

Mother tongue blues

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THE auditory texture of Goan linguistic environment is predominantly Konkani, the language spoken in most Goan homes, in the streets and the local marketplace in the state. According to the 1991 Census, of the 17,60,607 Konkani speakers in India 6,02,626 are in Goa, 7,06,397 in Karnataka, 3,12,618 in Maharashtra and 64,008 in Kerala. Konkani belongs to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European family of languages. According to S.M. Katre, a consideration of the main grammatical features of the language would assign Konkani to the South-Western group of Indo-Aryan languages, with Marathi and Gujarati as its nearest of kin and with a tinge of the Central group, mainly, Hindi (1966:173).

Based on a careful historical comparative reconstruction from the modern speech forms by P.B. Pandit (1976), Ashok R. Kelkar presents the regional branching of the modern Indo-Aryan languages (see diagram) in which Konkani and Marathi form a distinct group .

Konkani occupies the southernmost position in the Indo-Aryan linguistic continuum on the Indian peninsula. Towards the North and the North East it merges gradually with Marathi, its closest kin. Towards the South and the South East it gives way to Kannada, a Dravidian language.

There are pockets of Konkani speaking population in and around Mangalore (predominantly a Tulu area) in the South Kanara district of Karnataka and in and around Cochin (predominantly a Malayalam area). These are the result of an exodus, due to religious and cultural reasons, of the Konkani speaking Goans under Portuguese rule – a mass migration of Hindus from the Old Conquests to escape the coercive proselytizing policy of the government, and mass migration of the Christians in the 17th and 18th centuries with a view to avoiding the terror of the Inquisition policy of the Church (see Miranda 1978).

Following N.G. Kalelkar, taking into consideration the historical events and cultural ties of the speakers, the Konkani linguistic continuum could be seen as comprising of three main dialect groups – Northern Konkani, Central Konkani and Southern Konkani (1962: 108). Northern Konkani comprises of the group of Konkani dialects spoken in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra with strong cultural ties to Marathi. Southern Konkani consists of the group of Konkani dialects spoken in the North Kanara district of Karnataka in close contact with Kannada which is the dominant regional means of cultural expression and instruction. Central Konkani subsumes the

Konkani dialects in Goa, an erstwhile Portuguese colony. Here Konkani came in close contact with Portuguese language and culture.

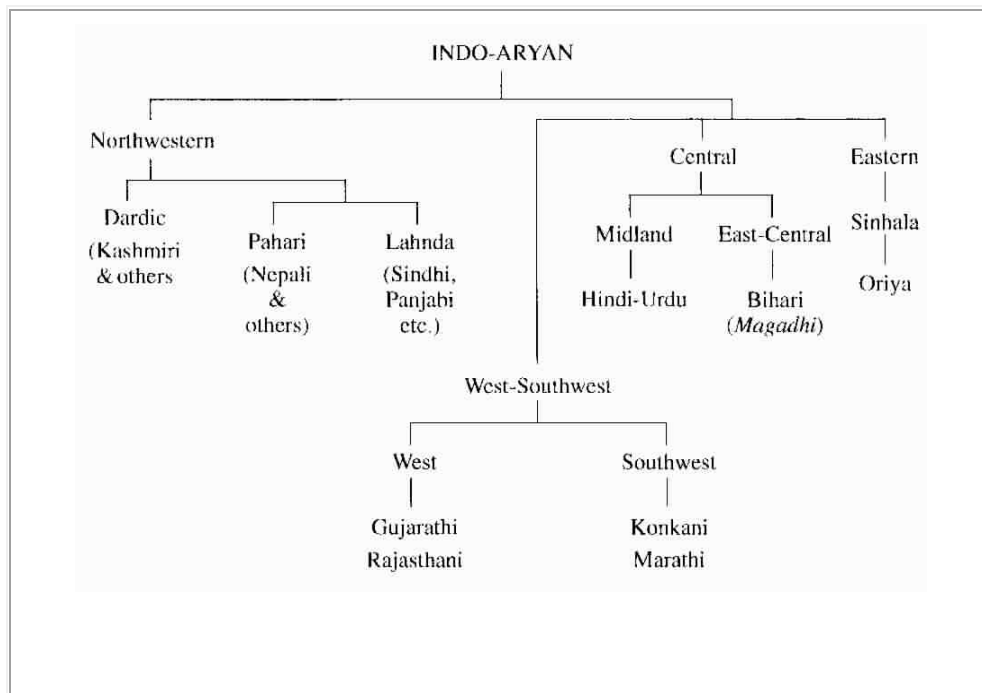
The regional and social dialectal texture of Konkani is rich and intricate. Within Konkani spoken in Goa, the Pednem, Kaankon, Saashti, Baardez or Antruz dialects, for instance, are easily identifiable. Also, a Goan variant is easily distinguishable from a non-Goan – a Karwari, Mangalorean or a Cochin variant. Thus on the basis of speech a Konkani speaker could be situated on the regional map of Konkani without much difficulty.

