

Newman, Robert S.

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# *Traditional Colonial to Bourgeois Capitalist*

Robert S Newman

**T**his essay has three aims. The first is to examine Goa's transformation from a colony with traditional underpinnings to a bourgeois-capitalist society. The second is to add to the growing literature on Indian regional studies. The third is to draw serious attention to a place that is currently better known as a tourist destination than as a socio-political entity in modern India. The analysis involves a number of fields—economics, history, anthropology, and politics. After a brief overview of Goan society before its takeover by India in 1961, we shall look at recent developments, focussing our attention on five interrelated areas of concern—the 'big families', fishing, the 'gaonkari', cultural expression, and tourism.

## **The Pre-Liberation Scenario**

Goa, because it was ruled by Portugal for 451 years, has been thought of as a Portuguese outpost, an "island of Western civilization" in an Indian sea. Nevertheless, despite obvious Western influence in certain areas of life (music, dress, architecture, food), and despite its large Catholic community, it is more useful and accurate to regard Goa as an Indian region with a rather unusual past.

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*This important analysis of socio-economic developments in a tiny Portuguese colony-turned-democratic part of the Indian republic was published six years before Mr Newman's essay on the Goan identity reproduced earlier in this volume. The essay first appeared in Pacific Affairs (Aug. 1984) under the title: 'Goa—The Transformation of an Indian Region'.*

Over the course of two centuries (roughly 1700 to 1910), Goan society stagnated, its trade in decline and its politics unchanged. Though there were sporadic revolts and conspiracies by both Hindus and Catholics, Portuguese rule continued basically undisturbed. Even the major reforms undertaken by the Marquis de Pombal, the famous Portuguese prime minister who virtually ruled Portugal between 1749 and 1777, had little effect on the basic structures of Goan society. A number of Goan intellectuals, inspired by Portuguese-European models, studied and wrote in Portugal and France. Repelled by the prevailing political system of Goa, or suffocating in its narrow colonial society, many such educated men migrated to the more open and favorable political climate of British India.

The founding of the Portuguese Republic in 1910 liberated the Hindus of Goa from centuries of discrimination and repression. Immediately, they flooded into the schools, joined associations, established journals, started libraries, and began to take an active role in public life—as teachers, members of government councils, and administrative officials.<sup>1</sup>

During the Salazar regime (established in 1926), and particularly after World War II, Portugal tried to hold on to the fragments of her Indian empire by belatedly encouraging some development projects and by turning Goa into a duty-free enclave. It had long been known that Goa was extremely rich in iron ore deposits, and in 1947 the Portuguese began granting leases for developing them. The leases were taken up mainly by local Hindu merchants, who paid as little as Rs.300 for the privilege of becoming mine owners.<sup>2</sup> With the infusion of foreign capital from India and elsewhere (specifically, Japan and West Germany), the Goan mines developed rapidly in the last decade of colonial rule.

There were also attempts to expand the road network, electricity supplies, and school system all of which had been neglected up to then. "Only in the last two years (before the Liberation)...were textbooks for Marathi...primary schools prepared under government supervision and published in Goa."<sup>3</sup> The number of scholarships for study in Portugal was increased and many Hindus were given the opportunity to attend the metropolitan universities—an opportunity rarely available until this period.

After 1947, Portuguese salaries were very high compared to those paid in India; and retirement pensions were equal to the salaries.<sup>4</sup> Cheap luxury goods and the availability of imported staples made Portuguese rule palatable to many; even today, older Goans yearn for the days of cheap whisky, cheese, olives, and Japanese tex-

tiles. In general, the prices of many consumer goods were about 50 to 70 percent below Indian levels, while incomes were nearly doubled<sup>5</sup>—a situation which encouraged large-scale smuggling of goods into India.

The Portuguese succeeded in creating an artificial prosperity based on iron ore exports, high salaries, and low prices for duty-free goods. Aimed at the politically-aware middle class and the intellectuals, however, the system offered little if anything to the vast majority of people—those engaged in agriculture and fishing. In fact, farmers and fishermen were reduced to subsistence levels, since their products could not compete with the cheap imported foods. There is good evidence that Portuguese efforts to mollify anti-colonial feelings were superficial at best. The only bank in Goa until 1961 was Banco Nacional Ultramarino, which paid no interest on deposits. There were no separate departments or sections of government for various aspects of economic affairs (industry, agriculture, fisheries, forests, mining, land survey, statistics, price control, etc.); rather, all activities were lumped together under a Directorate of Economic Services.<sup>6</sup>

Portugal, a poor country itself, had neither the capital to invest in Goa nor the industrial output to supply Goa's needs—not even the ships to bring goods and take away the iron ore. The Goan economy was doubly colonial: subject to a do-nothing Portuguese administration, it was also exploited by Japanese, European and American interests who bought the iron ore and invested in some domestic facilities. Japan and West Germany together took 70 percent of Goa's iron ore production in 1960.<sup>7</sup>

### **Economic and Demographic Developments**

Since the Indian Army takeover of Goa, in December 1961, the territory has undergone very rapid change in many different areas. As an integral part of India, Goa's economy has been basically transformed. As soon as the Indian Army moved in, Goa's status as a duty-free port ended. Cheap liquor and cheap imported textiles, foods, and luxury goods disappeared. Living standards no doubt declined for the short term. But in place of the unproductive, essentially artificial system created by the Salazar government, Indians rapidly built up the same development-oriented system they had created in other parts of their country.

