

**FOLK THEATRE IN GOA: A CRITICAL STUDY
OF SELECT FORMS**

THESIS

Submitted to

GOA UNIVERSITY

For the Award of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

by

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January 2018

CERTIFICATE

As required under the University Ordinance, OA-19.8 (viii), I hereby certify that the thesis entitled, ***Folk Theatre in Goa: A Critical Study of Select Forms***, submitted by Ms. Tanvi Shridhar Kamat Bambolkar for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English has been completed under my guidance. The thesis is the record of the research work conducted by the candidate during the period of her study and has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other similar titles to her by this or any other University.

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DECLARATION

As required under the University Ordinance OA-19.8 (v), I hereby declare that the thesis entitled, ***Folk Theatre in Goa: A Critical Study of Select Forms***, is the outcome of my own research undertaken under the guidance of Dr. (Mrs.) K.J.Budkuley, Professor of English (Retd.), Goa University. All the sources used in the course of this work have been duly acknowledged in the thesis. This work has not previously formed the basis of any award of Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other similar titles to me, by this or any other University.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It gives me immense pleasure to express my gratitude towards those significant people without whom the current study would not have been possible.

A sincere thanks to my research guide, Dr. (Mrs.) Kiran J. Budkuley, for showing me the right path, for her valuable guidance, for always trying to bring out the best in me, for being so patient, and most importantly for giving her precious time and support throughout the study.

I would also like to thank Dr. A. R. Fernandes, Associate Professor, Department of English, Goa University, for his constant support and help during the research work.

I express my heartfelt gratitude towards the subject experts for this research, Dr. Pandurang Phaldesai and Dr. Isabela Santa Rita Vas, for their valuable inputs in course of the study.

I also express my sincere gratitude towards the performers Shri. Rama Perni, Shri. Devraay Shirodkar, and Shri. Chetan Khedekar accepting the request to be interviewed and for providing significant inputs regarding the primary texts. I also thank folklore enthusiasts Shri. Zilu Gaonkar, Shri. Mahendra Phaldesai, Shri. Nishikant Tengse for their valuable contribution. I express my gratitude towards Shri Govind Gaude, Minister for Art and Culture, Government of Goa for helping me to get in touch with the performers.

My heartfelt thanks to all the performers for accepting my request to be interviewed and allowing me to document the performances.

I would like to thank Smt. Nutan Mohite, Smt. Felcy Cardoso and Shri. Santosh Halarnkar, Administrative Staff, Department of English, Goa University, for their timely help. I am also grateful to the general administrative and library staff of Goa University for their whole-hearted co-operation.

Thanks to my friends and family members who accompanied me for the field work during the study.

Thanks to everyone who has provided me with significant sources like videos, audios and photographs relevant to the study. Special thanks to groups, especially Abhivyaktee, Panaji for letting me be the part of Lokrang festival and also for sharing the pictures of the event with me.

My dearest friends Palia, Akshata, Nafisa, Anwesha, Suprabhat, Mahim, Glenis, Svetlana and Prathmesh, who have been of great help and motivation throughout my research journey.

A special mention of the person who made me believe in myself in the toughest times, who lent his helping hand in whatever way possible – Adv. Hrishikesh Kadam.

Last but not the least, my family members, my father Shridhar my mother Geeta, my brother Kalanand and sister-in-law Gautami, who have been a great support during the study.

My sincere thanks to all of them.

Date:

Ms. Tanvi S.K. Bambolkar

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CHAPTER ONE

Goa: History, Society, Culture and Folklore

1.1. Introduction

Goa is known for its varied folklore, and its rich cultural legacy, a product of its long and impactful history. Being a coastal area, it attracted foreign traders, sailors and explorers alike. However, before the arrival of foreign rulers who later colonized this land, Goa had been ruled by several indigenous dynasties. No doubt, each dynasty with its own political and cultural background has influenced Goa's cultural map.

Having a long historical background to its cultural evolution, Goa undoubtedly prides itself on a wide range and variety of folklore that has been passed down from one generation to another. While some of this lore, such as the traditional songs like *honvyo* or *vavar-geetam* related to traditional occupations, has lost its relevance due to modernisation and have become redundant; others continue to thrive on the Goan cultural scenario.

The current study titled, *Folk Theatre in Goa: A Critical Study of Select Forms* has been inspired by a deep interest in the Goan folklore. However, due to the vastness of the field of Folklore and the constraints of field work, it is confined to the study of select folk theatre forms, namely, *Ranmaalem*, *Zagor* and *Kaalo*. Its focus has been three-fold: to observe, document and critically analyze these three forms in their contemporary performances; to contextualize and compare them with their traditional form and content; and thereby, understand their contribution to Goan society and gauge their survival strategies to remain relevant in future. In order to contextualize these folk theatre forms, a brief discussion of the history of Goa, its society, and culture relevant to the present research is undertaken below.

1.2 History of Goa: From Early Settlements, Colonization to Modernization

For convenience, the history of Goa can be divided into the following phases, i.e. pre-historic, medieval, post-colonisation and post-liberation. Although little research has been done on the first phase of Goan history ample documentation can be found on the later phases. However, there are some instances and references which provide testimony to the pre-stone age existence of human beings on the land which has been named and renamed through the ages, but is now known as 'Goa'.

In 1965, the excavation by the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) in Goa provided some significant archeological clues about the pre-stone age human settlement in Goa. Some of the finds from places such as Zambaulim and Kepem villages from South Goa are considered to be pre-stone age rock carvings.

According to Satoskar (1979) “the weapons which have been found during excavation seem to be manufactured by the Stone Age settlers by using the material from Goa itself” (9). During the 1965 excavation, the evidences of neo-stone age settlements in Goa were found in around 70 places across the state. Further, the rock art mentioned above, found on the banks of river Kushavati has also provided significant clues to the development of nomadic culture in Goa during C.8000-4000 B.C. This is indicative of the early settlement of nomadic tribes or their forerunners in Goa. Traditional folk forms like *Dhalo* and *Perni Zagor* are believed to have originated during this particular era.

To discuss the later stages of human development in Goa and their settlements it would be apt to take a brief stock of origins of Indian society. Sir Herbert Risley (1901) has classified the Indian population into seven racial types. These seven racial types namely, the Turko Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Scytho-Dravidian, Aryo-Dravidian, Mongolo-Dravidian, Mongoloid and Dravidian. These types can however be reduced to three races viz. 1) The Dravidian 2) The Mongolian 3) Indo-Aryan.

Risely (1908) does not mention the existence of Negrito race in India while; J.H. Hutton (1921) includes it in his classification. In fact, Hutton believes that the earliest occupants of India must be the negritos. Further, the Indian society has also been classified according to the various linguistic groups. According to Satoskar, Iravati Karve acknowledges three major linguistic divisions in India— Sanskrit speaking, Dravidian speaking and Mundari speaking populations (12). As per this categorization, the last ones to arrive and settle in India seem to be the Aryans.

Satoskar also opines that the earliest settlers in India were Negrito, followed by the Proto-Australoids, and that the latter race scattered around various parts of India and laid the basis for the Indian culture. The first settlers of Goa also belong to this racial group. In fact, S.K. Chatterji’s view has also been that, “[T]he bedrock of Indian civilization is agriculture, and

that, in all likelihood in connection with the cultivation of rice, goes back to Proto-Australoids” (20) Thus, it can be deduced that the agrarian culture must have begun with the arrival of this race, also in Goa. The earliest settlers of Goa, namely, *Gauda*, *Kunbi* and *Kharvi* seemed to be the descendants from this particular race. They had discovered the art of growing rice, building boats and the use of coconuts. Their places of worship include stones, anthills, sacred groves and trees like the Banyan, Peepal and so on. According to Satoskar, the existing cultivation system like the *Kulagar* (a vast farm of areca nut and other domestic vegetation) and *Communidade* (the village commune) must have been legacy of these tribes.

Subsequently, Goa saw several settlements as well as dynastic rules. It also witnessed the influence of newly-formed religions like Buddhism and Jainism during C.500 BC to C.200 BC, when Goa was a part of the Mauryan Empire and up to AD 200 while the Satavahanas ruled over Goa. history also records that between AD 200-400 several minor dynasties such as Chutus, Marathis, Kadambas of Halsi, Kuras of Kolhapur arrived in Goa; again, during AD 400 to 600 the Bhojas ruled in Chandrapur, now known as Chandor; and from AD 500 to 800 Goa saw the rule of Chalukyas when trade in horses is believed to have received a boost. The Kadambas ruled over Goa from AD 1000 to 1330 and left the imprints of their culture, mainly architecture on the Goan society.

The Islamic influence over Goa began in 1326 with the invasion by Sultan Jamaluddin of Honnavar. From 1350 to 1380 Goa saw the rule of Bahamanis. However, between 1380 and 1472 Goa was under Vijayanagara rule. But, in 1472, Yusuf Adilshah of Bijapur conquered Goa and Adilshahi remained in power until the arrival of the Portuguese colonizers led by Afonso de Albuquerque conquered the city of Goa from Ismail Adilshah in 1510. Portuguese rule spread across Goa and lasted till 1961.

As such the long period of colonization from 1510 to 1961 is considered as a separate phase by historians. During the Portuguese rule, spread of Christianity and its impact on the overall Goan cultural scenario can be considered as unexpectedly severe and indelible. In terms of large scale religious conversions persecution of the so called the pagans and heathens, ban on indigenous cultural practices, proscription of native Konkani language, compulsive migration of the neo-converts and other natives, this regime left some irreversible footprints on the Goan cultural scene. No doubt, the colonial era, also witnessed

some very progressive steps in terms of the common civil code, introduction of printing and creation of lexicography and religious texts in Konkani. But, political repression of native rights far outweighed the benefits to the elite. As such, there were several attempts of resistance against the policies of the rulers.

From the mid 18th century to the mid 20th century the protest against the rulers grew from organized uprisings like the Pinto's Rebellion to the Revolt of the Ranes to a full-fledged freedom struggle in twin phases (viz 1946 and 1954) inspired by the legendary Ram Manohar Lohia on 18th June 1946. As a result of these consulted efforts the dream to free Goa from foreign rule was realized and Goa was liberated on 19th December 1961 but not without the Indian Army's Operation Vijay.

After liberation, Goa became a union territory along with Daman and Diu, the Republic of India until it attained statehood in 1987, with Konkani as its state language. In the course of the first twenty five years after liberation issues like the merger of Goa in the neighboring state of Maharashtra leading to the Opinion Poll in 1967, launching of the Konkani movement, first to gain recognition for the local language Konkani were some of the significant highlights of the post liberation political scenario in Goa. This resulted in upholding the distinct political identity of Goa as a union territory after the Opinion Poll (1967), gaining recognition for Konkani as a 'literary language' (distinct from Marathi) from the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi (1975), inclusion of Konkani in the Eighth Schedule of Constitution (1992) and gaining of Statehood for Goa (1987).

These have been the most significant markers of Goa's political destiny and regional identity. They have also been the far reaching sources of motivation to the Konkani folk to preserve and promote their lore and language, as well as to take pride in the various cultural and folk practices and manifestations. This has had a direct impact on the Goan folklore for three main reasons: one, the empowerment of the subaltern sections of the society and the rise of the native identity; two, the political patronage and promotion of local folklore; three, the availability of the modern avenues and forums for the presentation, documentation and study of folklore. More importantly, post-liberation Goa has evolved into a progressive, egalitarian but identity conscious society. However, it has also willingly embraced globalization. This has created a paradoxical dynamics in the Goan society. This

deserves discussion, it also affects the content as well the mode of presenting the Goan folklore, mainly the three folk theatre forms under study.

1.2.1 Goan Society at a Glance

There is no denying that, each dynasty and every settlement of folk, whether tribes or castes have left some imprints on the societal and cultural heritage of Goa. Some of the noteworthy events and happenings have been documented even in the Goan folklore. All these influences have contributed to the constitution of the Goan society and helped to shape its distinct dynamics.

Interestingly the core of Goan society is captured by Olivinho Gomes in his book *Goa* (2002) thus; “Goan society presents a remarkably harmonious characters despite the religious and caste divisions that have dented as well as enlivened it, especially during the din and bustle of democratic electoral politics” (172). Being a product of several settlements and rules, Goa has obtained several criteria for societal classifications over the centuries based on tribe, caste, profession, religion besides language and gender. The three major religious groups which can be discussed also as cultural groups are the Hindus, Catholics and Muslims. Interestingly, within these religions several societal classifications like castes and sub-castes are found. In fact, caste has been a very tenacious criterion of societal stratification also in Goa, like the rest of India in spite of almost 450 years of its colonial status under Portugal as against the rest of British India. Caste also denotes folk groups and hence merits some discussion in the context of folklore. However, Caste as a concept has been discussed and elucidated at length in Chapter Three. Here, it should suffice to say that, in India the notion of caste has existed from a very long time and has been followed very rigidly. As a result, the Indian society has evolved from the groups with tribal differences to those having occupational differences to those with class and status differences. Interestingly, there have been times in remote past, when a professional caste has constituted itself from the members- often caste-aways- from various castes and sub-castes. For example, the community of Kumbhars or potters is one such example. But, equally ‘the caste’ has reached beyond the professional difference and become criteria to classify society into higher and lower classes. *The Varna system* itself divided the four categories of people with regard to the kind of tasks they carried out. The element of wealth and ‘class’ must have been associated with caste in later periods of evolution of caste as a basic element of society.

The Goan society is not an exception to the hierarchical structure that the caste system in India has evolved into. There are some castes which have been traditionally considered as higher, while some others have been considered as low castes. Each of these castes and sub-castes has its own *ethos* or communitarian character. They differ according to the tasks they perform at present; or which they had been performing at some point of time in the past. Each caste has its distinct customs, modes, traditions which differentiate it from others. Similar is the case with the various tribal communities in Goa such as the Gaudas, Kunbis and the Dhangars. For example *Dhangars* a shepherd community in Goa have their own form of folk dance called *Fugdi* which is not performed in like manner by any other communities. Similarly, the Perni community has been practicing the folk theatre form known as *Perni Zagor* which has been unique to them. These examples underscore the distinct cultural wealth, mainly folklore of the various folk communities. As such, some discussion of Goan culture and folklore will be in place here.

1.2.2 Goan Culture

As seen from previous discussion, Goan culture is an amalgamation of several influences ranging from the times of the earliest settlers to Portuguese colonization. There are some cultural practices and notions which have to be credited to the earliest settlers of Goa. These practices and notions have been carried over from one generation to another for centuries in spite of influences and changes as expected in such situations. It would be difficult to classify some common cultural creations separately and assign them to one particular community. Most of them are a shared heritage, widely followed and practiced by many Goans. Yet, each community that has existed in Goa has contributed to the cultural tapestry of Goa. Each community in Goa has had its own cultural legacy and these communities have thrived together with their own cultural practices.

These indices of cultural distinctness have been manifested either as an art form or as a lifestyle practice or even as an aspect of cuisine. They show how each cultural group in spite of getting influenced by each other's ways, has shown some unique features which are only found in those communities. The best example of this would be a theatre form called *Zagor* solely performed by *Gauda* community from Goa. It is a unique heritage shared by individuals from that community. Another example would be a typical dance called *Chapay* performed only by the *Dhangar* community from Goa. These forms are

exclusively practiced and performed only by the particular community with which they had originated and evolved in the course of time. These unique practices have contributed in enriching the culture of Goa.

1.3 An Introduction to Folklore

Culture is a wide domain to be studied and studying culture of any land would mean studying various constituent sub-cultures of several communities that have thrived and are thriving on that land. While, culture is the way of life of a people from all sections of society including the elite, it mainly comprises of cultural groups which can be classified as ‘folk’ in terms of their separate and different way of life. Usually the term ‘folk’ is associated with rural population which is believed to have a close bond with nature. As such, it mostly carries the maximum number of cultural practices often associated with nature. This characteristic perhaps distinguishes a folk group from the other groups or individuals. Folk is also considered as a group that thrives together, like a community and shares a common heritage. In the remote past, the word ‘Folk’ was associated with the illiterate and uneducated lot from the society that followed age old traditions. However, the definitions of this term have changed over the time as life of folk has been studied in various streams. The term folklore has been widely used to describe the material that these folk groups produce, whether in verbal or performative form.

The term lore refers to the spoken word. *Hutchinson Concise Encyclopaedia* (1989) defines it as ‘the oral traditions and culture of people, expressed in riddles, songs, tales, legends and proverbs’. Thus all these oral forms of literature are referred to as folklore or at times folk literature.

Folklore is distinct from the written form of expression or literature because of its oral nature. It is a part of traditions which are passed on from one generation to another, often changed and modified due to various reasons.

According to Vinayak Khedekar (1993) only a few communities from Goa can be considered as ‘folk-communities’-*lok* as he terms them. He considers the tribal communities, namely, *Kunbi, Gauda and Dhangars* as the folk communities. Other communities, particularly those which are caste-based and considered to be ‘higher’ in

terms of either financial power or social status have been considered more evolved and so distinct from the masses. The term *Lok* itself has implies common folk.

In Goa, such communities have lived, nurtured their cultures independently and at times in co-existence with the larger village community. Yet, they have been on the social periphery. Even when they have followed the prescribed communitarian customs and traditions, in certain cases a community has had to remain below the so called ‘higher class’. Even within the given community for example, In Goa, the Brahmins, who performed rituals and also a particular caste called Gaud Saraswat Brahmins, locally known as *Bamonn* have been considered to be higher classes. Both these castes also have sub-castes in them according to the places they belonged to and according to the deities they worshipped.

As Antonio Bernardo de Periera notes, in Goa there are around 30 to 35 castes and sub-castes amongst Hindus, 17 amongst Catholics and 20 amongst Muslims (Satoskar 156). These castes have also evolved as distinct cultural groups but have also intermingled with each other in some way or the other. Some sub-castes such as Bardeshkar, Sashtikar and Shenvi from Saraswats have become ‘exogamous’ that is inter sub-castes marriages are now possible while some sub-castes have been categorized into one single sub-caste. Example would be, the erstwhile sub-castes like *Bhavin*, *Devli*, *Bandi*, *Ferjend* and others have been included into one group of *Gomantak Maratha Samaj*.

From the existing castes and sub-castes in Goa, some castes are known for their unique contribution to the culture of Goa. With customs and practices of these groups, a common heritage has evolved with time. It has also given birth to various art forms which are a reflection of the land, its people and its history. Forms are many and several variations have been found. A few significant ones have been encapsulated in the next section.

1.3.1 Folklore of Goa

Vinayak Khedekar in his book *Loksarita* (1993), opines that the major role of bringing various folk forms in Goa was played by the rulers from South India and the Portuguese (2). The existing population in Goa was primarily Hindu and thus the cultural elements borrowed from the external sources were mingled with the existing culture which was Hindu. In spite of the influence of Christianity in Goa, some rituals from the Hindu culture

were retained by the converted population. Some of these traditions still exist amongst Goan Catholics. Thus, what we see today as ‘culture of Goa’ is not just a production of one single group but a confluence of many. This confluence can be witnessed in folk forms like *Musalnaach* a dance form from Chandor village performed by Catholics by dressing up as traditional Hindus. *Zagryo* deity from Siolim village is worshipped by both Catholics and Hindus and both the communities perform the *Zagor* folk theatre form together for the deity. It can be said that ‘confluence’ of many cultures is one of the key features of Goan folklore.

The term ‘folklore’ includes many aspects from the lives of folk. It includes customs, traditions, art forms, legends, tales etc. In case of Goa, even if one classifies folklore into different genres and categories, one will find that most of them will fall into more than one category. For instance, a dance is not just a dance, but a festival in itself. Example: *Dhalo*, a form of dance as well as a festival celebrated only by women. Thus, categorization of folk forms is definitely a complex process but for the sake of systematic understanding one can follow categories like folk dances, folk theatre, folk songs, folk literature etc.

Folk dances: Bharata in his *Natyashastra* defines *nrtta* as a ‘pure movement’ (Vatsyayan 67). Dances have had a very pure and holy stature in Indian societies. They are a part of celebration as well as devotion. The basic difference between the classical dances and folk dances is that the classical dances have evolved with a systematic pattern of technicalities whereas; folk dances are more based on the spontaneity and imitation.

Folk dances form a very significant part of Goan folklore. They have been part of various festivals. At the same time, some of them are performed irrespective of whether they are a part of a festival or not. According to Khedekar, except for Catholic Kunbis no other community from Goa performs folk dances only for leisure. Most of the other dance forms are a part of ritual or festival.

Each folk dance has a variation according to the regions it is performed in. These forms are also gender exclusive, as in they are performed either only by women or only by men. No folk dance has been found in Goa which was performed by men and women together. If at all men were involved in women’s performances, they would be only present as musical accompanists and at times in the form of a worshipper such as priest. However, most of the

folk dances by women are without musical instruments and hands play a significant role in providing the beat for the performance.

Goan folk dancers lay more stress on the foot movements than on the hand gestures. These steps are not taught formally anywhere but are imitated by the younger generation by following the elders. However, some folk dances like *Goff*, *Toniyamell*, *Divli* dance need rehearsals since they involve a lot of coordination and prop-synchronization. Some dance forms from Goa are exclusively the dance forms while some dance forms are also a major part of Goan folk theatre. The folk dances can be categorized into several types according to the nature of the participating group, gender of participants and occasion of performance. Some of them are discussed below.

Community exclusive forms: there are certain performances which are performed only by a particular group. These can be called as a product of particular community and their lifestyle. For instance, *Dhangar* community of cowherds or shepherds performs a typical dance form called *Harbala* during the festival of *Dusshera*. They wear white gown with red stripes and wear a turban to sing ‘*Harbala*’. The dance is accompanied by musical instruments like *Dhol*, *Ghumot*, *Thali*, *Kondpaavo* and *Surpaavo*. This community also performs a dance form called *Chapai* where performers hold handkerchief in hand. During the festival *Shigmo* they perform *Radhakrishna* which is a theatrical dance form where a man is dressed up as Radha, beloved of Lord Krishna, while other male dresses up as Lord Krishna.

Women of *Dhangar* community perform a special kind of *Fugdi*- a dance form. Vinayak Khedekar believes that moments in their *Fugdi* are similar to the body moments of Sheep and Goats since the community is occupationally associated with these two animals. The women of this community also perform a form of dance called *Jhemado*. Songs of this dance form include occupational references like tending cows.

Another example of community specific folk dance would be *Dekhni* performed by Catholic girls. Olivinho Gomes opines, “[T]he *Dekhni* depicts a Hindu temple dancing girl, though composed and sung by Christians, perhaps indicating nostalgia for their lost Hindu past, where the ‘*devdasi*’ or ‘*kolvont*’ in Konkani, was an alluring symbol ”(293).

Women centric forms: Fugdi in other communities of Goa, involves “[S]ome homely group activity like grinding, washing or kneading, is improvised, to provide dramatic setting” (Gomes 290). It also involves various references to flora and fauna found in rural setup. For instance mention of ‘mango branch’ is often found not just in Fugdi songs but many other folk dance forms such as *Goff*. Fugdi also becomes part of Dhalo festival, where several types of Fugdis are performed. A festival that celebrates fertility of Mother Earth includes women from all the sections of society. The festival goes on for a week or so at night in the month of *Paush* according to Hindu calendar, roughly around December and January. It includes not only dances but theatrical rendering of activities like hunting. There are also instances during Dhalo where young girls go in trance during the festival.

Women belonging to Catholic Kunbi community also perform a type of Dhalo which is also called as Kunbi dance. They perform it during wedding ceremonies and after the harvest. This is one of the women centric folk dances where men accompany with musical instruments like *Ghumot*, *Mhaadle* etc.

Festival related forms: there are a lot of folk dances which are solely associated with folk festivals like *Shigmo*- one of the major festivals celebrated by rural agrarian Goan society. This festival begins during the Month of *Falgun* of the lunar almanac or roughly around March in most places of Goa while in Sattari taluka it begins after *Rangpanchami* the festival of colours i.e approximately in March or April. Almost for ten days groups of males, known as *Romat* sing and dance around the village with their musical instruments and they are honored by villagers. Certain dance forms such as *Goff*, *Morulo*, *Chaurang*, *Divli dance*, *Ghode-Modni* form a significant part of Shigmo festival are mostly place specific forms. *Musalnaach* or pestle dance is performed by Kshatriya Christians in the village of Chandor. They dress up in Hindu attire and enact a dance where a village chief captures a bear. This is performed on the first day of Carnival.

Other than the exclusive dance forms, folk theatre forms also comprise of several dances. One example would be *Dandla* in the folk theatre form of *Zagor*. Dance of Lord Ganesh in the beginning of *Kaalo* is yet another instance of dance in folk theatre form. Next section discusses yet another significant part of Goan folklore which is the focus of the current study that is folk theatre forms.

Folk theatre: just like folk dances, folk theatre forms are also either part of some festival or it is a festival in itself. Some of them are performed in some defined spaces like *Maand* or temple *mantap*. Some of them are combination of static as well as mobile performance. Some of the major folk theatre forms of Goa are, *Zagor*, *Kaalo*, *Ranmaalem*, *Khell*. Even though these are the major categories of folk theatre forms, each of the forms has further variations and types. The relevant theatre forms are discussed under the section of Primary Texts.

Other than *Zagor*, *Ranmaalem* and *Kaalo* there are other folk theatre forms like *Lalit* and *Khell*. *Lalit* was a folk performance performed at the end of religious festivals in temples. *Khell* is found in southern parts of Canacona. Similar to *Yakshagana* of Karnataka and *Kaalo* of Goa *Khell* presents itself as a region specific folk theatre form. Catholic community also performs a folk theatre named *Khell tiatr*. It was known as *Khell* before the arrival of *Tiatr* as a popular form of theatre amongst Catholics. *Khell* of Catholics is performed during the festival *Intruj*. The communities belonging to the lower category of social hierarchy perform this act.

Folk-songs: folk songs are a significant part of folk dances and folk theatre but there are certain customs and traditions where songs are sung in absence of dance and theatre. Folk songs have been part of routine life of rural population. Songs were composed and sung spontaneously during household tasks like grinding, cleaning, cooking etc. These songs would naturally have mentions of the task that is being performed. For instance, one of the songs that is sung during grinding rice on *daatem*- a round tool made of hard stone to grind, is “Daatem Maandun ge Datya Kelem Tilem, Manache Ube Ganesdev”(Naik 6). This can be roughly translated to ‘the tool to grind has been set up; Honorable Lord Ganesha stands to bless.’ Women sing such songs during the tasks they perform. Each task has its own song to be sung during the work. Other than household work, songs were composed and sung during the outdoor work such as working in fields, gardens etc.

There are several other occasions like naming ceremony, different ceremonies which form a part of weddings, folk songs are a major part. Amongst Hindus, there are ceremonies like *haldi*-applying turmeric to the bride and groom where songs are sung. Amongst Catholics, a similar ritual called *Ros* where coconut milk is applied to the bride exists, where villagers

sing *verses*. Songs for children which include lullabies, riddles, and rhymes is also a part of Goan folk songs.

These songs are rarely in written form and are mostly passed from one generation to another. Their themes vary from tales from epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* to some local legends. There are a lot of references to local flora and fauna. Some songs might exist in more than one area and community, but the context, tones etc may change.

Folk literature: ‘Folk literature’ is defined as ‘traditional popular orally-transmitted literature consisting of songs-ballads, legends, stories, fairytales, plays, pseudo-historical anecdotes and proverbs of pre-literate peoples committed to writing only after their essential inspiration has ceased...’(Summerscale 233). This section discusses folk literature which exists in Goan folklore other than that exists in the three sections discussed above. The major material that can be considered as ‘Folk literature’ with Goan context is folk tales, sayings, proverbs, swearwords etc.

Khedekar notes that most of the folk tales in Goa are in verse form and prose is used in between to tie the loose ends (Khedekar 164). The tales can be divided into two major types: the ones based on Puranic stories and others which are imaginative in nature. Each community will have its own variant of a commonly found tale. For instance, stories of Pandavas- the five brothers from the epic *Mahabharata* told by Kunbi community sets the five brothers and their life in Kunbi culture and environment. Folktales reflect the thoughts, beliefs of folk societies. They also act as mediums of sending across a message about ethicalities of particular society.

Sayings and proverbs form a significant part of language that folk societies speak. They are widely used to express in an indirect manner. Olivinho Gomes opines:

Konkani proverbs and maxims or [M]honn’neo contain in a concentrated, compressed capsule form, like any other proverbs, the distilled essence of collective wisdom of the people of Goa, expressing their social customs and mores, their emigration from the northern regions of India, with affinities to the Vedic culture, their interaction with the invaders, particularly the ‘[F]irngi’, meaning in Konkani here only the Portuguese, their cast of mind and the propensities of the body and soul, the features they share with their neighbors on all sides of their land and

sea borders and their migration to other parts of the world and ways and manners acquired there from, their demeanor and graces, the totality of their culture .(255)

The proverbs usually consist of animal, bird imagery since they are allegorical in nature. For instance, *Buklyan kenna nustem sodlaam?* This can be literally translated as, ‘Has the tom-cat given up eating fish any time?’ which means ‘some habits of people shall never leave them’. There are also community based, occupational references. For instance, ‘*Kaam jaalem, Vaij Melo*’ which can be literally translated as, ‘Work is done so the Doctor has no value’. This means ‘once the service of someone ceases to be useful, people do not value the ‘service provider’.

Just like the tales and proverbs, swearwords also form a significant part of rural folk life. Once again, a lot of animal imagery is seen in swearwords as well and, in fact, some of them are sexist and demeaning in nature.

Thus, the imprints of social life are reflected in the various manifestations of folklore of Goa. This study aims at analyzing one of the significant constituent forms of folklore of Goa i.e. the Folk Theatre form. At this juncture, it would be apt to introduce the area of study in detail.

1.4 General Introduction of Research Area

Like all other elements of folklore, folk theatre is a significant form that combines several art forms like music, poetry, dance etc. At the same time, folk theatre is not just a form of art and entertainment, but it has been practiced as a ritual. Today, Folk theatre has not just remained confined to folklore but performance has been incorporated as an important element of modern theatre as well. Rather, folk theatre has had its influences on the modern theatre in many ways across the world.

Folk theatre is an essential part of Goa’s ritualistic endeavors. Folk theatre forms like *Zagor, Kaalo, Ranmaalem* etc are not just the performances but also an inseparable component of festivals. The proposed study has taken up the analyses of these three major folk theatre forms of Goa and tried to capture the nuances of allied folk forms like folk dances, folk music and folk literature in the context of this analysis. The forms that have

been studied under this work are the major folk theatre forms from Goa. Each of them is either a ritual in a festival or a festival by itself.

1.4.1 Scope of the Study

Although there have been attempts at writing about the folk forms of Goa, there is a limited study done in a critical mode. There is an utter need to analyse folklore not just as a mere form of art that pleases, but also as a component of society that is a product of social transformations and political changes. It needs to be studied as a mode of expression for masses which have been sidelined for long. The ritualistic, performative and linguistic essence of folklore has to be critically examined for a newer perspective on existing beliefs and ideas. This study aims at critically analyzing folk theatre of Goa by placing it in the framework of theories of related to society, gender and performance.

1.4.2 Expected Outcomes Met

Documentation of variations amongst each of the selected folk theatre forms has been undertaken. Analysis of each form as well as a futuristic perspective through relevant critical frames has been offered. Survey of the contextual as well as contemporary challenges faced by each form in its uphill task for survival has been conducted. Attempted recommendation for preservation and remedies to control decline have also been suggested through this study.

1.4.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The **aims** of this study have been:

- To observe, document and analyze the three major folk theatre forms of Goa.
- To examine Goan folk theatre in the context of its history, society and culture.
- To critically analyse the contribution and survival strategies of folk theatre today.

The study had the following **objectives**:

- To apply select theoretic approaches to the content and context of folk theatre forms under study and try to interpret the reflection of Goa's history, political changes and societal dynamics in them.
- To elucidate the Goan ethos revealed in the primary texts in relation to the relevant critical theoretical frames.
- To trace the growth and status of Goan folk theatre forms in contemporary times and to map the influence of folk theatre on modern Goan drama.

