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SOCIO-CULTURAL LIFE IN GOA DURING 16TH CENTURY

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When Afonso de Albuquerque conquered Goa on 25 November 1510, Goan society which was groaning under the Muslim rule of young Adil Khan beset with internal rivalries, submitted itself to the new fate in store for it under an altogether alien rule of the whites, who were hitherto unknown to it. The new conquerors during the capture of the city of Goem (Old Goa), almost annihilated and exterminated the Muslim soldiers, the pretty widows of some of whom were encouraged by him to have a fresh conjugal alliance with his Portuguese gentry stationed in Goa.

Prior to this queer rehabilitation of the helpless widows, Albuquerque while reducing the imports a bit in the newly conquered Tiswadi islands, assured the residents (mostly Hindus), that they would be obliged to the Portuguese king for their inheritance, rent money, taxes and charges which they used to earlier pay their kings and lords of the land and he would protect their rights and customs.¹ He did not change the existing basic administrative set-up. Gradually, the Portuguese began to introduce their own system of administration and established the *Senado de Goa*, *Fazenda*, *Alfandegas*, *Casa da Moeda*, etc. But at the same time they were extremely cautious not to disturb the age-old existing traditional indigenous institutions like *Tanadaria*, *Gaoncaria*, the office of *Catual*, etc. since the local populace was very attached to them in carrying out their socio-religious activities.

Nevertheless, Albuquerque boasted of having converted Goa into "the mother of the whole of India".² While it is extremely difficult to imagine what made him attribute such a high status to Goa, it may be surmised that Goa being centrally located on the west

coast of India with easy access to the Far East and Europe, he must have thought it had the central position in their expected future conquests in the East.

Much reliable information about the life in Goa of the early period of the conquest of Goa is available in *A Suma Oriental* penned by the apothecary of Prince D. Afonso who came to Goa in 1511 as Factor of Drugs. Tomé Pires describes vividly the life and the people of Goa at the time. He reveals that the caravans of fully loaded bullock-carts coming from far-off lands outside Goa brought merchandise and the merchants enjoyed much as compared to the situation they had to face with the Muslims at the helm of affairs prior to the arrival of the Portuguese. Goa, according to him, was a haven for the traders from all the nations and the men with enormous capital had a number of ships with the good port to thrive. The people who plied their ships were the local residents who were good seafarers. Their business being on a grand scale, the revenue earned by Goa in the anchorage as well as duties on goods besides the toll levied through *Tanadarias*, offices of the chief local police with military authority to collect imports and customs levies, was enormous. Thus Goa soon after the Portuguese conquest earned dues from all sources annually to the tune of four lakh *pardaos* of gold each valued at 335 *réis*.

Pires believed that Goa had more rich and honoured citizenry with a lot of fortune and almost the whole land was dependent on them. They lived respectably merrier and luxuriant lives than those of the citizens from Cambay, another important port town on the east coast in the Rann of Kutch. He disclosed that these rich people of Goa had numerous temples with brahmin priests of varied manner, some of whom for generations did not eat any item with blood nor did they consume any food prepared by others. They were held in high esteem all over and their services were also utilized for carrying the goods and letters safely by land. The people of Goa without torture confessed everything that they did and suffered immensely various types of tortures patiently and before death they would confess their determination to keep certain secrets. The women of Goa, according to him had the knack of dressing well and their way of dancing and swinging round and round was much applauded all over. It was customary for a woman to immolate herself on the pyre of her husband. If in case she refused to sacrifice her life on the fire, her relatives were dishonoured and the people would admonish

others not in favour of the sacrifice and force them to immolate themselves. Those women who would refuse to sacrifice on any pretext would become public prostitutes and they would earn for the maintenance and the construction of the temples. This gives credence to the not oft-repeated view that the caste of dancing girls of *devadasis* was the creation of the kinsmen of such hapless women not only in Goa but all over India who on account of the male-oriented, selfish, weird tradition forced their own womenfolk to enter into the despicable life. It also implied that the destitute women from all castes and classes in India who abstained from being *sati* were forcibly drawn together to create the devadasi system and in turn the new caste in anthropological terms.³ However, it goes to the credit of Albuquerque to put a stop to this pernicious and inhuman practice on humanitarian basis,⁴ a step which was the first of its kind on the soil of India.