Agricultural production was emphasised: Goa was integrated into the Community Development Block system; improved seeds, fertilisers, and up-to-date methods were adopted. By 1970, the production of rice (the basic crop) had increased by 45 percent.<sup>8</sup> New

land was brought under cultivation and existing irrigation canals improved. (The major Selaulim irrigation project is now nearer completion, and will irrigate some 36,000 acres when finished).<sup>9</sup> Production of coconuts, cashew nuts and their by-products was expanded and the fish catch was greatly increased. Iron ore mining, exporting, and associated industries have all flourished. Iron ore production rose from 6.4 million tonnes in 1961 (the last year of Portuguese rule)<sup>10</sup> to a high of 14.8 million tonnes in 1976.<sup>11</sup> Thousands of small industries have been aided by government loans and a number of large enterprises have sprung up in such industries as pesticides, fertiliser, alcohol, barge-building. The port of Mormugao has been expanded into one of the major harbours of western India, mainly for the export of iron ore.

Recent years have also witnessed the widespread distribution of electrical power. Being deficient in hydro-electric potential, Goa has been connected to the grids of neighbouring states. Prior to 1961, only three of Goa's 383 villages were electrified; by 1980 that figure has risen to 330.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the growth in other sectors of the economy and infrastructure has been accompanied by the development of a sound financial system. The Goa State Cooperative Bank Limited was established in 1963, and numerous Indian banks soon set up branches throughout the territory. By 1978, there were 216 bank branches with deposits of Rs.2 billion.<sup>13</sup>

With the rise in production of agricultural, mineral, and industrial commodities and the increased availability of finance and electric power, came other changes. The Indian government began building roads, bridges, and culverts. New forms of economic activity and a new style of administration brought many non-Goans to the region. Construction of houses and new government or institutional buildings became a thriving business. Although a few Goans departed with the Portuguese, many more returned from abroad after Liberation in order to establish homes and business. The tourist potential soon became apparent; hotels, restaurants, and associated businesses have expanded tremendously. The statistics in Table 1 gives some indication of the magnitude of economic change experienced by Goa since 1961.

As Goan society undergoes economic transformation, changes in one area lead to changes in others. There is a 'snowball effect', by which events move at an ever faster rate, each change allowing the overall process of transformation to unfold evermore quickly. Before discussing general social and political developments, let us examine three factors which are integral to the entire process: population, education, and transportation.

## Population

Between 1900 and 1960, Goa's population grew from 476,000 to 590,000, an increase of 114 thousand in 60 years.<sup>14</sup> The preliminary findings of the 1981 census revealed that Goa now has just over a million inhabitants<sup>15</sup>—which represents an increase of 410 thousand in only 20 years. The simple statistics obscure a much more complex feature. Owing to the lack of opportunities at home, many Goans had migrated for decades before 1961. Catholics went to Africa and the Gulf countries, as well as to the commercial centres of British India, particularly Bombay, Bangalore and Karachi. Hindus were more inclined to remain among their co-religionists in India than to emigrate abroad. In addition to the economic migrants, were the political dissidents, including opponents of the Portuguese regime and Hindus who felt handicapped by a generally pro-Catholic tone to Goan life.

In 1961, the wheel turned. People who strongly identified with Portugal, or who saw little opportunity for themselves in a Goa tied to India, left for Portugal and its African colonies—or for Brazil and North America. At the same time, other Goans returned to their newly liberated homeland, hoping for an economic and political renaissance. Those departing roughly balanced those who returned. Large numbers of Indian officials—initially both military and civilian, later mostly civilian—poured in. With the upsurge in economy activity, more and more non-Goans came to work in construction, mining and in the tourist and other industries that were springing up. White-collar workers and businessmen also arrived.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was growing feeling among Goans that they had become outnumbered and disadvantaged in their own region. They began to demand that places for native Goans be reserved in the public service and industry. But there are nearly 300,000 non-Goans in the region now, about 30 percent of the total population; and it is they who account for most of the rapid population increase.<sup>16</sup> And, because India upholds the right of any citizen to travel or shift his place of residence, there is unlikely to be a reversal of the present trend—unless, of course, there is a sudden and unexpected downturn in the Goan economy.

## Education

The Portuguese did little to develop the education system of Goa. At the time of Liberation, there was only one high school in the region—the Liceu Nacional in Panjim. The language of instruction

was Portuguese. While standards were high, the number of graduates, particularly Hindu graduates, was pitifully small. Graduation prepared one for a post in the local bureaucracy or for further studies in Portugal—an option open mainly to the well-to-do. For a good future in the Indian context, a young Goan studied English in a private school, crossing the border to continue his studies in that language. This explains why there was a larger number of Goans in British Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda than in Mozambique or Angola. For all intents and purposes, education prepared Goans for migration.

