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GOA'S HIDDEN TREASURE TROVE
OF TEMPLES

Face to Face

DR. HEMANT RAJE GAIKWAD



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Privacy trumps power in Goa

*Development is an antipole for tourism in tourism-driven Goa. **Manu Shrivastava** paints the side of this small state where development is confined to a few pockets and restricted to affluent tourists visiting for professional reasons. It is the locals from the interiors of Goa, especially North Goa, Central Goa and South, who define development. And that essentially is one that panders to the quintessential Goan tourist to whom only privacy matters.*



Tourists arrive in Goa to blend into the dark, get high without a worry and let their hair down in the din of psychedelic music

Goa depends on two industries for its survival – mining and tourism. With mining having hit rock bottom owing to the Supreme Court's intervention on the issue, India's smallest state is now entirely dependent on tourism. And, a form of tourism that stands in sharp contrast to 'development.'

Goa is known for unspoiled hills, pristine beaches and lush forests that have withstood the onslaught of time as tourists throng the zone for exactly the same reasons. Most of North Goa, that includes Arambol, Morjim, Keri and Tiracol, is covered with large expanses of land and uninhabited zones that include beaches and forests.

Only recently Arambol got its first four-star resort and state-of-the-art Nanu Resort, a string of other hotels in and about

the zone. The otherwise pristine area now bustles with affluent tourists who fly into Goa in sharp contrast to the Yoga aficionado and health-conscious traveler who'd rent bungalows and stay-ins for months on end to 'find themselves.'

Fine living is a scourge

Development is a scourge when it comes to Goa as any form of fine living threatens to engulf the all-natural mien of greenery, podi and feni – not necessarily in that order. The entire idea being, why would someone come from their plush homes in metropolitan cities and towns all the way to Goa to stay in a developed 'starred' hotel instead of partaking in the 'free, wild ways of Goa.'

There are, however, a few drawbacks to the tourism of

Goa which depends entirely on retaining the inaccessible nature of zones, the lack of connectivity and the aura of mystery in travel across the state.

For visitors to Goa, it's usually a rickety bus ride from say Mapusa to South Goa or North as the destination may be. For the not-so-initiated, there're taxis transporting you to any place within Goa for more than the price, of course. Nobody commutes with a meter and the charges for being transported from Point A to Point B are entirely subjective to the satisfaction of the driver aka pilot. If you know the pilot, good, if you don't, even better. Chances are he'd overcharge you either way unless you have options at hand and flaunt them too.

Taxis – A case in point

The entry of prepaid taxis to Goa and the metered trips have been met with overwhelming resistance from local taxi drivers and for obvious reasons. They simply cannot and will not have any competition their way. The local authorities too choose to look in the other direction should there be any complaints. For those wanting to register a protest, it would be online where you'd find yourself hustling for space with millions of other protestors. It makes little difference at the grassroots. Goa thrives despite the mess and probably even, because of the mess.

If there's anything 'fixed' about prices in Goa, it's their unpredictability. If you get a dream deal on one visit, don't expect it to stay for long. The next time you arrive, despite assurances online and on phone, you could expect the host to turn around and surprise you with a loftier rate. And, that is Goa for you. Protesting takes travelers nowhere as the locals are a highly closed and tight-knit lot. If one charges you high, there's little chance of getting anyone to come around with a lower price.

So, development, of say tourism, would be met with sharp resistance by locals. They're complacent with their situation and thrive in it. Any attempt to regularise things, even streamline affairs, is almost always met with uproar by locals. If there is a call for a taxi strike in any part of Goa, anyone plying a taxi even beyond their lot is expected to comply, even by force if need be.

Beaches outside ambit of law

Beachline affairs that include shack tourism and restaurants along the sea are always outside the ambit of law. Development includes complying with processes and procedures by law. That would include no littering on the beach, ensuring no sale of drugs, no sale of alcohol to minors, accountability by law and so on and forth. All of that is simply a downer for the tourist who arrives to Goa to blend into the dark, get high without a worry and let his/her hair down in the din of psychedelic music and the incessant flow of alcohol. Development is an antithesis to this sort of tourism which is unregulated and unfettered.

For tourism to thrive in Goa and pander to Russians, Israelis, Nigerians and the daily flow of Indians from across state borders and back, it would be impossible should the state stick to rules and regulations. Thousands of Russians live in Morjim

which caters entirely to them. An Indian visiting Morjim would simply find it impossible to find his way through the zone as all signages, directions even restaurant menus are written in Russian.

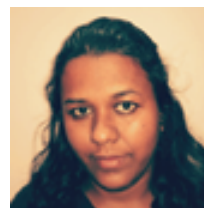
Development means keeping paperwork like visas, police clearances and all, in order. If they start doing that, So, development of tourism in Goa is restricted to casinos, controlled by the law and kept beyond the reach of locals who are not even permitted to enter or work in casinos, state-run tourism cruises which are frequented only by Indian tourists. So, after consuming copious amounts of alcohol provided within the cover charge, first-time visitors can be seen emerging from casinos anchored a little distance off land in Panjim in their finery, drunk and satiated. The regulars, however, are almost always away from Panjim to the North or South and without any state controls.

Private players rule the roost

The State takes little responsibility of tourists in Goa as private players rule the roost. Why, each zone's players don't even engage with another zone's. Non-interference is an unwritten rule as the 'tourist' is the Goan stakeholder's most precious possession. Try visiting a wine shop in Goa and they'd tell you to buy your sin and consume it right outside the shop, in public view as 'in Goa it's allowed'. Every wine shop has a zone on the outside where buyers consume their liquor without a bother. It's cheaper to have it in the open rather than go to a bar. Anyway, the alcohol in Goa is cheaper than neighbouring Maharashtra or Karnataka as the tax component's miniscule in comparison.

The development of beaches, Goa's mainstay, is restricted to closures at the time of monsoons as the rains get wild and the sea moves into interlining shacks. The authorities cut off power supply during the rains to ensure there are no short-circuits and fires owing to tidal situations that almost always go out of hand. But the shack-owners still give it out on rent for cheap and to those who don't need the power. After all, there's lot more to Goa than power, for the tourist keen on privacy and solitude.

Development is an antithesis for tourism especially the Goan sort. Yes, in areas in and around capital Panjim, there is some semblance of development but that again is for the business tourist or the affluent tourist visiting Goa for work, a conference or a meeting. Otherwise in interiors of Goa, especially North Goa, Central Goa and South, it's the local's interpretation of development – one that panders to the needs of the quintessential Goan tourist who'd want nothing more than privacy, not even power!



Manu Shrivastava is a journalist and lawyer with DraftCraft International and Co-Convenor of #TheWomanSurvivor, #MeTooAtHome and #MeTooBeyond-Borders initiatives

Champions of Goa liberation

*Although the Portuguese colonial influence lingers in Goa, its battle for liberation, “popularly called the Goa Liberation Movement, is a noteworthy chapter in its history. What began as a tiny spark snowballed into a fire between 1940 and 1961. It was a struggle where people from all walks of life fiercely fought to bring Goa out of the colonial shackles. **Manu Shrivastava** traces the history.*



A file pic of the Goa Liberation Movement

Just like the Indian independence movement that sought freedom from the clutches of the British Raj, the Goa Liberation Movement fought to end the Portuguese colonial rule that lasted in Goa for more than 450 years.

The Goa Liberation Movement grew from small scale revolts and uprisings, continuous and spontaneous resistance from the locals, into a full-fledged freedom movement between the years 1940 to 1961. It witnessed participation from satyagrahis, journalists, film artists, armed guerrillas and people from all walks of life.

The freedom movement in Goa comprised a range of tactics including non-violent protests and demonstrations, revolutionary methods, diplomacy, etc. Since the beginning of the colonial rule, measures introduced by the Portuguese to ‘fully’ control Goans met with resistance. In 1555, for example, the Goans opposed the imposition and collection of hefty land tax.

Among the last to be ‘free’

When India became independent in 1947, Goa was still under the Portuguese control. The European colonists were among the first to colonise parts of India but were the last to leave. Goa Liberation Day is celebrated on 19 December every year. In 1961, on this day, Goa was liberated from the Portuguese rule but the movement has today become a forgotten war of freedom.

Post 1947, some pockets of the country remained under foreign colonial rule. The French left Puducherry (then Pondicherry) in 1954 but the Portuguese continued to resist and challenge India’s claim on Goa.

When the Portuguese invaded Goa, they began the inquisition and by 1540, the worst phase began when they started the persecution of Hindus by destruction of temples,

suppression of local language i.e. Konkani, prohibiting Hindu marriage rituals, etc.

Tax exemptions were given to those Hindus who voluntarily converted to Christianity. There was suppression of right to assembly and speech and press. Those who didn't comply would be imprisoned, even given death sentences.

The Goan Inquisition targeted New Christians accused of secretly practising their former religions and Old Christians accused of involvement in the Protestant Revolution of the 16th century. The Inquisition in Goa was finally abolished in 1812.

Resenting the Portuguese rule

At the time, resentment with the Portuguese grew but mainly among those who wanted to gain power for themselves. Till 1912, there were 14 'unsuccessful' local revolts against the Portuguese rule. Major reason of failure was disinterest from majority of Goans.

In 1787, an attempt was made to replace the Portuguese rule with that of Tipu Sultan. 'Conspiracy of the Pintos' was led by prominent Goan Catholic priests from Candolim village in Bardez, mainly Fr. Caetano Francisco Couto of Panaji and Jose Antonio Gonsalves of Divar.

The Ranes of Satari launched several insurrections between 1755 and 1822 to secure their lost rights from the Portuguese rulers. In 1895, with the help of 900 aides, Dada Rane launched a bigger revolt against the Portuguese using guerilla warfare but it was unsuccessful.

Simultaneously, the Goan consciousness was being influenced by the events of the Indian independence movement and Francisco Luis Gomes, one of the first Goans to demand freedom of India from the British.

Stirring rebellion

In 1900, the 22-year-old Luís de Menezes Bragança founded O Heraldo - the first Portuguese language daily newspaper in Goa which was critical of the Portuguese colonial rule.

In 1910, when the Portuguese monarchy was abolished, several colonies, including Goa, hoped they'll be free. That didn't happen as the Portuguese colonial policies remained unchanged. As a result, anti-colonial movement gained momentum in Goa.

In 1917, the 'Carta Organica' law was passed that oversaw all civil liberties in Goa. To curb growing dissent among masses, the Portuguese government enforced rules that infringed on civil liberties including press censorship.

Initially, it were Lokmanya Tilak's 'Kesari' and 'Maratha' that inspired and influenced Goans and shaped public opinion. Later, Dattatraya Venkatesh Pai's 'Hindu' and Govind Pundalik Hegde Dessai's 'Bharat' that relentless published to invigorate Goans. The concepts of self-determination and liberalism were also furthered by of Luis de Menezes Braganza in 'Pracasha'.

Inspired by 'free' minds, in 1928, Tristão de Bragança Cunha founded the Goa National Congress that received recognition and representation at the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress. In 1930, Portugal passed 'Acto Colonial' that prohibited political rallies and congregations in all Portuguese colonies.

The beginning of the end

It was Dr Ram Manohar Lohia - an Indian independence movement activist and a socialist political leader who initiated the final blow to the Portuguese colonial rule and gave the much-needed impetus to the freedom movement in Goa.

On 18 June 1946, he openly defined the government orders against public gatherings and held one at Margao. He addressed more than 5,000 people at Municipal Chowk in Margao, now known as Lohia Maidan. The crowd raised slogans of Dr Lohia zindabad and Jai Hind throughout his speech and the fervour soon spread across Goa. The 18th June Road in Panjim, Goa is named after the great revolutionary leader and 18 June is commemorated as 'Goa Revolution Day' in the state.

The torch of civil disobedience ignited by Lohia led to his incarceration along with Juliao Menezes at the Aguada prison (Fortaleza da Aguada). Incidentally, freedom fighter T B Cunha was in another cell, also serving solitary confinement. This incident earned Lohia the title of 'The Lion of Aguada' from noted Goan poet Manohar Rai Sardesai.

Dr. Juliao Menezes was a nationalist leader from Goa, a medical practitioner and an author. He studied with Dr Ram Manohar Lohia in Berlin and along with him played an important role in the Goa liberation movement. He established the 'Gomantak Praja Mandal' in 1939 to spread national fervour among Goans. In 1942, he started 'Gomantak' an English-Konkani weekly and actively participated in the formation of the National Congress (Goa).

The unsung heroes

It was owing to the sacrifice of hundreds of freedom fighters that Goa became free. While a few were commemorated for their contribution, many more remained unsung and never got recognition for challenging the Portuguese regime.

Shanti Nayak, Purshottam Kakodkar, Laxmikant Bhembre, Evagrio Jorge, Shyamrao Madkaikar, Adv Jose Inacio Loyola, Vinayak Mayekar, Dr Jose Francisco Martins, Vasant Molio, Pachibab Sardesai, John Carvalho, Guilherme D'Souza Ticlo, to name a few.