1.4.4 Hypothesis: Folk theatre of Goa needs to be compiled and assessed through critical frameworks to uncover the social dynamics reflected therein. To understand and interpret the transformations in the Goa folk theatre forms under study, there is need to map the sociological, historical and political influences on them.

1.5 Primary Texts, Methodology and De-limitations

The primary texts selected, the methodology used and the de-limitations outlined for this critical study are discussed below:

1.5.1 Primary Texts

This research work has undertaken an in-depth critical study of the following **folk theatre forms as primary texts**:

Zagor: Literally the term *Zagor* a festival of vigil. The performances go on till the dawn, thus justifying the name. The term also implies the awakening of spirits which indeed is an intention behind this festive theatre form. It contains songs and dances based on the ethos of various communities and mythological characters. These songs make nuanced commentary on social and cultural life of villagers. Sometimes, they also contain various historical references and political allusions. The term *Zagor* is used to cumulatively denote four major variants in this study as identified below.

The first variant of *Zagor* is celebrated post-harvest and performed by the indigenous Hindu Gauda tribe during the month of May. These performances take place in Ponda, Tiswadi talukas. This variant “consists of sixty seven characters representing sixty seven human tendencies,” (Khedekar 103). The performance includes songs which depicts people found in day to day life. These include, fish sellers, winnowing pan makers, flower sellers, thieves, road side Romeos and so on. *Zagor* does not have one single plot but various tales are woven in the whole performance. At times, characters bring spontaneous

humour and satire as per the response of audience. Thus, presence and participation of audience holds an important place in these performances.

In some places, there is a custom of taking a vow, locally known as *Angvann* of performing in *Zagor*. Thus the religious sentiment attached to it has helped in its continuity. *Zagor* performances do not have random participants but every family of Gauda in a particular village is supposed to perform a particular character. The tradition continues till date and is carried on by the next generation.

Two characters from *Zagor* which are known for their *dandla* dance are *Parpati*, the tax collector, *Nikandaar*, the soldier. This dance requires the performers tie 2 feet long wooden stilts below struts to their feet and dance by balancing over them. This act requires a fine sense of equilibrium while performing, since they have to move the struts tied to their legs and also be in their character. Another character called *Thoti* meaning the ‘lame’ depicts the limp enacts the same type of dance but with only ties strut to one leg in action as he and dances.

The character of *Garasher* or *Turmati* depicts an eve teaser. This character wears a heavy wooden headgear which is known as Turmati (also the name of the character). It is decorated with flowers made from paper which are inserted in the cabbage that is placed inside the headgear. The property and costumes in traditional *Zagor* were derived from the local products. With modernization, the performers have begun to use artificial products like sponge instead of cabbage for instance.

Throughout the night, several characters perform and keep the audience awake. Every character has its own time in the whole sequence of performance. At the dawn, the last character named *Pavna* arrives. Performers pray to this character and the performance ends.

Another a variant of this form is celebrated by Catholics from Salcete, Mormugao and Tiswadi talukas. Other than Catholic Gaudas, *Kharvi* and *Render* communities from the Catholic community perform this theatre form. There are many similarities between the Hindu and Catholic *Zagor* and what differentiates them is not just the religious difference but certain norms of performances. For instance, *Mhadlem*, one of the musical instruments used in Catholic *Zagor* is not used by Hindu *Zagor* performers. Catholic *Zagor* is a cultural product of the converts to Christianity. Hindus who were converted into Christianity during the Portuguese regime continued some of the permitted traditions from their former religion. One of the traditions was *Zagor*. Portuguese administration had restricted the practice of such customs and traditions. Yet some of the coverts

continued with the practices, albeit by introducing certain modifications in the form and content. As Marcos Gonsalves discusses in his book *Kristnavacho Zagor Sod-Vavr*, “Zagrant khuichech ritin, ani chukun legit Hindu devanchem vo devichem nanv ucharunk zainam oso portugezamni nem’ ghal’lo....Kaim [janani] adlech riti kodde chittkun ravpachem tharaylem. Zalear, kaim zonnamni purtugezanchea nemak hoikar dilo.” Trans: [The rule laid by Portuguese was that in *Zagor*, there shouldn’t be any mention of Hindu Gods of Goddesses in any way. Some remained faithful to the old customs. While, some agreed to the new rule of Portuguese.”] (Gonsalves 35)

Thus, Catholic *Zagor* can be called as the modified version of Hindu *Zagor*. Yet, many characters like Nikandaar, Portuguese speaking soldiers and others have been retained in this variant.

Third variant identified in the study is performed in Siolim village of North Goa and is held in the month of December. Interestingly, this variant is celebrated and performed by the members of both the Hindu and Catholic religion, together. It is celebrated on the immediate next Monday after Christmas. This variant is much different from the previous two variants discussed above. As noted by Vinayak Khedekar, in olden times, twelve various *Zagor* performances and festivities were held in Bardez taluka. One of them was Siolim. Probably because of political and historical reasons, these *Zagor* festivities stopped. But because there were problems in village, *Zagor* was restarted in Siolim in 1895 and a special permission had to be taken from Archbishop. Henceforth it is termed as the *Siolim Zagor* in this study. This revival could be the reason why this *Zagor* displays distinct variations from other *Zagors*. The character of *Zagoryo* which is also the local deity of Danda village where the *Zagor* takes place is a unique element from this *Zagor*. The last variant of *Zagor* which is much different than the above three is *Perni Zagor*. Performed by the Perni community in regions such as Vagurme from Ponda taluka, Malkarnem from Sangume taluka and Poinguinim from Canacona taluka. The form is known as ‘*Zagor*’ but is more similar to Kaalo, as told by Rama Perni one of the performers of *Perni Zagor* (Perni). One of the characteristics of this *Zagor* is the usage of masks during the performance. Another significant character from *Perni Zagor* discussed by most of the folklorists of Goa is *Mhataari*. According to Phaldesai, this character which portrays an old woman with a digging stick is a testimony of *Perni Zagor* being originated before the development of other agricultural tools. This digging stick was one of the earliest tools used in sowing seeds. Another significant feature of *Perni Zagor* is that Goddess Sarswati is invoked before Lord Ganesha, where as in other forms like

Kaalo and *Ranmaalem* the order is opposite. This is the only folk theatre form under study where females also perform with males. Some of the common characters in *Perni Zagor* and *Kaalo* are Sharada, Putna and Ganapati.

Performances of *Perni Zagor* have stopped in recent times. As noted by Pandurang Phaldesai, during the period from 1950 to 1955 *Perni Zagor* was performed in seven talukas of Goa. This number came down to four talukas in 2001. Even the number of performers has gone down. The families who performed *Perni Zagor* have become smaller. Phaldesai calls it an ‘endangered art form’ and opines that there should be attempts at reviving this it.

Kaalo: The name of this folk form is adopted from the word ‘Kaalo’ meaning ‘mixture’, since this festival and its allied performance is a mixture of several art forms and rituals. It has also taken inspiration from the legend of Lord Krishna wherein he is said to have used the contents of various milk products ‘stolen’ by him and his playmates to mix the items of food and celebrated the sharing (Tengse).

The term *Kaalo* is used for various elements related to this festival. First it is used for the whole festival which includes performances as well as other ritualistic elements. These elements include ritual like *Gopal-kaalo*. This is a ritual carried out at the end of the main performance of *Kaalo*. The characters enact the tales of Lord Krishna and his brother Balram. Riddles are a part of this performance. The performance is culminated by distributing curd, one of the favourite edible items of Lord Krishna.

Yet another ritual associated with *Kaalo* is *Gaulan-kaalo*. It is performed on the next day of *Kaalo*. Girls from Devdasi community would perform this ritual. It was again performative in nature and consisted tales of Krishna and Krishna’s beloved Radha.

Kaalo has two major variants. One if *Dashavtari Kaalo*, also known as *Dashavtari Khell* and another is *Shankasur Kaalo*. As the name suggests, *Dashavtaari* includes the tales of ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, whereas, *Shankhasur Kaalo* gets its name from one of the significant characters from *Kaalo* i.e. Shankasur.

The *Kaalo* festival is celebrated in many temples of Goa across many Hindu communities. According to Shyam Verenkar it was celebrated in around 350 temples registered under the State Government (Verenkar 10). The expenditure of *Kaalo* is met by the local communes *Communidades*. The *Kaalo* festival begins in the *Kartik* month which is around November and December. Ponda, Canacona, Pernem are major talukas where *Kaalo* is celebrated. Each village celebrating *Kaalo* will have different rituals and

traditions. Even the performance of *Kaalo* theatre form will have variations according to the region.

The content of *Kaalo* is influenced largely by Puranic scriptures. Usage of masks is also found in *Kaalo*. One of the significant elements of *Kaalo* is the presence of a narrator who is called *Hardas*. He initiates the performance and also strikes conversations with various characters. In some *Kaalo* performances there is a one single plot, which is locally known as *Akhyan*. Such performances narrate legends from mythology. While, some *Kaalo* performances like *Zagor* bring in various characters from day to day life.

One of the common features of all *Kaalo* is its music, which is distinctly influenced by Indian classical music. Even the musical instruments used in *Kaalo* are not the ones used in *Zagor*. While local instruments like Ghumot, Kansaale and Dhol are used in *Zagor*, classical instruments like *Mridagam*, Harmonium and *Taal* are used in *Kaalo*.

Traditionally *Kaalo* performances would begin at night and go on till dawn. In contemporary times, the performance of *Kaalo* also goes on till dawn in some places such as Canacona while in some other places like in Priol only a few episodes are performed followed by a commercial play.

Ranmaalem: Some believe that the name of this form is derived from the name Rama, since it features stories from Ramayana. However, Vinayak Khedekar has expressed another view with regard to its name. He feels that the word *Rann* (ರಣ) must have been derived from ರಾಣಿ which means forest. Since the areas where *Ranmaalem* originated is densely forested, this view can be taken into consideration. Also, he further says that it can be derived from the term ರಾಮಾಲೆಯಿಂದ which means ‘of Rama’. This can also be a valid explanation since the form features life of Rama.

This form is performed exclusively in Sattari and Sanguem Taluka by the Maratha community. It is also performed in some villages of Karnataka such as Kankumbhi, Chikhli. In Goa, *Ranmaalem* is performed during the Shigmo festival. Like the other two forms under study, performances of *Ranmaalem* also go on till the dawn.

The content is based on community life as well as mythological scriptures. The two major categories of characters present in *Ranmaalem* are *Songa* and *Dhonga*. While the former includes the mythological characters, latter consists of real life characters. One of the significant elements of *Ranmaalem* performance is the human curtain which stands on the performance area throughout the performance. This group of men also function as

chorus for the main characters. There is one main singer amongst this chorus who sings the songs and others repeat after him.

Like *Zagor*, even in *Ranmaalem* there is the custom of taking a vow of performing in *Ranmaalem*. The religious sentiment is common in all the folk theatre forms. One of the similarities between *Ranmaalem* and *Kaalo* is the episode of priest in the initial part of the performance. This act is humorous and thus grabs audience's attention towards the performance.

1.5.2 Methodology

The overall **methodology** used in this research work is as follows:

- Literature survey of the research work done on the folklore of Goa.
- Contextualizing of the study by tracing the evolution of Folkloristics as a discipline and the application of theoretic frames on folklore to the data.
- Use of select theoretic perspectives such as Subaltern Studies, Feminism and discourses on Society, to the relevant aspects of folk theatre forms under study.
- Witnessing the performances of the three folk theatre forms in specific regions in their original space and time during the appropriate phases of field work.
- Video recording of the performances of all the three forms to be used as data for the analyses of the content, context, interactivity and social dynamics for the purpose of current study.
- Interviewing and recording the views of folk artists, performing groups, significant local personalities and other folk enthusiasts to get a wider perspective about the forms on the verge of extinction, essential features of performances, and their contemporary relevance as well as strategies for survival in the face of technological and allied changes.

1.5.3 De- limitations of the Study

- Folklore of Goa being a vast corpus of various forms it was too complex to study each form separately, so only three folk theatre forms namely *Zagor*, *Ranmaalem* and *Kaalo* have been selected for this study.
- Due to time constraints, the study has aimed to analyze only the folk theatre and allied forms which were relevant to the study.

- While the three major folk theatre forms of Goa have been taken as the primary texts, other relevant folk forms like dances, music have been studied as the secondary text as and when required.
- The said forms have many variations across the state. Some of them are even extinct. Thus, it has not been possible to document *all the variants* of all three forms.
- The analysis had to be done on the basis of the field work carried out by the researcher as well as the previous literature that was available about these forms.

1.5.4 Literature Survey

The following major works on Goan folk form and culture, society have been consulted,

Form Related texts

- *Loksarita* (1993) by Vinayak Khedekar draws Goa's cultural patterns through various chapters dedicated to different cultural aspects of Goa.
- *Lokbimb* (1998) by Dr.Jayanti Naik also brings out various elements of Goa's folklore with special attention given to aspects like gender roles. Her thesis on Women's role in Goa's Folklore provides a wider perspective about this specific domain in the study of Folklore.
- *Goa: Folklore Studies* (2011)by Dr. Pandurang Phaldesai is a compilation of various essays written on the various folklore practices as well as performances of Goa.
- *Gomantak: Prakruti Ani Sanskruti* (1979)by B.D.Satoskar is a volume that deals with the evolution as well as features of Goan society. This text has been beneficial in gaining detailed information about various communities from Goa.
- Tara Bhavaalkar's Marathi text *Lokparampara ani Stri Sanskruti* (1990) was beneficial in examining the folk traditions related to women in various cultures, especially in the neighbouring state of Maharashtra.
- V.S. Sukhtankar's *Tales and Tellers of Goa* (1974) was read to check the historical significance of various folk tales of Goa.
- Sharad Vyavahaare's *Lokdharmi Natyachi Jadhan Ghadan* (1990) specifically deals with the evolution of folk theatre in various cultures. He discusses how folk theatre started as a part of ritual in many cultures and then further evolved to be a medium of informing and entertaining.
- Ulhas Prabhu's *Lokvedanche Kul ni Mul* (2005) discusses origins of folklore of Goa by giving various verses from folk songs of Goa sung during various occasions.

- A. M. Joshi's *Bhartiya Loknatya* (n.d.) provides a brief review of the evolution of and the variations in Indian folk theatre forms in Marathi.

Theory Related Texts

- Various encyclopedias including *Encyclopaedia Britanica*, *The World Book* were referred to derive basic understanding of concepts like society and culture.
- Vladimir Propp's *Theory and History of Folklore* Translated by Ariana and Richard Martin in English from Russian was one of the key texts in assessing the development of folklore studies. Propp has been a key figure in Folkloristics thus his views on folklore hold significance to this study.
- Jawahar Lal Handoo's *Folklore in Modern India* (1998) is a compilation of various research papers which present various theoretic approaches with regard to folklore of India. They were beneficial in gathering Indian perspective on the folklore studies.
- D.T. Bhosle's *Loksanskruti: Bandh-Anubandh* (2010) in Marathi was helpful ¹ in understanding relevant views on folklore traditions and research strategies used by scholars of Folklore in Maharashtra.
- Gangadhar Morje's *Loksahitya: Siddhant ani Rachanaprakar* (2002) deals with various theories related to folklore and also speaks about the question of genre in Folklore Studies.
- Richard Dorson's article "Current Folklore Theories" from *Chicago Journals* helped in knowing various theories which developed over the years in the field of folkloristics.
- K.W. Christopher's *Rethinking Cultural Studies: A Study of Raymond Williams and Edward Said* helped in tracing the rise of Cultural Studies as a field of study.
- *Men in Feminism* by Alice Jardine and Paul Smith was read to get an idea about the involvement and perception of men in the movement of Feminism.
- *Feminism as Critique on the Politics of Gender* edited by Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell was utilized in tracing the concept of 'gender' and get a broader view on its role in feminist movement.
- Linda Nochlin's *Representing Women* helped explore the portrayal of women in various art forms and how it has been perceived by feminist critics.
- *A Subaltern Studies Reader* edited by Ranajit Guha provided a detailed history of the rise of Subaltern Studies. It was also useful to get introduced to the various concepts used Subaltern Theory.

1.6 Chapter Outline: This study comprises of five chapters including the introductory and concluding ones. The chapter-wise break-up is given below:-

Chapter One titled “Goa: History, Society and Culture”, introduces the area of study. It deals with the history of Goa since it has been necessary to place the primary texts in the historical context. The various invasions on the cultural scene of Goa by several dynasties and rulers have been discussed in the Chapter to elucidate their influences on Goan society and culture. It also discusses in brief the dynamics of Goan society to show how it has evolved over a period of time and includes a brief discussion about Goa and its cultural legacy. Since Folk Theatre is a cultural and social product, the Chapter tries to place it in the context of both these aspects. The major elements from the folklore of Goa have also been discussed and three primary texts have also been highlighted in the context of Goan folklore. The Chapter also mentions the Methodologies adapted for the study, its Aims and Objectives as well as expected outcome. Also, Literature Survey has been listed in this chapter.

Chapter Two, “Folklore, Society and Culture: Theories and Definitions” is devoted to the discussion of the folklore-related theories and definitions of core concepts. The study of folklore, also known as Folkloristics has developed as a science considerably late. This Chapter tries to trace the evolution of the science of folklore and elucidates the various theories which were developed in the 19th and 20th century. Further, this Chapter also deals with the Indian concept of *Lokveda* as propounded by various Indian scholars. Since the current study of Goan Folk Theatre Forms is based on folklore in India, this Chapter also attempts to trace the development of Folklore Studies in India. Moreover, since the study of folk theatre cannot be carried out without contextualizing it within the society and culture, which create it and to which it contributes, this Chapter also discusses the notions of society and culture.

Chapter Three, “Social Dynamics of Goan Folk Theatre”, explores the social dynamics as reflected in Goan folk theatre. Beginning with caste hierarchy in general, it examines the caste system prevalent in Goa and its hierarchical nature, elaborately discussing the various castes prevalent in Goa. Further, the complexities and harmonies that these communities share with each other are also elucidated. Social dynamics have been analyzed through the lens of Subaltern Studies. Besides, since gender is one of the crucial elements that features in the discussion of society in general, it has been also discussed by applying Gender related theories to the portrayal of women in the performances.

The Chapter also mentions in passing how folk theatre has evolved in the contemporary society, thereby paving the way for the next Chapter which deals with the evolution of folk theatre to date.

Chapter Four, titled “Evolution of Goan Folk Theatre: From Devotional Infotainment to Contemporary Commercialization”, traces the evolution of the three folk theatre forms under study. The focus of this Chapter has been the evolution of the three forms under study. It adopts two viewpoints for comparison: firstly, it takes the pre-liberation perspective by placing these forms in the historical context; and then, it assesses how folk theatre has changed after the liberation of Goa from the Portuguese colonial rule. The fact that the space and paraphernalia of folk theatre have also gone through a transformation over the years, has been discussed with relevant examples from the three folk theatre forms under study. Besides, a special segment has been dedicated to the influence of folk theatre on modern theatre. By taking stock of conventional Konkani theatre, it has been observed how Goan folk theatre has influenced the conventional, contemporary theatre.

Chapter Five titled “Conclusion” reports the observations and the findings of this study. It has been observed that the forms under study have not remained rigidly pure with regard to their content and aspects of performance such as temporality, spatiality, modes of performance and resources used, due to the current fast-paced life impacted by the changing social dynamics. Although they have evolved over the centuries and yet continued to survive from generation to generation, they have had to adapt to this fast-paced life in the contemporary times. As such they have adopted technology and responded to this challenges and opportunities for better performances.

1.7 Relevance of the Study and Scope for Future Research

Although there have been some very useful attempts at compiling and writing about certain forms of Goan Folklore, made by dedicated, amateur field workers in Folklore, to date there has been very limited critical study carried out and published in this domain ---particularly on Goan Folk Theatre---- by trained researchers and scholars. Thus, the present study focussed exclusively on the three folk theatre forms, *Zagor*, *Ranmaalem* and *Kaalo*.

Since, there is an utter need to compile, and analyse folk theatre not just as a form of devotional art and mode of entertainment, but also as the product of social transformation and political changes that informs and educates, the present study was devoted to its interpretation as the reflection of Goan social dynamics, from the perspectives of hierarchies of caste and gender. It also undertook to trace the shifts and coils of folk theatre as influenced of late by conventional

cultural forms as also modern theatre, but also as a form which in turn, has impacted the contemporary, experimental theatre movement in Goa. It is felt that this broad range of influences and interactions has also mobilized the much needed socio-cultural interactions across various social groups and organizations as never before in the history of Goan theatre.

It is expected that, this research work has provided a much-needed basis for further study of this area and its allied dimensions. The ritualistic, performative and linguistic essence of folklore has been touched upon in this study, but it needs to be critically examined in greater depth for a newer perspective on existing beliefs and ideas. The study of folk theatre content, its resources and strategies of survival have been examined but a much greater research challenge awaits to place these aspects in the contexts of present threats and future survival of Goan folk theatre. Critical scrutiny with insight, sympathy and understanding will help in preserving, sustaining and fostering Goan folk theatre.

In conclusion, this study has been a modest attempt at critically studying three distinct folk theatre forms of Goa by placing them in the framework of theories related to society, gender and folklore. It is expected that it will encourage more such folklore-based research activity with regard to some of the neglected areas of Goan Folklore. If that happens in near future, this study will have met its objectives and relevance.

CHAPTER TWO

Folklore in the Context of Society and Culture: A Theoretic Perspective

2.1 Introduction

Human evolution has given rise to several kinds of physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual activities, performed on both individual as well as collective level, in fulfilment of the practices and processes related to the social life shared by a group or tribe. Some of these practices relate to aesthetic and ritualistic objectives of group life. As an extension of such shared undertakings human society has gradually learnt to create various forms of self and group expression mainly (but not exclusively) in pursuit of these twin objectives. These expressions have eventually assumed form of visual, performative, oral as well as literary Arts. Since the literary art or ‘literature’, has been available for study in its physical form, it was easier to contextualize, interpret and analyze it. Before the term ‘folklore’ came into vogue, the equivalent parallel term in use in the academic circles, was ‘popular literature’. While ‘Folklore’ is the term widely used, there are some who use ‘Folk literature’ to define the some of the elements included in folklore.

However, the ‘folk literature’ per se has existed mostly in oral form until very recently, when some of it has been documented and compiled. It is thus a significant constituent of what is popularly known as ‘Folklore’, which comprises other verbal as well as non-verbal components such as, cave drawings, plastic arts, dance forms, theatre forms etc.

Since the current study deals with select forms of Folk Theatre which is an important genre of Folklore, to begin with it is necessary to trace the definition of the term ‘folklore’. Hence, the present Chapter attempts to explore the development of the Science of Folklore. Since folklore is a product of society and contributes to the culture from where it gets created, both these elements have been also discussed in this Chapter with regard to Folklore.

2.2 Understanding Folklore: Some Theories and Definitions

Science of Folklore holds its origins in the documentary work which was carried out by the earliest Folklorists in the West, it absorbed and assimilated the diverse theoretic approaches over a period of time. The process of such study has led to the creation of the science known as Folkloristics. Several attempts at defining the term ‘folklore’ have been made in the course of this process. Consequently, various theories related to the study of Folklore have developed. It is gainful to discuss some of the more relevant ones, but before that it is necessary to elucidate the term ‘folklore’ and if possible define and contextualize it within its field of study..

2.2.1 Understanding the term Folklore

Folklore, according to *The Reference Work: a Cyclopedia for Teachers, Students and Families* (Beach 1996) is also “[...]the study of the popular customs, traditions, and tales of people. The systematic study and collection of old ballads and tales, with the recording of customs and ceremonials, which began with the 19th century”.

According to *The World Book Encyclopedia*, (1992) Folklore is ‘any of the beliefs, customs and traditions that people pass on from generation to generations’ (194). ‘There is no denying that popular beliefs, customs and traditions are at the core of *Zagor*, *Rannmalem* and *Kaalo*. As such, this definition exactly fits these three folk theatre forms chosen for this study for the following several reasons: each of these forms represents specific tribal/group beliefs; these theatre forms are performed as per definite tribal/group diktats or norms, in a customary manner, at a predetermined place and time; one of the forms, namely *Zagor*, have sometimes been required to adapt to times and prevailing conditions in order to survive; but most importantly, they have been practiced without a break as a continual group/tribal/village tradition. These three forms among them also use in varying degree the allied elements mentioned in the above definition to further qualifies its own statement viz. stories, fairy tales, folk tales, legends, myths and so on. Other elements like arts and crafts, dances, games, nursery rhymes, proverbs, riddles, songs, superstitions, religious celebrations, inclusive of rites and rituals, which are also a part of folklore have a fair degree of presence in these three folk theatre forms under study.

It will be useful to look at a couple of more definitions of ‘folklore’ to see if the above observations about the three primary texts as generic of Folklore are still valid from other perspectives. Again, according to *The Reference Work: a Cyclopedia for Teachers, Students and Families* (Beach 1996), it is “[...]the study of the popular customs, traditions, and tales of people”. It also defines ‘study of folklore’ as the “relation of races and languages to each other-addition to ethnology and philology,” where as *Encyclopedia Britanica* Vol 9, defines the term ‘folklore’ as:

[The] generic name used to denote those traditional beliefs, superstitions, manners, customs and observances of ordinary people which have persisted from earlier into later periods and which in fragmentary, modified or comparatively unchanged form, have continued to exist outside the accepted pattern of contemporary knowledge and religions, in some cases down to modern times. (1768)

Interestingly, all these definitions broadly apply to the three primary texts as ‘folklore’. But the third definition above, with its wide-ranging definition applies very precisely to *Zagor*, *Rannmalem* and *Kaalo* in that: the three folk theatre forms fulfill by their very nature the criteria

indicated there in as ‘denoted’ by the generic term ‘folklore’; also by their ‘continued’ existence in the public domain to date with little transformation (with perhaps *Perni Zagor* likely to go out of performance). Moreover, although to some degree, they use elements ‘outside’ the ken of ‘contemporary knowledge’; these forms continue to remain strongly ‘within’ the domain of contemporary religion. This helps to ascertain their status broadly as folklore---more specifically, as folk theatre forms that constitute a performative sub-genre of Folklore.

Here, it will be relevant to observe when the study of Folklore took off, especially in the west. According to *The Reference Work: a Cyclopedia for Teachers, Students and Families* (Beach 1996), [T]he systematic study and collection of old ballads and tales, with the recording of customs and ceremonials, which began with the 19th century”. Interestingly, the term ‘folklore’ was introduced in a letter, written in the August 1846 by W. J. Thomas under the pseudonym Ambrose Merton, which appeared in the volume of the periodical *Athenaeum*. Subsequently, this term was widely accepted and has been since used in academic discourse by scholars.

Some of the early theories of the origins and nature of Folklore tried defining the field in various ways in relation to varied disciplines or domains of study. For instance, E.S.Hartland defined folklore as “[A]nthropology dealing with the, psychological phenomena of uncivilized man,” (Benton 518) while Andrew Lang called it the ‘science of survivals’, and as per Wikipedia, explained the “irrational” elements of mythology as survivals from more primitive forms in his work *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (1887).

Funk and Wagnall’s *Standard Dictionary of Folklore* offers twenty definitions of the term ‘folklore’; one of them is, as the ‘anthropology of peasants’ (Benton 518).

However, this notion of attaching folklore only to agrarian societies changed in later phases of folklore-related studies. Folklore came to be seen as something that exists even in other societies. Thus, quite distinct from other views, R. S. Loomis, Lord Raglan and A. H. Krappe (1930) observe that folklore, “[F]ar from originating with ordinary people represented forms of culture originally existing in the aristocratic and scholarly classes and later brought down to the level of the peasants and the artisans” (518). Such a view was unacceptable, to Vladimir Propp (1984) because he believed that folklore existed even before the emergence of peasantry. He calls it the “art of the oppressed classes, both peasants and workers and also of the intermediate strata that gravitate toward the lower social classes” (4).

From the above discussion, it can be surmised that most Folklore scholars agree that folklore as a field of popular creation emerged from the lower, ordinary rungs of society. It can also be deduced that the expression of Folklore can be in the verbal forms short and compact nature,

like proverbs and songs as can be used in a form like *Kaalo* or in longer structured performative forms like plays such as *Ranmaalem* or ritual performances of night-long vigil like the *Zagor*. It can be also be gauged from the above-mentioned scholarly views on Folklore, that it survives if it appeals to the masses and is patronized by them.

For instance, a story like Cinderella has survived for so many years in almost a thousand languages with different oral and later written versions because it appealed to the children of almost all the regions, which were exposed to this story. But at the same time, the story of Cinderella has its own variations in many of the regions to which it travelled. Variation in an oral narrative or its manifestation in other modes of non-literary expression is an indication that it is a constituent of folklore but, more importantly, it is also an indication of the fact that folk uses varied modes of preservation of a received tale/version by making it familiar or appealing to the receptor language-group. Folk expression is adaptive to changes unlike other forms of literature. In fact, there is no final word that cannot be changed in a given folklore content since it goes through multiple metamorphoses and thereby it survives. As such, it is the living and inextinguishable force of human creativity and a rhythm of social life.

Folklore manifests the attitudes and ideals of a society, besides its constitution and power structure. For instance, a given folk expression or form depicts how a society regards the roles of males and females in real life. It also reflects various social stratifications, mechanisms for survival and modes of functioning of a particular society to which the particular folk form may belong. All this is discussed and theorized by various scholars of recent times. Hence, it is necessary to study the development of Folklore theory.

As mentioned earlier, since ‘Folk literature’ was a term in use as an approximate equivalent to what is termed as folklore, it is gainful to look at some of its definitions and analysis. It is defined as ‘traditional popular orally-transmitted literature consisting of songs-ballads, legends, stories, fairytales, plays, pseudo-historical anecdotes and pro-verbs of pre-literate peoples committed to writing only after their essential inspiration has ceased[...]’ (*Penguin Encyclopedia* 233).

Hutchinson Concise Encyclopedia defines it as, “stories which are or have transmitted in spoken form, such as public relations, rather than through writing or painting”. The major quality of folk literature is its ‘oral’ nature. Thus, Hutchinson cites the example of how Greek *Odyssey* and Mesopotamian *Gilgamesh* were composed and added to over many centuries before they were committed to writing. In this context, it can be observed that if the term ‘folk literature’ is to be applied to the three folk theatre forms, viz *Ranmaalem*, *Zagor* and *Kaalo*

that constitute this study, then it will suit their ‘oral’ component to a greater degree rather than their performative one.

However, Propp’s definition which dwells on pre-peasantry origins of folklore and his description of it as the art of the ‘oppressed classes’ best elucidates the nature, evolution and form of *Zagor*. Likewise, the definition of the term, as given in *Penguin Encyclopedia* (1965) cited above, which emphasizes the ‘pseudo-historical’ aspect of folklore content, can be used to draw attention to the early antecedents of the present *Ranmaalem*. Similarly, if one examines some of the *Kaalo* performances witnessed and discussed by the present researcher, they provide illustration of how, pre-literate people’s work committed to writing after initial inspiration has ceased, if one treats ‘folk’ as illiterate and pre-civilization stage of cultural evolution. Again, some performances of *Kaalo* provide evidence of the fact that they were originally composed by scholarly classes and “later brought to the level of peasants [...]” (Loomis, Raglan and Krappe 518)

2.2.2 Early Developments in the Folklore Studies

Folklore can be considered almost as old as humanity because it includes all that a human mind created as a part of his or her existence. Folklore survives with the spirit and gesture of imitation. It is often passed orally from one generation to another. When people move from one place to another they take their folklore along and then it is adapted to the new surroundings. In fact, in defining ‘Folk Music’ *Penguin Encyclopedia* defines it as being, ‘of anonymous composition, usually transmitted among a musically unlettered population, and thus subject to both variation and continuity’ (Summerscale 233). Further, this definition is elucidated by saying that, it is uncertain whether such compositions actually originate in this population or are adapted and modified from a literate composer’s work. Thus, it can be said that most of the definitions related to folk art forms focus on the flexibility and adaptability of Folklore.