Touching upon other ports in Goa, Pires has recorded that the rice, betel leaves and the areca nuts were in great demand there. The areca nuts of Goa were of very good quality and they were highly rated and exported to far off ports like Aden, Hormuz and Cambay.⁵

But what is infinitely more important is that Goan Hindu society of the period under discussion was not different from its counterparts in the rest of the country. It was a caste-ridden, tradition-bound, conservative, extremely religious-minded, pious, socially well-knit, morally at a higher level, much conscious about customs, rites and rituals and very possessive of its property and deities. As in other parts of India, they strictly followed the *Manusmriti*, code of Manu which was accepted by the Indians as Hindu law and jurisprudence. Since it was older than *Dharmashastras* or Brahmanical legal manuals, it was considered by the Hindus for the last hundreds of years as the most important work after the *Vedas*, though of late it is derided as biased. But in older times, the people of India fully adhered to it because it laid down moral and ethical precepts for the general guidance of the Hindus and formulated the rules and regulations, customs, rites and ceremonies. No Hindu in the country could go against it and hence it was held to be absolutely binding on the Hindus of all castes and creeds. It almost carried the weight of law, giving divine sanction to the institution of caste and endorsing its continuity. This being the general situation in the entire Indian peninsula, tiny Goa was no exception at all though it underwent the ignominy of being ruled by

several dynasties and sovereigns over the centuries followed by the Portuguese.

At the time of the fall of Goa in the hands of the Portuguese, its population, majority of whom were Hindus, followed by the Muslims mostly on military duty continued to live in villages with its agricultural communities. Originally these villages belonged to the settlers namely *ganvkars*, and it is they who managed the village administration from time unknown. This system prevailed throughout the Indian peninsula. The villagers under the system of *comunidades* or *gaoncaria* had their common rights and interests in their occupied lands. They followed the Hindu law of inheritance. Manu determined that the sovereign did not have the right over one-fifth of the gross produce. But, as in Indian mainland, in Goa too the rulers used to extract as much imposts as they liked thereby putting the populace to great hardships. Such was the situation when Adilshah had to give up Goa to the Portuguese, who on conquest assured the populace that they would allow them to pay as much as they did to their predecessors.⁶

But in the meanwhile another scenario which was changing the demographic profile of Goa was gradually emerging. Within a decade and a half in 1524, the Portuguese who married and settled in Goa totalled 450 besides several others including *fidalgos*, knights and shield-bearers and other individuals of merit who had scattered outside the city with sons and daughters of marriageable age who by their nature were populating the land creating thereby ethnic changes.⁷

Though the Portuguese right from the beginning made constant efforts to have full control over revenue administration against the odds of allowing the traditional rights and customs, it was not so easy for them because of the powerful lobby of the *ganvkars*. Nevertheless, Albuquerque dared to select his own man João Machado, a Portuguese, as the *tanadar* of the city of Goa in 1515⁸ ignoring the claims of the local. However, by 1523, the situation seems to have taken a reverse turn. When Krishna was heading the *tanadaria*, the regimen had been issued giving the clear indication that the rights and customs as per the contract during the conquest of the territory would be continued to be maintained without any changes.⁹ But this softening of the stand did not last long. Afonso Mexia, Overseer of the Revenue of India who on his own, independent of the Viceroy or Governor was working on the idea to

regulate the uses and customs of ganvkars and peasants of the Tiswadi island. And he did not succeed, when Dom João, king of Portugal duly approved it and it was put into operation from 16 September 1526 in the form of *Foral dos uzos e costumes os gancares e lavradores desta ilha de Goa e outros annexos nela*,¹⁰ (Charter of uses and customs of ganvkars and peasants of the island of Goa and other territories annexed to it).