The social dialects of Konkani are of two types – caste dialects and dialects of religion. The latter are more pronounced in the Old Conquest areas that were under Portuguese dominion for four and a half centuries. Thus, the speech of a Konkani speaker also helps the listener to place him/her on the social map of Konkani. It indicates, for instance, whether the speaker is a *Baamannm* or a *Caaddo*, a *Shet* or a *Gaawdo*, whether he/she is a Hindu or a Christian. The Christian Konkani community also ‘shows more or less the full spectrum of caste stratification’ (Miranda 1978: 84) as the Hindu Konkani community. Thus, the Konkani community has both Hindu Brahmins as well as Christian Brahmins, Hindu Gaawde as well as Christian Gaawde.

The social dialectal differentiation is sometimes more noticeable than the regional one. For example, the speech of a Hindu Brahmin and a Christian Brahmin living as neighbours in a single locality, probably for centuries, differs more than the speech of two Hindu Brahmins living kilometres apart. The same is true of caste dialects. Thus social barriers seems to have distanced Konkani speakers much more than geographical barriers.

During recent years, Konkani has also displayed tendencies towards standardization. Although one cannot speak of standard Konkani with the same confidence as one could of standard English or French or, for that matter, standard Hindi or Marathi, one can say with more or less certainty that the process of standardization of Konkani is underway, felt more in written Konkani than in the spoken. Preparation of textbooks in Konkani, teaching of Konkani at the degree and the university levels and the starting of a newspaper (*Sunaaparaant*) in the Devanagari script (in 1987) opened up opportunities for standardization of Konkani. This process would have been hastened by the use of Konkani in government administration. But ironically, the language of administration in a state where Konkani is the official language is any other but Konkani!

Konkani is written in five scripts – Roman, Kannada, Malayalam, Perso-Arabic and Devanagari. Of these, the Roman script probably has the oldest literary tradition beginning from the 16th century. The use of Devanagari for Konkani, which is now its official script, was first made in 1678. Monsenhor Sebastiao Rodolpho Dalgado, Konkani scholar and lexicographer, was the first to advocate the adoption of Devanagari for Konkani (see Dalgado 1893, Introduction). He himself used the script in the entries of his Konkani-Portuguese dictionary (1893). This task was furthered by Madhav Manjunath Shanbhag, an advocate by profession from Karwar, who with a few like-minded companions travelled in all the Konkani speaking areas, seeking to unite the fragmented Konkani community under the banner of ‘one language, one script, one literature’. He succeeded in organizing the first All India Konkani Parishad in Karwar in 1939 (Kelekar 2003:14).



Devanagari was chosen as the script for Konkani by modern revivalists as Konkani belonged to the Indo-Aryan family and Devanagari being the script of the Sanskrit-Prakrit linguistic antecedents of Konkani was seen as belonging as much to Konkani

as it belonged to Hindi, Marathi, Rajasthani, Maithili, Nepali – sister languages of Konkani (Dalgado 1893: Introduction, Shennoi Goembab 1945: 57-61). There were also phonetic reasons. Compared to the Roman script for instance, Devanagari was seen as giving a better representation to the contrasts significant to Konkani, the dental vs. retroflex, the unaspirated vs. aspirated contrasts (Dalgado 1893: Introduction).

