

**SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF
GOAN HISTORY
(SEMINAR PAPERS)**

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BRITISH RECORDS AS CORROBORATORY SOURCES IN WRITING THE HISTORY OF GOA.

By Dr. N. Shyam Bhat

Introduction :

Sources or historical facts collated from varieties of literature, inscriptions, monuments, coins, oral source, etc. play a crucial role in history writing. In fact the statement 'No Fact No History', beautifully sums up the importance of sources in historical research. The topic of study or research determines the sources to be consulted. There is no doubt that a scholar researching on Indo-Portuguese history should primarily consult the Portuguese and other foreign and indigenous sources. However, as Portuguese Goa had interactions with the rest of India, and particularly the contiguous territories which today form parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra, it is essential to tap the sources of history available outside Goa for the reconstruction of Goan history. The Portuguese in Goa had political, economic and socio-cultural relations with their neighbours in India. This part of their history can be written better by studying the sources available in the repositories outside Goa also. There are several records in the Tamil Nadu State Archives and Maharashtra State Archives which provide information on Goa and its linkages with the neighbours.

The present article is based on such original records preserved in the Tamil Nadu State Archives and this illustrates and provides an example to emphasise their importance as corroboratory sources in

writing Goa's history during the 19th century. These records throw much light on the relations between Portuguese, Goa and Kanara which was under the British during the 19th century. Many documents refer to the commodities traded between these two geographical regions on the west coast of India. Of the various records preserved at the Tamil Nadu State Archives, the Proceedings of Madras Board of Revenue, Proceedings of the Madras Political Department, Proceedings of the Madras Sea Customs Department, Proceedings of the Madras Marine Department, Proceedings of the Madras Judicial Department and the correspondence between the Collectors of Kanara and the Madras Board of Revenue are of great importance in the reconstruction of the political, economic and socio-cultural interactions between British Kanara and Portuguese Goa.

These records, as primary sources are of considerable importance and authentic information on the various historical aspects like political condition, political relations, law and order situation, social milieu, goods produced, commodities exchanged, prices, etc. Mostly they do not provide detailed information on Goa, nevertheless the available data could be used as corroboratory evidence in the task of writing history of Goa.¹

The Portuguese and the British in the Nineteenth Century :

The British ruled Kanara and Portuguese Goa were strategically located with many important rivers which flowed from the western Ghats to the Arabian Sea. They provided natural ports for purposes of trade and commerce. Trade between Goa and Kanara flourished well from the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the nineteenth century, the Goan economy was declining. The phase of 'Big Trade' or trade in spices and commercial crops had dwindled, but continued to exist. It was partly due to the competition from the British who were politically and economically stronger than the Portuguese. The British tariff policy, the unequal treaties which they signed with the

Portuguese in the nineteenth century and the more effective role that they could play in the capitalist world completely worked against the Portuguese in India. However, the 'Small Trade' or trade in the trifling was very much present.

After the fall of Tipu Sultan in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799), the British annexed the coastal region of Karnataka which was called as the Province of Kanara and Sonda. The trade transaction between Portuguese Goa and Kanara was not affected by this colonial take-over of Kanara. In fact there was a revival in the external trade of the region after 1800.

Sir Thomas Munro, the first Collector of Kanara described the trade of the province in 1800 and highlighted the fact that one-third of the rice exported reached Arabia and the rest to Malabar, Goa and Bombay. Kanara imported arrack, salt and gin from Goa.² Another letter of Munro dated 29th April 1800 to the Madras Board of Revenue mentions an advance to the tune of 4000 Bahdury Pagodas (Rupees 16,000/-) to the captain of Frigate sent by the Governor of Goa to enable the Captain to purchase rice from Kanara.³ Francis H. Buchanan and John Sturrock also made a special mention of the export of rice from Kanara to Goa. Rice trade with Goa was chiefly carried on at Haṅgarkatta.⁴ Apart from the port of Hangarkatta, the ports of Mangalore and Kundapura exported rice to Goa.⁵ In a fine season, as many as a hundred native crafts located for Goa at the ports of North Kanara.