It is necessary to reiterate here that, Folklore has been there with humans since the time they have learnt to express their ideas and emotions verbally, but it was not studied as a Science for a long period of time. In fact, the *Penguin Encyclopedia* mentions that serious attention was given to the study of folk literature only during 19th century. There were attempts at ‘improving’ the original form of folk literature. Tasks like collecting and tracing them to ‘archetypal’ themes were carried out during this time. Further, it is also mentioned that folk literature survived in the rural areas. There is an obvious reason for it. During 1800’s due to the onset of industrialization, there was a sudden increase in the number of cities and the migration to cities increased manifold. With this rapid urbanization, the authentic traditions

could not get transmitted in their true sense to cities. However, they were preserved by the ‘folk’ that remained in the villages. These were often the uneducated peasant class.

The early initiative towards folklore studies, was taken in the first decade of the 19th century by the German brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, who collected folk tales from the peasants who lived near Kassel in Germany during the period from 1807 to 1814 and named the collection *Die Kinder Un Hausmaerchem* (Collection of Children’s and Home Folktales). This is considered as a milestone in the development of studying Folklore methodologically. As per Wikipedia, “[W]ith the goal of researching a scholarly treatise on folk tales, they (Grimm Brothers) established a methodology for collecting and recording folk stories that became the basis for folklore studies”(Wikipedia Contributors “Brothers Grimm”). In essence, this work was compilatory and documentary in nature but with a conceptual and methodological clarity.

2.3 Development of Folklore Theories

The study of folklore might have begun with documentary and compilatory work but once it developed as a science, various theories were developed mainly with twin objectives: one, for the analysis of its manifest forms and their relation to the societal structure where they have emerged; and two, the interpretations of their content and its socio-political implications as well as applications. Different modern theories have had a different approach of looking at Folklore. Their focus has also differed according to the time and place where they were developed.

2.3.1 Mythological Theory

The entire conceptual framework by Jacob Grimm is known as Mythological theory. He had applied comparative method to trace the history of German language. The same method was further applied to Folklore by other folklorists, especially with regard to oral narratives. The views of Grimm inspired other contemporary European folklore scholars to undertake a systematic explanation of oral narratives. This was later reshaped and developed by scholars like Max Muller who explained the rise of myths in Germanic and Indic cultures with the help of the Comparative method with a philological basis.

Max Muller believed that myths are created by malady of language. His theory is known as The Solar Mythology Theory. Max Muller started his work with an assumption that the primitive man, specifically the ancestors of the Indo-Europeans, expressed themselves with concretely meaningful words. They were not able to think abstractly, since only concrete words were a part of their language. Every element and natural process was given its name by

observing their concrete and obvious qualities. But the same element could also be named from some other quality. Several elements and processes would gradually receive the same name due to the resemblance with the specific qualities. According to this process, the primitive language as opined by Muller was full of metaphorical epithets and must have included several synonyms. For instance, both water and sun could be named as 'the shining one'. So could be stars and the moon. This variety and instability in words according to Max Muller, must have created confusion of ideas, and resulted in the so-called "malady of language" and thus, "forming fantastic concepts about concrete realities of natural phenomenon. In this way were myths created" (Handoo).

2.3.2 The Indian and Indo-European Theories

German Indologist Theodore Benfey, while translating the stories from the *Panchtantra* pointed out striking similarities between the Sanskrit and European tales. His work was inspired by the works of Muller. He opined that the similarities between Sanskrit and European tales exist not just because of the genetic relationship as believed by Muller, but also due to cultural and historical relationships. Benfey's theory is also known as Theory of Borrowing or Migrational Theory since it proposes that these tales migrated from one place to another. It also proposes that they were borrowed by other regions. This line of thought is also called as *diffusionist* as it explains how from a single atom or source all the folk tales diffuse and travel. For Benfey, the source of all the folktales from where they get diffused is India. Thus, current folklorists call Benfey's theory Indian theory. The theory that contradicts Indian theory is Indo-European theory.

In his article, "The Indian and Indo-European Theories in Folk Narrative Research: An Update" (Handoo 1998), Carsten Bregenjøj explains the similarities and differences between these two major theories which developed either in contradiction to, or with inspiration from, the earlier theories. Bregenjøj feels that both these theories question the age and origin of folk tales or narratives, but these theories never asked questions about the content of the folklore. Both the theories find their common source in the ideas of Wilhelm Grimm expressed in the introduction to 'Grimm's Fairy Tales'.

Indian theory is in opposition to Grimm's ideas, whereas Indo-European theory is an expansion of theoretical bias. Indian theory led to production of type and motif of index of folktales. Basis of Indian theory lies in literary transmitted texts found among Indo-European language-speaking people(s). On the other hand, Indo-European theory proposed that it is possible to differentiate the folktales of Indo-European origin from others. This theory ascribed to

Grimm's ideas which stated that distribution of folktales was connected to Indo-European myths.

Although both these theories have been refuted over a period of time, opinion about folk tales having their origins in Indian folk tales cannot be fully rejected. It is believed that the science of navigation was invented in the Indus Valley. References to organization of ships are found in the histories of the Mauryan empire of India. Chandragupta Maurya's mentor and prime advisor Chanakya's work *Arthashastra* (C. 2nd Century BCE) has a full chapter on the waterways. Indians were one of the earliest countries to have started international trade. Obviously, the trade must have led not just to exchange of goods but to the transport of cultures as well. During this process, there are chances that the folk tales from India travelled with the travelers and traders and vice versa. Thus, we find similarities in some of the folk tales from the East and the West. The tale of Cinderella which is said to originate in the West holds a striking similarity to the Konkani folk tale *Kundekuskoor*. Both the tales deal with the plight of a distressed girl whose fortune changes due to her fantastic encounter with magic and extra-human elements. Interestingly, in Budkuley's (2009) view,

While the European Cinderella and the Indian Kundekuskoor, both marginal folk protagonists, tread no common path of adventure or predicament, their affinity lies in their names. One is linked to cinders-ashes, the other to husk-and reject of grain. But these are only superficial similarities not traceable to deeper thematic motifs or structural linkages.(101)

The above statement demonstrates how important is the aspect of content in ascertaining the affinity between the folktales of different regions and across alien languages. Thereby, it lends credence to BregenjØj's view, mentioned earlier, that not just age but also content is a valid criterion to decipher the similarities and distinctions between tales of various regions so to reach an understanding of their likely diffusion or otherwise. This is further borne out by the following illustration provided by Budkuley, when she observes in the afore-discussed context:

However, there are other tales where deeper identification marks are discernible. For instance, 'the sleeping beauty' in English version is 'awakened' by the kiss of the prince, whereas 'the sleeping princess' in Konkani oral tradition is 'not' awakened by the prince at all! Rather in tune with the native norms of personal ethics, the prince 'keeps a naked sword' between the princess and himself as he lies in the same bed as her as though to safeguard her chastity and uphold his own honour.(101)

Such versions of a given tale thrown up by different language-cultures show how specific cultural practices and ideological norms tend to dominate the variants that get created. In fact, even within the same region and a single language, there are context-specific variations seen within the content or manifestation of the same folk form, such as the Hindu and Christian *Zagor* versions, driven by caste hierarchy, religious norm or political diktats. For instance, in the invocation of Hindu Gauda *Zagor* contains prayers to local deities while Christian *Zagor* invokes Jesus and Virgin Mary.

2.3.3 Historical-Geographical Theory

Indian theory by Benfey couldn't be proved but it inspired the Scandinavian particularly Finnish folklorists to trace the origin, history and travel routes of folk tales. This led to the Historical- Geographical theory also known as the Finnish school Theory. Finnish historical-geographical method reconstructs the history of a complex folktale, folksong or other folk item. To avoid rash generalizations about the origin and meaning of folktales, they carry out a thorough and unprejudiced examination of each individual text. A tale according to them can have hundred variants as it is an act of continuous invention. They reject blanket Theories of Origin as Polygenesis or independent invention of complex tales. The theory also dismisses anti-diffusionist theories which propose that tales cannot cross linguistic and cultural boundaries. Austrian folklorist Albert Werselski opines that, "literary versions of a tale exercised *an influence* on its circulation *so powerful* as to invalidate any attempts to trace oral traditions" (Emphasis added Dorson 1963). This seems to be a valid opinion. Yet the question remains what about the basis for inspiration of the pre-literary version of a given tale? There are possibilities that the tales after travelling from their original place went through a drastic change that it lost its original content. Probably these tales have gone through such severe modifications that tracing their origins become difficult. Also, evolution of languages can be a strong basis to trace the origins of the folk tales. There are chances that languages which developed first must have had their own oral material. Transport of this material as mentioned earlier must have happened with the emergence of trade. The only reason why some folk tales seem like they have originated in a particular region is spite of being travelled from another place is that it has a strong *influence* of accepting culture as Werselski mentions. In this context, it is helpful to cite Budkuley(2009). Speaking of the "vast mutual exchange of narratives" between India and Europe over the centuries, after their parallel though not identical socio-cultural awakenings during the Medieval Ages, when their dialects began to evolve into Modern Languages, she argues that:

[S]ince a language is the natural and comprehensive ‘conduit of culture’, it was a formidable challenge to the creative genius of the day to fuse the diversity of the narrative context and the identity of the given language-culture into which it had to be recast. Thus storytelling in ‘translation’ underscored the distinctness of the target language-culture from that of the source language-culture. In the process, it also invested the narrative in translation with a wealth of thematic, linguistic and cultural variety since the flavour of a region, custom and idiom was woven in with the paradigms of norms, values, beliefs and doctrines i.e. with ideology.(100)

Budkuley’s analysis of what might have led to the “formal, thematic or even contextual transmutations such that the identity of the received text is often indiscernible”, when ‘recirculated’ oral literature is “cast into diverse forms of literary and, performing, arts” (101) seems relevant to this discussion.

Swedish folklorist Von Sydov believes that local historical and cultural factors moulded an international tale into sub-types, or regional ‘*oitcotypes*’ , as he termed them, possessed their own histories. (Dorson 1963)

It can be observed that the folklore theories have been impacted by the region in which they evolved. For instance, the historical background of Russia influenced the theories proposed by Vladimir Propp, who can be considered a key figure in the field of Folkloristics. His views on the historicity of folklore and its relation, parallels with literature hold significance in terms of the current study.

2.4 Vladimir Propp and his Folklore Theories

Vladimir Propp, in his monumental work *Theory and History of Folklore* (1984) opines that spiritual culture is hidden in folklore. He thinks that it is an ideological discipline that reflects the outlook of the age. Propp also attempts to trace the difference between Folklore and Literature.

2.4.1 Difference between Folklore and Literature

Propp believes that both the fields, Folklore and Literature, overlap partially in their poetic genres and felt the need to realize and consider the differences between both these fields in order to study folklore systematically. The major difference between folklore and literature is the absence of ‘author’ in folklore. It is a combined activity of several authors yet most of the times they remain unknown. Folklore mostly gets created or has been created over the years as a part of rituals where as literature need not have the same motive. Another major point that

differentiates folklore from literature is that literature does not change over the time, while the core quality of folklore is its ‘changeability’. Thus, Propp recommends that it is necessary to record folklore as many times as possible. According to him each recording is a variant. For instance, in the current study, each primary text was recorded in various spaces, time and occasions. This helped in comparing the modifications and variations that can be seen in the same form performed on different spaces. To illustrate, *Zagor* from Dhonshi performed in 2015 and then 2016 had a few changes. For instance, in the latter a new song *Eka Payacho Re Thoti* was added in the performance which was absent in the former. This is an influence of the play *Premjagor* produced in the same year for the professional stage. The play is based on the folk theatre form *Zagor*. Also, it was noticed that *Ranmaalem* performances performed in Ranmaale festival (2014) were compressed versions of the *Ranmaalem* performed during Shigmo festival (2015). *Ranmaalem* performed traditionally goes on for a longer duration whereas; the ones performed in festivals are modified to suit the schedule of festivals. Also, in spite of being a region specific form, *Ranmaalem* exhibits various versions according to the smaller regions where it is performed. For instance, the variant from Coronzol was different than the one from Coparde. Both these villages are located in Sattari taluka from where *Ranmaalem* form originates.

Propp also mentions that when literature changes it becomes folklore. Thus, both cannot be studied in isolation as they keep on influencing each other in some or the other way. Various historical reasons affect the process of literature getting transformed into folklore. For instance, the narratives, verses or thematic motifs from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have found a place in folklore because these two epics were spread across various regions of India through religious and cultural dissemination/ teachings.

2.4.2 Folklore as Historical Phenomenon

Folklore, according to Propp is not just a literary but also historical phenomenon. Development of folklore depends on the forms of material and social life. In one of the chapters of *Theory and History of Folklore* (1984), Propp explains the significance of ethnography while studying the genesis of folklore as a phenomenon. He considers it as the first step in the study of folklore. Further, explaining the historical nature of folklore, Propp says that historical study of folklore should show what happens to old folklore under new historical conditions. For instance, inherited folklore comes in conflict with the old social system that created it and denies this system. Thus, in one sense, folklore is a contradiction of itself. This further leads to hybrid formation. For instance, the performances performed in various non-traditional events like folk festivals, corporate events and college festivals demand a modification and thus leads to

creation of the ‘hybrid formation’ that Propp discusses. Therefore, the basic creative process of folklore involves reworking the old into the new.

This can be well elucidated by referring to the Goan Folk Theatre texts under study. For instance, the contemporarization of songs from folk theatre of Goa has adopted the technique of reworking the old into the new contexts. The form of *Zagor* actually is supposed to have originated in the pre-Portuguese era, yet we see that there are songs which are inspired by the historical events which have happened much after the arrival of Portuguese. For instance, there is a song which mentions the country Bangladesh. The creation of the country Bangladesh happened after 1971. Prior to that, there cannot be a possibility of Goans knowing about the term ‘Bangladesh’. Thus, it can be concluded that this song must have been added in the *Zagor* performance post 71. The song is, “❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑” [We chopped the Muslims by going to Bangladesh]. The song is sung by the soldiers who narrate their achievements so that they are hired for Warfare. At one time, this verse must have mentioned some other nation as the land of ‘soldierly prowess’. The substitution, of the country’s name also brings in religious bias into play.

Propp also emphasizes that representing folklore as ‘a sunken cultural property’ is unscientific. The motive of folklore research should be developing and refining what is hidden behind the folklore. Social hierarchies, hegemonies, social exclusions, religious attachment, cultural connect to the native folklore despite religious or practice prohibitions are some issues that can be examined gainfully through a scientific, methodological approach to folklore. Since folklore contains a profound potential for message, the objective of folklore research should be the discovery of the same. What is scientific for Propp in Folklore Studies is the treating of plots of folklore as reality. He feels that folktale reflects prehistoric reality. Outrageous plots gain popularity because nobody believes it as reality. According to Propp, in folklore representation reality is turned inside out intentionally. Folklore stresses action and story rather than the descriptions of landscape and focuses on the empirical space that surrounds a given hero at the moment of action.

Although certain factors are common in all the genres of folklore, at times these genres can overlap. All this can be discovered only through scientific method of study of folklore; thus Propp also discusses the need to categorize the folklore systematically.

2.4.3 Folklore Studies and the Question of Genres

To study folklore systematically there is the need for categorization. It is actually the prerequisite and the basis of an in-depth study. Classification is the result of a long and detailed

research into folklore. To classify various genres of folklore, the principle of literary criticism of defining genre by the entire poetic system is applied.

Genre is defined as the group of monuments united by a common poetic system. Again, character of a genre is determined by the kind of reality it reflects, the means by which reality is expressed and the relation to reality and its assessment. Structure of each genre is obviously different. Also, their use in particular situation is the basic feature of some genres. But works of different genres can be interconnected too. Categories may exist in a genre itself. But the classification is done on the basis of one feature that is different in a genre, but that particular feature should remain the constant throughout the classification. However, as Propp says this generification is difficult in folklore because it keeps on changing. To meet this difficulty, stable elements such as actions have to be taken into consideration. While action is stable in folklore, the performances are the variables. Thus basic feature which will be used as the basis of classification of folklore genres should be formulated clearly. Usually, classification by mutually exclusive features is applied in establishing folklore genres. Even then, some genres merge into one another. To elucidate, folk theatre and folk music are considered as two different genres. In folk theatre form like *Kaalo* both these genres merge into one another to create one single genre of folk theatre form. Similarly, *Kaalo* is also a folk festival. Thus, it can be studied as a folk festival as well as a folk theatre form.

Each genre of folklore has a different system. Poetic devices of genre reflect the relation with the reality. To decode this relation, it is necessary to study the morphology of a form. This explains the close relation between the historicity of folklore and its literariness.

As such, folklore cannot be studied in isolation from reality. Skinds explains the relation of folklore to reality. He feels that folklore is endangered by reality. The fictitious plot of folklore contains obvious traces of people's lives even when it was not an aim. This happens unconsciously as folklore is an obvious reflection of people's lives. At the same time, there is a conscious, intentional description of reality in folklore, such as for instance, the descriptions of deaths, hardships of service, battles etc. In Zagor, the characters depicting the Mahar community, describe their lifestyle. One of the character sings, *Vhalli Sup Laaita Haav, Fonya Bazarak Vikta Haav* (Trans: I weave cane products, I sell them in Ponda market). The description narrates the professional reality of the community depicted through the character. The Mahar community has been traditionally involved in making handicrafts made out of cane. Propp repeatedly stresses the fact that folklore does not exist as a unified whole but breaks down into genres. Each genre, as mentioned earlier has a potential system of its own. Difference in these potential devices reflects difference in the relation to the reality. Since, each genre also

has its strict boundaries, Propp emphasizes the need to study each genre separately and draw conclusions about historicity as a whole. In his opinion, the historical method of interpretation of folklore should be comparative. On the backdrop of some of his very relevant propositions, it is easy to understand, why Propp's extensive work helped the next generation of folklorists to further explore the intricacies of folklore. Thus, the twentieth century Folkloristics has been marked by a cautious and eclectic approach.

2.5 Folklore Studies in Twentieth Century

While nineteenth century was characterized by the wild, extravagant theories by European folklorists, twentieth century was more of restrained and cautious with regards to folklore studies, opines Dorson (1963). During mid nineteen-twenties more of comparative and competitive theories of folklore made their way into academic discussions. Major schools of thought like Marxism and Freud's Psychoanalytic theories influenced the century's folklore theories. The Marxist folklorists' focal interest was to look for 'class struggle' in the folklore while Freudians tried to trace the 'suppressed libido' in the expressions of folk. This led to development of various schools of Folklore Studies devoted to the systematic and scientific study of Folklore as a major discipline of knowledge about the sociological evolution of the human race. Of these, the Comparative, National, Anthropological and Psychoanalytical schools of thought are the prominent approaches to Folkloristics of our times

2.5.1 Comparative Folklore Theory

As discussed earlier this method was developed by earliest stalwarts in the field The Grimm brothers. During 20th century, it was carried forward by Grimm Bolte and Pelvika by issuing their exhaustive reference to similar versions of Grimm tales. They classified various versions of tales collected by Grimm Brothers.

2.5.2 National Folklore theory

This theory concentrates on the distinctive qualities of the folk traditions found within one country. There are examples where small nations utilize their folklore to assert their uniqueness. Nazi Germany harassed the folklorists to spread the ideology of a master race united through mystical bonds of blood and culture, including folk cultures.

Folklore is perceived differently in different countries. For instance, for Latin Americans it is a living part of the national folk traditions. Current theory explains the relationship between the folklore studies and concept of Nationalism. Some nations manipulate the study of folklore for political ends. Some of them motivate the objective study of folklore to preserve the known stock of national traditions.

Hitler's National Socialist government was the first national state to make political capital of folklore studies. In 1930's massive literature of folklore was published in Germany documenting Nazi concept of 'HerrenVolk.' Riehl a sociologist and travel writer wrote *Die Volkskunde als Wissenschaft* in which he described folklore as a science. He was appreciated by Nazis. Hitler was an arbiter of German folk culture. His political thought had the notion of 'folkish' state to its center.

In Russia, folklore was a powerful force to promote communism. Y. M. Sololov and Veselovsky Miller recognized the neglect of creative elements in working class compositions. In his work *Folkloristics*, Sokolov dramatically pronounced the Marxist principles. According to him, folklore was a weapon to express the class conflict amongst the oppressed class.

Lenin declared, "Folklore must be considered from the socio-political point of view, as an aid to understanding the hopes and expectations of working masses in the past" (Dorson 18). The new task that the Russian folklorists took over was to search for pre-revolutionary evidence of proletarian attitudes revealed in folklore. I. G. Pryzhov had realized that folklore reflected the real life of people in their struggle against the Tzars, clergy, landowners and so on.

I.A. Khudyakov pursued themes of social protest and class satire in popular tales and historical folk songs.

While Russians stressed on labour class expression in folklore, this aspect was given less attention in countries like United States. Even in Hungary, Marxist principles were applied to folklore and were presented in nationalistic terms. After First World War, there was an impulse to establish Hungarian national culture. A modern scientific approach towards folklore was developed. In 1920, series of booklets were issued by the Folklore Fellows of Ethnographical Society to spread awareness of the methods and values of studying folklore.

While Socialists stressed on the problems of working class, countries like Japan worked in isolation. Kunig Yanagita founded Japanese Folklore Institute. Japanese founded the method of 'Shintoism', which included historical reconstruction. Yanagita influenced by the English folklorists of the late 19th century studied Folklore as a historical science. He seconded the view of George Gomme who said, "Past history and pre-history could be reconstructed from surviving fragments of folk beliefs and custom"(Dorson).

In American history of Folklore Studies, there were less of theories and little scholarship. Oral traditions were considered as insubstantial and untrustworthy. Thus, they failed to recognize its value as a reflection of social thought. A few collections like *The American Songbag* by Carl Sandberg in 1927 and *American Ballads and Folk Songs* by John A. and Alan Lomax in 1934 can be considered as the attempts to collect the folk literature in America.

2.5.3 Anthropological Theory

Tyler and Andrew Lang rejected the atomistic and diffusionist model of Benfey and introduced concept of polygenesis which implies multiple origins of folktales. They believed that an item of folklore could have originated in various areas but the conditions in which they originated might be similar. Their views are also known as Anthropological. Folklore studies is closely associated with anthropology which is defined as ‘the study of man, as an animal (physical anthropology), and as a member of society (social and cultural anthropology); with the later are usually included in ethnology (study of the past history of peoples), and archeological and linguistic studies.

Franz Boas edited the *Journal of American Folklore* from 1908 to 1924 and was responsible for assigning to folklore an influential role in studies of non-literate cultures. Boas line of American anthropology valued tales and other oral traditions of Indians and Africans.

Boas set out to collect the texts in interlinear translations from all possible informants in all available variants. He proposed that the corpus of traditional tales in a culture reflects the qualities of the material culture. He believed that tales comprise ethnography and provide valuable clues to the extinguished factors of tribal history. Boas concentrated on the dissemination process. He displayed interest in European and African borrowings seen in North American Indian repertoires.

Boasian approach was criticized by Melville Jacob, who felt Boasian and Finnish schools have reduced Folklore Studies to an arid descriptive and mechanical procedure. He stressed on gathering all the evidence in the closest possible approximation of reality, recalling the directions of Leopold Von Ranke. Boas was firm but went little beyond the faithful recording of texts towards any theoretical concepts for analyzing styles, values, humor, ethics and the worldview of tribe. Boas followed conventional folklore categories of characters, themes and incidents which permitted no real search into latent meanings of narratives. It did not pose any direct questions at informants which would enlighten on the features of content and hidden values.

Ruth Benedict, a student of Boas introduced fruitful ideas for the analysis of oral literature in her Zuni methodology. Benedict comments, ‘tales tally with, and yet do not tally with [culture]’ (Dorson). She examined the lines of divergence. She asserted that certain concepts recurring in tales need not be part of the culture, which she called as the suppressed tensions in the society released in oral literature. But at the same time, there is a fantasy world in the folk tales which is created with the help of cultural realities. Benedict considered style as well as content

significant in folklore research. She also stressed the creative artistry of individual narrators and the co-existence of multiple variants and distinguished between tribal and individual style. In 1940's anthropologists increasingly drew apart from folklorists. William Bascom tried to bridge the gap. He suggested that researchers should avoid the term 'folklore' and use 'verbal art'. He defined verbal arts as the creative compositions of a functioning society, and should be viewed as dynamic not static, integrated not isolated, central not peripheral components of culture.

Bascom defined functional role of folklore. For instance, proverbs help settle legal decisions, riddles sharpen wits, myths validate conduct and satirical songs release pent up hostilities. Anthropologists search for context as well as the text. Bascom also suggested that comparative folklorists can develop fresh and rewarding theory by relating folklore to culture. Most recent suggestions from Melville Jacobs seek for imaginative advance over the Boas type of literary text which renders the oral literature of tribal cultures. Melville Jacobs felt that Euroamericans regard the tribal narratives not as literature but as theatre, gesture, song and dance. He opined that oral literature projects the stresses and anxieties of cultures. An anthro-folklorist slices the text into component elements. They are divided into 'minimal units' tabulated for frequency of recurrence of situational elements, emotional attitudes, and stylized ways of initiating time and place movement. Anthropologists try to search the dominant psychological attitudes projected into tribal tales. Psychological reflections in folklore gained momentum when Folkloristics was influenced by Freud's Psychoanalytic theory.

2.5.4 Psychoanalytical Theory

It is one of the most speculative bodies of current folklore theory. Often found as abhorrent by the orthodox folklorists, this theory seeks to study the sexual symbolism in the folklore. A psychoanalyst folklorist tries to unveil the censor and read the 'true message' of the fantasy. 'On the Nightmares' by Ernest Jones deals with medieval demons and presents connection between infantile fantasies projected in dreams and in folklore. Dream is perceived as a precursor to parallel with myth and tale or combining with unconscious fantasies to form myth. Carl Jung was in opposition with Freudian ideas but he seconded with regards to folklore with psychoanalytical thoughts. They regard folklore as integral part of their discipline. They used the method of symbolism. Jung transformed the key concept of unconscious from individual to race. He believed that primitive man did not invent myths but experienced them as revelations of the preconscious psyche and modern man re-experiences them in 'autochthonous revivals'. Campbell (1949) explored universally recurrent themes of separation, travail and return of the mythological hero to illustrate their archetypal patterns. Professional folklorists

dislike psychoanalytical symbolism. Thompson terms all symbolists as ‘fantastic’ and ‘absurd’. Although this method has been criticized by many folklorists, even today eminent folk researchers like Allan Dundes use this approach.

2.5.5 Structural Folklore Theory

This theory as the name suggests takes its source from the literary structural criticism. The classicists and linguists undertake the analysis of structure of folklore texts. They construct a model that will explain the relationships of meaningful units in a folklore text. Propp had proposed a novel classification of folktales. Dundes applied his method and proposed a folklore index based on structural units. Pike introduced a term called ‘emic motif’ or ‘motifem’ for basic structural unit of language. Dundes suggested that motifem be used rather than ‘function’ in the new index as an extension of ‘motif’.

Dorson concludes in one of his articles related to theories that all the theories have their strengths and weaknesses. While comparative method undertakes indexes and distribution studies questions of function, style and structure remain out of their sphere. Anthropologists insist on functional role of oral literature in the cultures but oblivious to folklore in literate societies. Nationalists concentrate folklore in high civilizations which can lead to chauvinism. While structural theory has no proven value, the psychoanalytical remains questionable.

Theory based work was widely carried out in west with regard to folklore, while in India documentation based studies were carried out. Next segment attempts at tracing the concept of folklore as perceived in India.

2.6 Indian concept of *Loka-Veda* (Folk-lore)

In Indian context, ‘Folklore’ is often referred to as *LokVeda* or *LokSahitya* which are rough translations of terms ‘Folklore’ and ‘Folk Literature’ respectively. *Lok* originally a Sanskrit word has been used since the ancient times in India which can mean world, place, people, society, animal etc. It has also been used to denote different levels of human existence in *Puranas*. In most of the Indian languages this word has evolved to be meant as ‘people’ but for folklorists like Kunj Biharidas it is, ‘the people that live in more or less primitive condition outside the sphere of sophisticated influence.’(2003) and naturally the ‘literature’ created by these ‘Lok’ becomes ‘Lok-Sahitya’. In the words of Ravindra Bhramar, ‘Lok-Sahitya is the simple and spontaneous expression of lok-mind’.(2003) So, it can be said that the Indian ‘Lok’ is more or less closer to the ‘Folk’ as defined by the Western theorists. Today, folk is considered as ‘any group of people who share at least one common linking factor-geography, occupation, ethnic background etc,’ (World Book Encyclopedia 1992).

Trilochan Pande has a different say with this regard, he says, “Indian scholars have not accepted, and they still do not accept, the narrow use of the word Lok in the strict sense of European folk, as the history of civilization and the social pattern of India have been much more different than those of countries of West” (Pande 1963). But he also mentions that the term *Jan Sahitya* also came into existence in India with regards to folk-literature.

In Goan context, the term *Lokved* has been into usage to refer to folklore. The term takes its inspiration from inclusion of Lok in other languages in the terminology for folklore. *Lokved* has also been used by scholars from neighboring state Maharashtra. But, there has also been debate about whether to use *Lokved* or *LokSahitya* in Marathi circles since *Sahitya* may denote the meaning of ‘written literature’. Goan folklorist Jayanti Naik in her doctoral thesis describes *Lokved* as, “‘लोकवेद’ लोकवेद लोकानुषासन लोकवेद. ‘लोकवेद’ लोकवेद लोकवेद लोकवेद लोकवेद लोकवेद लोकवेद लोकवेद, लोकवेद-लोकवेद, लोकवेद लोकवेद लोकवेद, लोकवेद, लोकवेद, लोकवेद, लोकवेद, लोकवेद लोकवेद लोकवेद...” (८) [*Lokved* is the medium of folk culture. Even though it can be reflected through all the traditional aspects of ‘folk’ life, folk deities, festivals, rites from birth till the death, folk art, folk tales, idioms, riddles are the major aspects which are studied (8)].

Goan folklorist Pandurang Phaldesai looks at oral traditions, “[...]both as a repository of the past and also as a vehicle of social awareness[...]...”(5). He opines that, “[T]he collective oral record and the personal oral testimony provided by a narrator helps to construct an objective past.” (7). Therefore, it can be seen that oral records from folk traditions are essential and significant in tracing the historical elements. Also, we see that the focus of most of the scholars while defining the term ‘folklore’ has been the ‘people’ and their traditions. These traditions can be in various forms. However, traditions which are solely ‘literary’ in nature can be regarded as ‘folk literature’.

Therefore, one can say that while Folklore is a concept that includes wide range of ‘folk’ elements, ‘Folk literature’ is exclusively meant to include all the linguistic based elements like songs and tales.

Folk literature can be documented by using different techniques like interviews, documentation of performances etc. In India, this process of collecting and documenting began before the independence from British rule. Yet, there has been little done on the theoretic front. The history of Folklore Studies in India has been traced in the coming section.

2.6.1 Indian Folklore Studies

India has a rich source of folklore material, yet ‘the scientific study of Indian folklore was slow to begin,’ (Wikipedia). Folklorists in India are divided into three phases, first is the British administrators who collected the folklore in the intention of smooth administration. Second, are the missionary who collected the material to recreate religious literature and third is the post independence phase where folklore study was carried out in Universities and other such institutions. But the style of study was more of literary rather than being theoretic. It gained a theoretic base during 1980’s when Central Institute of Indian Languages and American Institute of Indian Studies started a systematic work in folklore studies. In India, an in depth study of folklore began through disciplines like anthropology. Except for Max Muller’s Solar Mythology and Benfey’s Diffusionist theory all other non-Indian theories rose from non-Indian data. Thus it is necessary to understand that Indian folklore studies shall need an exclusive theoretic base for the study of Indian folklore.

Although there have been so many developments and evolutions in the theoretic arena of folklore study no single theory has been validated as the best one for the study of folklore. Also, the historical and social context differs with regard to all these theories. They developed in different eras and regions of the World. So, every time same theory cannot be applied to a folk item from entirely different region. Moreover, at times, the same theory might have a global significance and may get applied to regional folklore. Also, theories developed outside the discipline of folklore having relevance to it can be applied in folkloristics.