This Charter was one of the most significant events after the occupation. It not only had the imprint on it of the Portuguese domination and assertion of the rule but also gave a sudden twist to the socio-religious life of the Goans besides making revolutionary changes in the village administration. It empowered Viceroys, chief tanadars, revenue overseers, magistrates of justice to such an extent that their orders, decisions and judgements gave rise to the plethora of social legislations in the years to come thereby raising the influence of jurisprudence in the day to day life of the Goans.

The Charter which had the preamble and 48 articles touched upon civil law, penal and fiscal legislation, and even the rural economy of the *comunidades* and civic issues.

The Charter exhorted (Articles 6-8) the ganvkars of 31 villages¹¹ to pay the Portuguese administration a certain share of the revenue as per the Charter, which the ganvkars of each village with the help of the scribe distributed and gave in auction to the peasants and persons who had their inheritance within the boundaries of each village and this process would be carried out under the condition with which it was given to each one according to their uses and customs. The said ganvkars were to collect taxes and pay the said revenue whether it swelled or waned. They would bear the loss or increase and it was left for them and the concerned village to compensate the loss or procure a part of the increase for the persons whom it belonged by their customs. Only exception was to be made to the loss in case of war when it was not to be paid proportionately in respect of their loss. The aforesaid increase or loss of each year would be distributed as free pay since every one paid the taxes on the lands or the paddy fields that he held. Some palm-groves and paddy-field growers were asked to pay annually some unspecified *tangas*. In the event of any losses, they were exempted from doing so.

Each one of the ganvkars was asked to give grounds in his village being unoccupied, gratis to put to good use or to be utilized,

by the officials of the village, namely, priest of the temple, clerk, porter, tenant, washerman, cobbler, carpenter, blacksmith and *farash* and mistresses of the temple and a jester. Any *ganvkar* was prevented from giving either any grounds or orchards gratis simply by paying a certain rent except authorized by the ordinance to that effect. If the *ganvkar* or the person from the village wanted to sell any inheritance in any of the said villages he was prevented from doing so without the permission of all the *ganvkars* of the village. And thus likewise nobody could buy without the said permission.

If any man being married to two women had four sons from one and one from the other or more or less, though not equal in numbers, then the sons would divide the property of the father and the division would be made in halves. One son would take as much as the four or three sons and no daughter would inherit the property of the father or of the mother.

None was allowed to bring flambeau, palanquin and umbrella without the permission of the revenue overseer or Governor except if it was owned by the one as an inheritance from their fathers and grand-fathers and the said license was to be given to them in two days only on account of the graces of their services. There were two types of such licenses. One was for bringing umbrella and palanquin with the attendants and flambeau and oil at their cost. Another license was receiving the honour by the authorities along with the attendants in which case the cost of the oil was to be paid by the authorities. The male and female dancers who used to go to celebrate the village festival would go first at the residence of the principal *ganvkar* and subsequently if they desired to visit anyone's house, it would remain open to them. The *ganvkars* would honour them with betel or any other honour and they would receive them standing together with arms crossed keeping the right hand below the left hand for showing more respect.

During the seeding time and during the time of harvest, the principal *ganvkar* would have first preference in ploughing and harvesting. Likewise, the main *ganvkar* would cover his house first by the leaves of the palm-trees namely *ollas*. The village of Taleigao had the prominence and it had the first preference in harvesting of paddy fields. Its *ganvkars* would come in groups each year with cluster of new crops to present it before the main altar of the Sé. From there, the Vicar would go with them to the trading post and the Factor would honour them with four *pardaos* in *pachodi* putting

them around their necks. Whenever there was any invitation for a feast or gathering in which there was a practice of receiving betel or *pachodi*, the principal *ganvkar* of each village was to receive the honour first followed by others, according to the custom and practice.

