CHAPTER IV: REGIONAL DYNAMICS
OF LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT

In a movement for the recognition of the status of a language, the role of associations and organisations is very important as they decide the terms around which there is a mobilisation of people and resources, a dissemination of information with respect to the issues involved and a representation that is to be made to the state authorities. These associations and organizations decide the strategies that are to be adopted to resolve conflicts through negotiation, deliberation, and mediation. In the case of Konkani the movement grew through such a complex evolutionary interaction. The several language associations, in the different regions, had their own priorities and programmes which determined their activities and policies. These associations were surrounded by the regional language associations of the majority language in the region and were constrained by the state policies on language and culture of that region. The language policies of the Central Government and its agencies were also significant in deciding the choice of strategies to be adopted by the individual associations working for Konkani. Looking at the language environments, within which these associations are situated, their activities need to be studied, and their impact judged, in relation to the broad objectives of the Konkani movement. This will help in understanding the socio-cultural basis of their perceptions and the economic determinants of their priorities.
REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF ASSOCIATIONS

The four regions of the Konkani movement viz. Kerala, Karnataka, Bombay and Goa have had a number of Konkani associations over the last century. Though the term Konkani associations refers simply to 'language bodies' it also refers to 'formations of those coming from the Konkan', or in a caste context to 'caste formations' as in the case of Kerala or Karnataka. The social bases of these numerous associations are different with respect to caste, region and religion. There is also a variance in the way they look at the language and the benefits they feel they can derive from it. These in turn determine their strategies and policies. In terms of inter-regional and inter-associational communication, cooperation, and exchange, these specific perceptions and strategies are key factors.

In the regional distribution of Konkani organisations Goa has a special place because it is regarded as the original home of the language. The organising skills of Goans have led to a building up of organisations not only in Goa but also in other centres of the Konkani movement. Also many of these organisations have looked at their counterparts in Goa as models for programmes and activities. Even an organisation such as the Konkani Parishad, which was formed outside Goa and under non-Goan leadership, has ultimately come to be controlled by Goans.

In Kerala the GSBs are called Konkanis and this has helped the caste to derive certain constitutional benefits. In case of Karnataka, the use of the term 'Konkani' for specific caste people is made by its members settled in North America and have their associations named after Konkani. They use Konkani to distinguish themselves from others, including other immigrant Konkani speakers belonging to other regions like Goa, Maharashtra.
emotional attachment of Konkani speakers to Goa, strengthened by its historical ties to groups in the Konkani region, has lent a relative privilege to the Goan leadership of the Konkani movement. This is reflected in the prominence given to Goan literateurs and activists in the national level events of Konkani. The projection of Goa as the potential Konkani state in independent India soon after Indian independence has also accounted for this special position that Goans have acquired in the Konkani world.

In order to understand the regional dynamics of language and script it is convenient to look at the formation and functioning of associations and organisations in different pockets of Konkani speakers over the major part of the last century. In doing so it is also necessary to explore the relationship between different caste and community groups involved in the process. This is attempted in the present chapter. Starting with North Kanara, where the earliest organised effort to express solidarity based on language was seen, other regions such as the metropolis of Bombay, Kerala, South Kanara and Mangalore and finally Goa are discussed.

North Kanara: Opportunity Not Taken

As regards the formation of organisations for Konkani, Karwar has had a special place with the earliest attempts being the setting up of the Konkani Mandal and Konkani Parishad in the 1930s. The leadership of these organisations was essentially with the Saraswat community with persons such as Adv. Shanbhag and Adv. Kamath being in the forefront. The need for a separate
language identity was felt when the movement for Samyukta Karnataka started with emphasis on Kannada and also the Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad of Marathi tried to resist the moves to ensure separate recording of Konkani speakers in the decennial census. Mention is often made of derogatory and insulting remarks against Konkani by some speakers in a meeting organised for highlighting the cause of Kannada, which prompted these leaders to mobilise the force for Konkani (Sunaparant, 23rd April 2002) and some Marathi conference in 1938 having ridiculed Konkani (Prabhu, 1989). Association of Konkani language leaders with the Congress helped them to rope in the Congressmen and also to organise the event such as the first Konkani Parishad on the lines of the Congress session (K.N.Rao, quoted in Prabhu, 1988). The involvement of Goans in the first Parishad (1939) was negligible, as can be seen from the list of organising committee members (Souvenir, Parishad Golden Jubilee, 1989). The only Goan name is that of Krishnabai Panajikar, who, by one account, belonged to Dharwar.