Folklore cannot be studied without a context. The two factors which provide a context to any folklore form are society and culture in which the forms have evolved. Thus, next two segments attempt at placing folklore, specifically folk theatre in terms of society and culture.

2.7 Society: A Product of Cultural Evolution

Society is a contextual unit in which human beings have evolved as specie. The concept of society has helped human beings to associate themselves within the circles of proximal and similar attributes and functions. As humans have evolved they have developed means and modes of recreation, sharing information and asserting association. This process of creation of distinct variants into historical and geographical context has led to the creation of a product like culture. Therefore, it is gainful to discuss the related nature of the two terms ‘culture’ and ‘society’ which are fundamental to the creation as well as manifestation of folklore. Moreover, before analyzing social dynamics in the next Chapter it is essential to dwell on the notion of society and its relation to culture. A particular group structure within which every single culture across the world has evolved is commonly understood as society. Being almost as old as humankind, society as a term is bound to connote both, diversity as well as complexity of nature

and function. This intricacy of this term is aptly seen in RM McIver's definition of society which explains society as, "a system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions and of controls of human behavior and liberties."(1963) It is to be noted that this definition precisely underscores multiple aspects of societal existence and interactions. Some of these are modes and practices; power and hierarchy; interdependence and co-operation, diversity and psycho-social regulations of community life. Probably influenced by McIver's view, G.S. Ghurye (1997) has opined that no individual has been known apart from a group. As such he defines 'society' as "[...]an integrate of groups and of members of those groups. Both the individual and the group are primaries in all human societies" (Pillai 315).

Taking all these aspects into account, it is possible to see why Peter Berger (1983) describes Society as "[...]a human product, and nothing but a human product, that yet continuously acts upon its producers,"(3). In fact one can say that society is a system; it is constituted of groups and individuals but it is also an ever changing product. It brings about a change in its constituents or components as it evolves as an entity.

All the above definitions may vary yet in all the definitions of society, the element of 'group' plays a major role in the constitution of society. In other words, society is largely formed when individuals come together to form groups. This phenomenon has been in existence from the beginning of human history. When humans realized that they cannot function individually, they began to rely on other individuals for physical, biological needs as well as emotional support. During this process of inter-personal companionship, various norms of societal behavior and regulations governing modes and practices were formed. These norms are certainly not identical across various cultures. Yet certain norms have brought their individuals followers together as a group. There is no denying that due to the proximity, peer pressure or politics every individual has to follow the norms of the groups to which they belong to. For instance, in Goan context, irrespective of their religion, caste and gender some villages worship a particular local deity, kind of protector. Such adherence to certain defined (sometimes unspoken) norms has led to the formation of structural units called as societies. However, the basic determinant of society is undoubtedly togetherness.

Interestingly, in *Keywords* (1976) Raymond Williams emphasizes on the fact that the original meaning of the term 'society' is fellowship or companionship. Further, he goes on to define society in two senses: firstly, in terms of its 'constituents'; and secondly, in terms of the conditions of the constituents. Thus, he describes it for one "[...]as our most general term for the body of institutions and relationships within which a relatively large group of people live";

and secondly as “[...] our most abstract term for the condition in which such institutions and relationships are formed”(291). This shows that the conditions which determine the institutions and relationships, affect the nature of the given society.

On such basis, societies have evolved and developed over the centuries, new achievements, discoveries and inventions have been constantly added to the list of intellectual development of human kind, while across time, societies have as distinct group learned and un-learned several mechanisms related to survival work, earning, fostering, re-creating and governance. In this process, the intellectual production impacting social processes and cultural practices in turn has been a significant venture that human race has carried out. As such, in each phase of human evolution, humans have added not only to the existing societal knowledge but also its manifestations. Hence, in the assessment and classification of human societies, the mode of production and the ideological system facilitating it, became extremely significant.

For instance, Erasov and Singh categorize the social structures into three major categories on the basis of chronological evolution of societies and modes of production that have existed in the course of human development.: the traditional pre-industrial, the industrial capitalist and the post-industrial socialist (Erasov 84 2006). According to them, “[i]n the traditional pre-industrial social structures production was based on the predominance of living labour over accumulated labour, of natural factors over transformed labour, and of social labour co-operation over material prerequisites” (85).

Since, in the first phase of its evolution society was more reliant on human labour, natural phenomena and collective endeavourers, the social relations in this phase were distinct: the individuals were inclined towards group identity and followed the norms of the group. It can be said that the society here was more of a collectivist in nature. The rituals and festivals which date back to this particular phase of evolution, exhibit this collectivist approach. For instance, peasant festival of Goa Shigmo is not limited to a smaller unit like family, but its nature is group oriented. The rituals in this festival are carried out by all the villagers together. Even the folk theatre forms for that matter, are quintessentially collectivist in nature.

Religious restrictions and caste regulations, including taboos and prohibitions were used to curb individual liberty and preserve the hierarchical status quo principle with regard to privileges and obligations. In fact, some of these still exist in the modern world, particularly those related to caste and religion.

For instance, with regard to Goa, the communities which were founded in this traditional pre-industrial era continue to follow some of the religious restrictions of their hoary past to this day in certain domains of public life. No doubt, the egalitarian nature of the democratic set-up of

India has facilitated and even encouraged inter-communitarian inclusiveness in certain domains of public life, like in the employment spaces yet the presence of caste is still a hindrance on social, psychological and even cultural level. This may be due to the fact that the foundation of Indian society has been not just on the principle of solidarity within a group, but also impacted by the conflicts existing among across various castes and sub-castes. However, this is not to suggest that a cohesive and co-operative society did not exist in India. It did, but by adhering strictly into the norms of inclusivity and notions of mutual exclusion across various societal units and sub-groups.

Furthermore, in spite of such differences and distancing there is no denying that each societal group in turn has produced its own intellectual as well as cultural resources which have been instrumental in the education, recreation, entertainment as well as information of its members and others as well. They are the elements which reflect social, historical and emotional aspects of human life. A significant manifestation of the intellectual cultural resources lies in the folklore of various communities across cultures. Among several other manifestations of lore and legend, these multiple resources comprise of various art forms including folk theater. As such it is necessary to understand this folk theatrical dimension of human culture. But before that a brief discussion of culture will be gainful.

2.8 Culture: As Perceived Through the Ages

The term ‘culture’ has evolved over a period of time. It has its origins in the Latin term *cultura* which denotes the process of ‘tending’. From being considered to as a process, the term ‘culture’ came to be discussed as a ‘product’. However, post industrialization, this notion of culture did not find favour with the existing society, since certain sections of society were still not ‘cultured’ as per this notion which looked at culture merely as ‘refinement’. Thus in the era that followed industrialization, this notion was challenged and as, the term ‘culture’ came to be looked upon not as refinement but a way of life.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the rise of Cultural Studies as a domain of study according to Stuart Hall was aimed at, “[...] address (ing) the manifest break-up of traditional culture” (Christopher 18 2005). While various stalwarts of this discipline defined culture in the contemporary contexts, it is F. R. Leavis’ view that threw up a new debate in the field. “[H]igh art which is the quintessence of the values of society” (Christopher 21). Although this view did provide a basis for further discussion of ‘culture’, each evolving school of thought began to see culture in a distinct various contexts. For instance, structuralists, saw cultural practices as signifiers made possible by an underlying system of differences. Likewise thoughts like post-modernism, post-Marxism, post-colonialism, each critiqued the various views on culture and

challenged some of them. For example, post-colonial scholars challenged the Euro-centric focus of the study of culture. Thus, culture is now looked upon in more specific context(s) and thus stress is laid on difference rather than simplicity in the discourse of culture.

This study of difference in cultures has led to a detailed exploration of various cultures under various parameters. However, though, the range of elements analyzed as constituents of culture expanded over a period of time, traditional practices still form the very core constituent of culture. As far as India is concerned, a consciousness about exploring the latent values of cultural practices has arrived albeit a little late. Yet attempts at several levels have been made to study and analyze traditional practices mainly as the expression of the marginal and subaltern folk.

Everything from products, practices to norms of society constitute the culture. The social dynamics as well, play a significant role in shaping the culture in a way it gets shaped. The dynamics of societies have been formed over a period of time according to the need and circumstances. It includes the interactions that are carried out by individuals being in a society and the relationships which are formed as per the evolution of society. These relationships have led to various structures and hierarchies. For instance, in Indian society, the social structure is largely based on the caste system which is hierarchical in nature. Thus, in such cases the social dynamics that have been formed and have been followed rigidly by a society becomes an imposing factor for the individuals who fall on the periphery of the social structure. This phenomenon can be traced through the analysis of social dynamics existing in Goan society vis-à-vis its folklore, specifically with regard to this study, through its folk theatre. The reflection of these relationships can be seen in the folk theatre of Goa. However, before dwelling into the reflection of social dynamics in folk theatre, it would be apt to discuss in detail the social dynamics which exist in Goan society in the context of the Indian caste system. This has been discussed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

Social Dynamics in Goan Folk Theatre

3.1. Goan Social Dynamics: Undercurrents of Hierarchy

For any meaningful analysis of the presence or reflection of ‘social dynamics’ in Goan folk theatre to be relevant to the present discussion, the term needs to be suitably elucidated and the extent of its use spelt out at the outset. A couple of very simple and clear definitions of the term ‘social dynamics’ state that it is “the study of social processes especially social change” (dictionary.com); or that, it is the “study of interactions within, and between societies (Yourdictionary.com).

More formally defined as “a branch of social physics that deals with laws, forces, and phenomena of change in society”(Merriam-Webster.), it “refers to the behavior of groups that results from the interactions of individual group members as well as to the study of the relationship between individual interactions and group level behaviors” (Wikipedia Contributors). According to Steven Durlaf and Peyton Young (2001), its fundamental assumption is that individuals are influenced by one another’s behaviours; and it is concerned with changes over time and recognizes the importance of heterogeneity across individuals. On the basis of the above discussion, two notions that invariably impact it, and so become inherently crucial to the understanding of social dynamics in the Goan context are, namely, the concept of hierarchy in general and caste system in particular. As such, a brief discussion of both these notions in sequence is gainful to this analysis before venturing into the illustration of their presence/reflection in the Goan folk theatre forms under study.

As per *Cambridge English dictionary* the term ‘hierarchy’ itself is derived from the Greek phrase ‘iepapxia hierarchia’, which means ‘rule of a high priest’ which is relevant literally as well as contextually to the present discussion. It defines the term hierarchy as, “[A] system in which people or things are arranged according to their importance.” In a hierarchical situation, the people or things placed in the upper stratum get more privileges and, consequently, those who are placed in the lower strata are deprived of similar privileges.

Since hierarchical churches, such as the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, had tables of organization that were ‘hierarchical’ in the modern sense of the word (traditionally with God as the pinnacle or head of the hierarchy), the term came to refer to similar organizational methods in secular settings” (Wikipedia Contributors “Hierarchy”). In the present study also, the attempt is to analyze social hierarchy from secular perspective, albeit in the context of religious ritual, since a specific hierarchical structure is innately woven into the very fabric of Indian society. In the words of Sony Pellissery: “[A] fine-graded social hierarchy dominates all types of inter-personal relationships in Indian context” (247). This hierarchy operates predominantly the form of caste system in addition to several aspects like race, class, gender, social orientation, language (as in a diaglossic situation) etc. This calls for a brief discussion of the caste hierarchy in Goa in the context of Indian caste system from which draws its genesis, nature and form.

3.2. 1. Cast Hierarchy in Goa: Context and Structure

According to www.vocabulary.com, the root of caste is the Latin *castus*, which means “chaste” or “pure, separated”. The word arrived in English through the Portuguese *casta*, which means “race” or lineage”, and was first used in 1700 in reference to Hinduism’s system of social stratification (Vocabulary.com). As per www.dictionary.com its origin can be traced to mid 16th century (in the general sense ‘race, breed): from Spanish and Portuguese *casta* ‘lineage, race, breed, feminine of *casto* ‘pure, unmixed, from Latin *castus* ‘chaste’. The Indian approximate term for caste is *jaati*. It is derived from the Sanskrit word *jāta*, which means “born” or “brought into existence,” and indicates a form of existence determined by birth (Madan). In India, the caste system has had its origins in the *Varna* system of Vedic society (ca. 1500-500 BCE). The word *varna* means colour in Sanskrit. The institution of *varna* existing in Indian society according to Louis Dumont, (2006) “presents the purest example of ‘hierarchy’” (Khare 94).

Historically, *Varna* system divided the society into four major sections. This major stratification included the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. This system was based on the occupational duties that the people performed. Existence of this system in India has been explained in various contexts. Satoskar provides verse 13 from Bhagvadgita from fourth canto which says, ‘□□□□□□□□ □□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□’ (149) which translate as “The four divisions of human order were created by me according to differences in

quality, activities, and aptitude; although the creator of this, know me as the non-doer being immutable” (“Approaching the Ultimate Truth”). Satoskar analyses this particular verse while applying it to the formation of *varna* system in India and says that “□□□□□ □□□ □□□
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□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□”. [When the Aryans arrived in India they had only one varna.
Later, due to the division in duties there was a division into the varnas”](149).

As time passed, these divisions assumed the form of rigid strata. Eventually, since the caste came to be passed on from one generation to another, there was little scope left for the individual abilities to develop. According to McIver and Page, “[W]hen status is wholly predetermined so that men are born to their lot without any hope of changing it, then the class takes the extreme form of caste” (Das). This is exactly what happened in India when the caste system was followed rigidly. Even marriages between two different castes were a taboo till the recent times. At present, the things have not changed as drastically as desirable in an egalitarian society but the system has also not remained as strict as it was a few decades ago, for instance, prior to Goa’s liberation in 1961 from Portuguese colonial rule. It is significant to mention this fact because the Portuguese had introduced Common Civil Code in Goa. Despite this fact, the caste-based discrimination persisted in the rigid social hierarchy across religious communities of the day. However, it must be acknowledged that this discriminatory social behavior was not as extreme as prevalent as in contemporary British India. Nonetheless, there is no denying that it was subtly practiced and it permeated the social hierarchy.

Speaking of social hierarchies, Erasov and Singh opine that:

[I]n traditional societies, exploitation is disguised. It is embodied in a system of “mutual responsibilities”, wherein a leader, Brahmin, landowner, merchant, money-lender or boss show their “fatherly concern” for his subordinates, “weaker” people or provide them with vital or imaginary assistance (Erasov 89).

This view underscores the subtle exploitation of the communities on lower hierarchical level as the direct outcome of social hierarchy. This exploitation has been seen on various levels. It often operates under the latent cover of ‘religious constraints’ or is practiced normally as the adherence to the traditional values. For instance, community of Mahars found in large numbers in places like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and some parts of Goa had been traditionally

involved in sweeping roads, carrying carcasses, weaving etc. They used to have their own living space on the outskirts of village. They used to be treated as untouchables and their involvement in social activity would have several restrictions like sitting at a particular demarcated place, playing only one single musical instrument etc. In Goa, according to Satoskar the sub-community of Mahars that exists is called as *Someshi*. They have been involved in making bamboo products. Although, the degree of untouchability in Goa was not as severe as in the neighboring state of Maharashtra, yet there are still certain practices which indicate the ‘otherness’ of this community.

In fact, the caste structure in Goa can be better understood in the larger context of the caste system in India. The latter has been the result of the hierarchical structure that evolved during the conservative phase of the pre-industrial era in medieval India. Castes have been further divided into sub-castes since then. Consequently, as Iravati Karve opines, “[I]n the single-linguistic regions more than two hundred castes and in every caste around twelve sub-castes are found” (Satoskar 156). However, this is not really the case when it comes to Goa. There are only around thirty five castes amongst Hindus of Goa.

According to the *Gazetteer of India, Union Territory: Goa, Daman and Diu*, Part 1, the castes in Goa are divided into eight separate sections. Of these, those which are considered to be ‘high castes’ in the societal context are *Pancha Dravida Brahmins*, *Gaud Saraswat Brahmins*, *Kudaldeshkar Gaud Brahmin*, *Chitrapur Saraswat Brahmins*, *Rajapur Saraswat Brahmins*, *Pancha Dravida Brahmins*, *Chitpavan Brahmins*, *Kramavanta Joshi*, *Daivjna Brahmins*. The ones which are classified as intermediate castes are the *Maratha* and *Vaishya* castes.

The rest of the castes are broadly termed as *Bahujan Samaj*. These include *Bhandaris*, *Kalvants*, *Charis* and so on. Other castes which are included in the ‘Other Backward Classes’ by Government of Goa are *Kharvi*, *Madval*, *Dhangar*, *Gosavi*, *Pagui*, *Shimpi*, *Teli*, *Kumbhar*, *Nathjogi*, *Nhavi*. The Scheduled Castes of Goa include *Bhangi*, *Chambhar*, *Mahar* where as *Gaudas*, *Kunbis* and *Velips* are grouped under Scheduled Tribes.

Among all these castes, the Brahminical communities have been conventionally accorded a higher status in the society. Some of these Brahmins, who indulge in priestly duties are locally known as *Bhats*. This community has been one of the common targets in most of the folklore

of the so-called lower caste communities. Their position in the social hierarchy of Goan society has been commented and critiqued in the folklore.

As per a prevalent belief, the Gaud Saraswat Brhamins, the community that is commonly known as *Bamonn*s is said to be brought into Goa by Lord Parshuram along with their *Kuldevas* (family deities) from the Northern parts of India to Goa. One theory that validates this view is the drying up of river Saraswati around 1000 B.C. and Brahmins who were affected by this travelled to the coastal areas. As mentioned in *Sahyadri Khand*, Saraswat Brahmins were settled in ten villages of Goa. Co-incidentally, these villages were the first to be conquered by the Portuguese.

With the advent of *Vaishnavism* and the conversion of some of the families to this Sect, Saraswat Brahmin clans were known to have had strained relations amongst themselves, with restraint on marriages and social intercourse across the two sects. An industrious and resourceful community, they soon moved from agriculture and ritualistic spheres to various major professions like swordsmanship, education, business and eventually took up administrative duties under various dynasties and gradually evolved as land owners. This inference can be easily corroborated by comparing similar transformations of this community's growth and prestige replicated by members who were compelled, by political persecution under the Portuguese during the 16th-17th centuries, to migrate en-mass to neighbouring regions like Mumbai, North and South Canara, Kochi in erstwhile British India. The members of this community who stayed back in Goa are often depicted as *Bhaatkaar* (land owner) in Goan folklore. The characters who portray the Bhatkaar dress up in a particular way to signify the well-to-do position that this community traditionally enjoyed.

In the case of Christians in Goa, the caste system has been an extension of Hindu caste system with some difference, in that unlike the Hindus they *have* the *Chardo* or *Chaddo* caste for Kshatriyas, *don't have* the *Vaishya* caste and use the term '*Sudra*' for the lower castes which the Hindus don't use. When the work of evangelization in Goa began, the conversion of higher caste was a matter of pride for the missionaries. Thus, their baptism was performed with much care, great festivities and fanfare. Although equality was promoted by the Catholic Church, it couldn't erase the social structure based on caste. As such, there are three major castes amongst Goan Christians. These communities from Goan society have shared various kinds of

relationships with each other. The reflection of these relationships can also be seen in the folk theatre of Goa.

3.2.2 Inter-Community Relationships: Harmonies and Complexities

The communities discussed in the above segment play various roles according to their ancestry and hierarchical position in the social set-up of Goa. Some roles have been assigned to certain communities down the generations, while some individuals have moved away from their community-assigned traditional tasks to some other kind of professional work. Thus, there are certain communities which are categorized on the basis of the profession they practiced. For instance, there are professional subcastes like Barber (*Mhalo*), Washerman (*Madival*), Oilman (*Shimpi*), Tailor (*Teli*), Potter (*Kumar*) and Cobbler (*Chamar*). During the period when barter system existed in Goa, these “[...] professionals were paid a fixed amount of paddy during the harvest season from *communidade* land,” Mitragotri (60). Thus, there used to be a systematic division of duties among the various castes in each village.

Although all the castes and tribes have had their distinct characteristic practices and norms of social behavior, they have also been socially interdependent. In more recent times, the members of various communities have accepted and adapted the behavioural traits or practices of other communities into their present lifestyle, in various degrees. Yet, there are certain restrictions on core practices such as rituals, modes of worship, or institutions such as marriage, which underscore inter-community divide.

Traditionally, some communities own vast tracts of lands and enjoy the privilege of being considered as elite due to historical reasons; while other communities have not been as privileged as their counterparts and they have remained on the lower rungs of the societal hierarchy. Land ownership and priestly duties have largely contributed in widening the gap not only between communities per se, but also between the empowered leadership of the priestly class and the marginal status of the others within the community. Interestingly, since folklore, is the product of the communities dependent on oral lore, it is composed or performed by those from lower strata. The upper caste having attained literary skills earlier than the rest have not retained the practice of folklore inherited from their ancestors.

It is only in recent times that the upper caste individuals have been trying to adopt certain folklore practices into their own cultural practices. This includes the performing of traditional

folk theatre forms by them in traditional set-up as well as modern set-up like contemporary drama. Yet, originally these forms have been a product of marginal communities. They were the muted voices which looked out for the modes of self expression and self identity in a society where they remained on the periphery. These modes have been community specific and performed by a non-lettered generation. Their position in the society and the treatment received by them renders them subaltern. This position needs to be studied through the lens of Subaltern Studies. But before that the status of another major subaltern group i.e. women, and the concept of gender with regard to Goan social dynamics has to be discussed in brief.

3.2.3 Concept of Gender and the Status of Women in Goan Society

The term ‘gender’ was brought into usage by feminists to distinguish between biological differences from social/psychological ones. This usage helped the feminists to argue that the gender roles as assigned to males and females in the society are a social construct and they are not the qualities which woman is born with. “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” is Simon De Beauvoir’s oft-quoted statement which , in a way has paved the way in the field of Gender Studies to further explore the construction of gender identities and the consequent stereotyping of women. According to Judith Butler, Beauvoir and French feminist Monique Wittig’s positions, “[...]commonly suggest a theory of gender that tries to make cultural sense of the existential doctrine of choice. Gender becomes the corporeal locus of cultural meanings both received and innovated.” (Seyla128). Gender Studies aims at studying gender representation in the cultures. It looks at how various cultures have perceived the issue of gender. Art forms are a good source of perceiving how society views women and women-related issues. This can provide a significant insight into how a society treats women.

With regard to Goa, women from various levels have found varied positions. Historically, there have been Queens like the one of Kadamba dynasty who was in a position to encourage learning. But women of the non-ruling sections of society have not enjoyed such a status in Goa. There have been historical accounts of child marriage and dowry system in Goa. The historical records of pathetic state of widow and evidences of women jumping into dead husband’s funeral pyre, known as the custom of *Sati* have been found in Goa. In his article on the tradition of Sati in Goa historian and environmentalist Rajendra Kerkar mentions, “Folk songs are sung during the Shigmo festival which tells us that she jumped into the burning pyre of her dead husband near the temple hundreds of years ago” (Kerkar).

This system was prevalent during the rule of Shilharas and Kadambas. Even during the period of Vijaynagara the system continued in Goa. The Sati stones found in many places of Goa validate the presence of this system. Later, during the Portuguese regime, the practice of Sati and tonsuring of widows were abolished.

Yet another exploitative system that existed in Goa was the *Devdasi* system. The word Devdasi literally means the servant of God. These women carried out all the temple work like giving bath to deity, singing songs for auspicious occasions etc. They were locally called as *Naikin*, *Kalvant* or *Bhaavin* as mentioned by B.D. Satoskar. Their maintenance was looked after by the village system of *Communidade*. The teenage girls of *Kalvants* were taken into the profession through the ceremony of *Shens* that involved a mock marriage. Subsequently, they were not allowed to get married to anybody else. Thus, it often led to their exploitation in the guise of ‘serving God’.

Other than these exploitative traditions, women in Goa did not enjoy too many rights in the households too. Often they were confined to homes and were expected to work for the family. It is only during Portuguese rule that gradually women were seen in the social environs of Goa. But that was also restricted to certain communities. In spite of this, the women in Goa have managed to speak out their minds through the oral folk tradition. This can be seen in various folk tales, folk songs sung by women on various occasions. They reflect the feminine psyche and underscore the subaltern position of the female in societal and family structure. This draws attention to folklore as the voice of the subaltern.

3.3.1 Folklore: Voice of the Subaltern

The rise of Cultural Studies in India went hand in hand with emergence of Subaltern Studies in 1980’s which focuses on cultural expressions to understand and interpret historical events. It considers narratives of common people as an alternative historical account since history has been written by and from the viewpoint of the elite or the hegemonic class. The point of view of the ordinary people has been rarely documented in written form. Hence, the significance of folk narratives and performative forms like folk theatre is paramount in the study of social dynamics.

Subaltern Studies aims at exploring these undocumented histories in the folk narratives of various cultures, which reveal the distinctness of their group identity, the subalternity of their

social standing and the marginality of their experience. According to Ranajit Guha,(1998) the hallmark of Subaltern Studies has been the “[...] insistence on a solidarity that would not reduce individual voice, styles, and approaches to a flat and undifferentiated uniformity” (Guha ix). In discussing the psyche of subaltern classes, Gautam Bhadra opines that both ‘defiance’ and ‘submissiveness’ to authority together constitute the subaltern mentality (Guha 63). Such an ambivalent attitude of authority has led these classes to be submissive in certain contexts, while they have also defied the existing social norms in certain contexts, mainly in the course of revelry and festivity often under the garb of community theatre performances. One of the ways in which the existing social structures have been challenged or critiqued by the subaltern folk is through their art forms.

As mentioned earlier, the groups which are studied under Subaltern Studies are usually the ones which do not have the tradition of written or documented forms of art.

Thus, for the subalterns, folklore has been the medium not only of ritualistic practices and aesthetic expression but a potent mode of venting their angst against hegemony of the upper castes and classes. Interestingly, folklore is a tradition handed to the next generation. For instance, in Goan folk theatre scenario, *Zagor* is community specific performance of Gauda community. Although, this community is one of the earliest settlers of Goa, it has remained underprivileged and felt the brunt of exploitation. Also, the Gauda community has been a victim of ridicule in many of the social and linguistic norms.

Folklore comprises all modes of folk wisdom and art forms. Hence, folklore forms an invaluable basis of studies undertaken under cultural and anthropological research. An interesting feature of folklore is its oral component, which is sacred and profane, innovative and continual; yet, it is not rigid in its popular performative aspect and is open to improvisation and repartee, especially in some of the folk forms undertaken for analysis in the present study. This flexible dimension of certain performative folk forms dates back to antiquity and yet provides a take on contemporary society. As such, folklore becomes a good source for studying social dynamics vis-à-vis: the changes in societal ethos and the cultural patterns on the one hand; and, the rigidity of the social hierarchy and cultural norms on the other.

It is the core of a community’s heritage that gets passed on in the oral form and as practice or performance from one generation to another. In this process of transferring the legacy from one

generation to another, some of the elements in the given folk form are naturally lost and some elements are added in the following generation which take it up as both as a sacred devotional heritage but also uses it as both a source of entertainment as well as the weapon of social critique and defiance of injustice of upper classes or castes.

Folklore, according to Erasov and Singh, “[...]expresses the resentment of the lower class against the behavior of the upper class and their protest against the customs of patriarchal families, the cruelty of the caste system, the hypocrisy of the clergy, the bribery of officials[...]" (98). Folklore is generally known to have expressed all such sentiments of those at the periphery of society. In fact, folklore through its flexible nature, keeps on manifesting this feature. Folklore in a way becomes the identity and voice of the subaltern. All folk forms including folk theatre are the vehicles of identity, expression and in some cases emancipation. It is a tool of expression also for the doubly marginalized section of women in the society. In the Goan folklore, there are gender exclusive forms in which the women express for themselves. However, even in the male-exclusive forms like folk theatre, the role of gender as a concept plays a significant role in its content and performance mechanisms, as traced at length in the next section.

3.3.2 Folk Theatre and Gender Dynamics

Folk theatre of Goa, in spite of being highly male-gender exclusive, contains much depiction of both the male and female genders acknowledged by the traditional society. Interestingly, many characters from the folk theatre forms are female, but they are enacted by males. Commonly found representations of female in the folk theatre forms are those of goddesses, wives, old women, demonesses etc. All these representations reflect different patriarchal attitudes pertaining to women in Goan society. This can be seen through objectification, reification, glorification, deification that occurs in folk theatre forms. Thus, the basic categorization with regard to representation of women in Goan folk theatre is image-specific: one category representing the social attitude reflected in the positive image of women through glorification and deification; and, the other is the negative attitude revealed through the objectification or reification of women. However, both generate from stereotyping of women as a whole.

3.3.3.1 Depiction of Female Mythic Entities: Deification and Demonization

A major share of the female depiction in the folk theatre forms under study is confined to the portrayal of non-human, mythological female characters—either independent ones like Goddess Saraswati, Putna, Tratika or as the counterparts of male deities like the consorts of God Ganapati. Interestingly, these characters are superhuman but are restricted to two extreme manifestations --- either as divine or demoniac—both diametrically opposite and rather unrealistic from the worldly point of view, as seen from the discussion below.

3.3.3.2 Deified Female Characters

All the three forms under discussion begin with an invocation known as *Naman*. In the *naman* of *Zagor*, several deities are invoked. Among them, goddess Saraswati is individually invoked after a few initial invocations are made to other male deities. But this may vary according to the region. In *Kaalo* and *Ranmaale*, the first performance is of the characters of Lord Ganesha and his two wives Riddhi and Siddhi. They dance as the chorus sings invocations. Traditionally, the wife is treated as *Sahcharini* (companion; fellow) someone who supports the husband. While portraying the divine spouses female deities are not presented individually but with their respective spouses except for the character of Goddess Saraswati in *Zagor* and *Kaalo*.

Goddess Saraswati or the Goddess of wisdom is often called Sharada. She dances and the chorus sings praises for her. They ask her to bless the performance with her power of ushering wisdom. In *Kaalo*, she is referred to as *Maauli* the term used for motherly figures. She is considered as someone who showers mercy and grace on those who are ignorant. Thus, here the glorification of the female is achieved through the depiction of the divine female deity.

3.3.3.3 Demonized Female Characters

Other than portraying the real life and mythological female deities, folk theatre also portrays characters which are negative in nature. For instance, in *Ranmaalem*, at the end of the performance a demoness called Tratika enters the performing area cutting through the audience. Usually, a hefty male plays this role. The clothes of this character are not graceful like those of the other female characters. She enters very ferociously and then she is killed by Ram and Laxman, the brothers from the epic Ramayana. While her corpse is being taken away by the victorious brothers, it becomes a reason for laughter for the audience. Death of a villainous character provides them an entertainment as well as the gaudy portrayal of the same character becomes a reason for ridicule. Even in *Kaalo*, the representation of Putna, the demoness who tried to kill Lord Krishna, is also significant in terms of its narrative.

3.3.4.1 The Portrayal of the Real Life Woman

The role of goddesses is usually in the initial parts of the performances of forms like *Zagor*. Rest of the performance is dominated by other women characters inspired from real life characters. Very few female characters perform individually and most of the times are accompanied or followed by their male accompanists. If she comes individually she seeks for help and protection from a male character.

In *Zagor*, there is an episode of *Maali*, the gardener and his wives. Although the focus of this episode is on the gardener, his wives arrive first on the performance space and introduce their life as spouses of gardener. They talk about how they are going to pluck flowers. Further, they also sing about other tasks they are supposed to complete. These tasks are mostly related to the profession of flower sellers. Through their songs once again they remind the presence of *Maandacho Guru* (Lord of the performing space), the audience and the local deities. They sing about offering garlands made by them to these significant entities. Later, their husband, the gardener arrives and speaks about his profession. But the female characters only dance and do not sing with him. Thus, the arrival of male character gains significance and dominance.