It is worthwhile to have a peep into religious life of the Goans of the day which was totally disrupted and subsequently ruined on account of the terrible onslaught on Hinduism and the Hindus. The pre-dominant Goan Hindu society had been greatly influenced by the Nath cult, also known as Yoga, Siddha or Avadhut cults. In this cult, the teacher has an unusual and pre-eminent position. It believes that the Shakti creates the universe, Siva nurtures it and time destroys it and Natha brings *mukti* (freedom). Natha is the only pure soul whereas the rest are mere human beings.¹² It does not recognize the caste system.¹³ Perhaps this was the main reason for the attraction to it of the people all over the country, including Goa. The Nath¹⁴ cult must have spread in Goa since the 12th century. The patronage of Kadambas to Saptanatha and its temple at Naroa must have given it a sudden boost leading to its spread all over Goa so much so that most of the temples of Goa in Ilhas, Bardez and Salcete belonged to the larger Saiva sect and Nath cult, the remaining being of the Vaishnavite sect.¹⁵

It is discerned from the letter of D. João III to the city of Goa that right since the conquest of Goa, there was a practice among the Goans that whenever they wanted to prove something they used to resort to the practice of taking a vow on the betel leaf, cow or buffalo dung and salt. Those who took such vows were considered upright. But the system resulted in several cases of falsehood and several unjust punishments had been meted out thus. Therefore, Governor Nuno de Cunha had issued an *alvará* emphasizing that all such vows should be taken in the Mahalaxmi temple at Bandora, outside the Portuguese occupied territory because that was the only temple where such a practice was in vogue.¹⁶

While the Hindus were leading their life as per the age-old practices, a consistent effort was on since 1518 by the Franciscans who had already initiated the Christianity anew after St. Thomas, at Anjediv island off Goa in 1505. Friar António had pleaded with the king of Portugal that he should not allow the yogis to enter Goa from the mainland because they brought with them the flowers offered to their deities in the temples and other tokens with the help

of which they tried to renew the heathen traditions of the indigenous people.¹⁷ Bishop de Dumenas mentioning about the existence of the 'images of the enemies of the Cross' on the island recommended to the king that it would be a great service to God if the temples on the island of Goa were demolished and in their place churches built. He further suggested that the king should issue an order that anyone desiring to live on the island and have a residence and lands should convert himself to be a Christian and in case he did not opt for it, he should leave the island. He was of the firm belief that none on the island could remain without being converted because if driven out of the island they would not be able to sustain themselves.¹⁸

Nevertheless, the new orientation was given to religious persecution by Miguel Vaz, the new Vicar General who arrived in Goa in 1532. This was followed by the upgradation of Goa to the bishopric in 1534 though it did not merit it on account of the sparse population of Christians. In 1541 the Church introduced an element of *Rigor de Misericordia* in Goa resulting in the destruction and devastation of all the temples on the island. Further, the important Hindu *ganvkars* were forced to accede voluntarily the siphoning of the revenue of the lands of the desecrated temples amounting to 2,000 *tangas brancas* annually for the maintenance of the newly-erected churches, chapels and the evangelists thereby depriving the *guravs*, dancing-girls, brahmins, blacksmiths and other servants of their livelihood. Not only this, but the steps were ordered to appoint native priests as chaplains because the local people could accept them with contentment as they would prefer to learn easily from them on account of the absence of the language barrier.¹⁹

Tracing the course of events, in April 1541 Padre Miguel Vaz and Diogo de Borba established Confraternity of Holy Faith to render help to the poor Christians and for the upkeep of the churches. It was also instrumental in erecting the Seminary of Holy Faith and the College of St. Paul to impart education for the youth of the East in priesthood.²⁰ Confraternity also sought preference for the Christians in the government postings. In the following year landing of the Jesuit missionary Mestre Francisco Xavier in Goa on 6 May 1542 gave such a boost to the process of evangelization in Goa and elsewhere in the South as well as in the Far East that the social fabric in Goa was torn giving rise to turbulence in the indigenous population which was virtually uprooted ultimately in the years to come in the wake of the Inquisition which was in store for them

within the next two decades.