Many of them were present on the historic day of 18 June 1946 in Margao to challenge the dictatorial regime of Salazar. The liberation movement in Goa witnessed participation from a large number of women as well. During the struggle, many freedom fighters sacrificed their lives, several others were deported to Portugal, Angola, etc. for imprisonment and many were tortured in jails.

The liberation movement regained momentum with the liberation of Dadra and Nagar Haveli in 1954. Following this, the National Congress (Goa) and the Goa Vimochan Sahayak Samiti in Goa launched mass satyagrahas in 1954 and 1955.

Several fronts opened to challenge the Portuguese regime in Goa - the Goan People's Party, Azad Gomantak Dal, the Frante Patriotica, the United Front of Goans, Goa Liberation Army, etc.

Liberation of Goa was discussed in international forums including at the United Nations. Finally, in 1961, India proclaimed that Goa should join India 'either with full peace or with full use of force'. Following a military operation conducted on 18 and 19 December 1961, troops of the Indian armed forces captured Goa, Daman and Diu, liberating from 450 years of colonial rule. The governor-general of Portuguese India Manuel António Vassalo e Silva signed an instrument of surrender.



Manu Shrivastava is a journalist and lawyer with DraftCraft International and Co-Convenor of #TheWomanSurvivor, #MeTooAtHome and #MeTooBeyond-Borders initiatives

The Goan footprint abroad

*Goans form a sizeable portion of Indian diaspora, yet they are strongly connected with their roots in India. **Alba Silveira** finds that they have jealously guarded their Goan ethos and identity even on foreign soil. While the Goans have migrated to several countries around the world, their presence can be predominantly seen in UAE, USA and Saudi Arabia.*



Of the global Indian diaspora, Goans form a significant portion and they continue to keep strong ties with their native land

The Indian diaspora is one of the largest in the world (about 17.5 million) and constitutes about six percent of the total migrant population around the world (about 272 million), as per the International Migrant Stock 2019 - a dataset released by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, today provides the latest estimates of the number of international migrants by age, sex and origin for all countries and areas of the world.

Of the global Indian diaspora, Goans form a significant portion. They continue to keep strong ties with their native land and even on foreign soil they have managed to maintain their distinct identity. Goans have migrated to several countries around the world, the top three being UAE, USA and Saudi Arabia.

The first recorded emigration of native Goans dates back

to the 17th and 18th centuries when a significant number of Goan Hindus fled to Canara and Mangalore to save themselves from forced conversions by the Portuguese. Soon enough, many newly-converted Goan Catholics also left Goa at the time of the Goa Inquisition.

Early migration

Goans have been continuously migrating since the late 19th century. The Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1878 led to the British constructing the West of India Portuguese Railway that connected Goa (Velhas Conquistas) to British India (Bombay Presidency). At this time, riding the first wave of migration, Goans - Hindu and Catholic, moved to Bombay (now Mumbai), Poona (now Pune), Calcutta (now Kolkata), Karachi, East Africa, the Gulf, Canada and Burma.

Around the same time, in East Africa, there was a significant rise in 'hiring' of people from India as the British had constructed the Uganda Railway.

Back home in Goa, situation was grim as farming was not profitable and the Portuguese in Goa did not focus on development. Well educated Goans found it difficult to get work. For promising prospects, new job opportunities and 'greener pastures', Goans started migrating.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the most attractive migratory land was Zanzibar that shifted to East Africa (Mombasa, Dar-es-Salaam, etc.) in 1890s and early 1900s. In Zanzibar, many Goans were employed in the Sultan's government also. Some were also employed in the British administration throughout British East Africa.

In East Africa, majority Goans were involved in business – retailers, shop owners, employees of Goan enterprises, tailors, shoemakers, etc. Later they established restaurants, bakeries and photography studios.

Goans also started training as lawyers, doctors and other professions reflecting the changing status of Goans in foreign lands. So, by 1880 more than 29,000 Goans had left Goa and by 1954, the number of emigrants had risen to 1,80,000.

More recently, in the last few decades, Goans have used their Portuguese passports to migrate to the UK. It is estimated that currently there are around 6,00,000 Goans living abroad.

Goan community abroad

When Goa was annexed to the Republic of India in 1961, the number of emigrants making a beeline to foreign lands increased. While many applied for and were granted Portuguese passports to enter European countries, there were those who left in big numbers to the Gulf countries.

By 1970s, there was a significant number of Goans in Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Historically, owing to early migratory waves, there are many Goans living in erstwhile British colonies such as Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and in Portuguese colonies such as Mozambique and Angola. Today, Goan diaspora is living in USA, UK, Australia, Canada, France, Kenya, Middle East, Pakistan, etc.

For the Goan, the reason of emigration was never war or conflict or seeking refuge. It was primarily in search of economic opportunities and so they can live what they'd like to think as 'better lives' and to provide better educational opportunities and job prospects for their children.

The Goan diaspora has been a successful lot of people and Goans have achieved a lot in the countries they migrated to. They have also integrated and assimilated well with the local communities in foreign soil.

Goans living abroad have formed organisations and associations that cater to their interests. They also come together to maintain their cultural and social identity.

For example, World Goa Day (WGD) is a signature event that has attained global status and is celebrated by Goan associations all over the world.

Since its inception, WGD celebrations have only grown in countries like USA, UK, Australia, Canada, Kenya, Tanzania,

Middle East, Portugal, etc.

WGD was introduced to commemorate the anniversary of the inclusion of Konkani in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution by the Indian Parliament on 20 August 1992. On this day, Konkani was accorded status as one of the official languages of India.

The event aims to uphold the legacy of the Konkani language, heritage and culture for future generations. It was initiated by Rene Barreto who is in UK and has been instrumental in bringing Goans across the world together on one platform.

Notable Goans and their works

Several Goans, who either emigrated from Goa themselves or whose predecessors left Goa at some point, and those who continue to live in Goa, have earned a name for themselves, in various fields such as arts, cinema, music, law, business, etc. Portuguese lawyer and professor 91-year-old Narana Sinai Coissoró is a retired politician of the right-wing CDS – People's Party. He was born in Portuguese Goa in 1931. Narana is a former Deputy to the Assembly of the Republic in Portugal and was the leader of his party parliamentary group between 1978 and 1991. He also heads the Goan Community Centre in Portugal.

Goan writer and poet Vimala Devi (Teresa da Piedade de Baptista Almeida) was born in 1932 in the village of Britona in the parish of Penha de França, across the Mandovi river from Panjim. She wrote articles and poetry for Portuguese language publications - *Diário da Noite* and *O Heraldo*. She moved to Lisbon in 1957 to work as a translator and later wrote and published many works there.

Author and artist Frederika Menezes was born in Panjim in 1979 and is best known for her book, *Unforgotten* - a love story for young adults published in 2014. Born to physician parents, she grew up in Altinho area of Panjim and was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at the age of one. She has also been working actively for the cause of the differently-abled.

Renowned Marathi theatre actor, Natya Sangeet musician, Hindustani classical vocalist and father of Lata Mangeshkar, Pt. Deenanath Mangeshkar was born in 1900 in Mangeshi. His father, Ganesh Bhatt Navathe Hardikar served as a priest at the famous Mangeshi Temple in Goa.

Indian fashion designer late Wendell Rodricks was a Goan who took Indian fashion on global platforms. He was also an activist especially raising his voice for gay rights and the environment. In 2014, the Government of India conferred upon him its fourth-highest civilian award - the Padma Shri.

Bombay High Court judge Anuja Prabhudesai was born in 1962 in Mapusa, Goa. She is the first woman from Goa to be a High Court judge in India. She joined the bar in 1985, practised law in Goa including at the Goa bench of the Bombay High Court.

Alba Silveira is a volunteer with DraftCraft International's The Goencho Project that tackles issues of law and policy affecting India's smallest state - Goa.

Heritage with a global flavour

*The fact that Goa has a number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites and draws a stream of tourists all through the year is a testimony that it is on world's radar. Built by the Portuguese colonists between the 16th and 17th centuries, these now have qualified the state as the 'Rome of Orient', says **Anushka Singh**.*



The Basilica of Bom Jesus is a revered Catholic site that houses the remains of Saint Francis Xavier (São Francisco Xavier)

Goa is more than just a vacation destination. It's an experience in itself and there's something for everyone. Other than the many beaches and enthralling natural landscape, Goa also has, in abundance, cultural and architectural heritage that draws tourists from all over the world. Goa is also home to several UNESCO World Heritage Sites that are hugely popular among tourists, both domestic and foreign.

A bunch of religious structures and monuments located in Old Goa or the more colloquial Velha Goa, collectively called the Churches and Convents of Goa, were declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in the year 1986. These structures were built by the Portuguese colonists between the 16th and 17th centuries during their rule in the region.

It is because of these shrines and monuments that Goa is also called the 'Rome of the Orient' and owing to their contribution in the dissemination of Western art forms in Asia, they have

have been included in the UNESCO World Heritage Site list.

On the UNESCO website, it says: The churches and convents of Goa, the former capital of the Portuguese Indies, particularly the Church of Bom Jesus, which contains the tomb of St Francis-Xavier, illustrate the evangelisation of Asia. These monuments were influential in spreading forms of Manueline, Mannerist and Baroque art in all the countries of Asia where missions were established.'

Goa's colonial past

Goa was part of the Maurya Empire in third century BC under Ashoka of Magadh when the Buddhist monks spread Buddhism in Goa. After that, Goa came to be ruled by the Bhojas of Goa, Chutus of Karwar, Satavahanas of Kolhapur, Western Kshatrapas, Abhiras of Western Maharashtra, Bhojas of the Yadav clans of Gujarat, Konkan Mauryas as feudatories of

the Kalachurism, Chalukyas of Badami, Rashtrakutas of Malkhed, Southern Silharas of Konkan and for over a few centuries by the Kadambas as the feudatories of the Chalukyas of Kalyani who patronised Jainism in Goa.

Goa came under the Delhi Sultanate in 1312 and Harihara I of the Vijayanagara Empire in 1370 and later, in 1469, was appropriated by the Bahmani Sultans of Gulbarga. It was then taken over by the Adil Shahis of Bijapur who established Goa as a port on the banks of the Mandovi River in the 15th century. It was taken by Afonso de Albuquerque with the help of the Goan Hindu privateer Timoja in 1510 and remained continuously under the Portuguese rule until the twentieth century.

The first to convert to Christianity in Goa were the native women who married Portuguese men who arrived with Albuquerque during the Portuguese conquest of Goa in 1510. Soon enough, Goa became the epicentre of the 'Christianisation of the East' where the Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, Augustinians, Theatines and other European Christian religious orders started to settle for conversion and spread of Christianity in India from sixteenth century onward. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are known as the 'Golden Age of Goa'.

When the Portuguese rule began in Goa, in the first two centuries several churches and monasteries were erected and are reminiscent of the cultural exchange that took place during the colonial period in Goa reflecting the legacy of the Portuguese. The architectural forms in these structures follow the European canon - internal decoration of altars, altarpieces, paintings, etc. The construction was done by local artisans and labourers that eliminated the need to import European artists or African slave labour.

The golden period came to an end when, in the late seventeenth century, trade competition with the Dutch and British and several epidemics led to the economic decline of the city of Goa. In 1759, the Viceroy moved the seat of power to Panjim (Nova Goa) and Velha Goa (Old Goa) lost its capital status officially in 1843. In 1961, the 450-year-long Portuguese colonial rule came to an end and Goa became part of the republic of India.

Universal value of the structures

The 'Churches and Convents of Goa' that made it to the UNESCO World Heritage Site list is a serial property located in the former capital of the Portuguese Indies, Velha Goa, located on the west coast about ten km east of Panjim. There are seven monuments part of this list:

- The Chapel of St. Catherine (constructed in 1510) which was raised to the status of Cathedral by Pope Paul III in 1534;
- The Church and Convent of St. Francis of Assisi (built in 1517 and rebuilt in 1521 and then in 1661) embodying the motifs in Manueline, Gothic, and Baroque styles;
- The Church of Our Lady of Rosary (constructed in 1549) that happens to be the earliest of the existing churches built in the Manueline style in Velha Goa;
- Sé Cathedral (built in 1652) displaying the Tuscan style exterior and Classical orders;
- The Church of St. Augustine (constructed in 1602) which is a complex that fell into ruins and today only one-third of the bell tower remains standing;
- The Basilica of Bom Jesus (built in 1605) and displaying prominent Classical orders; and,

- The Chapel of St. Cajetan (constructed in 1661) and modelled on the original design of St. Peter's Church in Rome, Italy.

The seven monuments played a significant role during the Portuguese invasion of Goa and exerted great influence for a long time between 16th and 18th centuries. Their influence and power could be seen on the development of architecture and sculpture in the region. These monuments also furthered the spread of the Manueline, Mannerist and Baroque art and architecture forms throughout Asia, across the countries where Catholic missions were established at the time. So, these structures glorified the works of the Christian missionaries who were spreading their religion in Asia then.