Rangmala is one of the characters who enter on stage individually in *Zagor*. Initially, she speaks about her beauty, how she is groomed etc. And then, she shares her pains about leaving her mother's house twelve years back. Here, is a reflection of the status of married woman in the earlier times. In this context, Mitragotri's observation is relevant: "[T]he married daughters would come to visit their parents' occasionally during festivals or for delivery. Such visits were for short period" (73). The character from *Zagor* also shares how she is travelling alone. And then a male character enters, who speaks about her loneliness and how he can help her take it away. According to Tulshidas Dhonshikar a performer from Dhonshi, Bandora this female is also called as *Tenli* and the male who falls for her beauty is *Vanmaali*, the snake catcher.

Yet another interesting character from *Zagor* is a warrior female resembling Queen Laxmibaai of Jhaansi. She calls herself Laxmi and claims to be going for a war at Canacona. She is followed by three soldiers who are dressed in attire of modern policeman. Thus, here we see the hybridization of historical reality. The *Zagor* performers must have only heard the legends of Queen Laxmibaai and must have seen the manifestations in mediums of popular culture like television, films and books. Since the legend isn't indigenous to Goa and comes from another

state, the performers have taken the liberty of localizing a legend from other part of the country. This addition might have happened during the times of Indian freedom struggle or the phase where the imprints of Indian freedom struggle were seen on the social backdrop of Goa.

Mhaarali Soon or the daughter-in- law of Mahaar is the female character that enters with two male characters, her husband and her son. She brings with her a *soop* (winnowing basket) made of cane. Mahar community is known for being skilled workers in making things out of cane. Use of this particular prop helps the performers in introducing the social background of the character. This female character complains that her husband and her son have finished all the money that was earned by her in drinking alcohol. Thus, the performance here brings in the picture the social evil of alcoholism which is quite prevalent in rural parts of Goa. Often, the victims are the womenfolk. It is interesting to note that the folk theatre tries to bring the female perspective in this case.

In the folk theatre form, *Ranmaalem*, also many female characters are seen. The invocation begins with prayers to female goddesses in *Ranmaalem*. In this form too there are female characters who represent wives of various professionals. And they are all shown as accompanying their husbands, such as the wife of the farmer and the wife of shepherd among others.

Through the dialogues and songs, the female characters depict various aspects of day-to- day life of a normal female in a patriarchal household, such as kitchen chores, cooking, various forms of gold jewellery, ways of grooming etc. Moreover, these characters also narrate the ordinary women's problems. Thus, the male performers, while enacting female characters express the grief of females. For instance, wife of an alcoholic husband shares her pains about her husband being an alcoholic. There is the character of an old woman who shares (apparently from the male perspective) the grief of being old and unattractive.

It is not surprising that in our gendered social hierarchy, women characters in folk theatre are also depicted as the targets for exploitation or objectification. For instance, in *Ranmaalem*, there are verses which subtly reveal strong sexual overtones. To illustrate this point, a song in *Ranmaalem* will be suitable. It goes as, “*Ago Ago! Sakhu var bugh lakdank vaita tevhaan. Bhaojin tuka malear bolealam. Rupea Tuka Choleak thaila*” [Hey Sakhu look up at the attic while going to collect firewood. Your brother- in-law has called you there, as he wants to offer

you a rupee for a blouse]. Sakhu is a popular name for girls. This verse reflects various things. One is that the task of collecting firewood was widely carried out by females. Secondly, brother-in-law who is usually a respected male asks the girl to come on the attic which was usually a secluded and private space in the old houses. Thirdly, offering a rupee for the blouse doesn't apparently indicate only the offer but more than that a concealed bargain for (probably sexual) favours.

Other than the narratives that reflect sexual tones, some folk theatre forms have also been associated with the community which was exploited on the sexual level. The Perni community that performed *Perni Zagor* was involved in customs like *Shens* which led to the marriage of girls to the gods turning them into servant of gods. These customs slowly stopped after the advent of education in Goa. That might be one of the reasons why the folk form is on the verge of extinction.

3.3.4.2 Role of Women vis-a-vis Folk Theatre

In all three folk theatre forms under study, the women characters are enacted by males but interestingly they all dress up accurately like women. During the field work, it was noticed that in most of the places, women help these performers to dress up. Thus, in this case, women might not be the direct performers but they have a role to play when it comes to dressing the performers. They are also part of the audience. Also, folk theatre performances are not just performances but an occasion for celebration. Thus, during these festivities, women are involved in preparing special food items for the guests visiting the village to enjoy the festival and performance.

3.3.4.3 Men in the Shoes of Women

Issues related to women are not expressed only by female characters. Even the male characters too unconsciously or consciously, intentionally or unintentionally give a voice to plight of women. For instance, in *Ranmaalem*, a character of servant working in the house of *Saokaar* or the money-lender says that the daughter of his master wants to marry him. Such unions were hardly allowed in the social structure of Goa in olden times. Even today, class parity influences marriage in most conservative families. Also, it is significant to note that, traditionally, the girls from higher-class families were not encouraged to mingle with 'outsiders'. They were often confined to the homes and were hardly exposed to the world outside. The only medium of getting in touch with the outside world for them would be the servants working in the houses.

There might have been cases in real life where girls from rich families got attracted towards the servants. The character of *Ranmaalem* who speaks of such a case isn't ready to marry the rich girl. This shows the distance that the two classes and communities have had since ages. The narration might have also aimed at ridiculing a particular higher class but it subtly reflects the plight of women from a specific segment of society. It also shows how they are looked at by the other section of the society.

This further leads to the exploration the gender exclusivity of these forms and rigidity that has been observed till today. In spite of expressing so many issues related to women, folk theatre forms of Goa are still performed only by men. Yet, women are not allowed to escape from the virtual presence. This can be better understood in the light of Paul Smith's following observation made in the context of Feminist Theory and social structures:

[...]male-centred social and psychical structures place biological men as enforcing agents for those structures. At the same time these structures place women as the other, in a different relation, in a place which is not a place- women always *for* those structures but never really *in* them. Feminist theory shows, then, that women are oppressed/hidden/repressed/marginalized by those structures but at the same time privileged to escape them or be displaced by them. (Seyla 56)

Thus, if we consider the folk theatre forms as one of these structures that Smith is talking about we can see the same phenomena here too. While the male folk realise the presence of women as 'the other' they also keep them at a distance when it comes to participation in the performance, but under the pretext of following prevalent norms or as the traditional privilege of the males.

However, in fairness to these folk forms, it has to be also reiterated that in spite of being male centric, folk theatre does not fail to depict the important aspects of women's life. But it is basically from a man's perspective since the narrators and the performers are men. They have taken the liberty of bringing in issues of women as and how they want. Probably, the sentiments as expressed in folk theatre might not be what exactly the women in Goan social structure relate to. But folk theatre is a mode through which we see men's interpretation of the women's life as the 'other'. Folk theatre being a male-centric form, the performances could have very well avoided the presence of women characters or women-related issues, but significantly it has taken into account the presence of women in social structure. Thus, its narrations and lyrics reflect the mindsets, approach towards this segment of the society.

It is also important to note that most of the characters in folk theatre are women. Men dressing up as women can be a matter of ridicule if not carried out properly. But, with regard to Goan folk theatre, except for a few characters which are actually meant to ridicule, most of the women characters are portrayed gracefully. Utter care is taken by the males who enact the roles of females to dress up suitably as women. This is noteworthy, since women; particularly from marginal classes are doubly marginalized segments of society.

Thus, on the basis of the preceding discussion, it can be said that these folk theatre forms are a representation of marginalised as well as doubly-marginalised sections of society. However, although the three forms under study hold certain similarities with regard to the depiction of social dynamics, they also vary in some ways. This has been discussed at length in the following section.

3.4.1 Social Dynamics vis-à-vis Goan Folk Theatre under Study

Most of the folklore found in Goa is a legacy of the communities which have been on the lower strata of the society. Since folk theatre represents various forms of folklore in one single genre it leaves a wide scope for wide range of elements. It is a significant part of Goan culture. Through the rituals, songs, dances, narratives and allied elements associated with folk theatre forms, various dimensions of Goan society are visible.

The three major folk theatre forms under study, *Zagor*, *Ranmaalem* and *Kaalo* have been discussed to trace these dimensions as uncovered in these performative texts. These three folk theatre forms showcase the belief systems of various communities. They also portray how one community perceives another community from the same society. Their narratives also provide a vivid depiction of historical events, societal changes, mindsets and beliefs. With the help of creative strategies like satire, humor and songs, folk theatre forms also critique, comment and speak about how society works. These undocumented narratives portray the common person's perspective on history, society, political happenings in very raw manner.

The characters of the three folk theatre forms under study are inspired by mythology as well as by real life. Myths have always played an important role in the traditional societies and paved the way in the creation of new myths in contemporary society. The real life characters from folk theatre forms represent various communities from Goa. They present occupational

activities, lifestyle patterns and ways of speaking as practiced by these communities. Besides that, dialogues by these characters and their narratives speak about their tendencies, the way these communities look at a particular caste, class and gender. Thus, they provide an insight into the interpersonal relations within the individuals of same community as well as with the individuals belonging to other communities.

As discussed earlier in Chapter One, most of the festivals from Goa are associated with the agrarian lifestyle. But, with the increase in curiosity about these forms which are originally a part of rural society, they have now found a place in the urban spaces like folk theatre festivals, five star restaurants, multi-national company events etc.

Originally these forms had a specific space like temple premises where they are performed traditionally. *Kaalo* is performed in the months of November or December, while *Ranmaalem* is performed during the harvest festival, *Shigmo*, which falls during the month of March and April. *Shigmo* is one of the most widely celebrated festivals of Goa which is very popular among the Hindu peasant communities in most of the villages of the State. Each village has its own way of celebrating this festival consisting of a blend of music, dance, theatre and various other Art forms.

Speaking about the *Shigmo* festival, Phaldesai notes, “oooooooooooo ooooooooooooo
oooooooooooo ooooooooooooo ooooo oooooo oooooo ooooo ooooo ooo” (32) [“It has the excitement of heartily welcoming the process of innovation creation.”]. The significance in which the natural elements are held in the course of the *Shigmo* indicates that it must have started in the early evolutionary phase where humans were largely reliant on nature. Satoskar describes it as ‘social’ festival’ (363). The folk theatre form, *Ranmaalem* is a part of the *Shigmo* festival.

While *Ranmaalem* is exclusive to the Maratha community and *Zagor* to the Gauda community, *Kaalo* is one form where several communities come together and perform. However, this varies according to the region where it is being performed since it is mostly performed in the temple premises; often it so happens that the larger community related to that particular temple performs this form.

Although, folklore is said to be the legacy of the marginal, who were on the periphery in the hierarchical structure, the *Kaalo* form has also been adopted and performed by the communities who belong to higher strata. For instance, at Ramnathi in Ponda taluka only the Saraswat Brahmins related to the Ramnath temple perform *Kaalo* since last 26 years; while in places like Savoi Verem and Marcel also from Ponda taluka people belonging to several communities perform it together. Thus, in some regions *Kaalo* is not a community exclusive form. *Kaalo* is inclusive in nature yet there are places which are exceptions to this feature of *Kaalo*.

Being performed across many areas of Goa, *Kaalo* naturally has developed several variations with regard to its content as well as the rituals related to its performance. The nomenclature of the *Kaalo* version also varies according to region where it is performed. For instance, in the North Goa it is known as *Dashavtaari Kaalo* while in South Goa it is known as *Raatkaalo* or *Shankhasur Kaalo*. *Dashavtaari* means the performance that focuses on the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. If not all, *Kaalo* performances include the tales of a few incarnations of Lord Vishnu in their performance. *Raatkaalo* denotes the performance carried out at night. *Shankhasur* is one of the significant characters from *Kaalo* who is present in performances in some areas.

The extinct form *Perni Zagor* displays similarities with *Kaalo*. Thus, it is also influenced by the Vedic culture the way *Kaalo* has been influenced. Moreover, Phaldesai feels that the character of *Mhatari* in *Perni* displays the technique of digging the soil with sticks to grow crop, which was used before the discovery of plough. Thus, he opines that *Perni Zagor* must have been a product of pre-stone era. Eventually, the form has absorbed the influences of several cultures. This particular form as the name suggests was performed by the *Perni* community. With the changes in the functioning of this community, the form also reached the level extinction. But the evolution of *Perni* community and dynamics of the performance of *Perni Zagor* provides useful insights into the functioning of subaltern communities of Goa. But equally, it reveals the gender-insensitive practices created and norms imposed on it apparently by the more powerful hegemonic sections of society. For instance, the institution of marriage wasn't a part of this community in past. As it evolved and got influenced by the other communities as well as the modern thoughts, marriages began to be a part of the community. However, *Perni Zagor* is significant in terms of its gender inclusivity which is absent in other theatre forms. In fact, it can be considered as the only folklore form from Goa where members

of both genders, i.e. males and females perform together. This inclusivity is the outcome of the norms related to the community functioning.

Since all the folk theatre forms under study have portrayals of various other different communities as perceived by the performing communities, they reveal the societal situations, and provide insight into the societal structures as well the relationships between the various communities related to or mentioned in these performances. On analyzing the Goan society depicted in these theatre forms, the prevalent caste-hierarchy, complex inter-caste relationships, as also the shift in individual/group interactions and behavior over time --- whether based on goodwill, indifference, contempt or conflict-- and the hierarchy that exists in the caste structure can be gauged.

Not just the content of the folk theatre but also the norms related to these various folk forms reflect much about a society. The study of the forms also brings in an insight into the hierarchical structure existing within the set-up of Goan society. It can also bring forth the struggle that the so called ‘low castes’ have carried out by being in the lower strata of societal structure. The situations as depicted in the folk theatre forms and analyzed here, might not be present in the contemporary times, however, they open a window to the reality of the historical situation prevalent in the society.

3.4.2. Attacking Social Hierarchies through Folk-Theatre

Interestingly the performance-oriented folk theatre forms are a good medium to disclose, critique or reinvent societal reality. They can also provide a forum to depict, analyze or comment on social reality. In fact, *Zagor*, *Kaalo* and *Ranmaalem* depict several of social communities with the help of characters present in their performance(s). For instance, there are two kinds of characters in *Ranmaalem*: one is *Dhonga*; and the other is *Songa*. Interestingly, the term ‘dhonga’ literally means ‘treacherous characters’ while ‘songa’ means ‘taking on a role’. While both are ‘theatrical’ creations: the former is used for lewd caricature of social reality and satirical critique; whereas, the latter are the divine/mythical characters meant for ritual worship as well as entertainment. *Dhonga* represent various individuals from the cross-section of the society to which the performing community belongs. *Songa* are the mythical and puranic characters like Ganesha, Saraswati and some other characters from the epics like *The Ramayana*. Interestingly, these two types of characters never mingle with each other in the course of performance. In fact, their narratives run parallel but alternate. For instance, there

may be a *Ranmaalem* performance where the full story of *Ramayana* is portrayed through the Songa but it will also have the Dhonga in between the scenes. The Dhonga often function in serious drama as humorous, satirical diversions almost like comic relief. They usually comprise of a priest, a barber, a family of the Mahaar community and other occupation-based characters, found in Goan society. Similar characters are also found in folk form *Kaalo*. Each of the *dhonga* characters is expected to enact the occupational tasks that the given communities practice in real life. But the enactments are often exaggerated and are presented with the clear motive of creating humour.

Interestingly, the performers who enact such characters do not belong to the various occupational communities which they represent on the stage. Thus, they afford the liberty to enact someone else in an exaggerated manner to create humour. Sometimes a satirical situation is also thrown up. For instance, both in *Kaalo* and *Ranmaalem* after the invocation, there is the scene of the priest or *Bhat*. The only difference is that in *Kaalo* the *Bhat* converses with the narrator who is called *Hardas* while in *Ranmaalem* the priest converses with the chorus or the human curtain that stands at the back of the stage to narrate as required and sing during the performance. In most of the *Kaalo* performances, the character of priest sings a song related to Lord Ganesha. During the performance at Ramnathi on 8th November 2014 it was observed that the character of the priest's assistant subverts this song and gives it an altogether different meaning. While the actual meaning of the song is extremely spiritual, this priest's assistant in the folk performance gives it a very funny and comical meaning. He subverts the term *moraya* which actually is the name of Lord Ganesha's devotee. The assistant priest says that the term actually means a fish called *mori*, the local name for shark which is a popular delicacy. Further, he elaborates how that particular verse talks about different types of fish eaten by Goans. He names various dishes prepared with fish. This mockery becomes a reason for laughter particularly because the priest community in Goa is known for being pure vegetarians. So, a character posing as one of them talking about fish is definitely comical for the audience.

While analyzing the above illustration from *Kaalo*, it is significant to notice that the community that performed (Gaud Saraswat Brahmins) has started performing *Kaalo* as recently as twenty five years ago. But they too, sing and perform the songs which in a way critique the so called 'upper caste' communities. This instance can be considered as an example of crossing the boundaries of performative norms and another community adapting the cultural product traditionally performed by a particular community.

There is another song in *Kaalo* sung by Madnant Kaalotsav Mandal from Savoi Verem on *Daayaj Lok-kaleche* series of Akashwani- (All India Radio) Panaji which says,

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□□□□-□□□□ □□□□ □□□” (Deshpande)

This verse can be roughly translated as:

“ By caste, we’re Brahmin
Our relatives are Muslim
We gave up the *Sandhya-* practice
Making Mahar-Chambhars our kin.”

This song is followed by a dialogue which can be translated as, “We do not need such kind of Brahmins.” Then, the character portraying the priest says that he and his assistant can perform the duties of Brahmin. This episode refers to Muslims, people of another religion i.e. Islam and to two other sub-castes of the Hindu religion, Mahars and Chambhars. Interestingly, the dialogue followed by the ironical song depicts the performing community’s implicit intolerance of these ‘other communities’ as well as their explicit disapproval of the Brahmin community’s so-called deviation from their prescribed ‘norms of practice’ and their *supposed* alliance (probably ‘by marriage’) with the Muslims as also with the (*putatively* lower castes) Mahars and Chambhars. The performer community here is Fulkar, a community that comes under the category of Bhandari Samaj. Thus, the character is of the view that they do not need such Brahmins to perform priestly duties who are friends with Muslims or with Mahars and Chambhars. Such notions might not be in existence in today’s times, but probably when these verses were composed this was the kind of mentality that one community held against the other. While, sarcastic critique of the upper caste Brahmins is seen in this particular verse, it also, reflects the caste bias that the performing community held against other communities.

It can be also considered as the other community’s way of mocking the so called ‘high caste’. Also, it can be inferred that this verse might have been created during the time when Muslim community in Goa wasn’t really close to the priest community. Thus, by attaching Brahmins with them, the song has tried to poke fun at the community. There is a kind of disenchantment

that the composer is trying to express towards such inter-community relations. Also, when the character of Brahmin himself says that I have left practicing the ritual Sandhya, it questions the professional obligation of a priest. Since, the priests are expected to practice this ritual very religiously; their giving it up would be almost like losing the essence of their identity as priests. At the end, the verse also says that the Brahmins have befriended the communities which were considered as untouchables at one point of time in Goa. This is either a fantasy of verse-creator that two communities belonging to extremely different strata have begun mingling with each other or it is more likely to be a satire on the treatment given to untouchables by the upper castes. It also reflects the performer community's disapproval for the alliances which are outside the defined societal norms. In fine, such satire of the other also indirectly poses as an unintended self-criticism.

Historically, Goa first came under the rule of Muslim rulers under Bahamani kingdom in 1347. Later when Bahamani kingdom was split into five kingdoms, one of the kingdoms, established by Bijapur dynasty of Yusuf Adilshah also ruled Goa from 1492. During this period, the locals must have had interactions with the ruler's community. The influence of the same can be seen in the cultural products of Goa. Folk theatre is no exception. The mention of the Muslims in the folk theatre forms like *Kaalo* and *Zagor* can be one signifier to trace the history of Muslims in Goa. The friendship that is mentioned in the verse of *Kaalo* can be also out of occupational obligations like trade and commerce. By this time Goa had become an international centre for trade with the Middle East countries. Thus, there is a probability that the Muslim rulers took the help from the locals for the trade purpose.

In real life, the priests are perceived to be at a higher level of societal hierarchy by other communities considered as so called 'low caste'. Interestingly despite these communities having individuals within the community who are assigned priestly duties, they approach the priests belonging to Brahmin community for certain religious functions such as wedding rituals, temple ceremonies and so on. Ironically over the ages, the Brahmins, even after being a participant in the rituals of the so called 'lower caste' communities, have culturally remained at a distance. They have never mingled with nor have they been invited to participate in activities of these communities other than the barely ritualistic ones. However, they have adapted the folk forms for their own performances for example; there are a few places where Brahmins who perform priestly duties also perform folk theatre forms for some festivals. For instance, in Khede village of Ponda taluka Brahmin community performs *Kaalo*.

Brahmins who perform priestly affairs have also been considered as the mediators who help the other communities connect with God. But, at the same time, this distance between the so called ‘higher caste’ and so called ‘lower caste’ communities has led to several bitter experiences. Despite of all the differences between the two ‘classes’ there has been a feeling of harmonious existence which is based on interdependence. This takes the discussion back to the subaltern mentality of it being both ‘defiant’ and ‘submissive’ as discussed by Gautam Bhadra. With regard to this instance, the ‘other’ community submissively respects the priest community and also defies its actions through folklore. In community festivals like Shigmo or Kaalo priests do not have much role to play ritually. Even the role which they have is minimal and the festivals are mainly dominated by the folk communities. Thus, by seeking the opportunity of attacking at the fallouts of the priest community the ‘folk’ tries to mock this community through the performance. And the art form provides them that much of liberty. Art here becomes a way of venting out the sentiments with regard to social restrictions.

The satirical portrayal of one particular community discussed above seems to be an effect of the hierarchical situation present in Goan society. Not just the priest community but also the Gaud Saraswat Brahmin, yet another community often regarded as ‘high caste’ by the other communities is mocked in several instances in the songs of folk theatre. This treatment isn’t only with regard to humans, but also with regard to mythological characters. This can be analyzed in the next segment.

3.4.3 Sociological Manifestations and Mythological Characters

As discussed in above segment, *Ranmaalem* has two kinds of characters. Both these kinds never mingle with each other. For instance, a character portraying humans does not have conversations with the characters from mythology. Another significant difference between the songa and dhonga is that songas never sing for themselves or they would not utter dialogues the way dhonga say. Mostly, the chorus sings for the songa. Whereas, dhonga characters sing as well as deliver dialogues for themselves. This example reflects the respectable distance that the common people wish to keep even with the Godly figures from mythology. They attain a separate space of their own in the narrative. Thus, one can say that the performing community tries to maintain the hierarchy even with fictional characters.

With regard to *Kaalo*, there are more of mythological characters than the ordinary human beings. Since, it is considered as a product of Vaishnava tradition it narrates the legends of Lord Vishnu and his various incarnations. While the *Dashavtaari Kaalo* focuses on other incarnations, the *Raatkaalo* enacts the tales related to Lord Krishna. But at the same time, *Kaalo* has negative characters like the demoness Putna who tried to kill the child Krishna.

There is another negative yet a very interesting kind of character named Shankhasur. As narrated by Nishikant Tengse, folk performer from Canacona, Shankhasur's legend goes back to the *Matsya avatar* or the fish incarnation of Lord Vishnu. He is the only character that dresses up in black costumes. His character tries to steal the holy Vedas, the knowledge texts of Hindus exclusively available for some communities in the legends. He in a way represents the rebel from the society. Interestingly, his songs are in Konkani the local language, while the other mythological characters speak in Marathi. Shankhasur can be called as the representative of the common folk. He is the epitome of rebel force. But finally he has to meet an end. There is a special episode of Shankhasur killing in *Kaalo* which marks an occasion for celebration. This can be a way of showing that the 'other' who will try to acquire knowledge exclusive to one community will have to suffer.

Thus, even when *Ranmaalem* and *Kaalo* portray the mythological characters, they reflect the notions of hierarchical positions present in the subconscious of society. The godly characters also reflect the human tendencies.

The mythological characters are often localized in the process of the narration and performance. One such instance is in the Mochemodkar's *Kaalo* where mythological characters *Bhima* and *Jarasandha* are having a conversation about the battle that they are going to engage in. *Jarasandha* while speaking takes a puff of his beedi and asks, as Devendra Karapurkar (1999) notes: "Who ate my share of mackerel from frying pan?" (Dantas 171). Thus making the characters behave like the common man and by referring to the local favorite fish the performers localize the myths.

The folk theatre forms include most sections of society in their range of plan and execution of a given folk performance. All of them are not really part of the performance but they have a presence in the narratives. This reflects interconnectedness that exists between the communities. It is a testimony of various communities being in constant touch with each other

since they seem to be making keen observations and commenting on each other through folk theatre. Goan folk theatre certainly reflects inter-community as well as inter-religious sentiments prevalent in Goan society. The folk theatre becomes a tool to attack hierarchy and its consequences. It also shows to what extent a community can get inclusive and exclusive with regard to participation. For instance, *Zagor* is solely performed by Gauda community. Where as in some cases such exclusivity doesn't exist. One variant of *Zagor* prevalent at Siolim in North Goa is an example of inter-religious harmony and religious blending in this single form. This variant of *Zagor* and the aspects of religious synchronizing are discussed in the next section.

3.4.4 Inclusivity in Siolim *Zagor*: Outcome of Political History

Very close to the traditional form of *Zagor*, *Shivolecho Zagor* celebrates in its songs the birth of Jesus on the Monday immediately following Christmas. This *Zagor* is celebrated together by the two major religious communities of Goa, Hindus and Catholics. *Shivolecho Zagor* or *Siolim Zagor* goes beyond being just a vigil festival.

It begins with an invocation *Naman* a common element of many of the folk theatre forms in Goa. But *Naman* of *Siolim Zagor* holds significance because of its space and content. While in other *Zagors*, the invocation is held at the performance area, the *Naman* of *Siolim Zagor* along with the rituals related to it, takes place near the house of Shirodkars--- the family that holds the legacy of performing in this form for almost seven generations. In fact, Kanhaiyya Shirodkar who lives abroad, makes a visit to his homeland to continue the legacy of his father who sang the *Naman*, which goes thus:

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□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□□□□□□,
□□□ □□□ □□□□, □□” (□□□□□ □□□□□)
[“*Payle Naman Deva bapa,*

Dusre Naman Devu suta,

Tisre Naman ispirisanta...

Sagle Dev ekuch gaa... ” (Siolim Villagers)]

This can be roughly translated as, “First salutation to God, the father/ Second to the Son of God/, third one to the saintly Spirit/ All Gods are one, know ye...”

Devraay Shirdokar, elder brother of Kanhaiyya opines that such references to Christ and his life must have been the fallout of the spread of Christianity during the Portuguese rule and the accompanying stipulations. He remembers his father telling them about the Censorship imposed by the Portuguese rule and the need to change the verses. Since censorship was imposed on the Hindu festivals and celebrations including forms like *Zagor*, officers were deputed during the performances to check whether the folk art expressed something against the rulers. According to the locals of Siolim, this particular phenomenon must have led the Zagorkars to initiate changes into the traditional verses of *Zagor*. While the performers showed defiance by not stopping the tradition completely, they also submitted to the religious restrictions laid down by the ruler. This instance brings to mind the ‘subaltern mentality’ that Gautam Bhadra (Guha 63) has discussed, which according to him is a combination of an attitude of defiance and submission towards the ruling class by the subaltern.

Catholics and Hindus still celebrate this festival with a lot of vigor and zeal. The young boys from Danda village from Siolim use Ghumots, Kansaale and Mhaadle the three major musical instruments of the *Zagor* celebrations. After an elaborate invocation, the troupe moves towards the performing area *Maand*, where a huge crowd is busy performing the *Saangne*--the evocative prayer seeking protection and blessings--to the deity *Zagoryo* before the performing troupe arrives. Thus, the *Zagor* night isn’t only about the performance but also about worshipping to the local deity.

On the way, the troupe takes a hault at the village Chapel and repeats the whole Naman. Finally, on reaching the Maand, where the deity *Zagoryo* is believed to have its presence from a very long time, the performance begins. *Siolim Zagor* is the festival dedicated to this particular deity.

The performances consist of various characters like *Bharbharya* where the locals are allowed to come on the stage and dance. After this, there is a comic conversation between *Firngi Raja*, the foreign king and *Vidushak*, the clown. Other characters like two *Maalni*, the wives of gardener and two gardeners also are a part of the performance. The first part of *Zagor* ends with the dance of the character of *Zagoryo*. It is a local belief that no one is supposed to leave the area while this character is performing or else people who leave shall never reach their destinations. Such sentiments, still followed by the locals ensure a large audience presence through the entire performance.

These performances are followed by a commercial Tiatr performed by locals. In the course of an interview Devraay Shirodkar said, “Originally the Tiatr wasn’t a part of the *Zagor* festival, it has been introduced only during the last fifty years. Probably, this has been done to engage audience and keep them remain awake through the whole night” (Shirodkar).

After the tiatr performance, there are still more characters and more *hoyyos* (verses), which go on until sunrise. The performing troupe returns with a similar procession as earlier but with an addition this time. A character called *Mhaarin*, played by a male, dressed up like a demonic woman carrying a burning torch of dry coconut fronds called *Chud* in her hands, moves with the procession and visit each household asking for offerings. She is generally offered *Sannas* or *Khajem*, the sweet dishes prepared for the festival.

Whether it is a Hindu house or a Catholic one, whether rich or poor, on the day of *Zagor* each house is decorated and is filled with people. Now the *Zagor* has also assumed the form of *Jatra* with glittery shops and stalls.

As per the locals of Siolim, the place where *Zagor* is performed has also undergone transformation over the years. It used to be a simple area with just a small shrine of *Zagoryo* which now has been done up in the form of a temple *Mantap*. It was gathered that it will be further developed. The place might undergo changes, but what remains unchanged is the unity of two communities, the sanctity and the faith behind this festival.

One of the lines from a song of *Siolim Zagor* is “*Ashech chaluni amchya bhavanche...*” which means “let this [tradition] of our brothers continue [forever].” This denotes the feeling of continuity and a desire to keep the traditions alive in spite of foreign pressures.

Siolim Zagor is a good example of the fact that the Goans have tried to retain and continue the traditional folk customs alive in spite of external pressures. But, it is significant to note, that the forms have also been modified to cater to the needs of changing times through history. But what makes it interesting is that these changes have been followed and continued even after the liberation of Goa. Probably, a nostalgic fervor and a desire to continue the tradition have led to this continuity. It is also important to note that Siolim comes under the Bardez taluka, one of the first talukas that came under the Portuguese rule and later on was one of the first talukas where locals were converted to Christianity during the phase of conversion. Influence

of Christianity is certainly seen on this form. Also, active presence of Christian community and participation of Hindu locals is an example of religious synchronizations in folk traditions.

3.5 Conclusion

The primary meaning of society as discussed by Raymond Williams (1983) was companionship. This companionship has gradually evolved into various social systems including a hierarchical structures in almost all societies. Since society produces culture and culture flourishes in society both these terms and concepts have been analyzed with regard to current study in the previous Chapter. As the cultural product of the society, the folk theatre forms under study have been greatly useful in the present exploration of the dynamics of Goan society, whether in terms of their content, practice, norms and beliefs. As such, core issues like notion of hierarchy, constituents of hierarchical structures such as caste and gender, norms related to societal practices like folklore and issues impacting interactions could be identified and analysed vis-a- vis social dynamics. Since folk theatre combines both verbal and performative elements, it is able to demonstrate very effectively the reflection of social dynamics of Goan society. Since folk theatre in Goa has been a part of celebratory and festival related affairs, there has been flexibility of expressing social angst, social distress, and rivalry amongst the communities if any. At the same time, it is also a medium of expressing defiance towards something that the folklore creating/ performing community may not approve of. Observing such defiance through the lense of Subaltern Studies, it has been noticed that the communities which perform these forms have been mostly on the periphery of the Goan society. Thus, their urge for self expression and societal resistance, social submission and sublimation is seen together in these forms. These tendencies are mostly seen with regard to their reaction towards the higher caste communities or sometimes the rulers.