Due to the salt monopoly introduced in Kanara by the English East India Company Government in the year 1807, the inhabitants of the region had to depend on the Government supply. The licensed manufacturers were unable to meet the demand for salt, and therefore, a large quantity was imported from Goa by land on payment of a customs duty of 12 annas per mound.⁶ The prices of Kanara, Goa and Bombay salt had to be regulated in Kanara and the

monopoly prices had to be fixed in order to ensure the use of Kanara salt first, and then the use of salt imported from Goa and Bombay. The high monopoly prices and the consequent suffering of the people and the continuous suppression of the home manufacture by the Goa salt in the northern part of Kanara, Bombay and the Arabian salt in the south caused embarrassment to the Collectors. One of them as a solution proposed that the monopoly be substituted by an excise. The admission of Goa, Bombay and Arabian salt at fixed duty was recommended by the Collector of Kanara in 1851 to establish equality in different varieties of salt that entered Kanara.⁷

In 1809 Alexander Read, the Collector of Kanara, wrote to the Madras Board of Revenue that the export of rice to Goa should not suffer as the troops at Goa were more than that of the previous year, and that settlement could procure its supplies from no other quarter but Kanara.⁸ This probably indirectly reflects the volatile political condition in Goa, and the fear of a military threat that Goa was facing due to the French designs over it and the offer of the British to support the Portuguese in Goa against the French.⁹ In 1812, a shipment of nine horses priced at 300 *xerafins* each, arrived from Mangalore to Goa.¹⁰ During the year 1813-1814, the value of salt exported from Goa to Kanara was about Rs.88,338/- and other trifling goods amounted to about Rs.7,456/-. The exports from Kanara valued Rs.4,38,374/-. Out of this, the value of rice alone was Rupees 4,00,000/- and the rest was the values of coir, coconuts and paddy from Malabar and few other things.¹¹

Apart from Kanara, the *Balaghat* (above the Ghat) regions of Karnataka also provided as much as two-third of the tobacco consumed in Goa. Goa obtained saltpetre also from that region and the Mhamais. One of the well known business families in Portuguese Goa, dispatched regular consignments of *Balaghat* saltpeter to Lisbon. Rice, wheat, condiments, spices, bamboos and cattle were also imported into Goa from *Balaghat*. The *Balaghat* textiles

constituted one of the most important items among Goa's imports. Goa exported to *Balaghat* items like salt, local liquor such as arrack and feni, salted fish, areca-nuts and the paper and sugar imported from Lisbon and Macau.

Besides the road transport, water transport system also helped in a big way in transporting goods between the two regions on the coast. Therefore, different kinds of vessels; *canoes*, *machvas* and *padavs* were used in transporting goods between Goa and Kanara.¹² In 1820-23, the exports from Kanara to Goa by sea valued Rupees 1,68,000/-.¹³ In 1836, C. R. Cotton, the Principal Collector of Kanara, reported on the articles of exchange between Kanara and Goa during 1828-29. His report clearly reveals that rice and paddy were the major articles of export from Kanara to Goa. It also informs that dates, drugs, paper, dry grains, sugar, wines and spirituous liquors were also imported into Kanara from Goa.¹⁴ From 1838-39 to 1845-46, Kanara exported the following quantities of rice to Goa¹⁵:

Year	Quantity in <i>Muras</i>
1838-39	1,35,727
1839-40	1,11,492
1840-41	1,26,591
1841-42 ^a	84,356
1842-43	1,18,507
1843-44	1,63,809
1844-45	1,20,094
1845-46	78,433

In 1845-46, Goa exported to Kanara by sea commodities like coconuts, dates, furniture, glassware, grain of sorts, salt, timber and sundry items. In the same period, Kanara exported by sea to Goa drugs of sorts, tamarind, dry grain, paddy, rice, cotton, silk, fish bladder, salt, pepper, timber wood black and timber wood jungle.¹⁶

From 1851 to 1854, Goa and Kanara had brisk trade. Among the exports of Kanara to Goa, rice and wheat were the major items. Of the items exported from Goa to Kanara, coconuts, dry fruits, salted provisions and salt were the major items.¹⁷