One of the major achievements of the India government since 1961—and certainly one of the most significant for the future—has been the rapid expansion of education in Goa. Where there used to be one secondary school, there are now 233.<sup>17</sup> Under the Portuguese, there was a medical school and one or two other institutions offering vocational or professional training; today there are 37 institutions at the tertiary level.<sup>18</sup> While many of the private primary schools operating in Marathi or English before 1961 (the language of government schools was strictly Portuguese) were simply converted to government schools after Liberation, the expansion of primary education was nonetheless truly impressive: in 1961-62, there were 176 government primary schools; the figure climbed to 601 in 1962-63; today extends at 1,155.<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, jobs have not increased as fast as educational opportunities. As a result, migration is still a major factor in Goan life today, and education has a marked effect on population patterns. Education and the need to migrate can also be linked to politics and the growth of regional identity. Goans who returned after 1961, now find their children again forced to leave to find work, while many non-Goans occupy well-paid positions in local government and industry. This situation has helped unite those who returned in 1961 with those who had remained in Goa under Portuguese rule.

Educated Goans and those with any sort of technical or service training go overseas, particularly to the Gulf countries. In many Goan homes, there are no husbands, brothers or sons—only small children, women and old men. While outsiders from other parts of India come to settle in Goa and take up the lower-paying jobs, the better educated Goans are moving to the US, Canada, Australia, or Britain to make their fortunes. (They can do so particularly because relatives displaced from Africa are already settled in these countries.) Though they have been liberated from a remote colonial power and reintegrated into India, Goans still tend to look to places outside India as 'the centre' where things really happen. This is a classic neo-

colonial pattern which occurs in many parts of Africa and Latin America. Goan regionalism and its history support the continuance of this pattern as does the sheer lack of opportunity for educated youth at home.

### **Transportation**

Like education, transportation facilities have expanded rapidly since 1961. The bridges and roads damaged by the retreating Portuguese were rapidly repaired. Since then, the total mileage of asphalt roads in Goa has increased by a factor of 6.8.<sup>20</sup> Several crucial bridges have been built, or are nearing completion, and river-ferry service has been expanded. Public transportation is far more available than was in the past. Buses and group taxis link major towns and many villages. Roads, airlines and sea routes link Goa to other parts of India, enabling the Goans to tap into India's ever-expanding economic network.

New transportation facilities have rendered the Goans far more mobile within their own region. They now can work in places many miles from their homes—at one time an impossibility. Similarly, students can now attend schools and colleges that were formerly available only to those few who could afford to be boarders. Increased transportation facilities have also encouraged the growth of industry, which in turn brings in outside labour and many non-Goan managers or small industrialists. As with factors of population and education, the developments in the field of transportation are intimately tied to general economic changes.

### **Social and Political Developments**

Goan society is made up of a number of groups in a complex web of relationships. It is not easy to sum up the situation in a few paragraphs. Briefly, there are three religious groups: Hindus (60 percent of the total); Catholics (38 percent); and Muslims (2 percent), who are mostly Sunni. Goans speak a large number of languages, including Konkani, Marathi, English, Portuguese, Hindi and Urdu. Konkani, an Indo-European language, should serve to unite the Goans; but because it is written in four different scripts, it often divides them—Hindus preferring the Devanagari, Catholics preferring the Roman.

Hindus and Catholics are both divided on a caste basis. The Brahmins and Chardos (Kshatriya) of both religions are, commonly, the dominant castes of their villages; as members of village associa-



tions, landowners and shopkeepers, they predominate among the modern, urban middle and upper classes. The Shudras make up most of the village population—farmers, tenant-cultivators, labourers, fishermen, toddy-tappers and craftsmen—and the bulk of wage labourers in the towns.

Among the lower castes is a large group who, while Catholic or Hindu, particularly resemble the tribal population of other areas of India. Known as 'Gavda' or 'Kunbi', they share much the same appearance, folk culture and socio-economic position, despite their different religious affiliations. Because of this, they may be said to form the solid base of Goan regional culture: Konkani-speaking, having a common world-view of a syncretic Hindu-Catholic variety, with a shared livelihood based on agriculture, fishing, and liquor-distilling.

The Census of India provides no information on caste, but two sources give some inkling of the numerical importance of these people. In Carambolim village, there were 3,639 inhabitants according to the 1971 census.<sup>21</sup> In 1974, that same village had 3,200 Gavdas, constituting the vast majority of the population.<sup>22</sup> In the Socio-Economic Survey of Verna, a village-survey monograph published as part of the 1971 census of India, there is a very useful table which gives another glimpse of the Gavda-Kunbi community. Verna had 752 households of which 718 were Catholic, 30 Hindu, and 4 Muslim. Among the Catholic households, 302 (or 42 percent) were Gavdas; 348 (48 percent) were Shudras and untouchables of several castes; and only 68 households (or 9 percent) were Brahmins.<sup>23</sup>

While the Gavda-Kunbi community comprises a large part of the rural population, in economic terms the Catholic and Hindu Brahmins predominate; it is they "who own most of the private lands in the village. They are also the *jono* holders of the village *gaonkari*, being the *gaonkars* or original inhabitants."<sup>24</sup> And it is the culture and traditions of the upper caste Catholics and Hindus, of course, which have been described and idealised as 'Goan culture'. Needless to say, there is a vast gulf between the 'great tradition' of the economically powerful upper castes and the 'little tradition' of the large majority of people.