One of the articles of the statutes of the *Confraria da Conversão a Fé* was that it should take care to see that the gentiles neither re-erected their temples nor built new ones. And it desired to take steps against the brahmins who insulted the Christians. It emphasized that the new converts should be made to work in such a manner that they did not live a bad life with idleness and in case they did not improve, they should be fed from Confraria but their parents should be forced to pay for their sustenance or leave their inheritance for them.²¹

Leaving nothing to chance, Vaz sent a note to the king, which was received by him in November 1545 seeking a special order that on the island of Goa, there should not be any public or secret temple and the violators of it should be punished severely. He recommended that no idols of wood, stone, copper or any other metal should be allowed to be made. He suggested further that no public festival of the gentiles should be permitted and the brahmins from the mainland should be prevented from taking shelter in their houses. He wanted the Crown to allow the authorities of St. Paul to raid the houses of the brahmins and the gentiles if they suspected the existence of the idols there. He also wanted that no unfaithful native (Hindu) should be allowed to earn his living by painting sacred Christian images. He wished that the Goans who went to Bassein and Diu should be driven out from there thereby allowing only the natives from there to live.²² However, the resentment of the Goan natives is discernible from the letter of Master Diogo de Borba to the Jesuit priest Simão Rodrigues wherein he states that the Indian gentiles neither desired to know nor wanted to hold in high esteem the holy name. With their enormous ways of worshipping idolatry and so-monstrous customs they never wanted to submit themselves to the truth and charity of Jesus Christ.²³

Realizing the harsh realities, the Crown seems to have acted with vehemence on the recommendations of Mestre Miguel Vaz. He ordered Governor Martim Afonso de Souza to punish severely, even without accepting the appeal those who continued to perpetuate idolatry of any kind and allow the newly-converted to enjoy the exemptions and liberties in payment of duties permitting them to avail of the privileges and honours which the gentiles were accustomed to enjoy before. The Governor was also instructed to exempt the Christians from India from being recruited forcibly in the

Portuguese armed forces thereby avoiding violence. He was further instructed to punish those Portuguese who on buying the slaves at a cheaper rate were selling them subsequently to the Muslims from across the borders at a higher premium. It was desired that such slaves should be converted to the Christian faith. Governor was also urged upon to render assistance to the evangelists in their conversion activity by charging the annual duty of 300 *pardaos* on mosques. The Crown reminded him that it had been informed of the ill-treatment to the newly-converted natives by their parents and friends who deprived them of their houses and possessions violently thereby forcing them to lead a miserable life. It counselled the governor to alleviate their difficulties in consultation with Padre Miguel Vaz.²⁴

Keeping in line with the trend, the Crown directed the new Viceroy, Dom João de Castro to treat well and favour the new converts among the natives in such a way that they should be allowed to occupy all the posts in the city of Goa and the villages of the island. He also ordered the Viceroy to establish the schools in those villages where the conversions had taken place to teach them *Doutrina Christa*.²⁵ In the instructions issued to Padre Miguel Vaz, the king asked him to put his efforts in the mainland carefully without any scandals, by removing all the idols and planting in their places the crosses, where the neo-Christians could be taught whatever possible of the religion so that it could help more conversion.²⁶

It is observed that the residents had still the attachment towards the temple lands usurped by the Colégio de Santa Fé. While they continued to procure clandestinely the items produced in those properties, the stringent law was made to imprison them forcing them as well to pay the rent for the entire period during which they indulged in this type of activity.²⁷ Considering the population of the island of Goa in 1548 of nearly 40,000, one can imagine how extensive could be the offenses of this nature committed in the island. Another noteworthy feature among the Hindus was that though Albuquerque had abolished the practice of widow-burning soon after the conquest, the practice appeared to have continued.²⁸ It took more than a decade for its total abolition by Viceroy Dom Constantino de Bragança on 30 June 1560 by inflicting the severe punishment to the abettors in the crime by putting them under permanent captivity after confiscating all their estates, half of which

would go to the accuser and the remaining half would be spent towards the construction works of the house of Apostle St. Thomas.²⁹