This is not to say that Devanagari is ‘*the perfect*’ written representation of Konkani. This script too has its orthographic imperfections or limitations like the other scripts used for Konkani, or for that matter, like orthographies of all living languages. Devanagari was further preferred because as a script of Hindi/Hindustani which, in the late ’20s or early ’30s was already envisaged as the national/link language of independent India with which all literate Indians would necessarily have to familiarize themselves, would not have been an additional script to be learnt by Konkani speakers (Shennoi Goembab 1945: 61).

The use of Devanagari script for Konkani was not an ‘influence of Marathi’ (Miranda 1978:80). It was much less the ‘Goan Hindu expression’ of written Konkani. Whereas the other scripts used for Konkani were historical accidents and convenient local choices, Devanagari was a conscious choice. It was a ‘new culture’ that was opted for.

Konkani has come into contact with and has been influenced by several languages – Persian, Arabic, Kannada, Portuguese, Tulu, Malayalam and English. Some Konkani dialects are influenced more by a particular language or one or two languages than by others. For instance, there is greater Portuguese influence on Goan ones of Konkani than on the non-Goan dialects which are more influenced by dominant vernaculars in the particular area. Goan Konkani dialects are also influenced by Marathi.

The 450 years of contact with Portuguese has significantly influenced Konkani, at once evident at the level of lexicon. Many words which form a part of the daily, even the basic vocabulary of Goan Konkani are loans from Portuguese, for example, *kadel* ‘chair’, *mez* ‘table’, *kuler* ‘spoon’, *zanel* ‘window’, *paasai* ‘walk’, *bol s* ‘pocket’, *buraak* ‘hole’, *fask* ‘match-box’, *igarz* ‘church’, *war* ‘hour’.

Portuguese has also influenced word-formation processes of Konkani. For instance, along with *fugaasao* ‘saffocation’, *istimasao* ‘esteem, affection’, *conisao* ‘condition’ that are Portuguese loans, Konkani also has words like *bejaasao*, *kaatkisao*, *guddilasao* that sound like Portuguese loans but in fact are native coinages in which only suffix *sao* is Portuguese. *Bejaasao* ‘boredom’, for example is *bezaar*, a Persian loan plus Portuguese *sao*.

Portuguese influence on Konkani syntax is even more subtle. For instance, while in all sister languages of Konkani the expression for ‘what time is it?’ is literally in terms of ‘how many times has it rung?’ (eg. Marathi: *kiti waadzle*; Hindi: *kitne baje*; Gujarati: *ketla wagya*), Konkani speaks of *kitli waraam dzaailm*, literally, ‘how many hours have happened’ which is a version of ‘*que horas sao*’.

As noticed by linguists like S.M. Katre and Rocky Miranda who worked on dialectal variation in Konkani, the Portuguese influence is more noticeable on the Goan Christian dialects of Konkani than on the Goan Hindu dialects since, to quote Miranda (1978), ‘Christians were more susceptible to Portuguese influence because of religious and cultural ties.’ This influence is even conspicuous at the level of syntax, especially the structure of the sentence in the written style and in the formal oral style mainly used in the church. As observed by Miranda there has been a conscious effort to ‘de-lusitanize’ the syntax of the literary Christian dialect in recent years, which implies a return to the word-order proper to Konkani. The monthly *Gulab* in Roman script has contributed much to this process.

It is also interesting to observe how the distinctiveness of the two main religious cultures of Goa – Hindu and Christian – is created at the linguistic level by a variation in Konkani vocabulary. Whereas in Portuguese, for instance, one could talk of a Hindu marriage or a Christian marriage with the same word – ‘casamento’, a Hindu marriage in Konkani is *lagn* or *lagin* and a Christian marriage *kaazaar*, a song sung in a Hindu dialect is a *pad* and that in a Christian dialect a *kaamtaar*. The kinship vocabulary in Christian Konkani dialects also bears a remarkable Portuguese influence.

From the literary contributions of Fr. Thomas Stephens (1549-1619), called ‘the Father of Christian Literature in India’ (SarDessai 2000: 34) and who is also the author of the first printed book in Konkani – *Doutrina Crista* (1622) and the first printed grammar of Konkani (in Portuguese) – *Arte da Lingoa Canarim* – which is also ‘the earliest specimen of its kind among grammars of modern Indian languages’ (SarDessai 2000: 42), it could be inferred that the Goan linguistic scenario at the time of the early missionary literary intervention was diglossic.