Popular World Heritage sites

The Basilica of Bom Jesus is a revered Catholic site that houses the remains of Saint Francis Xavier (São Francisco Xavier). Then the Society of Jesus arrived in Goa in 1542, Francisco Xavier was considered the Apostle of the East for his work in the evangelisation of Asia. At the time, the Jesuits erected several structures but the one that survived is the Basilica of Bom Jesus, consecrated in 1605. This beautiful monument is a single nave temple covered by a curved wooden liner and has no side chapel except for two chapel in transepto area.

The most venerated treasure here is the transept chapel where the remains of Saint Francis Xavier lie, since 1655, in a finely-crafted silver urn.

The Church of St. Augustine aka Augustine Tower, a ruined church complex where only half the tower remains, is also a popular tourist destination and has been featured in several Indian films as well. The Augustinians arrived in Goa in the sixteenth century and founded a convent and a church building.

The church was abandoned in 1835 when the Portuguese government of Goa began evicting many religious orders in Goa under its new repressive policies. After the collapse of the structure owing to neglect, the bell was moved from the tower to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Church in Panjim, where it remains presently.

The Se Cathedral or the Sé Catedral de Santa Catarina is the cathedral of the Latin Rite Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Goa and Daman and the seat of the Patriarch of the East Indies. It is the largest building built by the Portuguese in Asia. The church has three naves of equal height, shaped hall-church similar to the other Portuguese cathedrals of time such as the Sees of Miranda do Douro, Leiria and Portalegre. The Se Cathedral was built to commemorate the victory of the Portuguese under Afonso de Albuquerque over the Adil Shahis of Bijapur in 1510 that led to the capture of the city of Goa. That day happened to be on the feast of Saint Catherine and so the cathedral was dedicated to her.

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Festivities blend lore & modern

True to its multi-splendoured image, Goa also hosts a myriad festivals which are a reflection on its patented culture and traditions. From religious to pure fun and carnivals to processions, it has a wide spectrum that has Goan feel written all over them. **Nandini Rao** explores this colourful side of Goan bonhomie and revelry.



The Shigmo Parade held annually on the streets of Goa is a grand affair

Goa is one of the few places that offer a peek into the state's rich traditions with a modern appeal to be able to cater to visitors of all kinds. Not many are aware but Goans celebrate a mind-boggling number of festivals and fairs that are integral to their very existence.

Goans celebrate festivals throughout the year and it's through these that they cherish the region's great cultural heritage and traditions - in the form of religious festivals, street fairs, carnivals or processions, dance, music and food festivals. In fact, it will be safe to state that the 'Goan experience' is incomplete without experiencing the community and public festivals of Goa.

Festival of colour

The spring festival in Goa, known as the Shigmo Festival or Shigmotsav, is a colourful 14-day celebration by the Konkani diaspora of the state. It is celebrated with immense euphoria and fervour and takes places in the Phalgun month (around March) every year as per the Saka calendar (Hindu lunar calendar) followed by the Hindus in Goa.

It is one of the most popular cultural festivals of Goa and despite the traditional value and grandeur of the celebrations; it has sadly not received the attention or the coverage like other carnivals or festivals in Goa.

A vibrant festival of colours, Shigmo is celebrated to welcome the spring season. 'Shigmo' is a Konkani word derived from the Prakrit word 'Suggimaho' and the Sanskrit word 'Sugrismaka'. The festival has mention in the ancient Puranas as well.

There are two types of Shigmo festival – the DhaktoShigmo (dhakto meaning small) and the VhadloShigmo (meaning big). While the former is celebrated by the rural Goans comprising farmers and labourers, the latter is a more public affair and sees participation from all kinds of people.

The Shigmo Parade held annually on the streets of Goa is a grand affair. It is held in Panjim, Margao, Mapusa, Vasco and Ponda. Spectacular floats depicting religious and mythology scenes, traditional folk dances and street dancers can be seen during the parade. Locals dress up in colourful costumes and

and perform folk dances – Divli, Ghode Modni, Gopha, Phugadi, etc.

Shigmo also commemorates the homecoming of the brave soldiers who had left their families and home at the end of Dussera to fight the invaders. Since the festival is celebrated at the onset of spring, it's also known as a harvest festival.

Shigmo, mainly in Konkan, is observed across India with different names and has different legends associated with it in these regions. It's called Holi in North India, Dolyatra in Assam and Bengal, Kamadahana in South India and Shimga in Maharashtra.

Sao Joao and 'leap of joy'

One of the most popular Catholic festivals celebrated in Goa, the Sao Joao festival is celebrated on 24 June every year as a tribute to St John the Baptist. The Catholics in Goa celebrate all the feasts of the Roman Catholic Church including the feast of St John the Baptist on June 24 as he had baptised Jesus Christ on Jordan River. There is an electrifying vibe during the festival as the fervour is high and unmatched.

During the festival, villagers jump into rivers, streams, fountains, wells and ponds signifying the happiness of St John the Baptist when Jesus was born and the 'leap of joy'.

Enjoyed by both children and adults, the festival also includes playing the traditional percussion instrument of Goa - the gumott and there's a boat festival as well.

The traditional festival is celebrated in the villages of Cortalim in South Goa and Harmal (Arambol), Baga, Siolim and Terekhol (Tirakol) in North Goa. In the modern version, there are pool parties and private Sao Joao parties where the participants and the guests, donning Kopel flower and leaf crowns, dance and feast on traditional Goan food.

The feast of St Francis Xavier

Francis Xavier arrived in Goa on 6 May 1542 for evangelisation and the day is celebrated by the Catholic community across Goa in a big way. His activities made a significant religious impact in India as during his time, there were large scale conversions to Catholic faith (peaceful and forced, both), several churches were built, there were baptism, etc.

The festival is observed on 3 December every year that happens to be Saint Francis Xavier's death anniversary. Thousands of devotees from across the world gather at Basilica of Bom Jesus in Old Goa (Velha Goa) to participate in the morning mass. The zone transforms into a fair with beautiful decorations on the streets and stalls selling food, delicacies, drinks, knick-knacks, etc.

As per a popular legend, a few Portuguese merchants performed the Saint's last rites and buried him in a coffin, partly filled with unslaked lime. When a Jesuit exhumed the body a few months later, he found the corpse with no decomposition and Francis Xavier was conferred with the title of 'saint'. Until 1994, his body, placed in silver casket in the Church of Bom Jesus, would be brought out every ten years on his death anniversary and kept in a glass case for the devotees to see.

Carnivals and revelry

The Carnival in Goa can be termed as the most famous of all Goan festivals as it invites unmatched attention and participation. The carnival is celebrated for three days and three nights and precedes the month of Lent (February) – the 40-day period of fasting and absenteeism from meat. It was first organised by the Portuguese in the 18th century.



Goa carnival

The Goa Carnival is marked by fun-filled activities, feast, drinks, music and dance. During the days, there are grand, colourful and musical parades starting from Panjim and evenings see gala balls and people partying on the streets through the night.

Another popular festival in Goa known as the Three Kings Feast is celebrated by Christians and non-Christians alike. It is celebrated in North Goa's Verem village and in Cansaulim and Chandor villages in South Goa.

Dedicated to The Lady of Mount- Virgin Mother Mary with infant Jesus in her lap, the celebrations take place for nine days and are held in the chapel of Nossa Senhora dos Remedios or Our Lady of Cures where the idol of Virgin Mother Mary is decorated with flowers, gold jewellery and garlands.

Goa Sunburn Festival is Asia's largest three-day Dance and Music festival. Every December, tourists from all over the world converge to Goa to come to enjoy enchanting music of Indian and international artists.

The Goa Cashew and Coconut Fest is also a popular event where one can see the most unique ways in which coconuts and cashews are used. There are fun-filled activities such as cashew stomping sessions, climbing a coconut tree, cocktail sessions and cookery shows.

Festivals integral to Goans

Other than Shigmo, Hindu festivals celebrated in Goa include Shivratri when Shiva temples in the state are illuminated with colourful decorations and lights and the devotees offer milk and woodapple leaves to Mahadeva.

The festival of lights, Diwali, is also celebrated with pomp and fervour in Goa for five days. On the evening of Diwali, diya or lamps are lit, paper lanterns are hung at homes and delicacies are prepared for friends and family and to offer as prasad during the puja.

Ganeshutsav is also widely celebrated in Goa. However, in Goa, this festival is more of a family affair than a public one, as seen in parts of Maharashtra. Goan households prepare *matoli* – a wooden canopy decorated with indigenous fruits, vegetables, wildflowers and herbs, prepare sweets and delicacies and perform the daily puja during Ganeshutsav.

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A slice of Goa's panoramic identity

Goa's scenic template might have been dominated by its beaches but its idiom goes far beyond. Tucked away along its length and breadth of west coast are several islands. Its significant riverine geography facilitates islands that can be visited for their shrines, festivals, and rich biodiversity. Ritika Seth informs how they have stood the rigours of time.



There are many islands that constitute the diverse landscape of Goa

Everyone knows about the many beaches of Goa, the popular ones and the not-so-popular ones. Few, however, are aware of the many islands that constitute the diverse landscape of the state. Goa encompasses an area of 3,702 sq km and is the smallest state in India. It is a part of the western coastal region of India known as Konkan and has a coastline of a whopping 160 km (99 miles).

There are seven major river systems in Goa arising out of the Mandovi, Zuari, Terekhol, Chapora, Galgibag, Cumbarjua canal, Talpona and the Sal rivers – all fed by the southwest monsoon rains. Of these, Zuari and the Mandovi are the most important rivers, interspaced by the Cumbarjua canal, forming a major and eco-sensitive estuarine complex in the region.

The basin of these rivers covers a significant portion of Goa amounting to 69 per cent of the geographical area. The complex and widespread riverine system in Goa is the reason why the region has a large number of islands. In all, Goa has more than 90 riverine, 40 estuarine and eight marine islands. Goa also has more than 300 ancient water tanks that were built during the reign of the Kadambas.

An island with ancient temples

One of the most important and visited islands of Goa is Divar Island, on Mandovi river, located just 10 km from the state capital Panjim. It's a great place for birding in Goa and is accessible only by ferry. Three ferry routes serve the island – from Ribandar, from Old Goa (Velha Goa) near Basilica of Bom Jesus and from Naroa in Bicholim.

The Konkani word for Divar is 'divadi' which is what the local Hindus still call the island. The word 'divadi' was derived from 'devawadi' translating to 'the home of the gods' or the place where gods live. The island was once full of temples and, even today, remains of Hindu temples and sites can be found. Saptakoteshwar Temple, Ganesh Temple, Mahamaya Temple and Dwarkeshwar Temple were destroyed during the Christianisation of Goa in the 16th century by the Portuguese and were shifted by the devotees to safer locations.

The Saptakoteshwar Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva and one of the six great sites of Shiva temples in Konkan, was

destroyed during the Portuguese inquisition. A few devotees took the deity to Hindale (Narve) across the waters in Bicholim, where, in 1668, Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji built a temple and reinstalled the deity. On the eastern end of the island is an area called Porne Tirth, now an archaeological site, which was the original site of Saptakoteshwar Temple.

Divar has three Comunidades - Piedade, São Mathias (now Malar), Goathias. The Piedade Comunidade was later sub-divided into Goltim and Navelim. At Piedade, on top of the hill there is the beautiful Church of Our Lady of Piety that offers a breath-taking view of the Mandovi around the island and Old Goa. Next to the church is a graveyard where once stood a Ganesh temple. The São Mathias Church in Malar was built by the Portuguese over 400 years ago.

The island has beautiful, palatial bungalows built in a blend of Portuguese and Indian styles. Divar Island is also known for the popular Bonderam Festival, celebrated on the fourth Saturday of August with great fanfare and euphoria. Thousands attend the festival which commemorates the villagers' protest against the Portuguese system of resolving land and other disputes by erecting flags at the boundaries. So, on Bonderam, as a tradition, the locals knock down each other's flags amid an ambience of carnival. There's food, music, parading floats and locals dressed in colourful costumes.

Another festival, the Potekar festival is celebrated for three days on the island before the start of Lent / Ash Wednesday. Similar to Halloween, locals wear costumes, masks, other accessories and venture around the village, going to homes demanding snacks and drinks.

Displaying communal harmony

The Mandovi river system has many major islands Ilha de Goa, Chorão, Vanxim, Cumbarjua, St Estevam and several other small mangrove islands and sand banks. Vanxim or Capão is a tiny island located north of Divar Island and accessible only from Divar by a ferry is a thinly-populated island where the Hindu and Christian families coexist peacefully. Earlier, locals were engaged in poultry and paddy cultivation. However, that has stopped now and most are dependent on fishing for livelihood.

There are a few beautiful churches on the island. Built in 1879, the Church of Santo Cristo hosts the feasts of the Miraculous Chapel and Santo Cristo in the months of April and May. The Chapel of the Miraculous Cross is also an important landmark that is visited by Goans from all over.

Vanxim is surrounded by mangroves on all sides just like Divar and Chorao. Interestingly, there is a Cross installed in the middle of the Mandovi water stream between Divar and Vanxim, clearly visible during the ferry ride. The Cross was constructed by the villagers in memory of a doctor, Louis Cabral, who lived on Divar but would regularly visit Vanxim residents.