With emigration of Kanara Saraswats to Bombay on a large scale over the century, and also with the spread of education in Marathi under the Bombay state, followed by the Kannada medium in the present Karnataka, Konkani was left without any support. The early leadership of Konkani was predominantly given by Saraswats/GSBs who also had their links with Bombay, which was the expanding industrial-economic centre and potential destination for migration. In the period following the creation of Mysore (now Karnataka) state in 1956 Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti fought elections demanding the inclusion of some border area mainly from Karwar, Kolhapur and Belgaum districts (along with Belgaum town) in Maharashtra, till the last decade of the twentieth century. The
work of Konkani got some boost in Karwar again after the language became the Official Language of Goa but the interests of Konkani workers lay in certain facilities and reservations in professional educational institutions which found voice on the Parishad platform. It is interesting to note that the votaries of Konkani in Karwar today are from the Konkan Maratha community (not the GSBs as before) known for its strong pro-Maharashtra leanings under the erstwhile Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti. Senior activists of Konkani in this community look at Saraswats as exploiters. In several interviews prominent leaders of the Konkan Maratha community expressed this view but requested not to be quoted. After the lost battle of ‘Ekikaran’ (unification with Maharashtra) their love for Konkani remains a ploy to distinguish themselves from Kannadigas, who have been systematically ‘settled’ in the region by the state government to ‘Kannadise’ the administration and education as per the state language policy. The work of Konkani is seen as ‘unremunerative’ and the enthusiasm is limited to seeking representation in the state body such as Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy for one’s caste, as has been the practice so far. The region which was considered as the birthplace of Konkani identity has no place for Konkani in

2 In Sirsi Session of the Parishad a resolution demanding the reservation of seats in professional colleges in Goa for Konkani speakers in Karwar and the surrounding area of Konkani speakers was rejected by Goan delegates saying that the Karwar people had already got into Goan administration and other fields in a major way and had all the facilities even without any express arrangement.

3 President of Konkani Sanskriti Kendra (Karwar) feels that no one finds Konkani of any benefit and no one wants to work for the language as an obligation. Same view is expressed by Titus Noronha of Mangalore.

4 The Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy has members representing different castes and communities of Konkani speakers such as GSBs, Gaudas, Siddis, Kharvis etc. Karwar, Kumta, Ankola, Sirsri region normally gets one seat in the state body. In one instance, the member was considered on the basis of work for Konkani language and culture, but the move was resisted, saying that the body had no representative of goldsmith community in the new set-up.
education or government communication, though Konkani speakers form a community that is eligible for recognition as a Linguistic Minority under the relevant provisions (Mallaya, 1997 p.140). The schools in Marathi medium have been closed down for want of students, as a result of effective implementation of Official Language policy by the Karnataka state government, but no one has even thought of Konkani to replace Marathi. The local station of All India Radio could have got Konkani as its language of broadcasts on the basis of the language population of 78 % in Karwar Taluk (Mallaya, 1997: 140) but in spite of guidance and suggestions from Goan leaders there was no forceful demand to that effect, nor was there a conscious effort to see that the basis for such provision - census returns - recorded Konkani as the spoken language/ mother-tongue in genuine cases (Interview- Pundalik Naik). Other places like Kumta, Sirsi, Ankola have their local Konkani groups working for Konkani. But their activities remain sporadic and symbolic, mostly cultural and creative. Most of them have been restricted to the caste/community circles and in some cases they centre around individuals. Akhil Karnataka Konkani Parishad was formed in 1991 to work as a state body as there was a section which felt that Konkani Bhasha Mandal Karnataka (Regd.) operating from Mangalore was merely a local association and had no state jurisdiction. But the Parishad which planned to have bodies at Taluk level in places where Konkani speakers were in sizable number, did not do much, because, according to its President Arun Ubhaykar, ‘Konkani movement has not taken deep root in Karnataka’ (letter dtd. 10.6.1998). As a state body, the Parishad aimed at affiliating all the Konkani associations in the state but by 1998 only a dozen had joined it and the equal number ‘were hesitant to join for some
reason or the other'. Uttara Kannada Zilla Konkani Sahitya Parishad of Sirsi was formed in 1989 as a district body and was largely patronised by V.S.Sonde whose role in the Konkani movement in the region is recognised by all. These and other local organisations of Konkani were formed at the initiative of certain individuals but remained dormant after the initial spurt of a few public functions like get-togethers, seminars, drama festivals and competitions etc. They also forwarded some demands to the state government or other agencies such as the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities (Interview – V.S.Sonde) but neither followed them up with any persistence nor had they any consistent literary activity or mass movement for the language which was aimed at urging the authorities to act towards providing facilities, concessions, or privileges to the language community. The role of South Kanara in contrast is relatively more prominent for various reasons which I shall discuss a little later.