Besides religious, linguistic and caste differences, there is a division in Goa between the Old Conquests (those areas occupied by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century) and the New Conquests (areas taken from the Marathas in the eighteenth century). Of Goa's eleven districts, four comprise the former and seven the latter. The Old Conquests suffered the brunt of forced conversions and the Inquisition and thus are more 'Catholic' than the other areas which were acquired at a less zealous period of Portuguese history. There

are also more fertile, have a more pleasant climate and were generally more beloved and favoured by the Portuguese. Even today, the Old Conquests receive greater attention; the bulk of industry is located there, as are most of the educational, medical, banking and other facilities. Well over 50 percent of the population lives there; and the total rises to 68 percent when we include the one agriculturally rich district of the New Conquests, Ponda.<sup>25</sup> The New Conquests, by contrast, are sparsely populated, overwhelmingly Hindu, and have the mines and forests that keep the coastal districts prospering. The unevenness of change and development between the Old and New Conquests is a continuing problem.

Events since 1961 have resulted in substantial social change in Goa. A section of the Catholic elite and nearly all the *mestizo*, or mixed-race population departed. Hindus and those Catholics who fought against Portuguese rule assumed a larger role in political and economic life. The economic changes detailed above, together with changes in population, education and transportation, created a new class entrepreneurs, professionals, managers, and administrators with ties to their counterparts in the rest of India. Upper caste Catholics and Hindus who did not adjust to new conditions and did not appreciate the magnitude of changes about to take place, became a backward-looking class of rentiers and functionaries, nostalgic for the peace and stability of colonial times and their lost prestige, critical of the crassness of capitalism.

A small number of families became inordinately rich and powerful, and will be discussed later. For the mass of agricultural and maritime producers and labourers, the end of Portuguese rule meant an end to a system of social structures kept them permanently in a subordinate position. Since 1961, these people have been emerging from the shell of traditional relationships. They are migrating to the larger towns, attending schools, and filling the low-level jobs in commerce and administration. Above all, they no longer squat self-effacingly before the threshold: they have entered the doorway.

Goa now is in the throes of rapid urbanisation. In 1960, only 14.7 percent of the population was classified as urban; by 1971, the figure was 25.5 percent; in 1981, 32.1 percent.<sup>26</sup> Part of this growth is due to the influx of outsiders; but, as in so many other Third World countries, rural people are flocking to the towns in the hope of finding jobs. Urban areas in Goa grew at the rate of 58.5 percent between 1971 and 1981. The corresponding figure for rural areas was only 15 percent.<sup>27</sup>

Colonial Goa was authoritarian and outwardly-oriented to Portugal and its other colonies. Power was centralised in the hands of

the Portuguese politico-military authorities, who received their directions from Lisbon. In less than a year after Liberation, Indian authorities had organised village level elections and begun the process of integrating Goa into the democratic patterns of the rest of India. Since then, Goans have become fully familiar with the electoral process. Political parties have emerged and manoeuvred for power.

This essay is not the place to narrate political events of the last twenty years. Suffice to say that the parties have tended to be centred around particular personalities or communal (religious, caste, linguistic) groups. An early move to merge Goa with neighbouring was decisively defeated in 1967. The party favouring merger remained in power until 1979 however. Starting as a champion of the previously out-of-favour Hindus and lower castes and of the Marathi language, the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak ('Maharashtrian Goa') Party gradually changed its tune. By the time of its fall from power in 1979, the party was considered as corrupt, dominated by one person, and narrowly communal—in favour of low caste Hindus alone. Above all it had reached a *modus vivendi* with the big families.

One might add that such a relationship between government and capital is not unknown in the rest of India. We may note that this relationship marks a basic difference between and pre-1961 Goan society of today. Under the Portuguese, local capitalists were weak or non-existent, emerging only in the last ten years of colonial rule. Even during the brief period of economic growth in the 1950s, Goa's government was distant from Goan industry and business, all decisions ultimately being made in Lisbon. The current arrangement, which we shall discuss at a greater length below, is a clear sign of Goa's transformation from a colonial to a bourgeois-capitalist mode of existence.

With this general overview of changes in Goa since 1961, let us now examine five areas in more detail in order to get a clearer picture of the process of capitalist penetration and transformation of Goan society. The five areas (which are closely interrelated) are: the big families, fishing, the *gaonkari*, cultural expression and tourism.

### **The Big Families Dominate**

After the end of World War II, two factors came to influence Goa's future more than any others: first, the Japanese needed iron ore to rebuild their economy; second, as we have noted, the Portuguese realised that the only way to forestall the increasing Indian demands for their departure was to create a class of Goans with a large stake in a 'Portuguese future'. The plan worked well.

A handful of small-businessmen, traditional landowners, and war profiteers received iron ore mining licenses, and were encouraged to dig and ship the ore to Japan. Families with names like Dempo, Chowgule, and Salgaocar moved into diverse enterprises and industries. Several of the family heads were decorated or honoured by Portugal for their industrial achievements. All were the creations of Portuguese policy.

Yet, as Goa went through the traumas of takeover after 1961, the big families hardly missed a step. Not only were they not penalised in any direct sense but, in effect, they were rewarded for it. Goan mine-owners were allowed to keep possession of their mines and to expand their activities at will. They became the only private mine-owners in India.

From 1961 on, these controllers of the major wealth of the territory came to control its politics as well. Foremost among such powerful men was Dayanand Bandodkar, a wealthy Hindu mine-owner and a friend of the Portuguese. Becoming the first chief minister, he and his daughter were to rule Goa until 1979. A man of low caste with the populist flair, Bandodkar adopted the platform of Goa's merger with Maharashtra. This position was championed largely by Hindus who felt they had been discriminated against under the former regime and who believed that a merger with the huge Hindu majority of Maharashtra would put an end to Catholic domination forever.