In the meanwhile, the Crown had totally stopped the review of granting fresh privileges to certain persons by the governors and captains in India.³⁰ He had also enforced the rule that the moment the slaves of the Muslims and the Hindus who would convert themselves to be Christians, their owners should sell them immediately to the Christians alone.³¹ Worse still, no brahmin or gentile was to hold any administrative post whatsoever. If anyone was found continuing to be so, not only he would lose his posting, he would also be held captive besides forfeiting his estate, half of which would go to the accuser and half would go to the government treasury.³² The Crown in a shrewd move to give further boost to evangelization ordered that the residents and the natives if converted to Christianity would enjoy the same status in the city and island of Goa as those of the Portuguese.³³ A deep sense of skepticism was pervading the minds of the gentiles when one after the other laws were passed in rapid succession to deprive them of their age-old rights. King D. Sebastião passed one more such law ordering that there should be neither temples nor idols in anybody's houses nor outside it, in the island of Goa and other adjoining areas any more. He also put restrictions on all sorts of festivities by the gentiles either in their residences or outside, besides ban on all types of image-making. Anybody going against this law would lose his estate, half of which would go to the accuser and the remaining half would be utilized for the works of the church under the jurisdiction of which resided the culprit who would be sent to the galleys without any pardon.³⁴ By another law, the sons, grandsons and relatives were allowed to inherit the estate of their converted parents, whether they be gentiles or Muslims or the other unfaithful persons as per Portuguese law. In case they got themselves converted, they would each inherit third part of the property.³⁵ The introduction of these prejudicial laws not only created dissensions in the families permanently but also gave severe jolt to the joint family system which was turning apart for long but survived and grew up once again under two different faiths — Hinduism and Christianity.

This alienation of kith and kin and a sense of demoralization in the minds of the Hindus was not only on account of the pernicious laws of unimaginable dimensions but also on account of the

deprivation of their temples, shrines, deities and idols in their own residential abodes. It had shaken the Hindu society to such an extent that it had to carve out its own future anew. They had only two options. One was to migrate and the other was to remain in the extremely servile condition accepting the new faith against their wishes.

The introduction of the most unholy pitiless Holy Inquisition in 1560 was the greatest blow, the Goans could ever imagine. The Jesuit Mestre Francis Xavier, who was later on canonized as the patron saint of the East was the first³⁶ to seek the establishment of the Inquisition in Goa way back in 1546 though it took 14 years for it to take a concrete shape. During 248 years of its existence, which could be cited as the blackest period in Indian religious history had no parallels elsewhere. In the words of Goan historian J.C. Barreto Miranda, "the cruelties which in the name of the religion of peace and love this tribunal practised in Europe, were carried to even greater excesses in India, where the Inquisition surrounded by luxuries which could stand comparison with the regal magnificence of the great potentates of Asia, saw with pride the Archbishop as well as the Viceroy submitted to their power. Every word of theirs was a sentence of death and their slightest nods moved to terror the vast populations spread over the Asiatic regions, whose lives fluctuated in their hands, and who, on the most frivolous pretext, could be clapped for all times in the deepest dungeons or strangled or offered as food for the flames of pyre."³⁷

This great cataclysmic blot in history full of abominable tortures and horrendous annihilation of innocent human beings is better summarized in 1912 by the Portuguese author of repute, José F. Ferreira Martins. He pathetically lamented: "Hundred years have elapsed since the Inquisition ceased to exist in Portuguese India. But even today one who reads the history of this terrible institution does not comprehend how a people so heroic with peerless feelings of nobility amply proved and admired by the whole world could give consent to a so horrible Tribunal in Portugal and in her colonies".