In North Kanara in spite of having the sizable population of Konkani speakers there was no good leadership after independence. In the linguistic reorganisation this region in the Bombay state was claimed by Maharashtra and the Konkan Maratha community which has a large population supported the claim. The GSBs who had land ownership and revenue rights in the region had lost their influence over the years because of large scale migration to Bombay and loss of economic hold after the implementation of the Land Reforms in the early 1960s. For three decades after 1960 the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti was working for including this region in Maharashtra. Karnataka government adopted the policy of gradual ‘Kannadisation’ of the region and the strength of Konkani suffered. By 1980s the Official Language Policy of the Karnataka state
the policy of gradual 'Kannadisation' of the region and the strength of Konkani suffered. By 1980s the Official Language Policy of the Karnataka state government started showing its results and Konkani voice weakened. In the changed scenario Konkani language leadership is with the Konkan Marathas who find little support for their work in the region. With developmental projects of the Union Government such as Kaiga Atomic Power plant or the Naval base 'Sea Bird' which is now underway the population profile of Karwar taluk has changed. Konkani has lost its relevance in the wider political and cultural scenario.

Metropolitan Problems

If North Kanara has remained relatively silent in the last quarter of the twentieth century on the language front, Bombay too - as the major centre of Konkani movement in its formative years - has little of organised language activity for Konkani. The first Konkani Bhasha Mandal as a permanent body was formed there in 1942 with ambitious plans. Its role in organising the Parishad in the crucial years before and after the Indian independence and in giving direction to the movement is indisputable. But the post-1960 period has seen the activities shifting to Goa leaving the KBM in Bombay less active. In the early years of Indian independence, this pioneer institution of Konkani movement worked towards the introduction of Konkani in education by announcing plans for the preparation of text-books for school children, the creation of awareness through its quarterly magazine 'Saad', the popularisation of the language by organising different types of contests, competitions, festivals etc. But the large number of Konkani organizations formed by the regional Konkani groups in the metropolis
specially after the formation of the Maharashtra state. In 1967 the Mandal celebrated its silver jubilee to coincide with the ninth Parishad but after this event, the Mandal remained as one of the many organizations of Konkani people rather than the torch-bearer and pioneer that it set out to be. Its office bearers changed but nothing much changed in terms of its activities and functions. The two sessions of the Parishad held after the Sahitya Akademi recognition (1975) – 13th in 1980 and 21st in 1997 – could not bring people closer and were marked by criticism and dissatisfaction over the organisation and policy issues. Though the Mandal had the same person as its Secretary for nearly four decades, the official records are not available (Moraes in Vishwa Konkani, 1995). Konkani writers and activists hailing from different regions held positions in the Mandal but the regional groups remained scattered and the Mandal could not present a unified image of Konkani people in the metropolis. Most of the other organisations were formed and run by regional or community groups such as the Chitrapur Saraswats, Mangalorean Catholics, Goan Catholics and the like. Even the KBM did not go beyond the routine of organising anniversaries, condolence