Eco-sensitive and biodiverse

Among the many eco-sensitive islands in Goa is Chorao island on the Mandovi that lies at a distance of five km from Panjim and can be easily reached by a ferry from Ribandar. Also known as Choddnnem or Chodan, it's the largest among other islands of Goa. Chorao village is known for its Luso-Goan churches and houses and the famous Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary where one can see more than 400 migratory and native species of birds.

The Chorao island comprises three comunidades – Chorao, Ambelim and Caraim (Caroi). Comunidades of Goa were a form of land association developed in Goa where land ownership was collectively held but controlled by the male descendants of those who claimed to be the founders of the village. The centre of the island is Saude.



A picturesque beach in Goa

Jesuits christianised Chorao at the same time as Divar Island and Salcete. The area was one of the first to be conquered by the Portuguese in 1510 and by the end of 1552, a small church was built to serve the 300 of the 3,000 islanders who were converted to Christianity. By 1560, Jesuit Dom João Nunes de Barreto had set up residence in Chorao. The island had two forts to keep the Marathas at bay including Fortaleza de São Bartolomeu de Chorão (Saint Bartholomew Fort of Chorão) built in 1720 that now lies in ruins.

One of the most beautiful and picturesque islands in Goa is the Sao Jacinto Island – derived from the name of the church, St. Jacinto's Church. It is located at a distance of 22 km from Panjim and seven km from Bogmalo beach and is close to Goa International Airport at Dabolim. A bridge connects the island to NH-17 Vasco-Panaji coastal highway and offers a breath-taking view of the island against the pristine waters. The quaint island is preserved in time devoid of external influence. Most of the island is covered with forests. One corner has old houses and there's a well intact Portuguese lighthouse.

Conco Island, located in the Canacona region, at the North end of Palolem beach, is very popular among foreign tourists. It's also known as Monkey Island because of the many monkeys in the forests of the island. The island can be reached by ferries and also an easy swim in low tide. Surrounded by the Arabian Sea, the island offers great adventure sports options for tourists such as snorkeling, scuba diving, surfing, swimming around this island, sunbathing, etc.

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Bio-diversity feast for tourists

*What lends Goa its unique picturesque beauty is also its flora and fauna that abounds because of its typical topography and climatic conditions. **Kriti Kalra** sketches a Goa which has congenial conditions for wildlife and nature to sustain and flourish – an ideal situation where humans and nature co-exist in peace and harmony.*



Chorao island houses Goa's only bird sanctuary - Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary

One of the most biodiverse regions in India, Goa is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna. Varying altitudes, weather conditions and soil types mean there is diversity in wildlife and trees. So, in Goa, there are mangrove trees growing on the banks of the many rivers in the state and then there are open scrub jungles, sub-tropical hill forests, etc.

Apart from the biodiversity seen in plants and trees, a plethora of different species of wildlife also exist in Goa. These include Indian giant squirrels, sloth bears, mongoose, slender loris and more. Goa also has more than 400 species of birds and is a paradise for any nature lover.

To protect wildlife and forests from human activity and prevent its degradation and destruction, several wildlife sanctuaries and national parks have been established in the state that

are not just a safe haven for these species of flora and fauna but also popular tourist destinations.

A bird sanctuary on an island

At a short distance from the state capital Panjim lies Chorao island that houses Goa's only bird sanctuary - Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary. Reachable through a ferry ride that plies regularly between Ribandar (near Panjim) and Chorao, this paradise for bird lovers is a must see destination.

The best time to visit Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary is during the winters as that time one can see not just the birds native to the zone but a variety of migratory birds that have flown from far and wide for warmer land.

The sanctuary is spread across an area of 1.8 sq km
(Continued on page 26)



Goa's hidden treasure trove of temples

*For all those who believe that Goa is all about beaches, churches and gala parties, there is a lesser-known dimension to it. **Ruchi Verma** brings out the state's rich Hindu heritage and culture and lists many ancient temples that dot its breath-taking landscape. Most temples are exquisite and date back to the Kadamba period in the 12th century with fascinating stories behind them.*



Saptakoteswar Temple

India's smallest state Goa is famous for its breathtaking beaches, spectacular churches and the 'happening' party scene. What most are unaware of, however, is the region's rich Hindu culture that can be seen through the innumerable exquisite temples scattered through the state's landscape.

Hinduism is the majority religion in Goa. According to the 2011 census, in a population of 14,58,545 people, 66 per cent identified themselves as Hindu. The Goan Hindus comprise Saraswat Brahmins, Daivadnya Brahmins, Karhad Brahmins, Konkanaatha Brahmins (Chitpavans), etc. Other groups include Kunbis, Gaudas, Konkani Kshatriya Chardos, Vaishya Vanis, etc.

Hindus in Goa celebrate their festivals with pomp and fervour. For example, the Yatra or the procession of Shree Mahadeva Shiva and Shree Mahadevi Shantadurga (Durga) is quite an elaborate affair where devotees from far and wide gather to celebrate.

Exquisite temple revering Lord Shiva

Goa is home to some of the most exquisite and spectac-

ular temples in the country. They have unique features and almost always painted in bright colours, typical of the houses and structures in the Konkani region.

The Saptakoteswar Temple at Narve in Goa is an important Shiva temple in the Konkani region. It is considered to be one of the six great sites of Shiva temples in Konkani. Narve or Naroa is located in North Goa, near Panjim, across from Divar Island.

A form of Shiva, Saptakoteswar, was one of the chief deities and a family deity of the kings of the Kadamba dynasty that ruled around the twelfth century in the region. The Saptakoteswar Temple was built by a king for his wife who was a Shiva devotee.

The rulers of this dynasty even used the title (Birudu) Shree Saptakotisha Ladbha Varaveera before their names as a mark of reverence. Artefacts such as gold coins, often referred to as Saptakotisha-Gadyanakas, discovered at Chandor, Gopikapattana, etc., have inscriptions that further highlight the significance of the god. The inscriptions read 'Saptakotishvaralabdha – Varaprasada' which means 'with the grace of Lord Saptakotish-



Shree Siddheshwar Temple

wara'.

When Goa, then under Kadamba rule, was conquered by a Sultan, several temples were destroyed. For about fourteen years, the region was ruled by Bahmani Sultan Allauddin Hasan Gangu, that ended in 1367.

Finally, when the Sultan was defeated by King Harihararaya of Vijayanagar, many temples in Goa, including the Saptkoteswar temple, were rebuilt and restored. It was only by the end of the fourteenth century that the temple was reconstructed by Madhava Mantri.

As per legend, the name Saptakoteswar has an interesting story to its origin. Once, seven holy sages began to pray to Lord Shiva at a site where five holy rivers met the sea.

They prayed for seven crore years at the end of which Lord Shiva, pleased with their dedication, granted their wishes and agreed to stay at the place in one of his incarnations. This incarnation is known as Saptakoteswar - 'sapt' means seven and 'koteswar' means lord of crores.

The temple is also famous for Gokulashtami celebrations that draw Goa's hidden treasure trove of temples.

Surviving the inquisition

The temple bore the brunt of the brutal Portuguese inquisition as well when the invaders destroyed a large number of temples in Goa. In 1560, the Portuguese destroyed the Saptkoteswar temple and, at the same site, using stones from the temple, constructed the Nossa Senhora De Candelaria



Maruti Temple in Ponda

chapel. In fact, the Linga was used by them as a well shaft and still bears the marks made by the ropes used for drawing water at the time.

It were a few devotees who rescued the shivling and took it to nearby Bicholim area that is now in Goa's mining belt. A man named Narayan Shenvi Suryarao took the Linga and hid it in Latamarsem where it remained for three years.

In 1668, under the aegis of Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the temple was reconstructed at Narve and the Linga was reinstalled rightfully. At the site of the new temple in Narve, a stone plaque mentioning this order can be seen.

Ponda, the Antruz Mahal

The central part of Goa comprising Ponda or Fondya is referred to as 'Antruz Mahal' because of the presence of several famous and important Hindu temples in the area. These include the temples of Shri Manguesh (Shiva), Shri Mahalaxmi, Shri Nagesh, Shri Ganapati, Shri Mahalasa, Shri Ramnath and the Goddesses Shri Shantadurga.

Antruz Mahal, a Hindu pilgrimage destination, thousands of devotees and tourists visit every year to pay homage to god or to just explore and revel in the region's rich cultural heritage.

As per legend, it is believed that divine energy protects the entire Ponda region. This is the reason why the zone is called the land of the divine energy of Sri Anant or 'Anant Urja Mahal' which has come through the generations to be known as 'Antruz Mahal'.

Maruti Temple in Ponda is dedicated to Lord Hanuman. Rich in architectural heritage, the temple stands testimony to the zone's rich history. On Tuesdays, the day dedicated to Lord Hanuman, there is huge fanfare and festivities as devotees gather in large numbers to pray to their favourite god.

Nagesh Temple located in Donshiwado, Ponda was established in 1413 AD. It is dedicated to Nagueshi or Nagesh, an incarnation of Lord Shiva. One of the oldest temples in Goa, this temple is also one of the few that stands in its original place and was not shifted out of the Velha Conquistas during the



Mahalaxmi Temple in Ponda

Portuguese rule.

The temple's presiding deity is Shri Nagesh Maharudra and other deities are Shri Laxmi Narayan and Shri Ganapati.

Goddess of power

In Ponda's Bandora, Mahalaxmi Temple too is visited by devotees from across borders. Mahalaxmi, who many accept as Pallavi - the patron deity – is said to have been released during Samudramanthan or the churning of the ocean by the gods (deva) and the demons (asura) to extract the nectar of immortality or 'amrit'.

Mahalaxmi, believed to be an incarnation of Adishakti, is the goddess of power and strength. When the Saraswats arrived in Goa, they were worshipping 'Shiva-Shakti'. The goddess representing Shakti and Linga symbolising Shiva.

The Shilahara rulers worshipped Mahalaxmi and so did kings of the Kadamba dynasty in Goa. At Bandora's Mahalaxmi Temple, the satvik or peaceful form of the goddess wears linga on her head. Goddess Mahalaxmi's main temple is situated in Kolhapur in Maharashtra state.

The temple comprises a dynamic silver arched doorway that leads from an oil-red hall to sanctuary. The twenty-four wooden panels here are beautifully painted displaying instances from Bhagvata Puran. The paintings are also inspired from anecdotes and life of Lord Krishna.

At this temple, the nine-day-long festival celebrating the many forms of goddess Durga - Navaratri - is celebrated grandly. Other festivals celebrated with fervour include Ram Navami, Shri Mahalakshmi Pratishthapana Day in Vaishakha and Maha Shivratri in the month of Magha.



Mahadev Temple

During Mahashivratri, when the main idol of the goddess is taken out on a chariot by the devotees on their shoulders, thousands gather to get a glimpse of their goddess.

An ancient temple

The most ancient temple in Goa is the Mahadev Temple located at Tambdi Surla at Mollem. The temple was built in Kadamba style from basalt that was carried from the Deccan plateau across mountains and then carved into the structure that can be seen today.

Owing to its location in the deep forests on the foot of the Western Ghats, the temple remains untouched. The small and beautifully-carved black basalt temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva. It's considered to be the only specimen of Kadamba-Yadava architecture in basalt stone preserved and available in Goa.

In the temple, the linga is mounted on a pedestal inside the inner sanctum. As per a legend, a huge king cobra lives permanently in the semi-lit interiors of the structure. There is a garbhagriha, antarala and a pillared basalt Nandi mandapa.

At the centre of the mandap is a headless Nandi who is Lord Shiva's vehicle flanked by four columns. The base of each column has carving of an elephant trampling a horse. Interestingly, elephant was the symbol of the Kadamba Kingdom.

The ceiling displays beautifully-carved Ashtoken lotus flowers that rest on the four pillars that are decorated with fine carvings of elephants and chains. The panels on the temple sides have figures of Lord Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. As the temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, Mahashivratri is a big festival celebrated with a lot of fervour.

Symbolising peace and harmony

Shri Shantadurga Chamundeshwari Temple is situated in Ghudo Avedem village (Quepem Taluka) in South Goa and is one of its kind. It denotes peace and harmony and the temple furthers communal harmony as well. Members of the Hindu and Christian community worship here. The deity is also called Santeri.

The temple is located on the banks of Kushawati River.



Shantadurga Temple

Initially, in 1560, the temple was established in Salcete Taluka in village Curtorim (Kudtari). However, owing to the inquisition and religious conversions that followed, the devotees fled the place and took their deities along.

In this case, the founders of the Kudatari temple took their deities to Shelvon and subsequently moved to Ghudo ward of Avedem village in Quepem Taluka where it was finally established in its present form.

The Shantadurga Temple is located at three places in Goa. According to legend, when a battle broke out between Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva, Lord Brahma requested Shiva's wife goddess Parvati to intervene. She took the form of Shantadurga (Shant means calm) and settled the fight. The deity of goddess Shantadurga is shown as holding one serpent in each hand representing Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva.



