story of Konkani and that the proponents of merger long continued to label Konkani 'a mere dialect of Marathi'. No wonder Goans conceived their beloved language as a mother, Konkani *Mai*, like Shanta Durga and Our Lady in her various aspects, a powerful symbol of the image of Goa *Indica*.

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