After Bandodkar's MG party won a majority in the new legislative assembly in 1963, questions of control of the wealth and natural resources of Goa did not arise, as the issues of development and merger were kept at centre-stage. Bandodkar and his fellow industrialists attempted to shape public opinion through their newspapers (there are almost no independent papers in Goa) and through tertiary educational institutions which they themselves had established. The Chowgules, for example, launched the newspapers *Gomantak* and *Uzvadd*, and were founders of an arts and science college at Margao; the Salgaocars founded a law college; and the Dempos own *The Navhind Times* and *Navprabha*, and are involved in Dhempe College at Miramar.

When the proposal to merge Goa with Maharashtra was defeated, Bandodkar and his party made a complete about-face. They now declared their support for Statehood, a separate Goa University and recognition of Konkani as one of the constitutionally recognised national languages. Throughout, the big families have profited because Goa remained a Union Territory without a full state administrative and ministerial apparatus and without a governor—who, as

a potentially powerful figure with no local ties, would be difficult to win over.

By 1978, Dempo was the fastest growing business house in India, with a real annual growth rate of 33 percent, though it only ranked 38 in size. Salgaocars was growing at the rate of 18 percent a year.<sup>28</sup> Chowgules, in addition to a mammoth iron ore pelletisation plant built on prime agricultural land, had thirteen companies in several states with branch offices in fifteen cities. On the occasions of their birthdays or the launching of yet another project or company, the newspapers in Goa are full of sickly praise, endorsements from employees and smaller fry in the business world and photographs of the magnets toward with politicians and bureaucrats from Delhi. The lieutenant governor (the highest administrator in Goa) and chief ministers grace weddings and other social events put on by the industrialists, there mingling with dignitaries from Japan, Portugal, and other countries. The Japanese send arm-twisting missions from time to time to hasten the expansion of port facilities so that more ore can be loaded more quickly. They are greeted by the industrialists, garlanded, and called friends and partners. The Japanese talk about a 'close family relationship'.<sup>29</sup>

The concrete results of this 'family relationship' may be seen in the luxurious lifestyles enjoyed by the industrialist families. They may also be seen in the "ravaging of Goa's splendid mountains and forests, the pollution of Goa's rivers and the reduced life-span of the Goan miner."<sup>30</sup>

Iron ore mining in Goa is open-cut mining and there is virtually no control over environmental destruction. Protests against pollution are ignored (the one successful anti-pollution movement was waged against an outside-owned company, Zuari Agro-Chemical). Labour unrest is treated harshly as well. Goa's economy is now linked intimately to Japan's. The big capitalist families created by the former colonial power have continued to thrive by playing the role of agents for foreign capitalist interests. Besides their own profit-making activities, they have created a climate for capitalist penetration of fishing and tourism. Needless to say, an appreciation of the strength of the big families and their links to both foreign capitalism and local government is essential to an understanding of Goa since 1961.

### Fishing Traditions and Wars

The sea off Goa is rich in life, and fish and crustaceans have always been an important part of the traditional Goan diet. Fishermen live in self-sufficient communities along the palm-fringed shore and make a good living in normal times. In 1973, there were 1091 traditional craft (though this is probably an underestimate) of which 70 percent were under two tonnes in weight.<sup>31</sup> In an ostensible effort to increase the protein supply for India's population at large and to raise coastal living standards in general, the Indian government's planners decided to increase the fish catch by encouraging mechanisation. I have argued elsewhere that this decision was related to an entire philosophy of development that emphasises production rather than distribution and stems from an addiction to Western models.<sup>32</sup> In any event the Central government encouraged people who wanted to operate trawlers (mechanised fishing craft other than the traditional craft with an outboard motor added).

Loans were given on generous terms, but they were still far beyond the capacity of traditional fishermen. The result was that trawlers were purchased by small local capitalists—those with small businesses, transport companies or manufacturing companies. And these small businessmen were often financed by politicians and big capitalists in return for a share of the profits. In 1979, there were about 400 trawlers operating from Goa—about four per kilometre of coast line. Most of them, as Goa's Director of Fisheries confirmed, were "owned by 'moneyed unwanted elements' and not by traditional fishermen."<sup>33</sup>

One important result of mechanisation has been the growth of the canning and export industry. Instead of increasing the protein supply for Indians and improving the lives of Goan fishermen, mechanisation led to the establishment of canneries and the export of frozen fish and prawns. By the mid-1970s, the export of frozen prawns alone amounted to several million rupees a year. Reaping the profits were a handful of companies employing very few people; and the people they did employ were brought from other parts of India in order to ensure a more pliant labour force.

Foreign-aid programmes and joint ventures with more developed nations are linked to this process. Foreign governments design their aid programmes to encourage the import of trawlers and equipment in the hope of absorbing much of the seafood produced. Mechanised fishing has become a major industry with strong ties to the manufacturers of trawlers and associated equipment. Again, we find post-1961 changes marked by growing capitalist penetration of

a traditional economy and increasing ties to a world-wide system of markets.