At the request of the new Brahmin converts Fr. Stephens composed an epic poem on the life of Christ – *Christa Purana* (1616) – in Marathi which in all probability was the literary language of Goans at the time. In the preface to the Purana, Fr. Stephens writes that he chose to write in Marathi as this language was found most suitable for expressing matters related to God. However, as ‘pure’ Marathi was not intelligible to people, the difficult words were replaced by easy words from ‘the language of the Brahmins’ and thus the poetry made easy. Although Fr. Stephens wrote the Purana in

Marathi, he prepared a catechism of the Christian Doctrine – *Doutrina Crista* – in Konkani (*Lingoa Bramana Canarim*, ‘Brahmin Kanarese Language’) which was posthumously published in 1622.

The 4th Council of Goa (1592) had decreed that ‘a compendium of Christian doctrine and instructions be made, and translated in the most common languages of the province’ and had strictly directed that ‘churches... be assigned to no one but to those priests who are well qualified and know well the vernacular of the place’ (Da Cunha Rivara 1858: 166). This position of the Council seems to have guided Fr. Stephens in his choice of the medium of the Catechism. Also Konkani grammar (‘Kanarese’) which in all probability was the ‘most common language of the province’, not literary Marathi, was prepared by him and used by foreign missionaries who had to master the vernacular before they could carry out their activities.

It is significant that while in the work of Fr. Stephens, Marathi is known as Marathi, Konkani is known either as ‘*Bramhannachi bhasha*’ (‘language of Brahmins’) or as ‘*Lingoa Canarim*’ (‘Kanarese Language’) or as ‘*Lingoa Bramna Canarim*’ (‘Brahmin Kanarese Language’). Here the epithet ‘Brahmin’ could be interpreted as dialect specification of Fr. Stephens’ informants. ‘*Canarim*’ seems to be a misnomer that had possibly arisen due to the adoption of a variation of the Kannada script which according to some scholars is attested in the old records of Goan village communes. (Gajanan Ghantkar cit. Gomes 2000: 37). Evidently Marathi was the privileged literary language of the time and Konkani probably only a spoken form.

The intervention of the Church at the beginning of the 16th century with an emphasis on preaching in the vernacular eventually foregrounded Konkani as the ‘language of religion’ of Goan Christians and after the 17th century Marathi slowly lost its hold over this community. It seems *Khrista Purana* was popular and used for nearly a century in Goa (SarDessai 2000: 39). But today the *Purana* has no place in Christian religious practice. The *Doutrina Crista* on the other hand still survives in the daily prayers – ‘Our Father’ or ‘Hail Mary’ very much echo the translations of Fr. Stephens done centuries ago.

The history of the Konkani language and its people is indelibly marked by Portuguese colonial policies and the contradictions within the Church establishment. While some of them sought to distance the converts from tradition, language and culture, others, such as the English Jesuit Thomas Stevens, actively encouraged its study. The language was banned in 1684 and this state continued for over 200 years. However, while official policies prevailed and prevented the free development of the language, parish schools taught Konkani in the Roman script.

Goan Hindu linguistic culture remained a clear case of ‘classical diglossia’ (Fergusson 1959) until the intervention of Vaman Raghunath Varde Valaulikar, popularly known as Shennoi Goembab (1878-1946) during the first half of the 20th century. Marathi was highly valued in the Hindu cultural ethos of the time. It was ‘the language’ or the ‘purer’ form of the vernacular. Konkani, despite being the language of daily conversation, was not considered a language. Rather, it was seen as a dialect or an ‘impure form’ of Marathi. Not all Hindus were fluent in Marathi, but they considered it to be their mother tongue. Knowledge of Marathi was considered a necessary part of ‘culture preservation’. Marathi was also the medium of religious activities like *kirtan*, *bhajan*, *aarati*. There was a clear-cut, functional differentiation of ‘High’ Marathi and ‘Low’ Konkani in all spheres. Konkani was the language of informal daily conversation and Marathi of formal talk or announcements. Konkani was the vehicle of oral literature (folklore) and Marathi the medium of prestigious written literature. In fact all writing, even personal letters, were in Marathi.