5. The 13th session was not able to attract Konkani speakers from the metropolis itself as the organisers failed to reach them. Presidential address at the VII Lekhak Sammelan in 1983 took note of this lacuna. (Sammelan Souvenir). The attendance as well as arrangements for the delegates of this session were poor. 6. The office-bearer and Ex-President of the Parishad Uday Bhembre in his editorial of Konkani Daily Sunaparant (20th Jan. 1997) pointed out a number of defects in organisation. In the 21st session in 1997, the issue of plural identity of Konkani formed a part of the Presidential address by Dr. Madha, which was against the basic understanding of the Parishad on the script issue and was criticised by another office-bearer of the Parishad and the Sahitya Sammelan President Nagesh Karmali (Sunaparant – 1st Feb. 1997). 7. Mr. F.J. Martyres was one of the Joint Secretaries in the early years of the Mandal and he took up the post of Secretary of the Working Committee thereafter to continue till mid-eighties, according to official report by J.B. Moraes in Vishwa Konkani, 1995. At the time of Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Manézi in 1967 Martyres was the Honorary General Secretary of the Organising Committee; but no details regarding the membership profile, or the past functionaries/office bearers, finance or such other aspects of the Mandal are seen in the souvenir released on this occasion, nor are any records available for reference. 8. There have been organisations like The Konkan Cultural Association, Goan Cultural Association, Konkani Sabha (Mulund), Konkani Kallzam, Konkoni Kala Kusum, Vasai Konkoni Kendra, Konkoni Seva Sangh, but many of them have specific regional and community membership. Quite a few of them are attached to local church/parish and language activities are only a part of their aims.
the KBM did not go beyond the routine of organising anniversaries, condolence and felicitation meetings. In terms of planning, propagation of language and pressurising the government on policy issues, it did not make any efforts. Neither did the mobilisation nor the integration of Konkani speakers receive any attention. Leadership of the Mandal remained with individuals belonging to regional groups in Karnataka and, activities got limited response from the specific regional and community groups, depending on the community to which leadership belonged. The larger picture of Konkani people never emerged through the Mandal or its programmes. Issues like the scope for Konkani as a medium of school education, the recognition of Konkani speakers as a linguistic minority, the place for the language in mass medium of Radio were highlighted in the early 1950s but were not pressed further after Goa’s liberation. An increasing number of Konkani speakers, who made this state capital their home, took to Marathi over the years (Sardesai in Jaag – Dec. ‘99)\(^9\). As the active Goan GSB youth who were the main force of the Konkani movement in the metropolis, shifted to Goa after liberation, the activities of the Mandal were affected. Goans were divided over the political future of their homeland, whereas the Konkani speakers from the other regions had made Bombay their second home. For Goans settled in Mumbai, Marathi becomes their social, cultural medium of communication and contacts.

Kerala – Caste Contests

\(^9\) Ms. Sardesai observes that Konkani speakers settled in Mumbai start speaking Konkani mixed with Marathi words and within a generation or two Marathi replaces Konkani. This is seen in case of large number of Goans whose families are now Mumbaites more than Goan. Marathi gives them security and sense of identity necessary in day-to-day social life within the locality.
Kerala clearly exhibits a caste link of language movement. The first collective resolve for preservation and improvement of the mother-tongue was made in a meeting of the Gowd Saraswats in Alapuzha in 1924 which is considered as the beginning of the Konkani movement in Kerala (Prabhu, 1996). All the later efforts have been through the local groups and associations of the GSBs and closely linked to their temples. The initiative and consistent follow up on the issues related to Konkani by Mr. N. Purushothama Mallaya for almost three decades starting from 1950s have been well recognised and acknowledged by all Konkani lovers in Kerala and outside. But the basis of all these efforts is only partly linguistic. The thrust is on the caste and community, particularly in the recognised organisational efforts.