In all of this, the benefits to Goans and the Goan fisherman in particular are minimal. The canneries pollute the rivers and surrounding areas. The trawlers, instead of going out to sea where tradition craft cannot operate, have been used to deplete in-shore, traditional fishing grounds where they have destroyed nets and killed small fish and egg stocks.

To protest such developments, an organisation was founded in 1974 by a group of social-minded middle class teachers and students—people who were politicised several months previously in the anti-pollution struggle against Zuari Agro-Chemicals. Ever since then, this organisation has fought to obtain recognition for the rights of traditional fishermen and corresponding regulation over trawler activity. The pleas of the traditional fishermen for a long time fell largely on deaf ears. Laws have now been passed, but it remains to be seen if they will be enforced. When desperate fishermen resorted to violence in 1979, the authorities harshly overreacted. Given the interests of some Goan politicians and their connections with trawler owners—and given the strength of foreign interests, the lure of foreign exchange and the behind-the-scenes influence of the big families—the sorry history of Goa's fishing industry is not surprising.

### **Decline of the 'Gaonkari'**

Before the Portuguese conquest, Goan villages were organised in a community system known as gaonkari. Rather than abolishing the system, the Portuguese, in fact, preserved it under the name of *comunidades* and by the twentieth century it had become incredibly complex and unwieldy. It is impossible to do justice in this essay to the complexities and far-reaching ramifications of this system.

Each village might have its own particular history, but basically the village associations were run by gaonkars, the male members of the dominant caste. Some gaonkari units decided "that their male descendants should be enrolled (on) completing a certain age (with the unit) regularly dividing the income equally among all enrolled persons. Whereas in others it was established that a certain amount from the income should be set aside to be distributed among the successors of every original family (who were) known Vangors,"<sup>34</sup>

Amounts were given for the support of village craftsmen and for the temple or church. The gaonkari units were responsible for maintaining roads, drainage and irrigation systems, public security,

religious institutions—and, under the Portuguese for supporting education and public health as well.

However successful in its time, the system had developed serious problems by 1961. "The Portuguese government insisted on observance of old traditions...without paying heed to the fact that villages had ceased to be occupied only by the gaonkars, that (the latter) constituted an insignificant minority in the villages and that the (structure of the villages) was totally modified."<sup>35</sup> Non-gaonkars—the tenants who rented gaonkari land and the labourers who did the actual work—had no say in the running of the village association affairs. In 1956, a Portuguese agricultural mission found that tenancy rates in Goa were extremely high, ranging from 75 to 98.5 percent tillers.<sup>36</sup> There were altogether 224 gaonkari units in the territory, the number in each district varying greatly. Fifty-five per cent of them were in the four districts of the Old Conquest—which also contained nearly half the paddy fields in Goa.<sup>37</sup> Throughout Goa, then, many villages were dominated by the gaonkars, who controlled the production and distribution of much of the regions agricultural wealth.

After 1961, the Indian government took quick measures to reduce the power of the gaonkari. Rents collectible by village associations were reduced, and the previous system of annual public auction of gaonkari-owned plots was abolished. The Goa, Daman and Diu Agricultural Tenancy Act (1964) established security of tenancy and fixed rent rates; it held that, while landlords would pay land tax, tenants would pay irrigation taxes and be responsible for the maintenance of bunds. (The Act applied to private owners as well as gaonkari). Since then, several other 'land-to-the-tiller' laws have been enacted. The Goa, Daman and Diu Mundkars (Protection from Eviction) Act (1975) stopped evictions and gave tenants the right to purchase their house sites. Landlords fought the acts (and some excessive observances of them) in court. In 1979, the major 'land-to-the-tiller' law was declared unconstitutional: landlords now could demand the arrears owed them. The tenants appealed, and the fight continues.

There are both positive and negative aspects to the decline of gaonkari since 1961. On the positive side, an outdated agricultural system has been weakened, if not destroyed. The way has been cleared for many more Goans to farm their own land—many of them from the lower castes. Land ownership will undoubtedly give them a sense of pride and security that they have never had. The old gaonkars often ploughed their wealth into houses and items of consumption rather than back into the land. Under the new ar-



rangements, production may well be higher—if the small private landholders can obtain the necessary capital and the technology. For tenants, conditions have improved considerably; absentee landlordism has greatly declined. All of these outcomes can be seen as justifying the recent changes.

Nevertheless, change has not been all for the good. Reforms were undertaken without a thorough analysis of what might happen if gaonkari disappeared, and there have been a number of unanticipated and negative side-effects of change. While many Goans may benefit in the short run from the demise of the gaonkari, in the absence of any alternative institution of a more democratic nature, Goans may lose out in the long run in terms of both quality of land and quality of life. Without the organisation and finances of the gaonkari, it has been difficult to maintain the irrigation and flood-control systems; as a result, thousands of acres have been damaged or destroyed by flooding or salination. The decline in gaonkari income has been reflected in the decline in village cultural and religious activity, the disappearance of church music-schools, and the deterioration of valuable architectural monuments. (On the other hand, upper caste culture is no longer so dominant; lower caste groups, particularly the Gavda-Kunbi community, are freer to develop in their own ways.) The gaonkari common lands, which are not rented out for agricultural purposes, have been subject to speculative manipulation by politicians, land dealers, and construction firms. The communal forests are now cut by individuals for private gain, as the gaonkari has become a mere shadow of its former self, unable to control the behaviour of its members and others.