Mahalasa Narayani Temple



Morjai Temple

In North Goa's Morjim area, known for its Russian tourists, lies the beautiful Shri Morjai Temple. Dedicated to goddess Shri Morjai, the temple is a unique blend of grandeur and simplicity - elegant designs and grand structure.

Shri Morjai is known to be one of the seven sisters who came and resided in different parts of Goa along with their brother, Shri Khetoba. The temple dons a unique red and white colour combination and is decorated with rare and extinct 'Kaavi' art friezes.

The exquisite geometric patterns that adorn the temple can also be seen on its window grills. There is a 'Mukhmandap' and an exterior 'Sabhamandap' dating to 1936.

The main festival celebrated at this temple is 'Kalas

Utsav' which is observed once in every three, five, seven or nine years and which lasts for nearly a month. It begins from the Phalgun Shudda Panchami and is celebrated with a lot of fanfare and festivities.

At the Shri Morjai temple, several other festivals are also celebrated and these include Gudi Padwa, Dussera, annual jatra or *jatra* and *ghodemodni*.

Shri Damodar Temple Zambaulim or Shri Damodara Sansthaan is located on the banks of the Kushawati River in Sanguem near Zambaulim village. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva incarnated as Lord Damodar.

Before the Portuguese arrived in Goa, the deity of Lord Damodar was originally placed in a temple in Madgaon or



Mangueshi Temple

Temple with tales

One of the largest and the most frequently visited temples in Goa is the Mangueshi Temple, again dedicated to Lord Shiva. This temple too, like most other in Goa, was first established in Kushasthali Cortalim, a village in Murmugao, on the banks of River Aghanashini.

In 1560, when the Portuguese attacked and started conversions in this zone, the Saraswats of Kaundinya Gotra and Vatsa Gotra shifted the Mangesh Linga to protect it. The deity was moved to Mangeshi in Priol village in Atrunja taluka. He is the kuldeva or family deity of Chitrapur Saraswat Brahmins and the Goud Saraswat Brahmins.

After the relocation, the temple has been rebuilt and renovated twice during the reign of the Maratha dynasty in the region and then one more time in the year 1890. The final renovation occurred in the year 1973. This time, a golden kalasa or golden vessel was installed on top of the tallest dome of the temple.

The original temple was a very simple structure. Later, about 150 years after the deity was moved, the new and existing

temple structure was built by Maratha rulers. It were the Peshwas who donated the village of Mangeshi for the construction of the temple in 1739.

The Brahma Temple in Valpoi's Nagargao is a must visit for those visiting Goa. According to Hindu legend, the creator of the universe, Lord Brahma was to have just one temple at Pushkar in Rajasthan. But there is this one in Goa too which not many know.

The statue in the temple dates back to the Kadamba period in 12th century. Like most structures of the period, in this temple too, the statue of Lord Brahma has been made from one black stone. The statue is tall, wears a beard and is in the form of a Trimurti i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, visited by thousands of devotees from all over Goa and beyond.

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and it is one of the smallest wildlife sanctuaries in Goa. It's been named after renowned ornithologist Dr. Salim Ali.

It's because of the sheer landscape of the zone that Goa is so rich in biodiversity. Mangroves that grow in abundance at the periphery of the many islands especially Chorao provide home to a wide variety of bird species such as pintails, blue-winged teals, etc.

In Goa, more than 450 species of birds or avifauna can be found. These include Oriental Darter, Purple Swamphen, Striated Heron, Crested Serpent Eagle, the Shikra and the Black-winged Stilt, etc. Rare bird species such as Long-billed Vulture, Darter, Great Pied Hornbill and Indian Skimmer are also found in Goa.

Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary at Chorao offers a great opportunity to spot avian fauna and see birdlife. A boat ride will take you around Chorao Island, on the meandering tributaries, where one can see several bird species in their natural habitat. The ride goes up to a watch tower where one can enjoy a great, seamless view of the bird sanctuary.

Apart from birds, one can also spot jackals and crocodiles. Mangrove Scrub form an ideal ecosystem for the breeding and shelter of a variety of fish and insects.

Discovering wildlife

Goa offers many avenues for birdwatching. There are several birdwatching trails organised in areas rich in avian species. Presently, there are six conservation areas in Goa where one can explore birdlife including Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary and the Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary in South Goa.

Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary in Canacona Taluka in South Goa is the second largest wildlife sanctuary in Goa and the perfect place for experiencing wildlife in Goa.

Here, thick canopy of trees prevent light from reaching the ground. Located at a distance of about 60 km south of Panjim, this zone is home to monkeys, hyenas, Malabar crested eagle, Indian pangolin, etc.

There are several watchtowers scattered around the sanctuary that offer great view of the zone and the perfect place to just wait and see jungle life. The best time to visit Cotigao is between October and March.

The Mandovi – Zuari Wildlife Sanctuary at Dauna Paula is located ten kilometer from Panjim. Also known as Goa Wildlife Sanctuary, it is Goa's most visited nature reserve and home to at least twenty varieties or species of mangrove, including a few that happen to be very rare.

The zone is rich in both flora and fauna. The diversity in flora supports wildlife diversity and one can see jackals, crocodiles, fish, snakes, etc.

Wildlife and waterfalls

Along the road going from Panaji to Belgaum is a sanctuary that covers 240 sq km area on the forest-covered inclines of the Western Ghats. Known as Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary (and within it Mollem National Park), it is located in the Goan town of Mollem (Dharbandora taluka) and is the largest of Goa's four protected wildlife areas.

The sanctuary is situated on Goa's eastern border with Karnataka state border being 53 kms away from Panaji and 54 kms away from Margao. The sanctuary is easily accessible by both road and railway.

Several species of animals, reptiles, insects such as butterflies call this sanctuary their home including pythons, cobras, jungle cats, leopards, deer giant squirrels, etc.

The park harbours 722 species of flowering plants in wild and 128 species of endemic plants either endemic to Western Ghats, Peninsular India or India.

The wildlife sanctuary also contains several important temples dating to the Kadambas, waterfalls such as Dudhsagar Falls and Tambdi Falls and is also home to a community of nomadic buffalo herders known as the Dhangar.

Tambdi Surla Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva and built in the 12th century lies within the premises, 13 km east of Bolcornem village. Dudhsagar (Sea of Milk) Falls is a tiered waterfall on the Mandovi River at the Karnataka border and at 310 m (1,020 ft) is also Goa's tallest waterfall. A viaduct of the South Western Railways passes through the waterfalls rendering a spectacular view.

The area was earlier called Mollem Game Sanctuary before being declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1969 and renamed as Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary. The core area of the sanctuary covering 107 sq km (41 sq mi) was notified as Mollem National Park in 1978.

Tigers in the wild

The Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, a protected area in the Western Ghats, spreads across 208 sq km in Sattari taluka near the town of Valpoi. An area rich in biodiversity, this sanctuary is often visited by tigers that have often been spotted in the zone.

There is a proposal to make it into a 'Project Tiger' reserve. It happens to be one of the best places to spot tigers in Goa. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in its 2020 report had stated that the management of the sanctuary left "much to be desired" and without adequate strengthening of conservation efforts, the place may become a "death trap for tigers".

Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Ponda taluka and covers a total area of eight sq km. It is a popular destination for both tourists and children. It's the smallest of all in Goa and is home to a wide variety of fauna including Indian bison, sambar, deer, Malabar giant squirrel, Indian peafowl and many species of snakes.

Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary is located in South-Eastern Goa and covers an area of about 211 sq km on the Western Ghats. Netravali or Neturli is an important tributary of River Zuari which originates in the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary.

The forest here consist of moist deciduous vegetation interspersed with evergreen and semi-evergreen. It lies adjacent to Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve, Karnataka on the eastern side, Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, Goa on the southern side and Bhagwan Mahavir Sanctuary and Mollem National Park on the northern side which in turn forms a contiguous protected area along with Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, Goa and Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnataka.

Kriti Kalra is an activist and field researcher with www.thewomansurvivor.com – an initiative of DraftCraft International to protect and empower women by bringing on one platform the latest on rights and issues, strategic case studies, state initiatives and informed legal opinions.

“My only one dream now is to give Shivaji Maharaj his due exalted status in world history.”

Multi faceted **Dr. Hemant Raje Gaikwad** (71) has achieved almost all that he has ever dreamed of - his own nursing home, paramedical institute, rural hospital, a BSA Golden Flash bike, writing books and owning two Dobermans. He has also worked as a home guard commandant as he wanted to serve the nation.

An ardent Shivaji Maharaj devotee, his only dream now is to give the Maratha warrior his true exalted status in the word history. In a free-wheeling chat with **A. Radhakrishnan**, the septuagenarian tells how he proposes to fulfill this dream.

How was your childhood like?

I studied at St. Xavier's High school, Fort, Mumbai and was an average student. Coming from a humble background and surrounded by well-bred, affluent children, I saw myself somewhat as a misfit there. Consequently some kind of inferiority complex became a part of my being. But later on at Bhavan's College, where I did my B.Sc in Chemistry, I underwent a major transformation. I then did my MBBS DOMS -Diploma in Ophthalmic Medicine & Surgery from Grant Medical College, Mumbai.

Why did you choose medicine as a career?

I think medicine and teaching are the noblest professions. My family doctor Dr. Benkar, noble laureate Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Dr. David Livingstone and Dr. Kotnis have been my inspirations since my pre medical days.

Tell me about your paramedical institute?

There is a good demand for paramedical staff. For every doctor, we need almost 10 paramedics assisting him in one form or other, for the smooth functioning of a hospital.

My paramedical institute in Dadar is the Dr. Gaikwad Institute, promoted by the government. The institute offers Earn & Learn scheme for all paramedical courses, through a fulltime internship programme which ensures maximum hands-on experience. The student is assured of his/her full fees back within two years. It also offers a 100% job guarantee in private hospitals/ clinics/ labs, and in the past twenty five years we have provided more than 5,000 to 7,000 jobs. We are now offering franchises.

Students who don't have access to newspapers at home are trained at the institute to read and write in English.



Dr. Hemant Raje Gaikwad

How do you manage the smooth and simultaneous running of the institute?

The principle is of trust and love for your staff. During the pandemic when many establishments sacked staff, we were the only one who took on more.

Our students are mostly from the Art or Commerce stream and not Science. They join after doing their 12th Grade.

During the pandemic, the Government realising the tremendous lack of good paramedical staff, created BVoc ., i.e. Bachelor of Vocation in Medical Lab Technology (BVoc.MLT), BVoc in Patient Care Management (BVoc.PCM), BVoc in X-ray Technology, etc.

From a diploma institute, we are now a paramedical college affiliated to the Shri Venkateshwara University and offer a proper three year graduation certificate.

What is the secret behind the efficiency of the rural hospital in Chirner and the trust of the villagers?

The Chirner experiment at a sleepy hamlet, 65 km from Mumbai, started in 1980 before I became an intern. With other GMCites (doctors from Grant Medical College) like Dr. V C Talwalkar and Dr. Rajan Powle, on the invitation of a patient, we initially began as Sunday doctors, working on infectious diseases and family planning.

We had a system in place and kept an ST bus stationed in the village to help any woman in labour. Once they realised we cared for them and their children, they trusted us and also decided to follow the two kids policy.

Between 2000-2005, with JNPT reaching the area, there was

rise in employment opportunities and money too flowed in with sale of lands. A lot of private doctors are now willing to set up hospitals. With MMRDA also reaching here, there is no need for charity. People can now afford to pay for their basic healthcare.

What is the source of your funding for your work here?

Around 1990, Wilde Gantzen, a TV programme on Dutch TV, showed people trying to do community work. The Chirner project telecast yielded about 65,000 guilders (about Rs. 32 lakhs) in donations and was the corpus that created the new hospital. At present we have 16 consultants, a ward that can house twenty patients and a operation theatre can compete with that of any Mumbai nursing home.

The Dutch money left me with mixed feelings. Sad, because it is white man's charity, but happy that they took notice of us and realised our potential and had faith in our ability and commitment, when not many in India were willing to help. Frankly, we didn't ask for State funds as it is a tedious process.

Now that we have two buildings, donations are pouring in. But to some extent in our present socioeconomic set up, a social worker is equated with a politician; and charity equated with corruption.

Is the rural hospital being converted into an institute?

We are considering either converting it into an educational institute or a preventable medical institute where anaemia in girls and dental problems in school children will be treated. Also we hope to provide spectacles at subsidised rates not very easily available in villages.

Who are your role models? And why?

In GMC, it was Dr. Phatnani who taught me how to speak; Dr. P. P. Rao who taught me public relations; Dr. Ambedkar who taught me rural health; Dr. T. Udwadia who taught me bedside manners and Dr. Sapatnekar who taught me planning. I also had role models for my history studies.

Why is Shivaji Maharaj so dear to you?

He was unique. His great escape, his forming a defence line of hill forts, his formidable navy, winning battles leading from the front, planning effective battle plans, preventing sati, conversions, starting a Rajya Bhasha Kosh (Lexicon), eliminating casteism, ensuring justice to all, getting himself coronated after a gap of 500 years, having a pan India Hindu rule and resurrecting the Marathi language are commendable.