In Kerala the major organisations formed in the name of Konkani are Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha (estd.1966), Konkani Premi Mandal (estd. 1960s), Konkani Language Institute (estd. 1975), and Kerala Konkani Academy (estd. 1980). Konkani Vidyapeeth, Konkani Sahitya Samaj, Saraswat Youth Association are other organisations engaged in publication and cultural activities. Among all these, the Sabha has made its mark as the pioneer body of Konkani in the state. The organisation is controlled by Mr. N. P. Mallaya who has managed to keep the membership restricted to the GSB caste members. His writings on Konkani have been published in the national and regional press since mid-1950s. To him, Konkani in Kerala means GSBs and the name 'lingua Bramanica', he feels, is clearly indicative of the caste basis of this language (Interview-N.P.Mallaya). Among others, Konkani Premi Mandal was established by a Vaishya V. Shet Balaraj who had a limited influence because of the rigid caste
Language Institute came into being in 1975 as a reaction to the autocratic functioning of the Sabha, ‘where the merit and work’, even of the caste members, ‘was sidelined’. The Institute is established and controlled by a GSB Mr. R.K.Rao who is critical of the Sabha and of Mr. Mallaya for neglecting the task of ‘Prachar’ i.e. propagation of the ‘Bhasha’ – language (Konkani) which is the prime function of the Sabha, as suggested in the name of the Sabha. Mr. Rao also felt that the Sabha was a ‘one man show’. In fact, a book written by Prof. Rao was handed over to Mr. Mallaya to publish through the Sabha but it remained unpublished for over a year. Konkani Bhasha Mandal Goa was also approached with the same proposal but the then President of the Mandal Mr. Chandrakant Keni expressed his inability to oblige. This prompted Prof. Rao to publish the book on his own for which the Institute was born (Interview – Prof. R.K.Rao).

Kerala Konkani Academy was formed as an alternative to the Sabha and is more ‘open’ in terms of membership. The initiative for the formation of the Academy was taken by Mr. R.K.Rao and Mr. P.G. Kamath but the members came from all the Konkani speaking castes. The Sabha, however, stood by its stand, that ‘all efforts towards promotion of Konkani art and culture should go under the banner of Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha and should not lead to formation of parallel organisations with similar objects and aims which may hamper the progress of the Konkani language’ (‘Konkani Vikas’ August 1979). The basis for such a stand was, perhaps, the claim by Mr. Mallaya for acknowledgement of the crusading work done by himself and his organization in getting for Konkani all the desirable official recognition and due honour as a language. There are others e.g. Adv. H.B. Shenoy who have worked for the Konkani cause, who provided
official recognition and due honour as a language. There are others e.g. Adv. H.B. Shenoy who have worked for the Konkani cause, who provided administrative and legal support, but there is no mention of their efforts in the recorded accounts of the work published by the Sabha and by Mr. Mallaya. There are publications on the background and history of the Konkani movement in Kerala, published mostly by the Sabha, all crediting Mr. Mallaya for all the achievements of Konkani. Going by his views, and looking at the composition or functioning of the Sabha, the caste appears to be a major factor in its stand on language and culture.

The GSBs have struggled to gain the Brahmin status in the face of strong divide between them and the local Namboodiri or Tamil Brahmins. In their attempt to prove their superiority they have stressed on their Aryan and North Indian origin as a branch of the Pancha Gowdas. The role of caste members as diplomats, interpreters, intellectuals and scholars in the past is also highlighted in an attempt to establish the rich history of the community (Mallaya, 1994). The historical evidence of hostility between the local Brahmins and these immigrants is found in the chronicles of foreign travellers and western writers (Valavalikar, 1928). The GSB moves for consolidation in the early decades of the 20th century helped these local GSBs to assert themselves as a caste group whose intellectuals worked for the recognition of the status to their community in the socio-cultural life of the region. Their economic activities in the region provided the resource base and academic pursuits of some of the community members such as A. D. Hari Sharma who brought the community a sense of pride. The movement for spread and popularisation of Hindi as national language provided scope to some
and sided with Devanagari to establish the separate identity\textsuperscript{10}. Malayalee society as a whole had little social or cultural interaction with this community and there is still a feeling that the Konkanies ‘do not identify themselves with the land (Kerala)\textsuperscript{11}. All along, the Konkanies have looked at Goa as their homeland and the GSBs, who have their family deities in Goa, have created a centre ‘Sasashti Parambil’ to house the temples of their Kuladevatas (family deities), in the memory of their homeland Sasashti(Salsette) in Goa from where they claim to have migrated (Valavalikar, 1928: 130).

