

FOREWORD

The Goan Spider's Web

The popular dictum “Better late than never”, is most appropriate in this case. Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes has been cited frequently by many authors during the past three decades, but it is unclear even to me, an old friend, why Stella's doctoral research had to wait for all these decades to be published and made available to interested scholars and general public.

Colonialism, Migration and the International Catholic Goan Community deals with a phenomenon that makes the essence of Goan identity since long before the Portuguese colonialism ended 50 years ago. Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes studies the phenomenon during the past two centuries, and hence, the recent phase that is more present in our memories and has influenced, and continues to influence the socio-political configuration of Goa.

Goa's past has seen in-migrations and out-migrations since most distant times. Goan identity is a product of many outsiders who chose to settle down in Goa to explore its strategic location as a maritime port. In the same process many natives of the region were drawn, or driven away by the foreign dominant groups. *The Last Prabhu* (2010) by Switzerland-based Bernardo Elvino de Sousa has opened the path to DNA- based genetic genealogy of Goans, tracing back his own ancestors as they moved out of pre-historic Africa some 50 thousand years ago.

Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes traces the return journey of many of our ancestors to Africa. «Insider-trading» is not viewed favourably in the financial market, but the insider knowledge that Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes brings to her subject makes her study particularly valuable.

It is obvious from the title of the study that the author concentrates upon the Catholic Goans, but does not forget entirely the Hindu Goans. While this limited scope leaves out the pre-colonial and colonial migratory movements of the Goan population as a whole, it is quite sufficient to explain the leverage that globalization or the “spider's web”, as the author calls it, has provided to the Goan Catholic minority community.

From Bombay *kudd* to Goan clubs in East Africa and present-day voluntary organizations worldwide, where Goan international satellite communities are located, and also the Union of Goan Repatriates in Goa since 1966, are some of the illustrations of the Goan “spider's web”. Had the study extended beyond 1980, it would take cognizance of the internet networks that now bind the Goans very effectively.

Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes has applied a rich theoretical framework to her ethnological research in Goa and goes beyond the traditional methods of social anthropology as demonstrated in the Introductory chapter and all through the book. She states in her closing chapter that much of her analysis would be unconvincing without providing historical details of political economy as it evolved in colonial times. She confesses her limited use of archival documentation, but several available publications in Portuguese could be better explored. An historical approach necessarily implies an adequate and critical use of these sources.

The multidisciplinary approach in this study reminds me of Maurice Halbwachs, one of the associates of the French school of *Annales* that defended a culture of synthesis and refusal of *disciplinarization* of knowledge. Closer at home, we have a model in D.D. Kosambi, who has left brilliant illustrations of research in social sciences, including his *Myth and Reality: Studies in the Formation of Indian Culture* [<http://bit.ly/rYSFDM>] wherein we witness a deft use of philosophy, literature, oral tradition, ethnographic fieldwork and archival documentation, establishing linkage between pre-historic and contemporary India, including Goa from *Skanda Purana* to Portuguese colonial times.

This study throws up some interesting revelations. We get to know that the establishment of the rail link played its part, but the occupation of Goa by the neighbouring English troops during the final phase of Napoleonic wars was also responsible for setting the trend of Goans migrating to serve the British military camps as cooks and butlers in Belgaum, Poona, Bombay and elsewhere in India. We get to know also why the Goan emigrants took to occupations as tailors and bakers.

Among other factors that helped evolve a proactive migrant culture among the Goan Catholics it is rightly mentioned that the Church played a significant role. The international connections of the Catholic Church backed the emigrants with its institutional and personal contacts. Incidentally, among the early Goan Catholic migrants to Canara coast, including Mangalore and neighbouring regions, there were families that served the Jesuit parish priests in Salcete (Goa) as cooks and sacristans. They accompanied the priests when they were transferred to the parishes of that region. There was a similar trend with Goan diocesan priests who served the Padroado churches in British India, particularly in the Ghat missions, Pune, Bombay and South India.

The release of this book to mark 50 years of Goa's Liberation is fully justified: This study accompanies the transition from the colonial times and covers the first three decades of liberated Goa. A village designated as «Amora» is the focus of this study. It has a special significance for the writer of this Foreword. Whatever may have been the intention of the author to choose that designation, I see it as characterising the ambiguity of the Portuguese colonial relations in Asia, as analysed in one of my recent essays entitled «*Amoras and Amores*» [<http://bit.ly/s1fbNU>].

It was the ambiguous or paradoxical result of the Portuguese colonialism in Goa that defines the essence of the Goan identity today: The Portuguese success permitted the creation of a strong Catholic minority with worldwide support of its international satellite network of emigrants. Konkani language continues to sustain the cultural bond with the Hindu majority. The Portuguese failed to prevent this despite all their efforts. This may be seen as a unique social partnership that makes the Goans proud after 50 years of their Liberation.



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Lisboa, 11 December 2011