But what was really remarkable is that he had no weakness, respected women and all religions, never ordered to slaughter a General, never enslaved prisoners, was a teetotaler, did not build monuments for himself, treated his subjects equally, never built a tower of skulls, respected his parents, brother, and comrades and ruled as a caretaker of the Almighty, but did not play God.

How important were forts of that time? What did they symbolise?

Born inside a fort, it made Shivaji Maharaj what he was. He made forts the terror of the Mughals, the cradle of his nation, the steps of his ambition, the basis of his conquest, his home and his joy. His dwelling was among the rocks and his strength lay in the everlasting hills.

He built this kingdom on the strength of his forts. If there were no forts, during a foreign invasion, the open country would have been easily desolated, and people massacred by the enemies.

What is the project on forts you are working on?

I wish to establish a Shri Shivaji Gyanpeeth on Shivaji Maharaj as a community social responsibility. I have already bought a camper which will carry a mobile exhibition through photographs and models of forts and there will be discussions in schools on the various battles that took place during his reign. I am doing this because a school student at Latur might never get to see Raigad till he perhaps gets a job. I want to at least introduce him to ten major forts. My only one dream now is to give Shivaji Maharaj his due exalted status in world history.

What books and manuals have you written?

I have written 25 manuals for the paramedical staff. I have also published a book titled *Shivaji Maharaj the Greatest*, which has been translated into four languages and made into a film, available in six languages.

In 1999, to celebrate the silver jubilee of GMC, I had written a breezy book on my college days named, *Chakaraka Makaraka*, which is now in its fourth print.

Why did you join the home guards?

In 1986, with a strong desire to serve the nation and fulfill my love for the uniform, I joined the Home Guards as Medical Officer and rose to be the Commandant of Greater Mumbai.

I was commended by the then Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar, Shri Ram Kapse for my efforts during the Tsunami. I also specifically enrolled fisherman as Home Guards to guard the coast line of Mumbai, after the 26/11/2008 terrorist attack.

I began the Railway Suraksha Pathak to prevent harassment/molestation of lady commuters. Today the duties also encompass the checking of commuters for concealed bombs. I have handled situations like the bomb blasts and the Mumbai floods.

Any other achievements you would like to mention?

I was also instrumental in organising the first three Mumbai marathons.

As the police refused security, I was approached as Commandant, Home Guards. We gave logistics and security till such time when private event management companies took over. I also conducted the largest medical camp in history at Dharavi, attended by 65,000 people.

Has your work been recognized?

I have been awarded The Economic Times of India - Icon of Excellence Award and Pioneer in Paramedical Education.

I am the recipient of two service medals, The Swatantrata Suvarna Jayanti Padak in 1997 and the Maharashtra Rajya Home Guard Hirak Jayanti Padak in 2006. I have also been commended by WHO (World Health Organisation) for Pulse Polio.

Dr. Gaikwad can be reached at drgaikwadinstitute@gmail.com



A. Radhakrishnan is a Pune based freelance writer, poet and short story writer.



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Sino-Indian war, then and now

*It has been 50 years since India fought that disastrous war with China in 1962. Prof **Avinash Kolhe** traces the anatomy of that war and makes out a case why India should be wary of the China-Pakistan axis although India are no longer the pushovers they were then.*



The 1962 Indo-China war was a legacy of the Raj as it left the borders undefined when they left the sub-continent in August 1947

It is rather surprising that the golden jubilee of India-China war in 1962 went almost unnoticed. Fifty years ago, on 20 October 1962, the Chinese army made inroads into the Indian territory, blowing to smithereens Pandit Nehru's Panchasheel. The Chinese betrayal shocked India.

The one-sided war lasted for exactly a month until China unilaterally declared ceasefire on 20 November 1962. The war claimed nearly 4000 officers and soldiers. For India, it was a setback for its Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) that China was initially enthusiastic about.

In a way, the 1962 war was a legacy of the Raj as it left the borders undefined when they left the sub-continent in August 1947. The attack so brazen and shocking that within hours China captured a high-ranking officer like Brigadier John Dalvi, the leader of the doomed 7 Brigade. Six years later, Dalvi wrote 'Himalayan Blunder', the controversial war memoir.

For keen observers of Asian affairs, India-China war was bound to happen. Brigadier Dalvi narrates an interesting story in his book. Dalvi was an officer-trainee in the DSSC, Wellington where a retired British officer was delivering a guest lecture. The British officer heard that Nehru had signed Panchsheel agreement with China in April 1954 and had decided to give up the post in Tibet that the British had maintained in Tibet to check Chinese advance.

He promptly predicted that India and China would soon be at war which was prophetic. The British had seen through the Chinese designs and had cultivated Tibet as a buffer state. Having attacked Tibet in 1950, China began constructing roads from Tibet leading to Aksai Chin near Ladakh. Since then, the Chinese had two major claims with respect to Indian territories. One is Aksai Chin, in the northeastern section of Ladakh and second is Arunachal Pradesh. Little surprise the Chinese attacked simultaneously on both the fronts, Ladakh area and



Chinese troops outnumbered by Indian soldiers at Arunachal Pradesh border in latest face-off

North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). They managed to win 11,000 km area in Aksai Chin and substantial area in NEFA now known as Arunachal Pradesh in India.

All along, China had blamed India for foisting the war on China. Even scholars like Neville Maxwell, the British journalist blamed India in his book 'India's China war' published in 1970. Maxwell was granted unhindered access to secret files by the Government of India to write this book which later was banned in India.

The blame game apart, the point remains that the war of 1962 was a huge shock to Gandhi's non-violent India. In its pacifist belief, India assumed that its natural affinity with Tibet would be respected by China. With China in no mood to oblige, war became inevitable and India was ill-prepared.

A quick look at the border dispute is called for. Aksai Chin is contiguous with Ladakh and was demarcated as part of Indian territory by British India in the mid-19th century through a tripartite meeting between British India, Tibet and China. Some 30 years later China rejected this demarcation. Thus, began border dispute between India and China in the North Western Frontier.

The story of the McMahon Line is a bit different. To the east of Bhutan lay a scattering of separate tribes, thinly populating a sixty-mile-broad belt of mountainous, densely jungled country. In 1915 a bilateral agreement between Tibet and Britain led to the McMahon line annexing some two 2000 square miles of Tibetan territory into India which is referred to as NEFA.

Came Independence in 1947, Indian government carried forward the policy of Britain about its borders, maintaining that the Sino-Indian borders had long been fixed by custom and tradition, and confirmed by treaty and agreement.

Back then the Tibetan government was seeking legal status and international recognition to the de facto independence it had enjoyed since 1911. Once the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established in October 1949, Chinese army marched into Tibet and made it part of the PRC. This finally led to a show-down between India and China, two Asian giants. Here Indian forces faced its worst defeat so far. There were many discussions of this defeat, the prime being the underestimation of

the strength of the Indian Air Force (IAF). Had the IAF put into action, the results would have been different. The use of fighter aircraft would have been a game-changer especially since the Chinese air force was severely handicapped due to high altitude

It has been now 50 years that the humiliating defeat was inflicted on the Indian armed forces. So, how and why should we now remember this ignominy? One is the fabulous rise of China and its stated ambition of being world's superpower No 1 by 2049, the centenary year of Chinese Communist revolution. Xi Jinping, the Chinese supremo, made no bones about the Chinese dream. Such an ambitious, aggressive country is our neighbour with whom we share nearly 3500 kilometres-long border which has been in dispute for the last five decades.

Secondly it is the all-weather friendship between Pakistan and China, cemented since March 1963. In the 21st century, this friendship is growing by leaps and bounds. On 1 November 2022, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had toured China. Pakistan and China are keen to strengthen the \$ 60 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Since the inception of the CPEC, India has boycotted it as it runs through the Pak-Occupied Kashmir (POK) which India claims to be its territory. Like the CPEC, China is very keen on the success of the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) projects, a euphemism for economic imperialism.

Given this new reality, India has to keep a sharp eye on China as well as Pak-China axis. China very well knows that 2022 is not 1962 and is unlikely to use force to settle border-dispute, but then it always pays to be vigilant.

Prof. Avinash Kolhe retired as Associate Professor in Political Science from D.G. Ruparel College, Mumbai.

For sisterhood and self-reliance

*Elaben Bhatt was a lawyer, trade unionist, social reformer, writer and quintessential feminist. **Lina Mathias** writes about her hugely impactful life and work.*



Elaben Bhatt

Elaben Bhatt (1933-2022), the founder of the iconic Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was among those public figures that are unassuming but forthright, modest but with a phenomenal impact, swim against the current without stoking needless controversies and leave behind an enviable legacy. Elaben died on November 2, 2022 at age 89 in Ahmedabad.

Elaben held a degree in English Literature having got it in 1952 from the Maganlal Thakordas Balmukunddas Arts College, Surat. She was awarded a gold medal two years later when she acquired a degree in law at the Sir L A Shah Law College in Ahmedabad. She met and later married student leader Ramesh Bhatt and theirs was a true partnership of heart and

mind. When she had to leave the Textile Labour Association (TLA-Majdoor Mahajan) following a difference of opinion, it was her husband who consoled her, saying it had happened for the better, as Sagari Chhabra writes in the *Mainstream* weekly. His words were prophetic because she formed SEWA which is considered one of the most influential and much studied movements in the world.

Elaben taught English literature briefly at the SNDT University in Mumbai and in 1955 joined the TLA's legal department. It was founded for textile workers by Anasuya Sarabhai and its constitution was drafted by Mahatma Gandhi. Elaben learnt a lot in the TLA but also realised that while male

mill workers were organised and protected by legislation, it was the women who had no such security.

And thus was it that in 1972 was born the SEWA that gathered women street vendors of fruits and vegetables, home based piece rate workers, labourers, recyclable waste collectors and women workers in many other informal and unorganised areas of Indian society.

Elaben planned and networked, ideated and worked tirelessly to bring agency and self reliance to these marginalised women who depended only on their relentless hard work for their and their families' livelihoods. She realised that they needed financial empowerment and unrolled the microfinance movement whilst setting up the Shri Mahila Sewa Bank. We speak easily of microfinance now but when Elaben began in 1970s, this was a little known and recognised concept.

Nor was she the kind of leader who believed in gathering the power reins in her own hands alone. She ensured that the activists and other women learnt the ropes of leadership and bargaining. Like all astute but selfless leaders she understood the importance of forging bonds and ties with likeminded people and forces around the world.

Beginning with the women who first hastened to heed her leadership, SEWA today has become a movement of 2.1 million workers across 18 states. No other movement anywhere in the world has perhaps influenced and ensured agency to such a large number of informal women workers. A true expression of women's empowerment!

It is but natural that such a movement and leadership would only inspire other similarly situated women all over the world. SEWA is emulated and studied worldwide and leading international women leaders in every sphere of life in India and abroad, have acknowledged Elaben's work as role model, fulsomely.

Just because Elaben was not embroiled in loud controversies does not mean that her path was smooth and even. Such a bold, innovative and against-the-rule book movement was not willingly welcomed in all quarters. It was her graceful dignity, strong minded values and strength of character that led SEWA through the decades and past the vested interests and obstacles.

Once she proved she was not a simple minded idealist who had no idea of the reality that the poorest women workers faced, there was no looking back. As SEWA gained ground and recognition, the accolades and honours poured in.

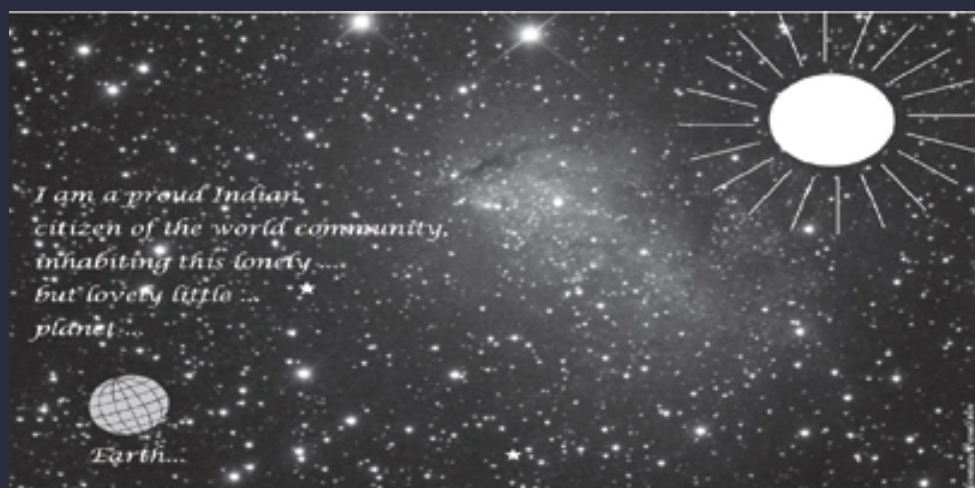
In 1977, Elaben received the Ramon Magsaysay Award and the Padma Bhushan in 1985 followed by the Padma Shri in 1986. She was appointed to the Rajya Sabha in 1986 and also headed the National Commission on Self-Employed Women, a government body for many years. She was part of many international organisations including the Women's World Banking. In 2007, she was invited to join the Elders formed by Richard Branson and Nelson Mandela and was a group of global leader working together for "peace, justice and human rights". Elaben was the Chairperson of Sabarmati Ashram and had recently resigned as the Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi-founded Gujarat Vidhyapith.