Land reform in Goa has been carried out more thoroughly than in many other parts of India. The gaonkari aside, private landlords were usually owners of ten acres or less. They controlled 90 percent of holdings in 1971.<sup>38</sup> While this figure is the same as for the rest of India, Goa's history and particular evolution produced different results. In other states, the large landholders often had strong political influence and were able to prevent land reforms from affecting them. In Goa, neither the landlords nor the gaonkari were powerful beyond their villages. They were members of the higher castes, and many of them were Catholics. These factors also mitigated against their building political ties to the post-1961 lower caste, Hindu-oriented leadership. In Goa, then, even small landlords lost their fields and sometimes their houses to tenants. Long-running litigation has prevented erstwhile tenants from investing in improvements and erstwhile landlords from selling out and doing something else.

Capital in Goa comes from destruction of land, not from the careful use of it. The families whose wealth derives from mining remain unaffected by land reforms. Their concessions remain valid; they can buy whatever new land they need. Destruction of the land by mining activities goes hand in hand with the decline of the gaonkari, the only indigenous organisation that might have ameliorated the situation through coordinated action.

### **Cultural Expression Changes**

With regard to both individual and group modes of cultural expression, the process of socialisation and the reinforcement of Goan regional culture has undergone considerable change. Some modes of cultural expressions have nearly disappeared, other have been played down, still others have emerged to take their place. Not only are the media changing, but also the values, attitudes, behavioral patterns, and expectations of life that they transmit.

Before 1961, 'cultured' Goans wrote, spoke, and sang in Portuguese if they were Catholic, and in Marathi if they were Hindu. Konkani, while beloved as the mother tongue of all Goans, was not encouraged by the Portuguese, and it remained the language of the folk culture, both Hindu and Catholic. Since higher education was only available in Portuguese (unless one left Goa) a number of Hindus also learned that language. Portuguese-speaking Goans never constituted more than a handful of the population; in 1961, for example, less than two percent of the people claimed Portuguese as their mother tongue.<sup>39</sup> Still there was a vast quantity of Portuguese-language material available—newspapers, journals, books. And educated Goans generally looked to Portugal and Europe for intellectual stimulation; they read Eça de Queiroz, Pessoa, Camoes, and Almeida Garrett. The Central Library in Panjim still has a large collection of world literature (now very dog-eared) in Portuguese.

With the end of Portugal's rule came the sudden demise of Portuguese as a functional language in Goa. All official contact with Portugal ceased for fourteen years. No Portuguese books, magazines or newspapers from abroad were available. Portuguese is hardly taught in the schools—though this is less due to official policy and more the result of a widespread desire to learn English, clearly the language of the future. Even though this century has seen a flowering of Konkani literature—both in Roman and Devanagari scripts—the new languages of education are English and Marathi, not Konkani. In fact, most Goans are opposed to Konkani being made the language of instruction in schools.<sup>40</sup>

Thus Goans have traded one foreign language for another, and have adopted a neighbouring regional language instead of their own. Given economic realities, this situation is likely to persist—despite the strong pressures from Konkani language organisations, English has spread in a way that Portuguese never did, due to its use in the rest of India and much of the world and because of the ready availability of English-language books, magazines, newspapers, films and radio broadcasts.

Turning to other forms of cultural expression, we find more evidence of a fundamental transformation since 1961. As elsewhere in India and the world, the change has been from the religious to the secular, from the rural to the urban, and from emphasis on the group to emphasis on the individual. Traditional stage-plays—immensely enjoyed in Goa, as they are in Maharashtra—have shifted from religious themes to those of romantic love and consumerism, accompanied by a new Goan pop music, a combination of Western rock and local folk songs. Hindi films and film music have achieved tremendous popularity and wide influence among the youth. Besides introducing a rudimentary knowledge of Hindi, they represent the cultural accompaniment of the economic goings on in Goan society. They stress individual problems and desires—particularly of the romantic variety—and escapism. Hindi films encourage consumerism by consistently glorifying urban life and frequently presenting traditional rural styles or values in a derisive way.

Changes in the economic, political and social structures have been accompanied by a rapid decline in traditional crafts. Former *patrao* have left Goa or are no longer prosperous. Factory-produced articles are cheaper, or appeal because they are 'new'. Architectural styles have changed as well. Few new buildings are constructed in the traditional Indo-Portuguese style, and many of the old ones have fallen into disrepair or have already been demolished. The towns are filling up with concrete blocks that look old before they are finished. Panjim, Margao, Mapusa and Vasco more and more resemble towns in other parts of Western India.