During 1855-56, the exports of Kanara by sea to Goa included cotton wool, cotton goods, coconut, rice, iron bar and bolt, molasses, cardamom, maize, pepper, timber and wood. It may be noted that forest of Kanara were known for good quality wood like teak which was in great demand not only by the British in Kanara, but also by the Portuguese in Goa. If the British used such high quality wood for the railway and shipbuilding, the Portuguese wanted them for their shipbuilding industry. About 121 Portuguese colours native craft arrived at the ports of Kanara with 1,747 tonnage. During the same time, 122 Portuguese colours native crafts departed from the ports of Kanara and the tonnage was 1,693.¹⁸

In 1858-59, Goa imported by sea, paddy worth Rs.43,339/- , rice worth Rs.59,836/- , and wheat worth Rs.5,796/- from Kanara. In the same year , Goa exported salt worth Rs.8,488/- on Government account and worth Rs.364/- on private account to Kanara.¹⁹

In 1862-63, one steamer and 160 native crafts under the Portuguese colours with a total tonnage of 2909 were sent from Goa to Kanara, and 156 native crafts with a total tonnage of 2,895 under the Portuguese colours departed from Kanara to Goa.²⁰ In the same year, Goa exported to South Kanara items like cabinet ware, fireworks, fruits and nuts (dates and others), glassware, spices, spirit (gin), wax and wax candles, and sundry items. During the same time, Kanara exported mainly rice to Goa, of course with other sundry goods.²¹

In 1869 rice imported to Goa from South Kanara was 16,198 *khandis* of 16 *mãos* and import of paddy was to the tune of 19,868 *khandis*.²²

The above mentioned items figured in the list of merchandise between Goa and Karnataka in General and Goa and Kanara in particular in the nineteenth century. In fact this trend continued in the early half of the twentieth century also. The most prominent items of export from Kanara to Goa was the rice from Mangalore and Basrur. Rice trade was carried out by rowers Nicholas Fernandes and Baba Naik, after the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1878 was signed. Chillies imported into Goa from the Ghat region is called the *Ghanti* chillies. The vegetables were imported from Belgaum and Dharwad. During 1878-80, Goa exported salt, instruments of iron, earthenware, tiles, coconut oil, wine, betelnut, pumpkins, potatoes, onions, salted fish, mangoes and nachinim to different parts of Coastal Karnataka and the *Balaghat* region. During 1878-79, Goa imported rice, paddy, long chillies, ginger, cinnamon, coffee, canes, loose thread, jiggery, grams, coconuts and wheat from different stations in Coastal Karnataka.²³

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, it is possible to conclude that there was brisk trade between Portuguese, Goa and Karnataka. The trade of Karnataka had thrived due to two major regions; the coastal and the *Balaghat*. Goa's commercial transaction used land and sea routes. There were agricultural, industrial and natural resources or products which were exchanged between these two regions. However, salt export from Goa to Kanara and rice export from Kanara to Goa figured prominently in the British records. It is evident that Kanara was the granary of the western coast and Goa was a grain deficit area. This proves that the British records are of great value in reconstructing the colonial history of Goa. A careful scrutiny of such records in the Tamil Nadu State Archives and Maharashtra State Archives will throw much more light on the myriad aspects of the history of Goa.

Notes and References :