"Pity on you oh convicts! Poor victims in sheepskin tunics and sackcloth on, were walking to undergo the final punishment! One by one they were walking to the burning pyres of the Inquisition. They were not allowed even to utter the last goodbye to those who were their dear ones in this world! There were no weepings, no cryings, no tear that might have weakened the rage of the terrible Inquisitors,

who at the black covered main altar of St. Francis of Assisi Church at Old Goa were sitting on a throne having at their side the Viceroy, witness of nefarious act! Yes, witness but irresponsible on account of the terrible sentences and other proceedings of savage banditry resorted to under the garb of a false religiosity".³⁸

The Inquisition triggered mass migrations as far as the south of the country. Many families were separated permanently. Some left their kith and kin behind to be converted or already converted prior to their escape. Many villages left with their deities and re-established them in the neighbouring Antruz and Sattari regions where they found security and safety. Considering the spate of baptisms in Tiswadi, according to Padre Lucena in one year itself to be of the order of 20,000 and in 1560 according to Padre F. de Souza, the number was 3092,³⁹ it was not at all surprising that the residents of the islands, Bardez and Salcete opted to flee away from the scene to avoid the ignominy of conversion to a new faith, totally alien to them. Though the Inquisitors prayed upon the neo-Christians who followed their earlier religious traditions and customs, their abettors and those who persuaded them not to embrace the Catholic faith were also subjected to Inquisition. Even a slight whisper against the Holy Office would invite punishment by the Inquisitors.

There is a reason to believe that most of the 159 temples in Ilhas were destroyed by Miguel Vaz after his return from Portugal, in October 1546 with wide powers and provisions.⁴⁰ In 1567, Diogo Rodrigues, captain of fort of Rachol razed to the ground 280 temples,⁴¹ prominent among which was the temple of Mhalsa at Verna where the people from South Goa used to take solemn oath to prove their innocence. In the same year, nearly 300 temples from Bardez⁴² were demolished by the Franciscans. The destruction of the temples *en masse* created an unimaginable impact on the Hindu populace making a terrible dent on their psyche from which they never recovered even after the abolition of the Inquisition in 1812.

In the backdrop of such a sombre setting, the social life in Goa appeared to be totally different from the day of the establishment of the Inquisition. Within a couple of years, the Crown emphasized to his authorities in Goa that the principal responsibility of the Crown in his conquests was that of conversions of the unfaithful. And being satisfied with the progress on this front, he urged upon them to make vigorous efforts with zeal to see that no unfaithful remained there without being converted.⁴³ As a shrewd move to entice more, the

Crown further ordered that when the wife got converted, the husband having refused to succumb to the new faith, all her jewellery and garments at the time of her conversion should be handed over to her and she would also have half the share of the movable property and the fields owned by him after the marriage.⁴⁴ This obviously led to several matrimonial discords and eventual separations.

Consequent to the introduction of the Inquisition, in 1561 the situation in Goa was such that the entire island was depopulated, the villages were lost, the tilled tracts of lands were inundated choking the river, the old Hindu residents did not desire to return as their properties and estates had been passed over to others.⁴⁵ And in 1563, the prescription was reinforced with the penalty of seizure and captivity at the galleys of those gentiles of any category with the exception of washermen, physicians, carpenters, blacksmiths, druggists, and the fiscal renters who were found not prejudicial to Christianity.⁴⁶

Now the growth of Christianity was such that the first Concilio Provincial (provincial ecclesiastical assembly) was held in Goa in 1567. Some of the decrees which it passed created the suffocating atmosphere in Goa. For instance, decree No. 7 stated that those who on being converted induced others to follow the sects and their cults of superstitions would be subjected to grave punishment. This was more applicable to those who could not give up their old traditions in spite of being converted. So also was an offence if anyone impeded the conversion to Christianity of anyone, scandalizing or deriding him for his action or instilling fear in his mind that he would forfeit his castes, would be punished severely (decree No. 8). Taking note of the neophytes resorting to same old practices of worshipping the idolatry, the Synod at this assembly recommended to the Crown to destroy totally the idolatry and the un-Christian cult so that the demon was never venerated. Similarly, it also demanded the destruction of all mosques. It deliberated against all types of ceremonies and festivities and modes of worship, adoration of the demons like deities, cremation of the dead, and several other rites, invocations, fasting, processions, thread ceremony, applying sandalwood paste on the forehead, animal sacrifice, tree worship, etc. (decree Nos. 9-10). It also came heavily on those gentiles who went outside the Portuguese territories to participate in these festivities of the temples or to take part in the religious processions