As Mirai Chatterjee, the former SEWA general secretary had written in the Indian Express, "Elaben was also an expert homemaker, cook and impeccable hostess and had a beautiful singing voice which was an instant draw. She was a prodigious writer who penned in *Anasuya*, our Gujarati newsletter, a play on street vendors, apart from numerous papers and several books in English and Gujarati. One of these was her book *We are Poor But We are Many* which described her life's work."

In her book *Anubandh: Building Hundred-Mile Communities*, she advocated 'hundred-mile communities'. The crux of this was that the three basic needs of food, clothing and shelter and the three basic services of primary healthcare, primary education and primary financial services should be met at the local level, within a radius of 100 miles.

Hers was a life that was truly well lived but it was not lived well only for herself and a small circle those around. Hers was a life that benefitted lakhs of people including those who never met or interacted with her. It will continue to live on in the movement that she started, the many people she influenced and the ideas she advocated. India is truly blessed to have felt the

Lina Mathias is a senior Mumbai-based journalist and former executive editor, Economic and Political Weekly.



A 'Sati' in contrasting avtaars

Shoma A. Chatterji takes a long, hard look at two films made on the social evil that was legally abolished in December 1929. She provides a comparative study of the films set in the old backdrop and made in the 1980s by Aparna Sen and Gautam Ghose with differing perspectives.



A scene from Goutam Ghose's *Antarjali Jatra* (1987)

Sati, also spelt as Suttee, was a practice among Hindu communities especially within undivided Bengal where a widowed woman, either voluntarily or by force, immolated herself on her deceased husband's pyre. But since girls were married very young to much older men, the question of "voluntary" does not arrive at all. It was always forced when gentle persuasion, social conviction failed which it always did. The then Governor-General Lord William Bentinck and the reason for the law as the regulation described it was "the practice of Sati was revolting to the feelings of human nature."

Sati is sacrifice by fire. In the Vedas, Agni, the god of fire, is said to transfer the substance of the sacrifice and convey this ethereal smoke to the realm of the gods, where it is imbibed by the sense of smell. In later developments of Brahminism, a purificatory power was attributed to fire, which is important in the rite of sati.

Before Sati came into existence, widows in Bengal led the life of humiliation, torture, deprivation. Their entire life changed with the death of husband they probably did not know at all as their marriage would be consummated only when they reached puberty. So, it was believed that if she died with her husband on the funeral pyre, she would be saved from such a terrible fate. But this was deeply entrenched in patriarchy as many of these widows stood to inherit large tracts of land and property as the sole heir of the dead husband so they were exiled

to Kashi or Vrindavan – some widows still are – and the husband's family would usurp her inheritance. Such stories are aplenty in Bengali literature including the works of Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra Chatterjee.

Late Agehananda Bharati, the Austrian-born anthropologist (born Hindu), declared that **sati** was the **nicor** (essence) of **pativratadharm** (moral action appropriate for married women) Sati had gained acceptance as a prefix to a woman's name to denote extreme devotion to the husband.

In 1961, actor-director Bikash Roy produced and directed a film called *Carey Shaheber Munshi* based on a magnum opus authored by Pramathanath Bishi. It is a historical novel about 19th century Bengal life. Pramathanath Bishi portrayed the civilian life of Kolkata in 19th century, the urban life of Bengal in detail. The Black-and-White film was a reasonable success while the novel was a thumping hit with the readers. Tandra Burman debuted in the film as the beautiful, teenage wife of an aristocratic family whose old husband dies and she is forced to join her dead husband on the pyre.

In the 1980s, two significant films that analysed the practice in two different ways are Aparna Sen's **Sati** (1989) and Goutam Ghose's **Antarjali Jatra** (1987). Both are contemporary filmmakers distinguished by memorable films exploring significant social issues through cinema.



Shabana Azmi in Aparna Sen's *Sati* (1989)

Aparna Sen chose to focus her third film *Sati* on the tragedy of a period in Bengal when 'choice' was a forbidden word. Perhaps, the tragedy was more in the case of women, but that does not mean that men could have their own way. While unfolding the story of a young girl born with and into misfortune, Sen also unfolds the tragedy of power versus the lack of it. Her celebration of Uma's *sahamara*n with her tree-husband evolves both into a comment on and a critique of the socio-religious custom of sati indulged in by a majority of Brahmins in Bengal in the 18th and 19th century. Uma's sati counteracts and contradicts every rule in the sati book.

Woman is an expendable sex, the film spells out. For the young girl drugged into *sati* in the first scene, it is murder committed in cold blood. It is the violent termination of a young life about to bloom. For Uma, death is redemption from a life lived in eternal humiliation. Uma's death marks the most violent closure among Sen's films. The violence of the storm and the lightning is designed to put an end to the (in)human violence Uma is subjected to all her life. This manifestation of violence through Nature, which acts as a pacifist force is striking in its originality.

Gautam Ghose's *Antarjali Jatra*, (Death by Drowning) based on a story by Kamal Kumar Majumdar, also revolves around a 'potential' sati when an octogenarian *Kulin* Brahmin is brought to the crematorium just before he is to die. He is married off hurriedly to a young girl named Yashobati at the burning ghat itself, so that the girl's father, an impoverished *Kulin*, can liberate himself of the possible 'guilt' of failing to marry his daughter off to a *Kulin* groom and that too, without the burden of a dowry. He promises the *pandits* (priests) that his daughter will commit sati the moment her husband dies. The marriage is conducted at the burning *ghat* and Yashobati, decked up in bridal finery, waits to become a *sati* as soon as the husband dies.

The story is set in 1832, immediately after the abolition of sati in Bengal. Yashobati is left alone with her dying husband on the burning ghats on the banks of the river Ganga, with only the *chandal* (the untouchable ghat-keeper, the burner of the

corpses) for company. When the *chandal* persuades her to run away, she refuses despite being faced with death. She tends to her dying husband who revives under her care. The *chandal* does not like this and castigates her. Yet, with time, the two the *chandal* and Yashobati are physically attracted to each other and become lovers. The river gets flooded taking the bier with the dying man away with its torrential waters.

Yashobati swims out in search of her husband, only to find an empty bier. She drowns in the flooded rivers of the Ganga, defying death of the sati by fire, while at the same time, conforming to the custom by dying when her husband does, and through the same agency - water.

Unlike Sen in *Sati*, Ghose falls back on the stereotypical 'narrative of rescue' pointing out perhaps, to the difference in perspective between two directors on grounds of gender, never mind the fact that the 'narrative of rescue' is blurred beyond recognition.

The other point of difference between *Sati* and *Antarjali Jatra* is Uma is plain-looking but Yashobati is beautiful. The obsessive male gaze, directed by the husband, the male lover and the director of the film at the female body is inevitably sexual. But it is also a reminder that the same body will burn. The male gaze does not exist with reference to Uma in *Sati* though her body too, is ultimately destroyed through death. While *Antarjali Jatra* blatantly foregrounds the body of the woman, *Sati* keeps it beyond the cinematic space and characteristically low-key for Uma, the protagonist. Yet, both Yashobati and Uma are 'sacrificed' through natural calamities.

Water defines itself as an agency of death for both women. Both Uma and Yashobati belong to extremely impoverished *Kulin* Brahmin families, though their victimisation is distanced in terms of their class, backdrop and in their power of articulation. Uma is mute. Yashobati is not. Uma is an orphan. Yashobati is not. Yashobati has the ability to exercise her choice – in her love-making with the *chandal* as well as in her choice of rescuing her dying husband from the floods and thereby, underwriting her own death.

Uma has never learnt to articulate her choice because she does not have a choice. She is born into a life of genetic silence. When compared with Yashobati, she is more vulnerable and therefore, has no power. Yet, in the ultimate analysis, they must both die because they are hopelessly trapped into a birth and a family over which they have no control. They are born and bred in desperately poor *Kulin* Brahmin families where poverty is a greater curse because of their high birth and not in spite of it.



Shoma A. Chatterji is a freelance journalist, film scholar and author. She has authored 17 published titles and won the National Award for Best Writing on Cinema, twice. She won the UNFPA-Laadli Media Award, 2010 for 'commitment to addressing and analysing gender issues' among many awards.

SUMATI MORARJEE (1909-1998)

Lady who broke the glass ceiling

Sumati Morarjee, was known as the first lady of Indian shipping. She helped establish a model for modern shipping companies offering the world not only business values, but propagating Indian culture and heritage. Well-versed in history and philosophy, she was also a discerning art collector.

Born into the affluent family of Mathuradas Goculdas, the only daughter among seven children, at birth, Sumati was named Jamuna, after the sacred river. At 13, she was married to Shanti Kumar, the only son of Narottam Morarjee, eminent industrialist and the founder of Scindia Steam Navigation Company, established in 1919. Since two most affluent and well-known families were involved, the marriage was then among the biggest social events in Bombay.

Narottam, fascinated by Jamuna's keen intellect, fast learning skills and a thirst for knowledge, renamed her Sumati - a Sanskrit-derived word which translates as 'a woman with superior wisdom'. Evincing deep interest in family's business and often sharing her insights, she was fluent in English, Hindi and Marathi. She also took the onus as the lady of the household after her mother-in-law's early demise.

Her being pitchforked into the forefront of the Morarjee business estate was unheard of in those days. Nominated to the managing agency of the company in 1923 at age 14, she was included in board of directors, aged 20.

The shipping venture then was in its infancy with Narottam parlaying a few vessels for cargo transport between India and Europe. In 1946, Sumati quietly assumed complete charge of SSNC, and over the next few decades, single-handedly took it to its zenith, scaling the company's strength to a fleet of 43 large ships, totalling 5, 52,000 tonnes of dead weight, supervising over 6000 employees and managed it for the next 69 years. She also became the President of Indian Fleet Association.

Post 1947, as Indian trade slowly evolved, ships played a crucial role in facilitating exports and imports. Sumati's expertise and experience became instrumental in helping India's trade relations and transport. In 1956, Sumati

became the first woman to be elected President of the Indian National Steamship Owners' Association (later Indian National Shipowners Association), an honour repeated in 57, 58 and in 1965. This made her the sole decision-maker over her ships.

By 1965 SSNC, one of the oldest, largest, and most respected shipping establishments in India became the Largest Fleet in India under her. In 1970, she became the Vice President of World Shipping Federation, London.

From 1979 to 1987, she was Chairperson, till sadly the debt-ridden company was taken over by the erstwhile Shipping Credit and Investment Corporation of India. All 23 ships that the company owned then, which Sumati proudly called her daughters, were sold. She was Chairperson Emeritus of the company till 1992. Sumati and Shanti Kumar substantially contributed to India's freedom struggle. Mahatma Gandhi considered her a close aide.

Using her fleet, she helped safely transport Sindhis from Pakistan to India during Partition. A deeply spiritual Vaishnavite, Sumati was a dedicated devotee of Srinathji and venerated the Tulsi.

In 1965, she provided a complimentary one-way passage on her ship Jaladutta, to New York to Swami Prabhupada, later Founder Acharya of ISKCON.

Sumati was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, in 1971. She served as the chairperson of the Narottam Morarjee Institute of Shipping and founded the Sumati Vidya Kendra School in Juhu, Mumbai. A richly illustrated hardcover book on Sumati, titled Sumati Morarjee - Felicitation Volume (Service to India Shipping), contains several chapters on her illustrious life and career and her writings.

She died of cardiac arrest at 89, leaving a trail of legacy.



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MAJOR KUSHAL CHAND MVC (1919 - 1953)

The brave son of Ladakh Valley

Major Kushal Chand, born to Thakur Mangal Chand, former Wazir (minister) of princely Lahaul state was born on 26 September 1919 at Gemoor Khar. His uncle Rai Bahadur Thakur Amar Chand fought the Turks and Germans in Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) during World War 1. Kushal Chand was commissioned into the 2nd Battalion of the Dogra Infantry Regiment on 15 September 1941.

It was the same battalion, where his older cousin Thakur Prithi Chand served and was his three-year senior. Immediately after 15 August 1947, most princely states exercised their right to accede to the Indian dominion barring Hyderabad and Kashmir. The Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh, instead, signed a standstill agreement with both India and Pakistan. Taking advantage of the wavering stand of the Maharaja, Pakistan, in connivance with the British officers, who chose to stay back and serve with the Pakistan army, planned the annexation of Kashmir, including Ladakh valley.

Leh, the hub of the valley, was its prime target. The execution of the plan began in late August 1947. By the time the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession with India on October 26, 1947, the Pakistan army, in the garb of tribal Lashkars, captured Baramulla and were on their way to Srinagar. Mirpur, Kotli, Poonch, Jhangar, Naushera and Bhimber in Jammu region were besieged or fallen to Pakistani lashkars.