Regarding socialisation and reinforcement of Goan regional culture and identity, we have already touched upon many of the relevant factors. Language, films, music, and theatre all play important roles in establishing cultural identity. Another important area, of course, is religion, particularly religious festivals. These festivals—saints' days for Catholics and *zatra*s for Hindus—provide the participants with a set of moods and motivations conveyed by a single cultural style, giving them a chance to move briefly from daily routine and normal structure to a transitory, more ideal world outside mun-

### Mass Tourism Destroys

At the same time that Goa reels under the impact of massive change, it is being vigorously promoted as a tourist paradise. In such a situation, ironies abound. While vast tracts of the territory are being turned into a moonscape, it is being touted as a 'lush garden' and 'almost miraculously unspoiled'. As the interesting Luso-Indian architecture of the towns is replaced by concrete blocks of exceptional ugliness, Goan urban charms are advertised as 'nearly Mexican'. As politics, pollution, mass media, and the increase of population pose mounting problems, Goa is referred to as a 'place outside time'.<sup>43</sup> But the ironies of tourism are not limited to the dubious claims of brochures. Because the big families have not gone into the hotel business in a serious way, chains operated by Indian corporations from other parts of the country have taken over. Construction of huge luxury hotels has resulted in: the alienation of land from traditional owners, the disruption of village life, tremendous inflation (because of the high prices that foreigners and rich Indians are willing to pay), and the commercialization of local culture.

Goa has been a tourist destination for many years, but only recently has it begun to suffer from mass tourism, the sure destroyer. Over the years there have been essentially three types of visitors to Goa. First, there were the Goans returning home on leave from their far-flung diaspora—reaching floodtide when the Bombay shops and offices let out for the holidays. This type of tourist brought new ideas and goods into Goan society, but was not disruptive. A few years after Liberation, Goa was discovered by disaffected, adventurous Western youth, loosely termed 'hippies'. Their nudism, drugs, and rock music shocked Goan sensibilities. Nevertheless, while the appearance of some seaside villages changed, the local people remained in control of the tourist trade, and socio-economic structures were not altered drastically.

It is the third type of tourism which has brought about severe economic, social, and cultural dislocation. This is the more recent mass tourism by well-to-do individuals or groups who want little or nothing to do with Goan life—visitors cocooned in luxury hotels built on former village land, staffed by former fishermen, toddy-tappers, and farmers, and supplied by the 'more reliable' sources outside the territory.

The greatest irony of all is that even the official advertisements urge people to visit Goa now, before it is spoilt. It seems almost inevitable that the burgeoning tourist 'infrastructure' will overwhelm and destroy the very place the tourists are coming to see.

dane reality. Such occasions create an atmosphere of excitement, even favour, in which people have a chance to approach their god's and their inner selves, to learn something about their own society through the festival 'texts'.<sup>41</sup>

Though in content the Catholic and Hindu traditions differ greatly, in form and style they have tended to move closer together over the past few centuries in Goa. There has emerged a syncretic Goan style, which has helped forge a common Goan identity despite religious difference. This development has been 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—in particular, the goddess Shanta Durga and Our Lady of the Miracles.

Saints' days and *zатras* are attended by hundreds of thousands of Goans. Yet the amount of attention they receive in the modern media is scant indeed. It is fair to say that any society has its dramatic forms in which certain cultural lessons or messages are played out for large numbers of people. One need only think of American football, the bullfights of Iberian cultures, the Balinese cockfights and cremations, or the ritual games of Amazon Indians. Indeed, some writers have argued that in simpler, less mobile societies, there is dramatic or dramatical content in daily life *per se*.<sup>42</sup> The transformation of Goan society can be expected to produce new forms of expression. One area which looks promising is local party politics, non-existent before 1961. There is a great variety of political expression, involving many popular symbols and identities. The 'drama' of Goan politics is always present in the newspapers and often on the streets as well—in the form of parades, celebrations, demonstrations, strikes, sit downs, blockades, and occasional riots. All of these are expressive of the plethora of new ideas, values, and problems that have come to Goa.

The Goan cultural tradition in all its forms—Hindus, Catholic, and syncretic—is under great pressure because of the changes in economic, social, and political structures, and the new patterns of population, education, and transportation. As noted earlier, there has been a rapid decline in the influence of *gaonkari* and in its ability to sponsor traditional cultural activities. Commercial styles of all-India or international derivation, tied to the mass media, have largely replaced the unique forms of cultural expression that gave Goa its regional identity.

### Uncertain Ultimate Solution

Looking back over the changes which have occurred in Goa since 1961, it is difficult not to derive a sense of pessimism. But we ought not to focus only on the negative. Like the rest of India, Goa is on the move. Its human potential is outstanding, as is its capacity for increased agricultural and industrial production. India and Goa threw off their colonial shackles and opted for change and a better life for all. The ideal is inspiring and seemingly attainable. The problem lies in the selection of the best means to achieve the goals.

India in general and Goa in particular have yet to discover that necessary combination of organisation and ideology which can ease their present difficulties and free them from their disadvantageous ties with the developed economies of Europe, America and Japan. Goa is firmly caught in bourgeois-capitalist society having leapt from a traditional-colonial order in the space of a very few years. Much of the change it has experienced so far has not resulted in a better life for all. An increase in money supply and a broadened economic base have been paid for in a decline of peace, order, cleanliness, and Goan identity. Goa's position as one of the regional cultures of India is not yet seriously threatened, but strains are appearing. As in other areas of India, mass education, rapid urbanisation, and the decline of the traditional village socio-economic system has led to a loss of direction, an alienation, a loneliness amidst the crowd that is assuaged in part by films, sport, politic theatrics.

Bourgeois-capitalism may offer no more effective a remedy to Goa's needs than did stagnant Portuguese colonialism. The ultimate solution remains uncertain. The only sure thing is that Goa will remain quintessentially Indian, tied by history, economics, politics, language, social structure, and culture to the rest of the subcontinent. It is in that context that it must seek its future.

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