Here, a little digression is in order, to show the ideological importance of the resistance shown by the marginal folk communities through their folk forms or lore. According to Limon, amongst first generation Marxists, Gramsci acknowledges the existence of folklore as a worthy ideological tool in the modern world, and “[...]recognizes that folklore can constitute a kind of folk political philosophy-an initial and potentially critical outlook on the world” (42). While Gramsci believes that folklore is dangerous for the development of the ones who create it, his explanation about the nature of folklore reflects the tendency of folklore performers to comment on the society they live in and perform. Further, he also stresses on the potential of folklore to harbour sentiments antagonistic to the dominant social order. This can be borne out

with examples from Goan folk theatre discussed earlier, where in a ‘outlook on the world’ as well as ‘antagonistic sentiments towards dominant social order’ are clearly visible in the characterization as well as the content of the folk theatre forms under study.

Gender is also a significant aspect of social dynamics. This factor in folk theatre is seen in various ways. Folk theatre of Goa also reflects the gender dynamics of Goan society. In spite of its gender exclusivity, folk theatre narratives have pondered on the issues of woman. But her position as ‘the other’ can be seen through folk theatre. Also, patriarchal nature of Goan society is at times clearly and sometimes subtly seen through the narratives of folk theatre. Although, Goan society has gone beyond what it has been portrayed in folk theatre forms with regard to women, these narratives reflect the position of women in Goan society in the history. It is also necessary to explore the reasons for keeping the forms gender exclusive even till today.

There have been instances where issues related to the ‘other gender’ are adequately portrayed while some forms also present an exploitative tendency of society. These forms also express the attitude that the society in general held with regard to women.

In spite of being a harmonious society, Goa isn’t an exception to the effects of hierarchical nature of caste system. One of the effects is definitely the suppression of a few communities. But these structural placements have changed with time. Several historical and political factors have influenced the social set-up of Goa. These changes at times have been manifested in folk theatre. But, some features which are not a part of Goan society anymore are still a part of folk theatre narratives. This phenomenon of being rigid with the form and its content needs to be explored in the evolution of folk theatre forms.

Some forms of folk theatre have definitely taken up the contemporarization with regard to its content while some remain rigid and follow the traditional content very religiously.

Goan folk theatre is a rich documentation of social history. They present the sentiments of the ones who have been on the lower strata of the society. To conclude, the folklore, specifically folk theatre in terms of this study reflects the political, inter-religious and socio-historical relationships which exist in the Goan society. Folk theatre has also evolved with the time. This process has been traced in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Evolution of Goan Folk Theatre: From Devotional Infotainment to Contemporary Commercialization

4.1 Introduction to the Concept of Infotainment

Infotainment is a combination of two words *information* and *entertainment*, referring to a type of media which provides a combination of information and entertainment. “The terms "infotainment" and "infotainer" were first used in September 1980 at the Joint Conference of Aslib, the Institute of Information Scientists and the Library Association in Sheffield, UK. The Infotainers were a group of British information scientists who put on comedy shows at their professional conferences between 1980 and 1990” (Wikipedia Contributors “Infotainment”).

Thereafter, the term has had references in several fields like media and information technology. Every field has had several developments over a period of time. The focus and aims have changed and evolved with demand of consumer. For instance, there was a time when news was just a mode of providing information about what is happening around. However, the focus of news industry has shifted in recent times from merely providing information. News channels in the present era also seek to provide recreation to public. According to McQuail (2010), infotainment is, “information-based media content or programming that also includes entertainment content in an effort to enhance popularity with audiences and consumers” (Cram 101) Thus it appears that any form which has dual objective i.e. i) to provide information and ii) to entertain can be called as infotainer. The task of infotainment isn’t restricted to serious forms like news but it is also applicable to other television programmes.

In Geoffrey Baym’s view, “Infotainment refers to a cluster of program types that blur traditional distinctions between information-oriented and entertainment-based genres of television programming” (Baym 1). This means, before the arrival of infotaining programmes in the media, there was a clear distinction between which forms were meant to provide recreation and which forms only inform. The arrival of infotainment as a concept that combines

these two elements had had several effects on how public receives information, how political communication is made; and also on overall democratic structure. In this process, there has been an apprehension in some quarters of the element of entertainment encroaching into the sphere of information. The use of music and various visual effects to attract the audience towards serious content is a sure-shot way of bringing the factor of entertainment and information together. The serious programmes have also started providing a sense of drama to their content. Interestingly, this has been preferred by the audience since the ancient times. One of the oldest theatre forms in the world, Greek theatre was, “inspired by episodes from Greek mythology, which we must remember were often a part of Greek religion” (Cartwright). Thus, even though ‘infotainment’ as a concept is seen as a recent phenomenon in the field of media, it has been present as a major characteristic of ancient drama.

Just the way entertainment has encroached into the sphere of information, information as well has made inroads into the domain of entertainment often with positive outcome. Thus, it is no longer restricted to merely recreation but entails elements which ‘inform’ and ‘educate’ its audience. It is in such forms that the dichotomy of entertainment and information is challenged.

The emergence of infotainment in media has happened because of confluence of technological, economic and cultural changes of the multiple forms of the media some have fragmented into newer modes while at the same time there has been an integration of some other forms. With the arrival of cable television and the internet audience across the globe have largely multiplied and the amount of content that goes into the world of information has proportionally multiplied too. Today, there are fewer barriers to enter into the industry of media as an audience or as a creator. However, the wide range of variety that is available in terms of entertainment has led to a distribution of audience across television channels, social sites, multiplexes. This did not happen in earlier the times where choices were limited. Thus, there was a compulsion to view what is available easily and what is accessible. The content available was also confined to regional material within the geographical limits. Nowadays, with wide-ranging choices, at the press of a button or a click of a mouse people choose what they want to see, choices were less. The arrival of new media has tackled this issue by going global in more senses of the world than one. As a result, everyone who is connected to new media has an access to multicultural content. In today’s world, the word ‘infotainment’ is used for everything that provides and claims to provide both these elements. Internet and Television are being a great source of this particular aspect. With the emergence of social media, infotainment has acquired a different

meaning altogether. Social media is not just a way of connecting with people but also a hub of sharing a lot of information.

Local arts can be seen as one of the major sources of informing people as well as entertaining them. Rather, it has always been one of the very few sources of infotainment. Also, since the media through which information and entertainment reached people were very few, performers had to make use of available resources to satisfy both the needs. Thus, a single form of local art or folklore willingly fulfilled both the objectives. Probably, that is why the ancient time-tested public forms of public engagement whether for worship or for recreation such as folk forms are not mere forms of entertainment. They display the characteristic of infotainment. For instance, folk forms from Maharashtra like *Powada*, *Vasudev* often acted as the source of information for the rural folk regarding political and social happenings. Even folk dance forms like the Marathi *Laavni* from Maharashtra which have been considered as pure forms of entertainment, now act through their ‘content’ face-lift as a medium of creating awareness about social evils

It may be mentioned here that the Konkani *Laavni*, prevalent in Sattari and Bicholim talukas of Goa and the Konkan belt is a distinct and mainly devout form of devoted to worship. It is performed by the males from Kulkadi and Dhangar communities during Shigmo festival. The males enact the role of female characters.

4.1.1 Infotainment Potential of Folk Theatre: Characteristics

Folk theatre has undoubtedly been one of the oldest sources of infotainment. This is not surprising given the partly interactive and largely socially oriented nature of the form. According to Chandrashekhar Kambar “[...]folk theatre is not just a medium, it is a live context where the theatre and actors and audience share an experience” (Lal 6). This sharing of experience involves not only sharing of performative nuances and the aesthetic pleasure but also the sharing of certain ethico-social values the performers as well as the audience are bound by. The societal dynamics works with these values. Such values are shaped by historical, political and economic factors governing the social life of the community concerned.

Since the folk theatre forms are the reverberations of community life and beliefs, they tend to reflect the communitarian focus with regard to core issues of life and, consequently, the relative shift in values. This is apparent in the way a folk form builds up a socio-cultural context every time it is being performed. In other words, form aspires to inform as well as entertain and thus can be considered as one of the oldest forms of infotainment. For instance, *Ranmaalemm* as a traditional folk form grew as a medium that introduces the masses to legends from Ramayana

and in modern times, it has adopted newer content that is related to contemporary times. For instance they add the content related to Government's new policies and they have affected common citizen's lives.

Folk theatre is more of a community affair that involves individuals across the sections of society. While some are performers, some are sole connoisseurs. As discussed earlier, the performances are usually ritualistic in nature often spiced up with humour, satire and other dramatic techniques. Also, they have a wide range of devotional content which justifies their ritualistic nature.

The days when modern modes of entertainment like television, computer were a far reality, the folk entertained themselves through various modes such as outdoor games, songs, stories, dances, theatre etc. These forms have been explored privately as well as publicly. Interestingly, form like theatre has found its space more in the public domain rather than the private and personal one.

4.2. Devotional Infotainment in Goan Folk Theatre

With regard to Goan folk theatre, the forms covered under the study are vivid and colourful. The performers take lot of efforts to get ready for the performances. It is a blend of visually appealing movements and raw yet rhythmic audio. These forms combine the existing mythos with the contemporary societal ethos. They are also a powerful medium for way of expressing the devotional sentiment of the community through their ritualistic content as regulated by tradition and norm. More often than not traditional belief and practices have such vigour that gradually develops the force of a norm. As such, the norms related to these forms display the devotion of the folk. For instance, performing *Zagor*, on Maand holds a great significance. The performances never begin without a prayer to the deities. There is also a normative practice visible in the content, *Naman* is solely devotional and expresses the significance that performers give to the natural and supernatural powers. Rest of the performance has content that is devotional in nature.

In the form of *Kaalo*, most of the verses are normally devotional in nature. It mostly represents the tales from mythology. At the same time, this mythology is not confined to visual representation of puranic mere tales but is also a way of worshipping the deities celebrated in the myths.

However, Folk theatre acts not just as a form of worship, entailing of entertainment. It also tries to educate and propagate what is seen as desirable for the community at present in some way. These attempts of educating are subtle and even unconscious at times none the less they are an educating element. It is true that the basic aim of any art is to provide aesthetic pleasure

to its recipients. But, all the art forms somewhere fulfil the work of providing something more than mere pleasure. For instance, the form under study *Zagor* not only generates laughter in the audience on the state of alcoholics, but it also comments on how alcoholism has led to bankruptcy. Folk theatre being a collective activity, naturally inculcates the value of being together, performing together and most importantly, co-existing in a dynamic environment of social ethos surviving in a politico-cultural shifts. Therefore, it needs to communicate certain basic ideas favourable to collective survival as a cohesive community often faced with challenges of existence and survival. Thus, perhaps as a strategy, Folk theatre offers comments on significant issues related to human existence like relation of human with the nature. For instance, in *Ranmaalem* character of *Gavli* or the cowherd comments that the water level in a particular area called Vagheri has gone down. He says that the people from forest department want to plant acacia trees in these areas and says that these trees will further affect the water level in the area. Thus, through such observations and comments information is shared with the village folk about the changes in nature as well as about how to deal with such crises is updated. Most importantly, interest in a genuine issue such as ecological conservation is generated among the audience. The cowherd in this case is worried about his cows that they will be deprived of water. Interestingly, the ecological consciousness of folk is often seen in traditional content of folklore also.

The invocation of the natural elements itself is a good example to show significance accorded to them by folklore. Since traditionally human life has depended on nature on a large scale, one can still observe the huge impact that nature has had on the psyche of folk. This can be traced through an example of *Dhalo* festival celebrated by women from subaltern communities. The festival begins with an invocation to *Dharitri Maata* or the Mother Earth. This convention brings forth the close connection that folk communities share with the nature.

4.2.1 Infotainment: Enhancing Societal Awareness

The folk theatre forms also various community specific behaviours, norms and positions. This helps the next generation learn about these social structures. Thus, consciously or unconsciously the folk theatre forms provide the significant keys to the cultural history of communities involved. They also provide important inputs about the historical changes that have occurred in the given society. For instance, in *Zagor* there is a verse which says,

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[Chorus: Baba Havalda

Tuka Desh Manvala

Baba Havaldaar: Bhaile bhair gelle marey terrak

Favor Marun haadle marey bandodkaaraani...

Kagadpatra Khaali marey kukudshyani...]

[Chorus: Hey, Baba Havaladar, ye,

Seem to have liked this country

Baba Havaldar: We'd gone to far off lands --out and away,

Currying favour, Bandodkars got the documents back

[But] the ticks in the hen coup ate them away]

This verse is sung by a character called Baba Havaldaar, character of an officer who is referring to some documents that were brought in the village and which were ‘supposedly’ destroyed by the mites or pests in the hen coop, who ate them away. It is a satirical comment on how at a given time some vested elements must have destroyed certain significant documents, which might have had some ‘telling’ information related to village affairs. In Goa, there have been several property disputes because of lack of proper documents. Such songs provide a slanted critique of administrative connivance probably to destroy revealing evidence.

impacted whom, can be well seen in *Zagor*”]. Thus, these forms indirectly take the liberty to bring forth what is wrong in the community.

In spite of the possibility of critical comments being passed on certain communities by the performing characters/troupe, there is no restriction or hindrance faced by the performing community to perform these forms. Therefore, it can be deduced that, the performance of this Infotainment Art form is facilitated by communitarian support. No doubt, the folk theatre performance is authenticated because it has a ritualistic significance and so it gets a religious sanction. None the less, the social approval of the non-ritualistic, sarcastic element in its performance augments the value of its content as a social critique, besides its worth as a ritual performance. Probably thus, even offensive (to some communities or genders) content does not become an issue for the spectators. For instance, the mockery of *Bhat*, the priest in *Kaalo* as well as *Ranmaalemm* is never questioned because space where these performances are held is sanctified and its context is seen as ‘normal’ to the performance. When this normative sanction, albeit unspoken is withdrawn, the content will be either deleted or re-phrased. This shows why, when some of their content has been seen as objectionable or hurtful to a community or sub-group, the forms themselves have undergone change over the years. This process has been a catalyst of transformation leading to the evolution of the folk theatre forms under study. This has been re-traced in the following section, chronologically from the pre-liberation era.

4.3 Evolution of Goan Folk Theatre Forms: Pre-liberation Perspective

Folklore survives because of its flexibility. It is an ever changing cultural product. In the case of folk theatre forms under study also, their content and the norms governing it, get modified over the years: this happens due to the evolving ideological trends and modes of thinking leading to attitudinal shifts and behavioural change in society. Since there are no written records about the folk theatre forms, there is no way to ascertain the date of the exact beginning of the forms under study or the date when changes have been incorporated in their performances. However, through the content which is still a part of these forms, an approximate period where these forms may have gone through changes and modifications can be identified. *Zagor*, *Ranmaalem* and *Kaalo* have for sure begun as folk forms before the arrival of Portuguese in Goa. Rather, in forms like *Zagor* and *Kaalo* there are references to Muslim rulers as well which was just before the arrival of Portuguese. It is a known fact that there were censorships during Portuguese regime, yet the performances did not take a pause because for one, they were a part of community beliefs and secondly, the Portuguese writ ran over only the Old Conquests for a long period covering nearly two centuries. However, due to the fear of

censorships, there have been modifications which were made in the content in performances (especially in the old Conquests, to begin with). Siolim *Zagor* is a good example of this particular phenomenon. Devraay Shirodkar, one of the locals from Siolim narrated his father's memories regarding the restrictions from institutions like Church and the changes made in the content of form. Siolim village falls in the Bardez Taluka which is a part of Old Conquests. But before discussing this issue further, it will be gainful to elucidate in brief the Portuguese Conquest of Goa in two waves: Old and New Conquests. This is needed because the colonial writ impacted the folklore.

4.3.1 Portuguese Conquest of Goa: its Phases and Impact on Folk Theatre

The Old conquests included Tiswadi, Bardez and Salcete Talukas, which were conquered in the earlier phases of colonization. Initially, by the year 1520, the Portuguese had captured Bardez, Ponda and Salcete from the Adilshah at the request of the emperor of Vijaynagar Krishna Deva Raya. However, Adilshah recovered the lands a couple of years later. However, during the tussles between the Adilshah and his governor Asad Khan in 1532, the Portuguese supported the latter in exchange for Bardez and Salcete. In 1534, following the death of Ismail Shah, Asad Khan made peace with the new King, who re-conquered Salcete and Bardez from the Portuguese in 1536. But when once again, the King and Asad Khan started having differences Portuguese supported the King and signed a treaty with him in 1543, by which the Portuguese could get Bardez and Salcete in exchange for sending Mir Ali, the King's uncle and rival to the throne, to Malacca. Thus the old conquests were finally sealed in 1543 by acquiring Tiswadi, Bardez and Salcete. These are the talukas where Christianity first spread and as per Wikipedia:

[T]he indigenous population of the erstwhile Portuguese colony of Goa underwent a largescale conversion from Hinduism to Christianity after its conquests and occupation by the Portuguese Empire, led by Admiral Afonso de Albuquerque in 1510...Christianization in Goa was largely limited to the four *conselhos* (districts) of Bardez, Marmugao, Salcette and Tiswadi. (Wikipedia Contributors “Christianization of Goa”)

Eventually, the Portuguese set about acquiring, what are known as, the New Conquests. In 1741, Portuguese seized Paroda, Mollem and Shiroda from Sonda rulers. In 1746, they conquered the forts of Acaro and Tiracol, and the Sattari taluka from Sawants of Sawantwadi. In 1781, they conquered Bhatagram (Bicholim), and obtained Pernem in 1788 from the Sawant. Since Portuguese helped Saundhekkars against Hyder Ali of Mysore in 1791, they could take charge over Antruj, now known as Ponda and remaining five places which included Hemad

Barshe, Zambaulim alias Ashtagar, Cacoda, Balli, Chandrawadi and Canacona. Thus, the territories of New Conquest were Pernem, Bicholim, Satari, Ponda, Quepem, Sanguem and Canacona.

The New Conquests did not have as much enforcement and so influence of Christianity. Incidentally, these were also the talukas where many of the Hindu temples were shifted from Old Conquests during the harsh and intolerant phases of Inquisition (established 1560), the Portuguese institution established by the Christian Holy Office between the 16th and the 19th-century regime set up to punish heresy against Christianity (Wikipedia Contributors “Goa Inquisition”). The Old Conquests suffered atrocities of this office for more years. By the time Portuguese could have a control over the New Conquests Inquisition (temporarily banned in 1774) was in its last phase. It was disbanded in the year 1820. Consequently, one can see lesser influence of Christianity on the culture of talukas which were New Conquests.

The *Zagors* which have been traditionally performed in the Old Conquests by the native population, are at present mostly performed by Catholic population and have content which has more affinity towards Christian values. For instance, the Naman, the initial invocation in Siolim *Zagor* and *Zagor* performed in Taleigao from Tiswadi taluka invoke the Trinity, Holy Spirit and Virgin Mary. With this, diversity seeped into folk narrative. Siolim *Zagor* is the best example of this diversity. This diversity is not restricted only to the narrative but the procedural and functional aspects too. To elucidate this point an example from Siolim *Zagor* can be cited where in the invocation is performed at the local Hindu shrine as well as the Christina Chapel. It is also noticeable that a form like *Kaalo* which is only performed in the New conquests like Canacona, Ponda and Sanguem, has no influence of Christianity. Although, these regions were conquered and ruled by Portuguese at a later stage, they seem to have retained their age-old traditions with much lesser political interference than their Old Conquest counterparts. As a result, the folk theatre forms in this region can be seen to have remained noticeably free of any other-religious impact than indigenous influences.

4.3.2 Post-Liberation Goa and Influence on Folk Theatre

Once, Goa was liberated from the Portuguese rule, as a result of Operation Vijay of the government of India on 19th December, 1961, the process of evolution of Goan folk theatre was accelerated by various, pivotal social changes. As such, it is hardly surprising that the Post-liberation scenario of folk theatre was quiet different from what it used to be during the Portuguese rule, prior to the liberation. There was greater freedom of expression which positively encouraged creativity and enthused the folk and literary arts, including the performance-based art forms. Since education was widespread after liberation, democratic

values like liberty, equality, justice became the cornerstone of the socio-political life and thought, thereby certain social practices which were stigmatic and were seen as exploitative in nature were socially as well as legally disapproved and abandoned. For instance, the *devdasi* system was banned by law.

Consequently, the folk theatre form Perni *Zagor*, which was the product of such a discriminatory and exploitative system deservedly lost patronage and started becoming extinct after liberation. As the winds of change swept the social environs of Goa, the women-folk from Perni community were freed from their conservative shackles of restriction and so began to get married. This emancipation, naturally, led to a gradually lesser participation of the females in the performances of this only folk theatre form, which had traditionally had participation of women. Today, the community does not perform this folk theatre form. For example, at Poguinim in Canacona taluka, while the Perni community does not ‘perform’ this form any longer, on the day traditionally marked for the performance, they open the box where the masks initially used during the performance are kept and worship them---perhaps to fulfill a ritualistic obligation and probably to avert what may be perceived as ‘divine ire’.

It has to be noted that post-liberation, these folk theatre forms have been evolving due to several external influences such as: the pivotal role of constitutionally guaranteed equality in intra-community relations; pro-subaltern, developmental policies of the democratically elected local governments; various schemes run by Governmental agencies like Kala Academy and Departments of Art and Culture of the Local as well as Central governments to promote folklore and folk culture; participation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) of various regions and societal groups that encouraged folk culture; educational reforms and sociological shifts that helped common people to review their respective folk forms as manifestations of their identities with pride; post-globalization emergence of awareness of the value of cultural diversity and the vision to protect, promote and preserve folk lore; and, arrival of technology and technical resources that favoured and facilitated the presentation, preservation and adaptation of folk forms to changing times to ensure preservation and survival. In the contemporary times, the performers of these forms are making an attempt of touching upon contemporary issues. For instance, a performance of *Ranmaalem* witnessed on 20th December 2014 at Ranmaale Festival at Masordem, Sattari had instances of a female character speaking about the *Laadli Laksmi* scheme of the State Government to promote the welfare of the Girl child. Thus, it can be inferred that with the changing times, the forms have also undergone change and thus they have also found a way to bring in the new issues into their content.

A performance of *Zagor* witnessed on 13th May 2017 at Veling in Ponda taluka can be cited to illustrate the use of contemporary issues in the narratives. The character of Mahar's son who is fond of drinking alcohol, showed the bottle to audience and says that now we wouldn't get this easily. This is because Central Government has issued an order to ban the sale of alcohol on the highways which has led to shutting of many bars in Goa.

While one group that performs *Zagor* claims that they don't change the narrative so much, the other group chooses to add subtle contemporarized content in the performance. With the evolution of the content, the spaces of performance have also evolved in post-liberation era.

4.4 Evolution of Space in Goan Folk Theatre

As explained earlier, like the content, the context in which these performances were performed has changed in recent times. Now the performances are being performed on various occasions. Space and time are two elements of folk performances which define the context of the performance. 'Space' is a significant element in any **folk form, especially performances like folk theatre and dance. It has been reiterated more than once in this study that they are performed in a specific defined space at a particular time. Folklorists Vladamir Propp argues, "Spaces in folklore has certain peculiarities that can probably be accounted for by early forms of human thought" (1984).** Spaces define the overall movement of a particular folk performance. Thus, space is a feature that helps in analyzing the semiotics of folk theatre. Traditionally, various folk performances have been performed in defined spaces. For instance, *Kaalo*, is traditionally performed mostly within the temple premises *Praakaar* or the temple *Mandaps*, while *Zagor*, is traditionally performed on a space called *Maand*.

Maand is a platform like structure found in most of the villages of Goa originally built out of clay, eventually with the moving times it was coated with cow dung. At present, most of the times, there is a sacred tree such as *Vad* (Banyan), *Peepal*, *Saavri*, *Rumod*, *Matt* etc near *Maand*. Also, there might be a small shrine like a *Ghumti* or *Tulsi Vrindavan* near the *Maand*. It has been demarcated traditionally as the space for religious and cultural activities and attained social significance over a period of time. All the traditional folk performances took place in this socio-ritualistic space. Either the *Maand* belonged to the village community or there is an individual who owns the space and is honoured every year for permitting the community to use it.

Vinayak Khedekar, folk enthusiast from Goa in his book *Loksarita* (1993) mentions that this tradition of *Maand* might have been brought by Kols and Gonds, the tribes from which the

earliest settlers of Goa Gauda and Kunbis have descended. According to him, words like Maand may have been derived from the native dialects spoken by these tribes. The meaning of Maand denotes 'to set' as in 'organize' or 'place in order'. It can also mean 'tax'. However, it is also likely that the word has been derived from the Sanskrit term *Mandal* which means a systematic set up.

Maand is not just a venue where festivities of the villages take place; it is also a space where the village elders or the *Dha Jaan* (the symbolic ten) members of that specific community meet to discuss major issue and take suitable decisions related to village festivities. While, in some cases, each village has one Maand, some villages might have more than one each meant for a different purpose. Based on the functional focus and the gender of participants, the functions of Maand are determined. For example, there is a type of Maand called *Dhalaam Maand* (Maand for Dhalo) which is exclusively assigned for Dhaalo, performative festival of women, where the male participation is minimal.

As a ritualistic space, three major deities are worshipped on the Maand. They are *Van-devata* that is the forest goddesses, *Dharitrimata* that is Mother Earth and *Maanda Guru* that is Teacher of the Maand. Retaining the purity and sanctity of the village Maand is extremely important for the community. In fact, For instance, the post-birth and post-death taboo periods for the family and the clan, and menstruating-period-prohibition to visit the Maand for women in general are strictly followed; and, individuals covered by such restrictions are not allowed on the Maand, which is otherwise, also a space of social transaction, utility and interaction. It also serves as a place for social discourse, adjudication and used for financial transactions acknowledged within traditional norms. Maand symbolizes the values of a traditional village and represents how the society functions.

During the process of bridging the gaps between village and city, the rural set-up of Goa has undergone much development which has naturally influenced traditional lifestyle aspects like family structure, public institutions, way of life including architecture, thus, also influencing the structure and order of Maand. Many villages now have a cemented Maand instead of erstwhile clayed and cow-dung-coated structure. Even the shrines in some places have attained a new shape and color (coat of paint) according to the new architectural influences. This concretization of the structure has subsequently led to a decline in the use of natural products like clay, mud and cow dung which symbolize the human relation with nature.

The natural elements would keep the performing area cool. Now days, the closed performance areas create heat. Since *Zagor* is celebrated during summers, villagers now use fans and coolers for the convenience of artists and audience. Although modernization has entered into the space

dynamics of folk theatre, there is also a tendency to stay faithful to custom with regard to connect with tradition and adherence to its norms and values. For example, it was observed during the *Zagor* performance in Veling in May 2017 that the performance area was not at an elevated level, as is the case in modern theatre, where there is a proscenium stage entailing a gap between the audience and the artists. This phenomenon of a sort of elevated stage has arrived in folk theatre as well, but is not adopted in adherence to traditional practice in places like Veling where the audience and artists are at one level. The performance takes place at the demarcated venue surrounded by audience on the right, left and in front of the performers. This proximity encourages an interactive, even participatory scenario. The audience tends to get more deeply involved in the performance. Thus, even in the adaption of modern theatrical norms, there has been the element of intimate theatre which involves the audience in the performance. This can be seen as the sustained influence of folk theatre tradition and its norms on the contemporary Maand, notwithstanding other permitted changes in its venue and performances thereon.

Interestingly, the political intervention in the village system has also led to much change in these structures in the name of ‘modernization’. For instance, Chetan Khedekar, folk performer from Priol, Ponda shared this piece of information that the Maand in their village went through more and more structural changes with each cycle of elections. The involvement of politicians in the field of art and culture has increased over the years. For them, promoting art and creating facilities for it, is an opportunity to safeguard and even enhance their electoral prospects with the voters.

4.4.1 Folk Theatre forms: Evolution or Dilution

It was also observed during the field work that now several elements from the modern theatre have become a part of folk theatre performances. Curtains were never a part of folk theatre. Now, they are being used even during the folk theatre performances since they are often followed by a modern play at the same venue on the same day or at times, the latter are performed a day before. Lights which are used in modern plays are now used in folk theatre as well. Even the costumes have undergone change with time. Characters like *Firgin* from *Zagor* dresses up like a modern day girl.

4.5 New Venues and Modes of Performances

The practice of folk theatre forms is now not restricted to ritual-performances; rather it is being performed in several other non-traditional spaces as well. *Perni Zagor* had the tradition of being performed in various places as revealed by one of the surviving performers Rama Perni during an interview. But these performances used to be held only during the religious occasions. With

the evolution of other folk theatre forms and with the rise of cultural consciousness, various initiatives such as organizing folk theatre festivals have been taken for these performances to be showcased in various other spaces.

Interestingly, during the process of taking the folk form performances to another space, it reaches to the audience that is the consumer of other forms of arts as well. This has its own impact on the content, context as well as mode of performance of the folk form. Goa being a culturally rich place, the local people are exposed to various forms of Art across the board. Moreover, with the arrival of new media like television and internet, it is easier for everyone to view and enjoy various multi-medial contents in different contexts and multiple modes.

4.5.1 Competition and Adaptation of Folk Theatre into New Modes

With such wide range of modes available for infotainment, every form will naturally tend to compete with each other for survival, patronage as well viewership. Folk theatre is not an exception to this competition. Since its exposure to the other spaces, folk theatre has to face the competition of other regional forms of entertainment. As a result of this phenomenon, there have also been adaptations and transmutations of certain elements of these forms into each other. For instance, television /radio have tried to document various folk performances and broadcast/telecast them. One example of this is *Dayaj Loknatkachem*, the series run by All India Radio, Panaji from 5th April to 28th June 2015. This series was aimed at enlightening the listeners with the information about various folk theatre forms of Goa. Various folk theatre groups sang in the series and also several experts provided significant inputs about the forms. YouTube has become one of the significant platforms to upload videos in today's world. Although in a very informal and casual manner, there have been people who have uploaded videos of folk performances of Goa. One disadvantage of this casual uploading is that the uploaders at times do not have proper information about the forms. Thus, there are chances of misinterpretation and even misinformation.

Social media sites are another medium through which a lot of regional content is put on the web. The live feature of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc, also allows the users to go live while witnessing the performances. This feature definitely assures a wide viewership. Thus, it has come up as a greatly preferred medium to reach out to a larger audience. However, these media also have their limitations such they cannot function if there is no proper network. As of now, the features like going live are being used by the ordinary informal users. But official departments, like Art and Culture and Tourism can utilize these features to attract tourists and extended audience to these art forms. With the intervention of these media, the folk theatre forms would not remain just the village Maand confined performances they used to be, but

would reach out to a wider audience in its putatively traditional albeit not pristine form. It is seen that when folk theatre forms are performed on other occasions like folk theatre festivals or conferences etc, they tend to get modified according to the need of event, occasion and the audience. Thus, it is not the original but a ‘modernized’ or even ‘contemporarized’ version of the form that is presented to the audience.

4.5.2 Change in Folk Theatre Forms for New Modes

Emergence of modern spaces has been the outcome of the need to expand the outreach and the accessibility of these popular folk theatre forms. In fact, as a part of infotainment they are being now performed at elite spaces like starred hotels, at corporate functions or academic conferences and so on. Particularly, at academic venues, the performances of folk theatre forms help augment the critical argument or serves as illustrative inputs to the discussion on the forms, nature, role, status of the form in question. It may be reiterated here, that while it would be most certainly desirable to have the traditional folk performances in their indigenous ritual mode and venue, with characteristic spontaneity of content and presentation, it would be extremely difficult for the traditional performing groups to match the present avenues of discourse and the time and venue of the annual ritual-linked folk theatre performance. This necessitates alternate performances at new venues. This change in space has also led to change in the duration and content condensation or variation in performance. For example, when performed during the festival, the original *Ranmaalemm* usually goes on for around four hours, whereas when it is performed in folk theatre festivals, its duration has to be decreased to meet the constraints of the audience demand. Again, at times the folk artists make modifications in the lyrics and costumes to suit the ‘other’ space. These modifications are distinct from some changes, that are born of compulsion, made in the ritualistic performances; such as, the non-availability of traditional material, unconstitutional or discriminatory nature of content or even the innate nature of the form itself, which may be violative of human rights/dignity (for example, *Perni Zagor*). However, the end result is that altered versions have emerged and led to professionalism in the amateurish folk theatre forms under study.