there (decree No. 11). The Synod also desired that in the villages when the plain lands were to be rented they should be given on the rental basis as per the Charter only to the Christians and not the gentiles, and the tax-gathering should be entrusted to Christians only (decree No. 15). It prohibited the Hindu painter to paint the images of divine cult, the goldsmith to make the chalices, crosses, melters and tin makers to make metal objects or tin items (decree No. 28). The synod also touched upon more personal aspects (decree No. 42). It prohibited the neophyte to attach the caste of his son. Nor could he allow his son to marry a Hindu girl. He was prevented from crying while mourning for his dead on the lines he used to before being converted. He was disallowed either to go to any temple or to offer any money. Worse still, if he were to be ill, no Hindu, even his own father was allowed to pay him the courtesy visit. He could neither attend any Hindu festival nor could he proceed in the adjacent territories on the mainland to share the joy of celebrating the feasts with the gentiles (decree No. 42). It advised the parish priest and the chaplain to help the neophytes to bury their dead (decree No. 45).⁴⁷

Most of these decrees were legalized by the Viceroy D. Antão de Noronha.⁴⁸ As an incentive for the boost of Christianity, his successor D. Luis de Ataide removed the customs duties on the clothes which were to be distributed in the form of alms to the neo-Christians by the authorities of the College of São Paulo.⁴⁹

Strange as it may seem, in spite of all the orders from the Crown or the Viceroys, the gentiles continued to carry on their old traditions of worshipping the idols as before even after two decades of the Inquisition. The situation therefore, forced the Crown to issue the fresh order in 1580 to stop the 'abominable mistakes' which were prejudicial to the conversions.⁵⁰

In order to dissipate the continuous veneration of the 'false gods' the king instructed the viceroy to ensure the non-raising of the temples, prevention of the ceremonies and the public rites of the Hindus as well as Muslims. In the meanwhile many Portuguese, taking advantage of the weaknesses of ganvkars had unjustly usurped the gaoncarias thereby impoverishing the rightful holders of them violating the *Charter of Uses and Customs* of 1526.⁵¹ The Crown realized the serious mischief committed by the Portuguese individuals and ordered the viceroy to restore those gaoncarias and the lands to the proper holders.⁵² With a view to augment the

conversions further, the neophytes were given the concession of non-payment of tithes for 15 years from the date of their conversion.⁵³ Besides, all the regulations and the privileges in favour of Christianity and conversions were confirmed with regard to all the Christians in the Portuguese-occupied territories.⁵⁴ Further, in a bid to soothe the ruffled feathers of the neophytes, the Crown allowed them to hold a public office.⁵⁵ Further, the posts were henceforth reserved only for the Christians and the brahmins and other gentiles were deprived to hold any public post under canon law.⁵⁶

The 4th ecclesiastical assembly which was held in Goa in 1592 took serious note of the entry of the Hindu priests, astrologers, yogis, preachers and kurumbins into the city of Goa through the passes of the island, taking shelter in the houses of the Hindus and native Christians reminding the old and new Christians about their old rites and customs, feasts, thereby acting against the Christian faith. Hence, it recommended that such individuals should not be allowed in the city and if found should be jailed and punished and anyone giving them shelter should be fined 50 *cruzados* besides the punishment for the crime.⁵⁷

If the above was the picture of the 16th century, by the end of the 17th century, the Portuguese with the help of the Church had succeeded to a great extent in converting a substantially large part of the Goan population to Christianity, mostly against their free will, thereby weaving a new fabric of the society at the cost of the gentiles who underwent innumerable odds and hurdles, suffered ignominy, lost their dear ones at the altar of the Inquisition, faced the galleys and deportation for the sake of sticking to their traditions, rights, customs and religious beliefs. No other sections of the Indian society must have suffered as much for sticking to assert their rights during the European expansion in India. The Inquisition would continue for many more years hanging like a Democles' sword over the head, and more pernicious laws were to follow under which the generations of Goans had to carve out their own destiny.

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