The Christian linguistic ethos especially at the level of masses created a wider space for Konkani. For a majority of Christians, Konkani was the language of religion as also the medium of mass entertainment like *teatro*. Also there was literature in Konkani (in Roman script) the target readership of which was the Christian masses. This became the mainstay for Catholics who migrated. Indeed the first newspaper in Konkani, *Udentechem Sallok*, was in the Roman script, published from Pune in 1889. *Gulab* a monthly in roman script published from Goa since 1983, has a very large circulation.

However, the Goan Christian elite culturally identified with Portuguese which entered even those domains generally reserved for the ‘Low’ variety in a classical diglossic situation, and often became the mother tongue in elite Christians homes, mainly of the Old Conquest areas. An elite Christian nevertheless needed Konkani to interact with the masses, often referring to it as ‘*lingua dos criados*’ (‘language of servants’). Tristao de Braganza Cunha saw this banishment of the local language in the life of elite Christians as a result of the project of ‘denationalization of Goans’ carried out by the Portuguese in colonial Goa (1961: 55-95). Portuguese was also sought by the Christian masses for upward social and cultural mobility. The Goan Christian linguistic situation was a case of ‘extended diglossia’ (Fishman 1967) in which two languages and not two varieties of the same language enter into a hierarchical relationship.

There was also extended diglossia in the Hindu community. Since Portuguese was the language of the ‘rulers’ it was the language of administration, higher education and mass media. The Hindus accepted the supremacy of Portuguese in these domains and sought the language for upward social mobility.

Shennoi Goembab is the pioneer of modern Konkani literature. His intervention was basically a subversion of the established linguistic ethos of the elitist Hindu linguistic culture to which he belonged. He saw the diglossic relationship between Marathi and Konkani as a hegemonic relationship between two languages. He expanded the domains of the use of Konkani. By delivering lectures on the history of Goans in Konkani, writing plays in Konkani and staging them before an audience used to watching only Marathi plays, translating the *Bhagwat Gita* into Konkani, writing a Konkani primer for use in Konkani medium primary schools and so on, Shennoi Goembab made Konkani enter domains hitherto reserved for Marathi.

However, Shennoi Goembab's subversion was not just a 'Hindu' subversion. He was convinced that in a fragmented Goan Konkani community 'total self-rule' (*Purna swaraj*) could be attained in and through Konkani, as this was the only thread that bound Hindus and Christians, masses and classes. He wrote, 'Let us make Gawde pundits (scholars) and let us all become pundits. Together let us enjoy the total self-rule of Konkani' (1945: 71).

In a diglossic Konkani community, the masses (*Gawde*) were alienated from knowledge as the means of the production of knowledge – languages – were in the hands of the classes (Pundits). If the language of Goan Hindu pundits – Marathi – was not accessible to Hindu Gawde, the language of Goan Christian pundits – Portuguese – was equally inaccessible to Christian Gawde. Only by endeavouring to make Konkani the language of the masses, the means of production of knowledge, could the masses be led into the world of pundits – the world of knowledge. Knowledge could be democratized only in and through Konkani. And the fragmented Konkani speech community could be emancipated from an intellectual and emotional slavery only with Konkani. Thus Konkani for Shennoi Goembab was 'a step in the direction of social equality' (SarDessai 2000: 113).

A close scrutiny of Shennoi Goembab's writings show how he initiated a trend of simple Konkani and steered the development of literary Konkani away from the Brahmanical pedantry prevalent in the Indo-Aryan languages of his time. Shennoi Goembab dreamt of a speech-community unified in a Konkani identity. In this endeavour he sought the blessings of both *Saatermaay*, the patron deity revered by Goan Hindus of all castes and classes and *Aakwaar Mori* 'Virgin Mary' revered by all Konkani Christians (1945:137). Through a new Konkani identity Shennoi Goembab sought to bring together all Konkani subcultures that were almost invariably the 'lower' side in diglossic situations.

Konkani has had to painfully negotiate a controversy about the nature of its relationship with Marathi – whether it was to be considered an independent language or a dialect of Marathi. José Pereira, in a detailed investigation of the history of this controversy, traces its origin in an essay on Indian languages written by John Leyden in 1807 wherein Konkani is called a ‘dialect of Maharashtra’ (1971: 4).