4.5.3 Professionalism and Incentives for Promotion of Folk Theatre

The folk theatre troupés from various villages from Goa have organized themselves into professional groups over the years. They perform in various cultural festivals in the state as well as outside the state. Several groups have also performed internationally.

Directorate of Art and Culture has been an active institution in developing various schemes to promote and showcase the cultural heritage of Goa. Inter-state exchange of cultural troupés is

one of the schemes of Directorate of Art and Culture of Goa. According to the official website of the Directorate, “The main objective is to opportunity by which people from different parts of the country will get to know about one another’s culture and promote National Integration. Under this scheme every year cultural troupes are sent to other states and in turn troupes from other states are received in Goa” (Directorate). It also mentions that only the recognized troupes will be sent in other states through this scheme through proper selection.

Directorate of Art and Culture of Goa in collaboration with West Zone Cultural Centre, Udaipur organizes several programmes for the benefit of cultural elements of various states. One of them is *Lokotsav* organized every year in Kala Academy, Panaji in the month of January or February. As mentioned on their official website, “These Folk Festivals are being organized to provide a platform and to preserve the traditional crafts and folk art of the artists from different parts of the country and the state. The artefacts are displayed and sold by the craftpersons. About 100 craft persons and 150 performing artists from different parts of the country and Goa are invited to participate in the festivals” (Directorate). The main objective of organizing this festival is to provide a shared platform to the artist and groups to showcase their folk art. It also gives boost to the local traditional professions by providing them a space at a subsidised rate to display and sell their products to the large crowd that visits this festival every year.

Zagorotsav is another festival which is solely dedicated to *Zagor* theatre form. It is organized by various local groups in collaboration with the Directorate of Art and Culture. It features various *Zagor* from various talukas of Goa. Since it is a two day festival every group has to modify and shorten their performances and present what is significant to the form, relevant to Event and appealing to the audience.

Other than these festivals, Tourism Department of Goa, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Kala Academy, All India Konkani Association, are the other institutions which organize folk based programmes.

The folk performing groups from Goa have been receiving exposure and motivation to continue the age old legacies due to such schemes of Government. However, as already discussed earlier they need to shorten the duration of the performances. These performances are organized in auditoriums or/and on a stage cannot be as long as the ones performed in villages in their original space. This changes the core dynamics of folk performance which is otherwise intimate

and interactive in nature. The audience remains at a distance during such sophisticated performances.

While performing in other states, the troupés from Goa are supposed to represent the state's cultural heritage. Thus, it becomes a responsibility for these troupés to present the best of what they have. When asked how they choose which forms are to be performed, Chetan Khedekar of Shri Siddhivinayak Mhalsa group said that they choose the forms according to the demand of the organizers. He also said that if the performance is supposed to be presented outside Goa, then they choose the forms which will require less number of props and costumes. This is solely because of the convenience during the travelling. The duration hardly crosses the two hours when performed professionally, so one needs to choose a few forms suited to the occasion/duration.

The groups try to bring the professional finesse in their performances while performing in festivals even in the state. For instance, the *Ranmaalem* performing group from Sattari modifies the costumes of the human curtain while performing for festivals. They bring more of uniformity in costumes.

There are many groups in Goa today which perform the folk theatre professionally as well as traditionally. There are some which have left performing in the traditional spaces and are solely professional. Reasons for these groups stopping the traditional performances are many. One of them is the internal tussles between the intra community members/groups due to difference in political affinities. Thus, it can be said that the contemporary politics has affected the cultural scenario in some way or the other.

The question is whether the folk performing groups can survive solely on the folk performances? For now, the answer is no. As per the Directorate of Art and Culture every artist is paid Rs. 800 and T.A. and D.A. for one performance. Other private organizations have different payment policies. At times, it depends on the distance to be travelled and the facilities that will be provided to the performers by the organizers. The amount that the group receives is not fixed all the time. It changes according to the duration, number of artists and ability of organizers to pay.

Despite having had several opportunities and earned prestige by showcasing their art, the folk troupés currently cannot function as purely professional groups. All the members who perform

in these troupes are otherwise employed, since only performing for folk groups cannot provide them stable income. To promote more dedicated performance and incentivize sustained participation, in Chetan Khedekar's view, Government can depute them to represent at various festivals on a regular basis to increase the economic possibilities through art. He also feels that if the groups perform really well then they are in demand. Thus, there is a need to provide training facilities and present good performances for the folk theatre to be in demand.

With the increasing popularity of folk theatre forms of Goa and shift in their performative space and contexts, they have become a part of overall Goan performative scene. They are not confined to the regional culture anymore. In the course of this transition, the folk theatre has significantly influenced the modern theatre of Goa. This has been analysed in the next section in the context of the Indian theatre.

4.6 Influence of Folk Theatre on Modern Theatre

India has a rich and diverse tradition of folk theatre comprising forms like Nautanki, Ramlila, Swang, Jatra, Bhavai, Tamasha, Yakshagana among others. All these, in their own way, have further influenced the modern Indian theatre. According to Amitava Roy, "During the 1950s and 1960s, an awareness began to grow among our emerging young urban theatre workers of the complex and rich forms, streams and traditions of Indian folk theatre" (Lal 10). Not surprisingly, it was after independence that folk theatre in India began to be a part of mainstream culture. Institutions like Sangeet Natak Akademi set up by government for the growth of art and culture began the work of documentation. Probably, the need to search for native roots during the post-independence era and the sense of liberation from the colonial influence, was the motivation for this upsurge. But according to Roy, this led to, "[...] a blind mishmash of urban and folk theatre elements" (Lal 10). However, in some plays, the folk theatre was resourcefully used, such as in the works of Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar and Habib Tanvir, who, along with the forms also adapted the regional mythos in their plays to experiment with content and techniques. The folk element of human curtain used by Tendulkar in his widely known play *Ghashiram Kotwal* (will be termed as *GK* in further references) is one such instance. Not just the curtain, but Tendulkar used the songs, satirical nature of Maharashtra folk in *GK*. Habib Tanvir made use of his in-depth study of Chattisgarhi folklore in his play *Charandas Chor*. Karnad's plays display the puranic as well as folk element; however, the folk forms are starkly visible in *Hayavadana* and *Nagmandala*. It is noteworthy that these playwrights did not just utilize the folk element to reflect the convention or focus on

tradition per se, they also used this medium to critique and comment on the contemporary social issues and concerns.

Indian theatre has a long and ambitious history of using folklore in contemporary theatre. Yet, there have been several debates and arguments regarding influence of folk theatre on modern theatre. As quoted by Amitava Roy, C. C. Mehta, one of the dramatists describes the programmed use of folk forms in modern urban theatre as “a fashion for foreigners to take up and a fashion to impress foreigners with [...] folk is good because it helps sell India to the outside world” (Lal 11).

Interestingly, in the case of Goa, the conventional theatre has grown parallel to folk theatre. It has been also a part of various temple rituals, just like the folk theatre. Therefore, folk theatre has had a constant influence on conventional theatre. Conventional theatre has also in return influenced the evolution of folk theatre forms. This correlative nature of Goan theatre scenario has been discussed in the next segment.

4.6.1 Goan Conventional Theatre: History and Developments

Goan modern theatre scenario can be categorized into three major types: 1) Commercial 2) Experimental 3) Semi Commercial. *Tiatr*, a popular theatre form with a history of over 125 years, that grew in the interstices of the native folk form *Khell* and Italian Opera, can be considered as the only purely commercial theatre that runs in Goa. By commercial it is implied that, this theatre thrives on the tickets which are sold, where as semi-commercial theatre is where groups are paid by local organizers to perform their plays. Experimental theatre as the name suggest is solely experiment-based theatre. The Government institution devoted to the Arts, Kala Academy has been organizing State- level drama competition for several years which has largely contributed to the rise of experimental theatre in Goa.

Tiatr is a catholic community dominated form and has a specific yet a large audience. It is believed that this form has evolved from the popular folk form called *Khell* (pronounced as *Phell*) in Salcete, into *Khell Tiatr*. It used to be a street performance and due to its improvisation and oral nature has to be considered as a folk theatre form. In contemporary

times, there has been debate about whether Tiatr is a folk theatre form. Rather erroneously, many believe that it is a folk theatre form. But, eminent Tiatr writer and director Tomazino Cardoz doesn't agree with this perception. In his article published on konkanitiatr.blogspot.in he explains the difference between Khel Tiatr and Tiatr. He says, "Khell-tiatr is an extension of the Goan folk play called khell or fell. About 30-35 years ago, the khell or fell, which was earlier performed on the ground, came to be performed on stage" (Cardozo). He further explains how the first Tiatr *Italian Bhurgo* was based on Italian opera *Italian Boy*. He feels Tiatr is more influenced by the European theatre rather than the Goan folk theatre. However, the rise of Tiatr also has a connection to folk theatre form of *Zagor*. When *Zagor* were performed in Mumbai in 19th century, they were ridiculed for being vulgar. As A. R. Fernandes mentions in his work *When The Curtains Rise: Understanding Goa's Vibrant Konkani Theatre* "Most educated persons were disgusted with vulgarity in *Zagors*" (Fernandes 45). Thus, it can be surmised that, to provide more sophisticated form of entertainment to the audience, the hybrid form of Tiatr must have emerged with much influence of the European form of the Opera that was very popular with the potential theatre audiences then.

At this juncture it would be apt to discuss the other modes in which conventional drama flourished in Goa. The neighbouring State of Maharashtra has the tradition of Sangeet Natak, the musical plays. These plays are specifically known for the songs which form a significant part of the plot. Interestingly, this tradition of Natak per se, is said to have started off in Sangli taluka of Maharashtra in 1840s. However, Budkuley provides a different viewpoint. According to her:

But, the major contribution of the 19th century Goa to Marathi language and theatre was in the form of Marathi *Sangeet Natak*. This genre of drama has been tremendously popularized in Maharashtra and Goa for more than a century by travelling dramatc troupes. However, its foundation was laid in Goa's Dongri village by a composer-performer of *kirtans*, Krishnabhatt Jagannathbhatt Bandkar. His melodious and vivid presentations of his own compositions during a Ramanavami performance so impressed Annasaheb Kirloskar, a visiting salt merchant from Maharashtra, that he invited Bandkar to bring his art to Maharashtra. Legend has it that the latter politely declined the offer but encouraged Kirloskar to take to writing plays himself. The rest is history: Annasaheb is recognized as the pioneer of Marathi *sangeet Natak* in Maharashtra. (Budkuley 2012 159)

It cannot be denied that the modern Goa's cultural scenario has been very much influenced by Maharashtra's cultural elements. Sangeet Natak became really popular in Goa as well. It served as a hub of artists for Marathi theatre which was dominated by Sangeet Natak in its earlier phase.

Rama Perni, one of the oldest Perni *Zagor* performers mentions that music of Perni *Zagor* and *Kaalo* were very much like that of Marathi Sangeet Natak. In general, although folk theatre forms of Goa were mainly performed in Konkani, *Kaalo* form has been influenced the most by Marathi theatre. Thus, the songs, dialogues of many of the characters from *Kaalo* are in Marathi. However, songs from *Zagor* and *Ranmaalem* are in Konkani. Interestingly, even though these forms have existed and have been performed in Goa from a very long time, it took quite some time and effort for Konkani theatre to flourish in Goa as also in the neighbouring Konkani-speaking region. The first Konkani play was written by Bolantoor Krishnaprabhu in Bantwal, Karnataka in 1912 titled *Sangeet Chandras*. Even in Goa, a lot of Marathi musical plays were translated into Konkani and staged. One such example is *Sangeet Charudatta* by Ravindra Kelekar which was based on *Sangeet Mrichhakatik*. Shenoi Goembab, the father of Konkani language used the medium of Konkani plays to assert the unique identity of Konkani. Adapting two of Moliére's French comedies into Konkani as *Mogache Logn* (1913) and *Pavanachem Taplem* (1919), and Abu Hasan's tale from *Arabian Nights* as *Jheelba Raano* were some of his very noteworthy attempts at contributing to the modern Konkani drama, if the unusual popularity of his *Mogachem Logn* in the post-liberation Goa is any indication to go by.

In the initial phases of Konkani drama, performances did not get much boost since Goan audience was more obsessed with Marathi drama. It was only after liberation that conventional Konkani theatre received a boost due to the concerted attempts of various organizations. This era also gave rise to the experimental theatre in Goa. Pundalik Naik who wrote path-breaking plays such as *Chaitanyak Mutth Naa*, *Shabai Shabia Bhoujan Samaj*, *Shri Vichitrachi Zatra*, is one of the major playwrights who has experimented with themes and genres, while also making insightful use of the folk theatre form. However, his more recent play *Prem zagor* ostensibly makes very resourceful use of the folk theatre form *Zagor*.

4.6.3 Influence of Goan Folk Theatre on Contemporary Goan Theatre

There is no denying that Pundalik Naik's overall literature is hugely influenced by the regional folklore. Goan folk songs have been a very crucial part of Naik's fiction. As the major contributors to the contemporary Konkani theatre, according to Manoharrai Sardesai (2000), Pundalik Naik's plays "[...]are rooted in the Goan soil and have a local colour" (Sardessai 238)

In Konkani theatre, experimentation with folk theatre has been successfully carried out by playwrights like Punadalik Naik, Vinayak Khedekar, Dattaram Bambolkar, and directors such as Digambar Singbal, Shridhar Kamat Bambolkar, Pramod Mahabaleshwar .Pundalik Naik's plays *Shabai Shabai Bahujan Samaj*, *Prem Jagor*, *Chaitanyak Math Na*, and Vinayak Khedekar's *Kani Kani Kotva* Shridhar Kamat Bambolkar's adaptation of Mahabaleshwar Sail's play *Yug Sanvar* as *Sanvar Yug* are examples of such experiments. Along with these, Jayanti Naik's *Kukma Devichi Dipmal*, Avinash Chari's *Kani Eke Kaniechi*, Dattaram Bambolkar's *Mahiravan*, Prasad Loliekar's *Krishnayan*, are according to director Shridhar Kamat Bambolkar "all dramatic literary works [which] excel in their style because of their dependence on folk theatre, and have had great success on stage"(Bambolkar).

One of the plays by Pundalik Naik based on the traditional folk form *Zagor* is aptly titled as *Premjagor* has interestingly spawned further influence. It was originally a short story by Naik. He transcreated it into a play and it was staged and presented by the repertoire of Kala Academy in 1998. The play revolves around the life and the love story of a *Zagor* performer Baburaay, who later becomes lame. In the annual village festival, he always appraises the role of (*Thoti*), one of the characters from the traditional *Zagor*, who ties a stilt-like cane to his supposedly unharmed leg and dance on it. Later on, in the play, to impress his beloved's father of his agrarian skills, Baburaay falls down, in the process of jumping from one areca nut tree to another and loses one of his legs and turns lame for life. This is a good illustration of how the playwright has creatively utilized one of the, core character from folk theatre to foreground the fate of his protagonist.

The play was once again staged by Antruz Lalitak in the year 2017. In this production, director Bambolkar has further experimented by using some of the original songs from *Zagor*, which were not a part of script written by Naik. Interestingly, Bambolkar had been familiar with this technique, having himself adapted Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into Konkani as *Sood Zagor* in 2015 and had had it staged by the repertory of Kala Academy. The rat trap scene was made into a scene from *Zagor* in *Sood Zagor*. Also the titles of both these plays, i.e. *Premjagor* and *Sood Zagor* assert the presence of folk theatre form in their content and form.

In the Goan modern theatre scenario, a lot of experiments have been carried out to bring in the folk element in the modern drama. In 2016, under the ‘Performing Arts Grant Scheme’ of Art and Culture Ministry, Government of India, the dramatic association, Abhivyaktee, Panaji organized a theatre festival called *Lokrang*, which included three plays based on three different folk theatre forms of Goa. The first play which staged in this festival was *Ved-Haran* written by Anagha Deshpande and directed by Saish Deshpande. This play was based on the *Kaalo* form. Playwright had retained some of the original songs from *Kaalo* and had converted some into satirical verses with contemporary content in them. The play was a commentary on the politics of language in the education sector of Goa. The protagonist/central character of the play was Shankhasur the demon from *Kaalo*. Shankasur was portrayed as a politician who tries to impose his whims over his population and then falls into trouble.

The second play in *Lokrang* was *Rupdyachi Rupkatha* written by Vinayak Khedekar and directed by Shrikant Gade. It was based on *Perni Zagor*. Although the play was closer to the realistic genre, the use of masks in the setting, and for one of the characters, brought the play closer to the form of *Perni Zagor*.

Lokrang was concluded with *Sabala Ga Naar* written by Mahadev Joshi and directed by Abhay Jog. It was based on *Ranmaalem*. Of the three plays, this play was most faithful to the folk form chosen as its structural basis. In fact, the playwright claims that he has kept all the songs as they are in the original *Ranmaalem*. Also, the director made the performers (who were not the traditional performers of *Ranmaalem*) learn the typical dance steps of *Ranmaalem*. A special training was given to them by the traditional *Ranmaalem* performers from Sattari. The only subversion which is done in the script is that the play focuses more on the female character’s perspective. It is the story from the epic *Ramayana*. In the usual *Ranmaalem*, it is told in the ‘normal way’, whereas, in *Sabla Ga Naar* the focus is on the predicament of two major female characters from the epic: namely, Urmila, wife of Laxmana, and, Kaikayi, the mother of Bharat and the step-mother of Ram. The former was left behind in Ayodhya when Laxman went to the forest with Ram; whereas, the latter is often considered responsible for the *vanvas* or exile of Ram.

The festival included discussions after every performance. Also, before every performance experts from the relevant fields of study provided more information about the folk theatre forms. The cast and crew of each play were predominantly from the younger generation. Thus, through this festival there was a curiosity and interest created in young performers and the

audience about the folk theatre forms of Goa. Also, the discussions led to a serious thought about to what extent the folk theatre can influence modern theatre.

Therefore, it can be said that Goan folk theatre has had a great impact on the overall modern theatre. Folk theatre has crossed the barriers of regionalism and has reached out to wider audience through various mediums. Yet, a lot remains to be done to give it the prestige that professional theatre has. Does folk theatre have the ability to sustain and reach that level is the question.

4.7 Conclusion

The Chapter has attempted to look at the changes that have occurred in the folk theatre forms of Goa over the years. One of the main features of folklore in general is its flexibility. It keeps on adapting to new influences and re-invents or modifies itself. Folk theatre of Goa is not an exception to this. Since Goa developed as a trade centre due to its favourable geographic location, foreign invaders like Portuguese were attracted towards this land. Pre-Portuguese rule in Goa too found this land suitable for strategic political control. These historico-political aspects helped weave the cultural tapestry of Goa.

Native population of Goa had its own cultural products even before the arrival of foreign rulers. One of them was definitely folk theatre, which was a part of people's rituals. These folk theatre forms also acted as a medium of recreation and information. They were the mediums of rural folk to inform the fellow villagers about the history, politics and social functioning of village. The folk theatre forms also helped the folk to express their devotional sentiments towards the forces they worshipped.

Several historical and political changes have influenced the folk theatre forms under study. Some forms like *Zagor* have been more flexible than other forms like *Kaalo*. To elucidate, we can see characters like *Firgin* in *Zagor* which seems to be like a Portuguese cultural influence where as in *Kaalo* we don't see any characters which are influenced by foreign culture. Rather, *Kaalo* is still more inclined towards the mythological elements. Language is *Ranmaalem* still remains ancient i.e. a lot of words used are not in use in today's verbal Konkani. But, *Ranmaalem* has adapted contemporary themes in its content.

The contemporarization of content has also occurred because of the new modes of performances that have become available to the performers. As discussed in this Chapter earlier, groups have been formed to perform professionally for folk festivals, conferences and other programmes. In such scenario, the performers modify the original performance. This has led to changes in costumes, duration as well as content. This change has further influenced the indigenous performances too. For instance, *Zagor* performed in Veling has adopted elements such as the Kunbi dance which is otherwise absent in *Zagor*. This is because of a very practical reason: the same performers belong to a professional group which also performs all folk dances. Consequently, this fact has influenced their performances during the ‘traditional’ *Zagor* festival too. It was also observed that the level of flexibility differs also according to the various regions from which the groups have come. While one group of performers is open for changes in content, another group expressed the need to remain faithful to the old content ----the one they have learnt from their ancestors.

It was also seen that folk theatre has had a great influence on modern conventional Goan theatre. At times the playwrights have naturally incorporated the folk elements in plays since they have lived through performances and experienced the folklore at first hand. While, there have also been conscious attempts at bringing folk component into the conventional theatre, folk theatre and conventional theatre have had a very interdependent relationship. Just the way folk theatre has influenced the modern theatre; modern theatre too has influenced the folk theatre of Goa. This influence has been on two levels. One is the use of modern paraphernalia, like curtain, lights etc, and has begun in folk theatre which was absent originally. This could be the effect of competition with the modern theatre performance forms like conventional/popular drama like the Natak and Tiatr. Another level of influence of modern theatre on the folk forms is with regard to the content. It was observed that in some *Zagors* performed professionally in folk theatre festivals, tunes of Hindi songs were used for the songs from *Zagor*. Also, *Zagor* which was held in Dhonshi on 13th May in 2017 had songs from the play *Premjagor*, which weren’t the part of *Zagor* originally.

No doubt, alternately, modern theatre has also attempted at utilizing the folk motifs into its performances but not all kinds of theatre doing this. It is only in experimental theatre we see this process taking place, whereas the semi-professional theatre, influenced very much by the farcical Marathi plays, and doesn’t attempt adopting folk elements. But important thing is that mutual interaction happens.

In spite of this healthy exchange between folk theatre and modern theatre, folk theatre certainly has several challenges for survival. In some places, it has remained alive or has been kept symbolically ‘alive’ just for the sake of ritual fulfilment. For instance, *Kaalo* in Priol is now performed only for 30 minutes followed by a professional play. Even in *Siolim Zagor* the inclusion of Tiatr is the same kind of phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, several villages have stopped performing their annual folk theatre festivals and it cannot be started again without proper rituals. Since there is devotional part attached to the performances, restarting the festival becomes an issue. There are several beliefs attached to the closure and restarting of ritualistic performances.

One of the reasons for folk theatre forms facing the challenge of survival is the reluctance amongst the new generation to continue their folk legacy. There are youngsters who are taking interest and are continuing the traditional art forms, but they cannot consider this as the only medium of living. There was a time when communities have lived solely on art forms. For instance, the Perni community survived only on their folk theatre performances. But the times were different and performers were paid in the form of goods and services. Extinction of *Perni Zagor* is a good example of tracing how changes in community functioning can lead to extinction of an art form.

On a positive side, incentives received from governmental and private organizations have encouraged the young generation to patronize their respective folk forms and participate more enthusiastically in their folk theatre. These incentives have provided them with exposure, opportunities and financial advantages too. But commercialization of folk theatre is limited for now. No folk artist can live solely on the art form. It would certainly be an incentive, if the various governmental as also non-governmental agencies could explore the possibility of providing professionally stronger opportunities to the folk theatre forms and thereby to the emerging generation of folk artists.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

As its title, *Folk Theatre in Goa: A Critical Study of Select Forms*, amply suggests the present research work, has been devoted to the understanding, analyses and interpretation of the three major folk theatre forms of Goa, namely, *Zagor*, *Kaalo* and *Ranmaalem*, from varied perspectives. Towards this end, as the preparatory step, the present researcher undertook sustained and systematic filed visits and practical work, involving witnessing live folk performances of these theatre forms, documenting the performances, compiling available data on them, watching and reading material compiled by others, and, interviewing the stakeholders including performing artists and other collaborating/supporting agents.

In terms of the theoretic dimension of this study, at the outset, it focused on the historical, social and cultural contexts of these folk theatre forms, shortlisted as its primary texts and resources, with the help of library and digital sources. Moreover, with the help of the traditional as also contemporary theories of Folkloristics, the study has undertaken to identify these theatre forms, alongside a wide variety of oral and non-oral forms, as significant performative components of Goan Folklore. On this contextual and formal backdrop, this study went on to analyse the content, performance, and contribution of these forms with the help of three specific critical approaches viz. Cultural Studies, Subaltern Studies and Feminism.

There has been a reason why these critical frames were utilized in this study. Since folklore and culture are inseparable and as both are located in the history of the land of its origin, there was a need to analyze the forms from the angle of Cultural Studies. Also, since the main participants of folk theatre have mostly been the marginal and subaltern groups in the Goan societal hierarchy, it was felt that the principles of Subaltern Studies have to be applied to the folk forms under study. Again, it was observed that women have been en masse excluded from the ‘performative aspect’ of almost all the folk theatre of Goa, except *Perni Zagor*; and yet,

they form a significant part of its narrative, thus it was essential to see the forms through the Feminist perspective to trace how these forms relate to women and how they are projected in the forms.

The impact of historical and political changes in Goa on these forms has also been gauged in the course of the study. Since the forms under study are a product of society, social dynamics have been analyzed through these forms. The study has also looked critically at the historical evolution of the folk theatre forms of Goa, their present transformation into the infotainment mode, their contribution to modern theatre as also current status vis-a-vis survival strategies of folk theatre forms.

As mentioned earlier, the folk theatre forms were identified, classified and contextualized with the help of insights from Folkloristics. Since, all the forms studied are indigenous, folk performances, most of them are performed in relation to their annual, ritualistic cycle. As such their performances are neither frequent nor fixed as per the Gregorian calendar, since most of the folk rituals are conducted as per the Lunar almanac. Yet, care has been taken to study these forms by witnessing them whenever possible. Wherever it has not been possible to witness the performances, it has been indicated in the course of study. The video recordings of performances were carried out and they were used to identify the content, characters, themes, quotes and technicalities of primary texts. These recordings have been utilized as primary textual evidence during the study. Also, interviews with the performers and locals were helpful in coming out with observations.

5.2 Major Observations of the Study

In the course of the literature survey and field work undertaken, as reported in Chapter One titled “Goa: History, Society and Culture”, it was observed that:

- Goa’s cultural scenario has been influenced by several dynasties that ruled over this land across the ages and the reflection of the same can be seen in various cultural products like the Folklore of the land.
- Historically, various communities have thrived in Goa. Their distinct practices and functions in the societal structure have given way to the production of a variety of folklore. One of the apt examples of this phenomenon would be the *Shigmo* festival which is celebrated across the State by subaltern communities. In the course of this festival, a lot of songs get created and passed on from one generation to another. Several folk dances have also been a part of the Shigmo festival.

- Folklore of Goa is rich, composed of various oral as well as performative genres, like folksongs, folktales folkdances and folk theatre. Many of the folk dances and theatre forms are performed and practiced by the various local communities as part of their ritual festivities.
- Folk theatre is one of the significant genres of folklore because of the inter-generic blend that takes place in its composition and in the course of its presentation. It easily blends song, dance and drama, not to mention folk/local anecdotes, riddles and aphorisms that become a part of its dialogue.
- The Folk theatre forms of Goa under study, like the other forms of Folklore, have always been a part of festivities, largely associated with the agrarian cycle. Since traditionally a large number of communities practiced farming, the festivities were held according to the agrarian cycle. For instance, *Zagor* is a harvest festival. It is celebrated after the harvest in the month of May.
- In the course of the reading and field trips undertaken for study, as discussed in Chapter Two titled “Folklore, Society and Culture: Theories and Definitions” it was observed that the study of folklore needs a theoretic approach to make the work in this field evolve beyond the level of mere documentation.
- As various theories were identified for short-listing the material available, it was observed that many of these theories are contradictory in nature. For instance, while Indian theory proposes that all the folktales find their roots in India, the Indo-European theory says that it is possible to differentiate the Indo-European stories from the other stories of the world.
- Although most of the theories related to folklore were developed in West, the source of many of these theories was Indian folklore. For instance, Theodore Benfey's Indian theory also known as Theory of Borrowing was formed on the basis of Benfey's translation of *Panchatantra* tales.
- To assert the difference in the roots of folklore of various cultures theory like Historical Geographical Theory was formed. This theory aimed at exploring the roots of each story separately.
- Vladimir Propps' work remains a significant input in the study of folklore. It made the folklorists look at the folklore through a social perspective. He also reiterated the ‘literary’ value of folklore by differentiating between folklore and literature. Since his

studies were largely based on the labour class of Russia, he could analyse the relation between the historical elements and folklore.

- Folklore studies in 20th century were influenced by the theories which developed as a product of social movements like Marxism. Literary movements like structuralism and Freudian philosophy also influenced the Folkloristics.
- In India, folklore studies have been carried out in documentative form, and theorizing has been negligible. Although, some Indian folklorists have applied Western theories to their studies, others have traced significant parallel concepts like *Lokveda*, *lok-sahitya* and created interpretive tools to place the indigenous discourse of folklore in the context of modern global folklore studies.
- Theoretic reading in this area, along with field work undertaken and interactive sessions held with folklore practitioners, revealed to what great extent Society and Culture can be significant in the study of Folklore--- a product of the former and a contributor to the latter. This led to the observation of the potential of this study of Folklore forms to gauge social structures, processes and ethos. Thus it became palpable that Goan folk theatre forms, which are also a product of local culture can be a significant basis for a minute scrutiny of the societal ethos, as also for a critical analysis of societal practices and beliefs regarding community-based festivities and functions and interactions.
- From the reading and field work undertaken towards Chapter Three, titled “Social Dynamics of Goan Folk Theatre”, it was observed that Goan society has over the centuries gradually evolved into a hierarchical caste structure with scant traces of the Varna system of the ancient India which divided the society according to the functions that individuals carried out. This system has continued with the members of the indigenous community after their conversion to Christianity and the hierarchy is visible in the folk practices and social structures.
- The acquaintance with the primary sources and relevant secondary sources revealed that, while the caste system in Goa has been rigid, leading to inter-communal differences with regard to social practices of worship and beliefs, there has also been harmony amongst various communities on various levels including some shared practices belief and folklore.
- It has observed in the course of this study that the tradition of rural Goa, where duties have been well-defined, divided and designated to the individuals of various intra-community groups such as tribes groups, castes, sub-caste and religious communities

continues to this day. For instance, during the folk theatre performances under study, individuals belonging to Brahmin families carry out rituals in temples. But, this varies according to the region, community and occasion. For example, the Velip Community have their own priests. Again, although the Bhat does the *Saangne*, a prayer in temples, during Shigmo, a village chieftain belonging to the intermediate caste performs the same ritual on the traditional Maand.

- This tradition of assigning folk-form-related duties has remained generally unfair to women and all privileges are granted only to male members of the Community. Women are only expected to assist from outside the actual performance. The only exception to this, among the folk theatre forms studied, is of the *Perni Zagor*. Conversely, it has been observed that in the case of an all-female folk form like the Dhaalo, men are required to keep off, except for priestly duties.
- The hierarchy in the caste structure has led to exploitation of communities on the lower strata, and this in turn led to various kinds of responses/reactions from the down-trodden communities through their folk expressions.
- The subaltern communities have displayed two kinds of responses towards the oppression by the so-called ‘higher caste’ (eg. Bhat/ Bamonn) or higher class (Bhatkaar). For one, they remain submissive and continue to follow the norms which are at times exploitative in nature; and two, they defy the norms and protest in their own way. For instance, the Perni community initially followed the norm of symbolic marriage with the God. Over the years, the practice of this custom has been abandoned. Thus, it has helped the Perni community and other similar communities oppressed due to such customs to get a space in the conventional social strata. There have been certain practices in Goa which still display the submissive approach of the subaltern.
- Almost all the folk theatre forms of Goa are practiced and performed by the subaltern communities; there are only a few instances of higher caste communities performing the *Kaalo..* Thus, folk theatre has emerged as a powerful medium for expressing the subaltern angst, defying suppression and voicing resistance.
- *Zagor* and *Ranmaalem* have been extremely community exclusive throughout. *Zagor* is basically performed by the Gauda community and *Ranmaalem* is performed by Maratha community. *Zagor* is performed in Ponda, Tiswadi and Bardez taluka. Whereas, *Ranmaalem* is performed only in Sattari and in very few places from Sanguem taluka.