Though the Gilgit Scouts had become a part of J&K state forces on 1 August 1947, the 600-strong force commanded by Major Brown actually owed allegiance to Pakistan. In October 1947, Brown rose in rebellion, arrested the governor appointed by the Maharaja, and raised the Pakistani flag on Gilgit Agency. Earlier, Lt Col Sher Jung Thapa of the 6th J&K Forces had left Leh and reinforced Skardu, which the Pakistanis attacked on February 10.

Pakistan planned to capture Leh in February 1948. Major Prithi Chand, his cousin Major Kushal Chand and their uncle Subedar Bhim Chand with just about two platoons and a small band of volunteers from the 2nd Dogra Battalion

outpaced the Pakistanis and saved not just Leh, but the entire Ladakh valley. The three brave Chands from Lahaul and Spiti, were awarded MVC for their bravery.

“Major Kushal Chand in February 1948 was one of the two officers who volunteered to go to Leh to help in raising a local militia force and to organise and conduct the defence of the Ladakh valley. For four months, he with just a platoon of J&K state forces, and 20 Dogra volunteers delayed the enemy advance south towards Leh along the Indus valley.

Major Kushal Chand fearlessly conducted guerrilla warfare of a skilful nature giving an impression to the enemy that he had many more men than he actually had. On one occasion, he held the Khaltasi Bridge for 24 hours with just himself and his buddy. At night, covered by his buddy, who kept firing on the opposite bank, Major Chand crawled down to the bridge and set it on fire. This delayed the enemy's advance for another week.

Having no communications with Leh, Major Kushal Chand had to risk frequent visits there to keep his commander in picture. Throughout, without proper ration, without artillery support and with acute shortage of ammunition, Major Kushal Chand led his small band like the true daredevil he was.

In 1953, on promotion as the Lt Col, Kushal Chand, commanded the 9th Dogra Infantry Battalion for three years. Thereafter, he was deputed with the UN mission in Cambodia. Unfortunately, Lt Col Kushal Chand, MVC, died when the aircraft he was travelling, crash-landed over Laos.

Future generations of Ladakh valley will always remain grateful to him and his men. Lt Col Kushal Chand, MVC, is survived by his daughter and two sons. The younger one Thakur Ashok Chand, was an IAS officer, who retired as Secretary to the Government of India in 2014.

Brigadier Suresh Chandra Sharma (retd.)



RAMDAS SHANTARAM KAMAT (1931-2022)

Icon of theatre and Natya Sangeet

Ramdas Shantaram Kamat was a veteran singer actor and Indian musician, who worked in Marathi Sangeet and theatre.

Born in then Portuguese Goa, in Mapusa, the trinity of integrity, honesty and beauty in his voice earned him a place in the public mind. Ramdas, a B.A with Honours in Economics had a simple, straightforward nature and was very disciplined, punctual and friendly. He was strict about his exercise, walking and *riyaz* which he passed on to his disciples.

Ramdas excelled in all forms of music, be it light music, film or folk music and left an indelible mark, and served Marathi musical theatre selflessly for over six decades. Carving his own niche as an actor and singer in the professional Marathi music scene, he made his mark not only in theatre music but also in emotional music, film music and folk music. He left behind a rich legacy for the new generation to emulate.

He lent a different colour to the acting and expression of theatrical music required in a play, where clear diction and melodious, sweet, transparent voice are important characteristics, and he used to prepare well for any event. An eminent sculptor of the golden age of musical drama, his devotional singing also captured the hearts of the fans.

He learnt music from his elder brother Upendra since childhood. He later underwent training in drama, music and acting from Pandit Govind Buwa Agni, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Prabhakar Pendharkar and Bhalchandra Pendharkar. He learned devotional songs from Yashwant Dev. Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki, polished this diamond and presented him to the world.

Ramdas started his career in musical theatre with the play *Sangeet Sanshay Kallol* of the Goa Hindu Association. After that he acted in about 18 musical plays like *Sangeet Sharda*, *Sangeet Saubhadra*, *Sangeet Manapaman*, *Sangeet Madanachi Manjiri*, *Sangeet Echcha Pyala*, *Sangeet Mandarmala* and *Sangeet Honaji Bala*. *Sangeet Matsyagandha* is his most popular play and many of his plays like *Guntata Hridaya Hai*, *Nakho Ghiru Sanket Meelanacha*, and *Tama Nishache Sarla* are popular.

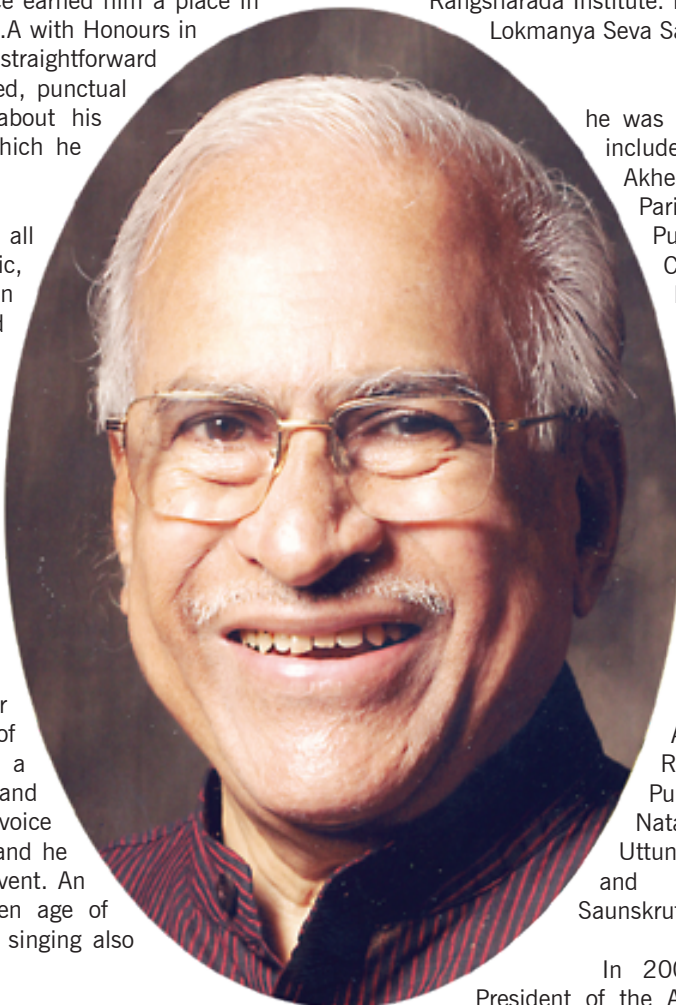
Many songs of his like, *Nako Visaru Sanket Milanacha*,

Prathama Tuj Pahata, *Jan Vijan Jhale Amha*, *Ambaratlya Neelya Ghanachi Shapat Tula*, *Phulavit Yere Pisara*, *Sriranga Kamalakanta*, *Deva Tuja Mi Sonar* are eternal in the hearts of fans. He taught theatre music for many years at Rangsharada Institute. He also directed music plays of Lokmanya Seva Sangh in Vile Parle.

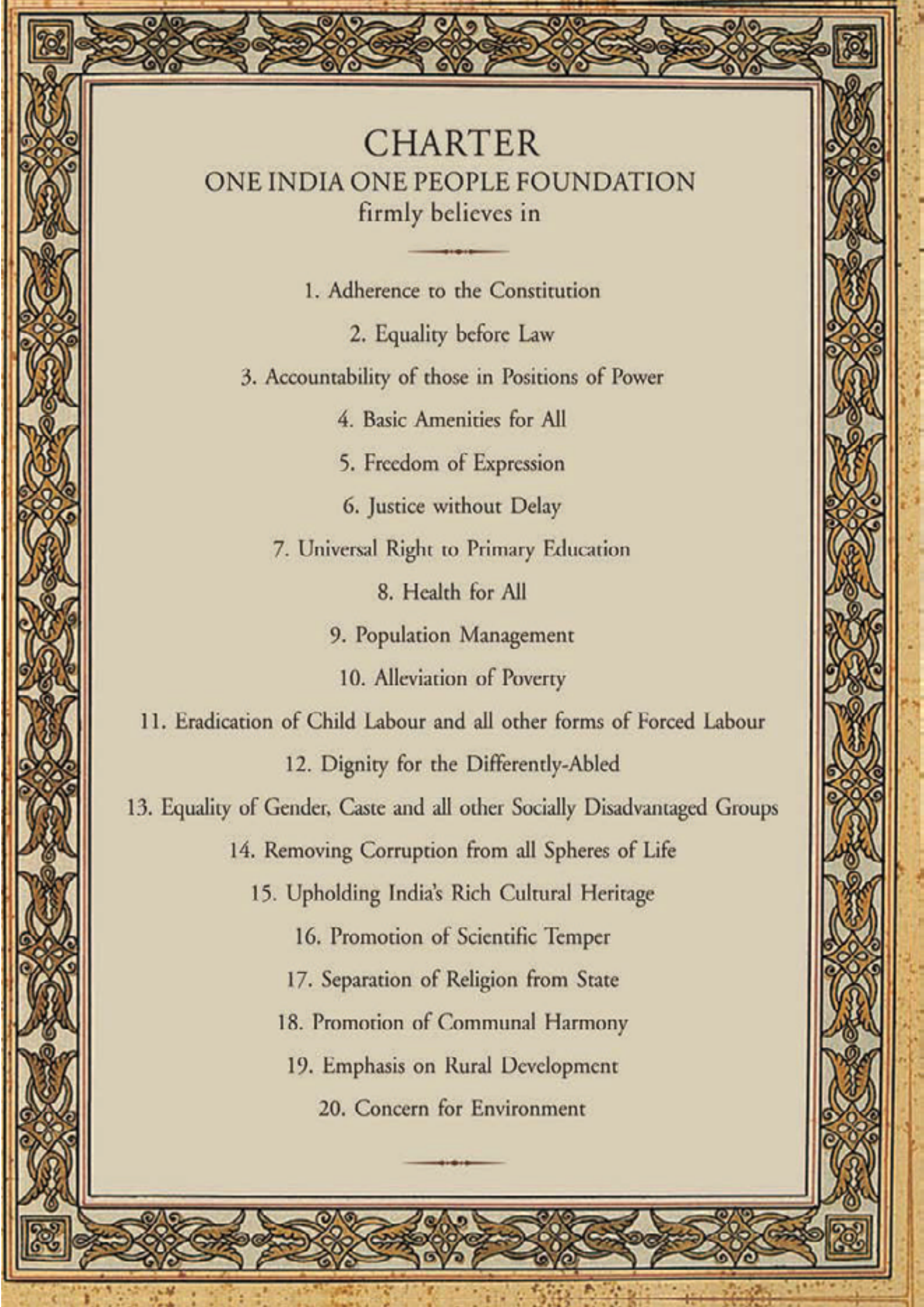
He received many awards, but he was always humble about it. They included the Maharashtra Government Akheel Bharatiya Marathi Natya Parishad's Bal Gandharva Puraskar, Pune Chichwad Municipal Corporations' Bal Gandharva Puraskar, Chhota Gandharva Puraskar at Koregaon, Akheel Bharatiya Natya Parishad's Jitendra Abhisheki Puraskar, Yashwantrao Prathishthan's Swara Raaj Chhota Gandharva Puraskar, Manipal T M A Pai Foundation's Outstanding Konkani Puraskar, Parle Bhushan Puraskar, Mumbai Swara Sanman Puraskar on World Music Day, Maharashtra Government Balwant Pandurang aka Annasaheb Kirloskar Sangeet Rangabhoomi Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar, New Delhi's Sangeet Natak Akademi Award 2015, Uttung Puraskar Vile Parle Mumbai, and Maharashtra Government Saunskrutik Puraskar.

In 2009, he also served as the President of the Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Natya Sammelam. Having completed successful 60 years of musical career, while juggling it with his job with Air India, he was a hero who enthralled the youth for many years.

Until the end, he had a desire to teach to those who were passionate about music. An ascetic gem in musical theatre Pandit Ramdas, passed away in Vile Parle, Mumbai aged 90. His death is a great loss to the music and arts sector. There is no doubt that he will remain in the hearts of fans for eternity!



A. Radhakrishnan is a Pune based freelance writer, poet and short story writer.



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WHO AM I?



Am I a Hindu first or an Indian first?

Am I a Muslim first or an Indian first?

Am I a Christian first or an Indian first?

Am I a Buddhist first or an Indian first?

Am I a Brahmin first or an Indian first?

Am I a Dalit first or an Indian first?

Am I a South Indian first or an Indian first?

Am I a North Indian first or an Indian first?

Am I the President of India first or an Indian first?

Am I the Prime Minister of India first or an Indian first?

Am I the Commander-in-Chief first or an Indian first?

Am I a supporter of any 'ism' first or an Indian first?

Am I a white-collar/blue collar worker first or an Indian first?

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Sadanand A. Shetty, Founder Editor
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