This dialect vs. language controversy which originated and remained confined for several years to the ivory tower of scholars took a sharp socio-cultural and political turn when Konkani speakers influenced by Shenvoi Goembab began asserting themselves as a distinct speech community, reflecting the resolve of speakers to extricate themselves and the Konkani speech community from a diglossic situation.

Had the dispute between Konkani and Marathi been merely grammatical it should have been settled in the court of linguistics, the science of language. And there could have been no better case in favour of Konkani than the scholarly work of S.M. Katre – *The Formation of Konkani* (1966) – wherein he employed the tools of modern historical and comparative linguistics across six representative Konkani dialects and showed the formation of Konkani to be distinct from that of Marathi.

But the language vs. dialect controversy was far more political an issue than linguistic or grammatical (see Kelekar 1964: 1990). With the liberation of Goa in 1961, the question whether Konkani was to be regarded an independent language or a dialect of Marathi gained political salience as it had a direct bearing on the construction of a new Goan identity. If Konkani was seen as a dialect of Marathi it would imply that the Konkani speaking Goans ideally belonged to the Marathi speaking Maharashtrians. Hence, within the Indian Union in which post-Independence political identities – states – were restructured around linguistic identities, Goa could be merged with Maharashtra. If on the other hand, Konkani was perceived as an independent language, Goa had a chance to forge its own independent Konkani identity within the Indian Union.

The language vs. dialect controversy became important as the issue was politically pertinent. Hence, the opinion poll of 1967, which decided the political fate of Goa and kept Goa, Daman and Diu a separate Union Territory, almost assumed a Konkani vs. Marathi colour. Interestingly, in this period even those Goans who could hardly speak or understand Marathi backed Marathi, felt it to be their mother tongue and rallied for the merger of Goa into Maharashtra. Also, those Goans who used Konkani mainly as a vernacular to speak to the masses or others who could not be approached in Portuguese were in favour of Konkani and voted almost *en masse* for a separate identity of Goa.

The Konkani movement set before itself various immediate targets and mobilized public support around (i) A separate political identity for Goa which was achieved in 1967. (ii) The recognition of Konkani by the Sahitya Akademi as it would give it the status of one of India's literary languages. This was achieved in 1975. (iii) Recognition of Konkani as the official language of administration for Goa. This was achieved in 1987. (iv) The inclusion of Konkani in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution which lists the major national languages. This was achieved in 1992.

In this movement the Konkani community in Goa (Kalelkar's 'Central Konkani' area) was politically more assertive than in the other states where Konkani was only a minority language. This was because there was more scope for Konkani 'nationality' (Fishman 1975) in Goa than anywhere else.

The Konkani speaking population in Karnataka (a part of which is Kalelkar's 'Southern Konkani' area) and Kerala did participate in the movement for the inclusion of Konkani in the Sahitya Akademi and the Eighth Schedule. But they were linguistic minorities within their states, more or less integrated with the dominant linguistic ethos. Here Konkani never clashed with the majority languages and there was no fear of encroachment as Konkani was secure in its difference – the majority languages were Dravidian and Konkani was Indo-Aryan. Even here the domains of use of Konkani were limited. But the typical demands of Konkani speakers were not tuned towards an expansion of domains but rather towards winning minority rights for speakers because of their minority linguistic status.

The Konkani speaking population in Maharashtra, mainly in the areas contiguous with Goa (Kalelkar's 'Northern Konkani' area), is more or less integrated with the dominant linguistic culture, partially on account of the genetic proximity of the language with the dominant language Marathi. Konkani consciousness, which began to assert itself during the '60s in Goa, could not touch these areas.

The religious factor also played a role in integrating the non-Goan Konkani speakers with their social environment. The Hindu Konkani community could assimilate more easily with the dominant linguistic culture as the dominant cultural ethos was Hindu. The integration of the Christian community was comparatively more difficult and hence non-Goan Christian Konkani remained 'more Konkani' than non-Goan Hindu Konkani. But the attitude of the minority Konkani speakers towards their language often finds a covert public expression. When the present writer was a student in Poona, she had attended two functions of two separate 'Poona Goan Associations', one in which the members were predominantly Hindu and the other in which they were mainly Christian. In the former the proceedings were in Marathi while in the latter they were in English.