- One of the common factors, in all the folk theatre forms under study, is that their content consists of commentary on the happenings in society. Certain characters in these forms are based on real life individuals. There are characters also influenced from mythological tales. But, these characters are also regionalized.
- The subaltern communities rarely had the opportunity to express their sentiments in the existing hierarchy. Mediums like folk theatre allowed them to do it. Thus, it can be seen that the performing communities have taken the liberty to express their angst and comment on the societal excesses and pitfalls in the folk theatre.
- Using humour and satire the commentary on society in folk theatre has often assumed the form of a critique, and in some instances, of ridicule of the other communities. However, this ridiculing has been taken sportingly by the communities concerned. Therefore, it can be said that art and ritualistic practices have become the mediums of expressing what cannot be expressed otherwise in normal conversations. For instance, a lot of jokes are made on the Bhatkaar, the landlord within the narratives of folklore, but these artists would not speak in same manner with the landlord in real life. It is only at the performing spaces such liberties are permitted and not taken offensively.
- One of the significant features of all the folk theatre forms under study has been its gender exclusivity. Except for Perni *Zagor* all the other types of *Zagor* are performed by males. *Kaalo* and *Ranmaalem* too are exclusively performed by males. There are female characters in folk theatre forms under study, but they are enacted by the males. Although a lot of other norms related to these forms have changed, this feature has not changed to date. This must be due to the ritualistic nature of the forms and the taboos attached to the women which are strictly adhered to even now. For example, menstruating women are still not allowed on the worship areas. Probably this is one of the reasons why women were not allowed to perform in the folk theatre forms. The spaces where folk theatre forms are performed have been considered sacred by the performers. Menstruating women are not supposed to be at sacred places according to the societal norms. The norm has continued because the practice of not allowing menstruating women near worship area is practiced till today.
- Generally, most of the folk performances in Goa have been gender exclusive in nature. Festivals and dance forms like Dhaalo is practiced solely by females. Although with increasing rate of literacy and exposure to new mediums a change is being brought in these age old traditions. The faithfulness towards the tradition is kept intact in

performing at the traditional spaces and on sacred occasions. However, changes have been introduced with regard to the traditional norms of performance when performing in the modern spaces and on occasions such as competitions, festivals, conferences and so on.

- In spite of being performed by males, the folk theatre forms have female characters which display various roles and positions that women have had in Goan society. They portray how women were either deified with the help of mythological characters like Lord Saraswati or they were demonized again by referring to mythological characters like Putna and Tratika. Valorising of women is seen in most of the performances.
- The characters based on real life people also include several female characters who reflect several issues related to women and their relation with the society in general. Usually, they are seen as fragile and submissive or the ones who need protection from their male counterparts. There are also characters who express their negative feelings towards their family members. Thus, it is a mixture of fragile yet expressive females that we see in folk theatre forms. In real life too, the tradition bound Goan woman has been in these two mind-sets. She has been very submissive towards the pressures of patriarchal society, and she has also expressed her angst in suitable mediums. For instance, the songs from folk dance Fugdi often contain women's attitude towards her family members and society.
- Folk theatre forms of Goa have been a very significant source of oral history. One can see how historical events have influenced these forms. Since these forms have been in vogue over the centuries, they show the impact of the political atmosphere of its time. They have evolved with historical and political changes that occurred in Goa. Various dynasties which ruled over Goa left their influences on local culture. Their lifestyle and administrative policies also had an impact on Goan lifestyle and living. These influences have also affected the growth and evolution of folk theatre forms.
- Goan psyche has evolved with the impact that the external forces have made. In the times like Portuguese era Goan society has gone through major changes for two important reasons. One is the colonisation and the other is the spread of Christianity.
- During the Portuguese rule, Goan society has undergone a lot of changes which includes major breakthrough social reform like changing the age of marriage for girls, i.e from young age to fairly older age. But during the same era Goan society has also seen suppression of freedom of expression.

- Censorships and restrictions on displaying/performing anti-establishment content was one of the major threats for local culture during the Portuguese era. Through the oral history as told by the locals it was gathered that the content of public performance was thoroughly checked by the authorities to check for any anti-establishment content. In this kind of atmosphere it must have been difficult for folk theatre groups to perform freely and spontaneously. But, it is interesting how the folk theatre forms have survived in this environment.
- The effect of colonisation and spread of Christianity can be seen more effectively in the forms performed in regions in the old conquests. Adopting a new religion and absorbing its values in the indigenous culture, is one of the features of Goan society. The Hindus who were converted to Christianity retained some of the cultural practices of their older religion even after conversion. Yet, during the Inquisition Era the ones who practiced customs of their old religions were severely punished. They were supposed to adapt to the new religion by leaving their past behind. A need to retain the values from their original religion and culture, the locals modified the cultural products to suit to the demands of new religion. This must have led to the inclusion of elements of Christianity in the folk culture. *Zagor* is one such practice that was practiced even by the converted Hindus. Thus, there is a type of *Zagor* which is called as Catholic *Zagor*.
- Catholic *Zagor* is very much similar to the Hindu Gauda *Zagor*, but some changes have been made to suit the ‘new’ religion. The invocation Naman has been changed to add the Christian elements. Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ are invoked *along with the* local deities and in some cases *instead of* the local deities. In Hindu *Zagor*, local deities which have temples situated near the performing region are invoked during a given performance. For instance, Lord Katamgaali, Lord Vithoba, Lord Nagesh , Lord Ramnath, Goddess Mahalaxmi, Humbryacho Mhaar, Lord Ramnath, Lord Betal, Goddess Shantadurga, Goddess Sateri, Goddess Kamaxi are invoked in *Zagors* performed in Ponda area. All these deities have temples situated in and around Ponda. Other than these deities, the Naman also invokes Zagracho Dev (Lord of the *Zagor*), Maandacho Guru (The teacher of Maand-the performing place), *Tulshi maata* (mother Tulsi), *Lord Ganapati*, *Tettis koti Dev* (the Thirty Three Crore deities) and the audience.
- The presence of Church and its influence on the Goan Society has also led to several modifications in the content of folk theatre. This phenomenon is particularly seen in the case of Siolim *Zagor*. What is interesting here is that, in spite of adopting the Christian

element into its content and practice, the form is practiced and performed by both Hindus and Christians together. This particular instance, out of many others, portrays the communal harmony that exists in Goan society since ages.

- Although the influence of Portuguese era is understandably seen in to a great extent in the old conquests in almost all aspects of social life including folk theatre, the theatre forms practiced in new conquests are also not devoid of the colonial influences. The Pakhlin character seen in *Zagors* performed in Ponda taluka (one of the new conquest) is one such example. This character portrays a Catholic woman, who sings a song about Jesus Christ.
- Other characters like two Moirs (Muslims) an influence of one of the Muslim dynasties such as the Bahamani or the Adilshahi.
- *Kaalo* is a form that shows influence of Marathi classical music. The musical instruments used in *Kaalo* are different from those used in *Zagor* and *Ranmaalem*. The form is performed in new conquests like Ponda and Canacona. Thus, we cannot find much influence of Portuguese regime. But mentions about Muslims are found in the content of *Kaalo*. The form is more focused on the tales from mythology but a few real life characters which feature in it speak about the Goan society.
- The social dynamics reflected in Goan folk theatre forms is seen on various levels. One is the relationship between various communities which live in Goa. Secondly, since the forms are performed by particular communities it gives a perspective not just about the form but also about the community. The folk theatre forms become a tool of analysing the societal history of communities and Goan society in general.
- The practice of folk theatre forms did not stop in spite of the colonial restrictions and censorship during the colonial rule. These were overcome by slightly tweaking content and the space of performance. In Post liberation Goa, the forms have been exposed to a wider platform. They have evolved by breaking the barriers of time and space. In a democratic set-up performers have found a freer and healthier environment to flourish. It has also allowed the performers to contemporarize their content. The forms have evolved in terms of practice and paraphernalia.
- In research leading to the findings in the Chapter Four titled, “Evolution of Goan Folk Theatre: From Devotional Infotainment to Contemporary Commercialization” shows that Folk theatre being an exclusive and ritualistic product of society has evolved to adopt changes in contemporary times. It must have originated in the times where there

were limited sources of getting information and entertainment. Folk theatre provided the dual service of informing as well as entertaining the masses. Even being a part of ritualistic endeavours, Goan folk theatre forms too have carried out the tasks of informing and entertaining the masses.

- The infotainment carried out by many of the folk forms in India has been through devotional approach. The *Bhajans* and *Abhangas* are the best examples of how mass awareness is created by attaching the content to devotion. Folk theatre forms of Goa too have been devotional to some extent. Especially, a form like *Kaalo*, has elaborate songs about the deities. Rather, performances of all three forms under study begin with invocations to deities.
- The performance is a part of community's devotion towards the divine elements. These elements include not only the characters inspired from the mythology but also natural life. Earth is revered as Mother in the invocations.
- One of the differences between *Zagor* and *Kaalo* is that like *Kaalo*, *Zagor* did not have the presence of Lord Ganesha. This can be because *Zagor* is a product of community that worshipped natural elements before getting influenced by Vedic traditions. But with time, *Zagor* performers have begun to invoke Lord Ganesha and that is an example of how other cultures influence the forms.
- The folk theatre forms were the source of entertainment for the rural audience. Now, even urban population is attracted towards its vibrancy. Infotainment in Goan folk theatre has been taking place on various levels. The forms carried out the task of informing people about the societal happenings through the songs filled with humour. The forms were also used as a medium to inform the crowd about various religious texts and tales.
- New mediums of art in the post globalized world thrive to deliver multi-dimensional product. There is a motive of entertaining the audience as well as creating awareness. Even a serious form like news has evolved as a medium that carries out the dual function of informing and entertaining. This feature has also infused in the folk theatre forms under study.
- Folklore and specifically folk theatre forms have had the feature of infotainment. This feature might not have developed consciously but it definitely has enriched the forms. Thus, folk theatre has not remained a mere ritualistic endeavour but has also sustained itself as a multidimensional medium of art.

- The new modes of entertainment were perceived as a threat to the existing folk theatre forms and folklore in general. But, it can be observed that these modes are being utilized to enhance the popularity of folk theatre. For now, the use of other media is limited especially with regard to Goan folk theatre. However, with proper incentives received from concerned authorities new mediums such as social media can be utilized to systematically document and promote the folklore.
- All three folk theatre forms under study have been passed on from one generation to another in oral form. In very few cases the verses have been preserved in written form by the performers. These written records are helping the new generation to recite the verses during the performances. Moreover, it is also true that the content of these verses has not remained constant over so many years. It is changing according to the contemporary environment. For instance, the mention of computers in *Kaalo* must have been added only after the arrival of computers in Goa.
- There must have been a lot of verses which were created and then were forgotten or were not sung during performances. In today's time it is possible to record and document the performances in audio visual form. Directorate of Art and Culture of Goa is taking up the process of documenting the variants of performances. This will help the future generations to analyse the forms in much better ways.
- The folk theatre forms are slowly moving towards the commercialization and professionalism. In this process, the performing communities have adopted various modern infrastructural facilities. One such example would be the evolution of the performing spaces. The Maands have now been concretized and obtained the look of modern stage. This has created a distance between the performer and the audience. In earlier days, audience and performers shared the same space. This intimacy continues in certain regions while many places have been influenced by proscenium culture.
- With changing times, the materials used for makeup, costumes etc have also changed. For instance, natural colours derived from fruits were used for makeup, whereas now artificial colours are used. Even the costumes are changed according to modern trends.
- Modifications are made according to the occasion of performances. Traditionally the forms are performed with elaborate rituals whereas the ritualistic element does not become a necessity during professional performances. Also, the duration has to be short during these performances in modern spaces. Traditionally all the forms began at night and ended at dawn. On professional platforms, only a few characters, the ones which

are attractive enough to gain the attention of the urban audience are performed. There is a compromise with the sequence of the performances while performing professionally. This does not happen traditionally. Every character, every song has its own sequence during the traditional performance.

- The major difference between performing traditionally and professionally is with regard to the motive and outcome of each of these modes. For the traditional performance focal point is the ritual whereas, for professional performances it is about showcasing the art form. For traditional performances, there are no financial expectations while professional performances are financially assisted.
- The folk theatre forms have the potential of being as professional as the modern commercial drama. Goan folk theatre has not yet reached to the level where folk theatre forms are performed for ticketed shows. In future, there is a possibility that this happens.
- Feedback from modern urban audience resonates with a sense of excitement as well as curiosity regarding these cultural products. For them, it is something that has always been there in their culture yet they have been unaware about them specifically because of the class divide. Therefore, it looks like this curiosity may lead to larger audience for the folk theatre forms in coming times.
- Events such as Lok Utsav organized by Central Government of India for school students have led to exploration of the folk theatre forms by students. For the performances, they need to study and adapt the forms. Hence, we see that students are taking up interest in exploring the indigenous folk culture and are patronizing folk theatre forms.
- Modern conventional theatre has developed with some influences of folk theatre. Goan folk theatre forms have also influenced modern Goan theatre in various ways. At times, the songs from folk theatre forms have been adapted in modern theatre to fit in the content of the plays. In some instances, the form has been adopted into modern themes. Various experiments have been made and are still being made to enrich modern theatre with the flexibility and vibrancy of folk theatre.
- Interactivity is one of the features of folk theatre forms. It tries to involve the audience, non-performers in the performance. This was not present in the proscenium drama. Now, with an influence of folk theatre modern theatre has also adopted this feature into its form. A lot of experimentations are being carried out to involve the audience in the performance in modern theatre.

- Just the way folk theatre forms have influenced the modern theatre, the latter has influenced the former too in technical ways. Curtain was never a part of folk theatre performances. This element from proscenium has been adopted by a few communities which perform folk theatre.
- There were apprehensions about the survival of folk theatre forms. However, with increasing interest amongst the young generation to search for their roots through these forms has lessened these apprehensions. It is true that performances from many regions of Goa have stopped due to various social and political reasons, yet the ones which are in practice are now getting a wider audience.
- Urban audience is getting attracted towards these rural cultural products. Also, through social media the performances can be viewed on internet by a wider audience globally.
- During the foreign regimes, folklore was a medium of retaining the indigenous culture for Goans. Today, it has become a medium of searching for the roots for the migratory and/or globalized generation. The products of globalization are indeed helping the current generation to explore the folk media in many diverse modes and in much better ways than during the conventional times. For instance, audio-visual documentation through electronic and technological devices, convenience of witnessing the performance outside the mandatory ritual duration thanks to folk festivals; availability well-documented performance through digital mode; finger-tip access to information and performance anywhere/anytime due to the internet facility.

5.3 Findings of the Study

- **Exclusivity:** While some forms have evolved to become a shared cultural legacy, some of them are very much community, region and gender specific in nature. For instances, the variant Perni *Zagor* was performed only by the Perni community. Also, *Ranmaalem* is specifically performed in Sattari taluka and a few parts of Sanguem. Gender exclusivity is one of the major features of folk theatre forms (with the single exception of Perni *Zagor*). Folk theatre forms have been an area of performance for males.
- **Relation with Nature:** The folk practices including folk theatre forms of Goa share a close association with the natural elements. The traditional performances happen according to the agrarian cycle. Also, Nature worship forms a significant part of these performances.
- **Folk Theatre as a Socio-Political Text:** The content and performances of folk theatre are largely influenced by the social and political environment. Thus, they have become

significant texts to gauge the socio-political dynamics of Goa in various historical periods. For example, influence of Portuguese era is significantly seen in the modifications that have occurred in forms such as *Zagor*.

- **Regionalization of Mythology:** The two well-known Mythological epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have much influence on folk theatre of Goa. The characters and content from these epics have been regionalized in the folk theatre forms. The characters speak in the local language and also behave as per the regional sensibilities. These texts must have been indigenized so that the local audience would relate to these texts and would find it as real as their own lives.
- **Flexibility in the Cause of Survival:** One of the reasons for the survival of folk theatre forms in the contemporary era of multiple media of entertainment is its flexibility. It has been adapting to the new environment created by societal factors and shift in the political ethos of the society. Historically, it survived and sustained itself in spite of external pressures. External threats like adoption of new religion by a community or its members, censorship on performance and content could not lead to the extinction of these forms. Its ritualistic significance, traditional basis, entertainment appeal in the times of less choices of recreation, helped the theatre forms to survive, and in the post-liberation era gradually to thrive. But currently, it is surviving the competition from the contemporary modes of entertainment due to their wider reach, easy access, relevance to contemporary times and ethos, variety and experimentation potential and nuanced viability.
- **Kaalo and Ranmaalem-Unaffected by Christian Influence:** Since these forms originated in the new conquests they were not exposed to the new religion in early phases of colonization. Thus, there is hardly any influence of Christianity on these forms. While this influence can be seen in *Zagor*.
- **Devotion: Medium of Information:** The devotional sentiments attached with folk theatre forms have helped the masses to reach out to their fellow companions. These forms have informed them about the societal, political and historical happenings.
- **Modern Theatre and Folk Theatre:** While modern theatre is adapting the feature of intimacy with audience from folk theatre, folk theatre is getting influenced by the infrastructural developments from modern theatre. It has gradually adapted the features like curtain, raised stage and artificial make up.

- **Performance in Two Spaces:** Folk theatre forms of Goa are currently performed in two major ‘spaces’. One is the traditional space during the traditional occasion and the second is professional platforms such as folk theatre festivals organized by organizations related to art and culture.

5.4. Reverting to the Hypothesis of the Study

The Hypotheses of this study, titled *Folk Theatre in Goa: A Critical Study of Select Forms* were as under:

- (i) Folk theatre of Goa needs to be compiled and assessed through critical frameworks to uncover the social dynamics reflected therein.
- (ii) To understand and interpret the transformations in the Goa folk theatre forms under study, there is need to map the sociological, historical and political influences on them.

The present research work based on in-field witnessing of the actual performances indigenous folk theatre forms in their ritualistic traditional mode, assisted by secondary sources (including documentations and critical materials) as well as field work involving documentation of the forms witnessed and interactive session with the stakeholder in the field. The documentation has helped in the following several ways:

- (i) To record and preserve for posterity the performance –related data and the views of the folk lore performers and other stakeholders. This forestalls the absence of any data particularly with regard to forms on the last leg of their survival, staring at imminent extinction, like the *Perni zagor*.
- (ii) The analysis of the folk performances with regard to their content as well as planning and execution, provided an insight into the Goan societal hierarchies of Caste and Gender, and the pivotal presence of caste in the folk theatre and the crucial voicing of the subaltern viewpoints in the folk theatre. More importantly, the all-male forms also include the female perspective, however, subjective in their expressions, characterization and focus.
- (iii) It was possible to understand through the folk theatre the nature of inter-community relationships and interactions, which are the fundamental planks of social dynamics. Thus this study could substantially reveal the social dynamics through the prism of folk theatre.

Secondly by tracing the historical, political and cultural backdrop of Goan folklore, and thereby of folk theatre in Goa, it was possible:

- (i) To trace the transitions, restriction and transformations that have come over the Goan folk theatre over the last few centuries--- especially during the Portuguese rule and how it with political suppression, adapted to the new climate and still survived;
- (ii) To map how the folk theatre responded to the democratic, liberal climate of the post-liberation era and coped with the egalitarian constitutional provisions to impinge the discriminatory and objectionable content; and more importantly, how it evolved in the contemporary age of global transformation
- (iii) To take up the opportunities of the State patronage, promotion through NGOs and exposure to multiple media, as well as,
- (iv) To visualize the need for the Goan folk theatre forms, in fact for Goan folklore in general, to take up challenges of the contemporary digital era.

On the strength of the observations and findings of this study and on the basis of the few points discussed above, it is possible to claim that the Hypotheses of this stdy have been established. The few conclusions that follow will further bear this out.

5.5 Conclusions

- Folk theatre forms of Goa have displayed a strong survival instinct over the centuries. This is established by the fact that they have withstood the historically, unfavourable climate, taken political impositions in their stride and carried on the traditional spirit of devotion in the environment of bonhomie, typical of the Goan social psyche. Moreover, surmounting severe social, political and historical odds, these folk theatre forms have evolved with the changing times, imbibing new trends in tune with the contemporary age and have survived in spite of various threats to their existence. For instance, during the extremely intolerant phase of the erstwhile Portuguese regime, the afore-mentioned religious restrictions and censorship of content imposed overcome by revising content and altering the sacred space of performance to more acceptable secular venue. Likewise, in Post liberation Goa, the sudden, unprecedented exposure of these forma to the formidable challenge of the multiple media and the need to survive against a much wider platform that the traditional *maand* or the ritualistic space. Yet, these theatre forms have overcome this unexpected gauntlet and adapted to the changing scenario of

theatre performance by breaking the barriers of time and space. In a democratic set-up performers have found a freer and healthier environment to flourish, but there is also the restriction of the constitutionality of content. Facing these challenges, folk theatre, patronized now by young, educated members of the erstwhile subaltern groups has converted the challenges into opportunities and has permitted the contemporization of their content, practice/performance and paraphernalia.

- The three forms under study display several similarities such as their links with the ritual-based festivity of a given group, whether tribe or caste or inter-religious community, their traditional adherence to specific period and venue of performance; and above all, their depiction of female ethos in a male-centric performances. However, these forms can still be distinguished from one another based on their certain unique features. For instance, the unique feature of *Kaalo* is the presence of Shankasur and generally the use of Puranic tales. Apart from Konkani, it also makes use of Marathi language-content and is performed by the so-called higher caste section of the society, not associated with the performance of other folk theatre forms. *Zagor* is exclusive due to its time of performance, which is post-harvest and also to the Gauda community. Its duration and nature is of a nightlong vigil; and its content is exclusively Konkani. *Ranmaalem* can be called as the special cultural legacy that is present largely only in Sattari taluka.
- Folk theatre forms have traditionally formed a major part of community celebrations in Goa. With changing times, they have become a major part of cultural showcasing in the touristic and the corporate world. There are troupes of performers across the forms, who are amateurs and give performances at State-sponsored events or on invitation by non-governmental/private agencies by charging fees.
- Folk theatre forms of Goa have been the voices of the voiceless and the marginal—expressing the sentiments, aspirations and fears of subaltern communities. While, over even the so called ‘higher caste’ communities have begun to perform one of the forms that is *Kaalo*. But folk theatre forms dominantly remain a legacy of subaltern communities.
- In spite of being male performances, folk theatre forms have had gender awareness and content. Nevertheless, some of the content has objectified women, but in some instances the content has expressed the angst of females.

- A very positive impact of the folk theatre forms has been the major influence cast by them on the modern Goan theatre. The contemporary playwrights have adopted the form as also content to suit the contemporary themes. They are also influenced by the developments from modern theatre. This is a clear evidence of the opening up of the folk theatre as also of the evolution emerging in the contemporary theatre movement in Goa leading the Goan theatre closer to the masses.
- Contemporary folk theatre artists have got into a professional phase yet there is a need of better opportunities and ways of promoting these cultural legacies. For example, there does not seem to be any official or registered body of these performers that could take up their issues or negotiate on their behalf with stakeholders with regard to recognition, remuneration and security of service as performers. There is also a crying need for an institutionalization of their training process and a training centre is essential. There is also need to create a more media savvy, digitally literate environment to foster, promote and preserve the forms, especially those they are on the verge of extinction.

5.6 Recommendations

During the research on the current study it was found suitable to provide a few recommendations for further analyses and preservation of folk theatre forms. The same are listed as under:

- Post 1970, Goa developed as one of the popular touristic locations not just in India but worldwide. Thus, tourism is one of the significant economic boosters for Goa. In such an environment, there is great scope to promote the local culture, particularly its visual and performative forms like *Zagor*, *Rannmalem* and *Kaalo*. Currently, this is being done in a very commercial and piecemeal manner. The objectives have to be widened beyond just en-cashing on tourist interest for the native exotica and they need to be directed towards promoting the original/indigenous culture rather than merely displaying hastily put up hybridized elements. Therefore, Cultural Tourism can be developed in a more systematic and focussed manner. For instance, in addition to having performances of the folk theatre forms in hotels and cruises, tourists can be taken to the traditional venues original spaces of the performances, by advertising specialized visits during the ritual-related festivities. In fact, an annual schedule can be made by taking the data regarding the schedule of performances from the various performing communities of the several regional

as well as community variants of these forms. This will keep the governmental authorities in regular contact with the community concerned and it will also give boost to employment.

- Platforms like social media need to be utilized in efficient ways to project, promote and preserve folk theatre forms. Features like ‘going live’ can be used to get a wider audience for the folk theatre forms. Pages which inform the viewers about the folk theatre forms and allied folklore need to be updated regularly. Teams can be set up to carry out these tasks on regular basis.
- Documentation of the folk theatre forms has taken a priority in today’s times where a lot of changes are happening in performance field. Documentation of all the variants is necessary to study the differences and similarities between the forms as well as the regional sensibilities. It is also significant in terms of studying the changes which occur in the forms.
- Performing communities need more incentives for folk theatre forms to get professional. Environment to attract the audience has to be created. However, great care has to be taken about folk theatre losing its essence as a community product. It needs to cross the boundaries but also needs to continue its practice in its traditional time-slot and space.
- Further possibilities have to be explored in terms of research about each folk theatre form and allied performances. Theoretic support needs to be mobilized, and if possible theories conducive to the Indian/Goan socio-political and historical contexts have to be generated within the academia to interpret and analyse Goan Folklore –including folk theatre forms-- in tandem with the traditional Indian approach to, and Western theories of, Folklore. Perhaps promoting Folkloristics as a subject at the Under Graduate and Post Graduate level may lead to greater literary and academic space for the study of this rather neglected field.
- Finally, just as performers of classical forms of art survive only on the basis on their art in the country, likewise, possibilities for folklore performers to survive only on the basis of art forms need to be explored. The Goan folk theatre, if not folklore as a whole, can be the arena for this experiment, given its limited scale as well as the promotion by the State Government and patronage by the NGOs and other private corporate houses. May be creation of a “Folklore Village” on

the lines of a “Handicrafts Village” can be set up during the Tourist season for folklore demonstrations and informal/academic interaction with tourists and the stake-holders.

5.7 Relevance of the Study and Scope for Future Research

In spite of some very dedicated endeavours, to date there has been few critical works on Folklore related topics. As it is, the field is so vast that much study can be still carried out on Folk Theatre of Goa itself such comparing various variants of the same given form; tracing the modes and methods of salvaging folklore and critiquing the literary dimensions of folk expressions and so on. Again, there is very urgent need to compile, and analyse other forms of Goan folklore, besides folk theatre, as the products and props of socio-political change.

As intended in the introductory Chapter, the ritualistic, performative and linguistic essence of folklore has been undertaken for study in this work, but it has scope for much greater scope for a newer perspective to emerge. In this study of folk theatre, its content, its resources and strategies of survival have been discussed critically in the contexts of its present challenges and opportunities for future survival. In this regard, it is hoped that this research work pertaining to *Zagor*, *Ranmaalem* and *Kaalo*, in the context of society, gender and contemporary times has done it bit to create awareness about the essence and worth of these forms for future generations. It is expected that this modest work will motivate more folklore-based studies to follow in its wake. That will be the true reward for this small contribution to Goan folklore.

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1. Characters from *Zagor*



(Fig. 1)



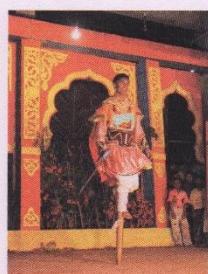
(Fig. 2)



(Fig. 3)



(Fig. 4)



(Fig. 5)



(Fig. 6)



(Fig. 7)

(Fig. 1) Pakhlin and her Brothers

(Fig. 2) Nikandaar and Parpati

(Fig. 3) Pakhlin

(Fig. 4) Garasher with the headgear Turmati

(Fig. 5) Thoti

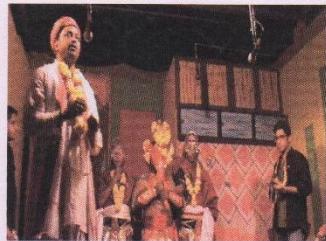
(Fig. 6) Nikandaar

(Fig. 7) Moirs

2. Characters from *Kaalo*



(Fig. 8)



(Fig. 9)



(Fig. 10)



(Fig. 11)



(Fig. 12)

(Fig. 8) Lord Ganesha with Riddhi and Siddhi

(Fig. 9) Hardas - The Narrator

(Fig. 10) Pair of Priests - The Vidushak element

(Fig. 11) Garuda entry in legend of Lord Krishna

(Fig. 12) Shankhasur

3. Characters from *Ranmaalem*



(Fig. 13)



(Fig. 14)



(Fig. 15)



(Fig. 16)

(Fig. 13) Invocation of Lord Ganesha at *Ranmaalem* performed in Coparde

(Fig. 14) Character of Dhangar and his wife

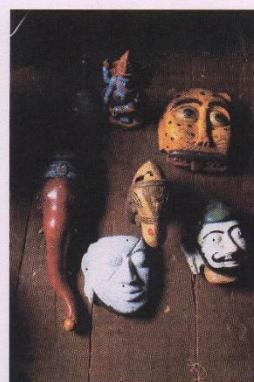
(Fig. 15) Characters of Ram and Lakshman with a Sage

(Fig. 16) Demoness Tratika

4. About the Perni Zagor



(Fig. 17)



(Fig. 18)

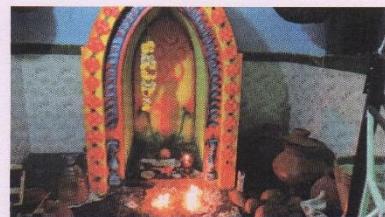


(Fig. 19)

(Fig. 17) & (Fig. 18) Masks used in Perni Zagor

(Fig. 19) In Conversation with Rama Perni, one of the few surviving performers

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(Fig. 20)



(Fig. 21)



(Fig. 22)



(Fig. 23)



(Fig. 24)

(Fig. 20) Ghumti from where Siolim Zagor begins

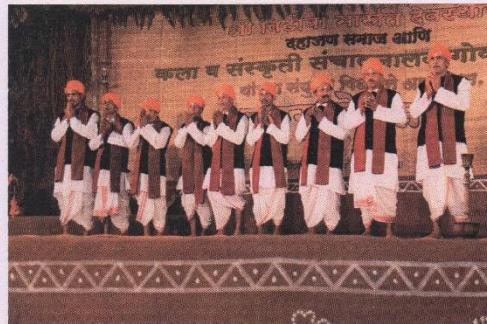
(Fig. 21) Mhaadle - Musical instrument unique to Siolim and Catholic Zagor

(Fig. 22) Shrine of Zagoryo

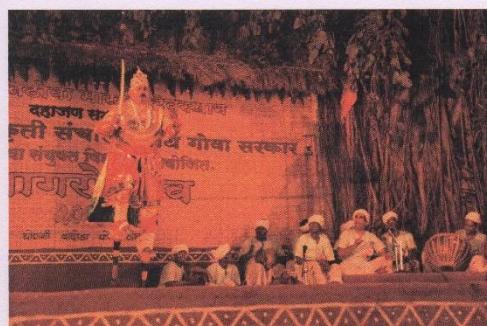
(Fig. 23) Character of Zagoryo

(Fig. 24) Vidushak and Firngi Raja

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(Fig. 25)



(Fig. 26)

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7. Scenes from the play *Premjagor*



(Fig. 27)



(Fig. 28)



(Fig. 29)



(Fig. 30)



(Fig. 31)



(Fig. 32)

(Fig. 27) Lord Ganesha and Riddhi Siddhi - element absent in traditional *Zagor*

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(Fig. 32) The protagonist Baburaay enacting the character of thoti

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(Fig. 33)



(Fig. 34)



(Fig. 35)



(Fig. 36)

(Fig. 33) Characters of Ram and Lakshman

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(Fig. 36) Participation of Females otherwise absent in traditional form

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