1. The objective here is only to provide samples of a few English documents as sources to study history of Goa. For some related issues and points, see N. Shyam Bhat, "trade in Goa during the 19th Century with special Reference to Colonial Kanara", in Charles J. Borges and others (eds.), *Goa and Portugal History and Development*, (Concept, New Delhi, 2000), pp. 55-71.
2. Sir Thomas Munro to the Madras Board of Revenue (hereafter *MBR*), in Proceedings of the Madras Board of revenue (*PMBR*), 28-8-1800, Vol. no. 261, pp. 7492-97.
3. Munro to *MBR*, 29-04-1800, *PMBR*, 21-04-1800, Vol.251, pp. 4070-73.
4. F. H. Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, (3 vols.), (Madras, 1870), Vol. III, between pages 4 and 5; John Sturrock, *Madras District Manuals, South Canara*, Vol. I, (Madras, 1894), pp. 218-9. The principal port of Barkur was situated at Hangarkatta. It was busy port till the end of the 19th century.
5. John Sturrock, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-04; H. S. Brown, *The Handbook to the Ports on the Coast of India between Calcutta and Bombay including Ceylon and Maldiva and Laccadive Islands*, (Mangalore, 1857), p. 257; Malathi K. Moorthy, "Trade and Commerce in Colonial South Kanara (1799-1862)", (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Mangalore University, 1991), p.135.
6. H. S. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
7. Extract from the letter of F. N. Maltby, Collector of Kanara, to the BOR, 3-9-1851, Appendix – E, No.15, Appendix to the Report of the Commissioner, p.324.
8. Alexander Read to *MBR*, 22-2-1809, in *PMBR*, 2-3-1809, Vol. No. 485, pp. 1424-5.
9. V. T. Gune (ed), *Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Div, District Gazetteer, Part – I : Goa*, (Gazetteer Department, Govt. of Goa , 1979), pp. 190-91.
10. Report on External Commerce 1813-14, Board's Miscellaneous Consultations, SI. No. 256, p.51.

11. Extract from the MBR, Miscellaneous Consultations, 1813-14, SI. No. 266, p.88.
12. Rita Braganza, "Goa Karnataka Relations 1763-1857 , A Political and Economic Study", (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Goa University, 2001), pp.171.
13. Proceedings of the Madras Sea Customs Department, 26-02-1824, Vol.50, p.283.
14. C. R. Cotton to the MBR, 26-2-1836, PMBR, 10-3-1836, Vol. No. 1494, p.4262.
15. T. L. Blane, the Collector of Kanara to the MBR, 10-7-1846, PMBR, 4-3-1847, Vol. No. 2070, p.4174.
16. Report of W. E. Underwood, Reporter, External Commerce, 1846, from Imports into Canara by Sea and Exports from Canara by Sea, in the year 1845-46, pp. 160-67.
17. F. N. Maltby, *Report on the Settlement of Land Revenue of South Canara for Fasli 1261*, (Collectorate Press, Mangalore, 1909), p.4. *Fasli* means Revenue year or Financial year. Add 590 to convert a *Fasli* year into the Christian Era. In this case it is 1851-52. *Statement showing the Imports into Canara by Land in the Official Year 1852-53*, Fort St. George, p.130.
18. Report of W. Fisher, Collector of Canara, 1856 from Statement of ships and Tonnage arrived at and departed from the port of Kanara not subject to the Madras Presidency, from 1st May 1855 to 30th April 1856, pp.138-39.
19. W. E. Underwood, Reporter, External Commerce, Fort St. George, 1st May 1859, Statement exhibiting the Quantity and value of Imports by Sea into the Port of Canara from Foreign Ports and Indian Ports and Exports by Sea from the Port of Canara to Foreign Ports not subject to the Madras Presidency, from 1st May 1858 to 30th April 1859, p.164 and p.228.
20. Report of W. Fisher, *Op. Cit.*
21. Reports of W. Hudleston, Secretary, Revenue Board Office (on Imports and Exports of South Canara), Fort St. George, 20th June 1863, pp. 149-51 and 29th June 1863, pp.242-45.

22. Reports of W. Hudleston, *Op. Cit.*; A. Lopes Mendes, *A India Portuguesa*, 2 Vols., (New Delhi, 1989 reprints), Vol. I, pp. 47-8.
23. *Alfandega de Agoada*, 1874-79, No.4715, *HAG*; *Alfandega de Sanguem*, 1879-80, Nos.5521 and 5522, *HAG*; *Livro da Exportação de Mercadorias da Alfandega de Betul*, 1873-78, No. 4765, *HAG*; *Alfandega de Assolna*, 1850-79, No.5603, *HAG*; *Alfandega de Betul*, 1877-80, No.5947, *HAG*. For more information on trade of Portuguese Goa from the last quarter of the 19th Century, see Murelle Maria Leonildes Da costa, "History of Trade and Commerce in Goa: 1878-1961", (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis , Goa University, 2002).