The achievements of the Konkani movement during the past four decades have indeed helped change the status of Konkani. 50-60 years ago speakers of Konkani when outside Goa, especially in Maharashtra, felt ashamed to converse among themselves in Konkani (editor's preface to the 2nd edition of Shennoi Goembab's *Mogaachem Lagn*, 1938, may be read). Even personal letters in Konkani were not common. Whenever letters were written in Konkani, it implied an unavoidable option since the sender and/or receiver only knew that language. In other words Konkani speakers in those days did not often step out of the house.

Today this is no longer the case. The attitude of Konkani speakers towards their language has changed with the language vs. dialect controversy a matter of the past. There has been an expansion in the domains of use of Konkani. It is the medium of instruction in at least 200 primary schools in Goa, and an optional language for an increasing number of students at the secondary and higher secondary levels. One can now get a Bachelor's degree in Konkani literature. Also there is a Department of Konkani (since 1987) in Goa University which initiated a full fledged M.A. course in 1991. On average about 20 students enrol every year for the course. Five students are presently registered for Ph.D. in the department and one has already submitted a thesis on Konkani folklore.

The current Goan linguistic scene, in a way, remains diglossic in which the 'High' language is English and the 'Low' languages are Marathi and Konkani, with Konkani placed a little 'lower' at the level of formal use. For instance, when a quarrel takes place in Konkani, the First Information Report (FIR) at the police station is written in Marathi and the court judgment is delivered in English.

Konkani was made the official language, but if the state government so desired, use of Marathi for official purposes was also allowed. The Konkani protagonists demanded an academy at the government level for the development of Konkani language and literature. This was granted and followed by a demand of the Marathi protagonists for equal funds for a Marathi academy which was also granted.

During Portuguese rule, although the trend among Hindus was to impart primary education to their children in Marathi, the medium of instruction in government primary schools was by and large Portuguese. Primary education in Goa today is imparted through English, Konkani, Marathi, Hindi and some other languages, but at the middle and secondary levels the medium is English. The prestigious private schools are all English medium. In some, Konkani is not even taught as an optional language. Ironically within the education system of Goa, the sole Konkani state in India and the *mull-peetth* 'the original place of belonging' of all Konkani speakers, one can be highly educated and yet illiterate in Konkani!

There is a growing tendency among the ‘practical’ minded parents to give English medium education to their children right from the primary level, because they feel English is the actual *pottaachi bhas*, ‘language of stomach’, and that Konkani cannot get one any further. And while regular demands are made by Konkani protagonists to make Konkani the *pottaachi bhas*, at least at the official level, i.e., to make the active knowledge of Konkani a necessary prerequisite for obtaining government jobs, the government somehow seems to lack both inclination and will.

The *de facto* language of administration in Goa is English. Questions about the implementation of the Official Language Act are met by a stock reply: ‘Whenever we receive letters in Konkani we reply in Konkani’ (which is not quite true). English reigns supreme in Goa as in the rest of India, ironically, without even being listed in the Eighth Schedule as one of the national languages of the country!

According to Ravindra Kelekar, a stalwart of modern Konkani literature and an activist of the post-liberation Konkani movement, the objective of the movement which began with the founding of the Parishad in Karwar in 1939, was to unite the several Konkani identities under the banner of ‘one language, one script, one literature’. The Konkani state envisaged by this movement stretched beyond the boundaries of present-day Goa which is only a territory that was once under Portuguese dominion. For the proper development of Konkani and the Konkani people through their language, the movement must mobilize towards *Samyukta Goem*, ‘United Goa’ comprising of Goa plus the adjoining Sindhudurg and Karwar districts of Maharashtra and Karnataka respectively (2003: 14,15).

Konkani has also to come to terms with other questions – those of script and standardization. The entire Konkani community was united in its struggle against the hegemony of Marathi. But with the ‘enemy’ out of sight, different sub-communities have become aware of their own differences creating disquiet regarding a common script standardization. (A similar pattern was noticed by Nancy Dorian (1977) in her study of Scottish Gaelic.) In short, a community united in and through Konkani still remains a far cry.

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