While the role of a GSB such as Mr. Mallaya in promoting Konkani is recognised, the basis of all his work is not linguistic or academic, as already mentioned. The language is looked as a tool of ‘their’ Konkani culture which is distinguished from that of others speaking the language. In all his efforts to preserve and promote the language and seek governmental support and privileges, Mr. Mallaya is said to have used the caste temple (Tirumala Devaswom at Kochi) and the spiritual leadership of the Swami of Kashi Math in every possible way. The inauguration of the Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha, ‘Bhoomi Poojan’ for the building and also the inauguration of the Konkani Bhasha Bhavan, ‘the first and

\textsuperscript{10} The leaders in the forefront of literary and organisational activities of Kerala Konkani groups have been closely associated with the work of Hindi. Mr. N.Purushothama Mallaya of Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha was involved in the work of Hindi. Prof. R.K.Rao of Konkani Language Institute was a college teacher teaching Hindi. Shri. P.G.Kamath, ex-President of Kerala Konkani Academy was the Hindi Officer in the Education Department in Government Of Kerala.

\textsuperscript{11} Mr. K.L.Mohana Varma, a renowned Malayalam literateur and ex-secretary of Kerala State Sahitya Akademi made this comment in a discussion with a group of Goan Konkani writers in a meeting of K’ochi Sahitya Vedi (the organisation of writers involved in literary activities in Malayalam and other languages in Kerala) in 1999. According to him, the regional literature depicts the community through characters that are targets of mockery and ridicule and no significance in socio-cultural milieu. This also shows the degree of distancing and lack of interaction with the native community.
only Bhavan for Konkani in India (Mallaya, 1994: 34) was performed at the hands of the Swami.

This attitude of casting the Konkani in the caste mould has made non-GSBs more skeptical. Their sense of alienation and feeling of being neglected was expressed before the 16th session of Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Sahitya Parishad held in Kerala under the Presidentship of Adv. Uday Bhembre. The non-GSB sections of Konkani speakers sent a representation with signatures of Vaishyas, Kudumbis, Saraswats (Kalavants) addressed to the Parishad President, informing about the local GSBs ignoring them in the work of Konkani. The Parishad President Adv. Uday Bhembre informed them telegraphically that Konkani belonged to all. The Vaishya Youth Association activists were then called ‘at the last minute’ to work as volunteers in the session of the Parishad and they did the job (Interview – R.S.Bhaskar). The caste hegemony is attempted to be maintained through the official and individual decisions and actions under the leadership of Mr. Mallaya. The presentation of cultural programmes, folk songs etc. by Konkani speaking people in Kerala on All India Radio were started with the initiative of the Sabha, but the Sabha raised objections when some other group/organisation of Konkani speakers presented a similar programme, and even questioned the authenticity of the programme in its communication with the officials of All India Radio (Interview – Shivanand Shennai). Similar attitude was also shown in the matter of representation to Konkani linguistic minority on the local and District Boards and Committees under the various Departments of the

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12. The second Konkani Bhavan has since come up in Margao-Goa in the last decade. For almost two decades the Sabha Bhavan was the only Konkani Bhavan in India. Besides the name there is little (that concerns the language) to mention about the contribution of the Bhavan.
state government. Within the educational institutions run by the Tirumala Devaswom management Konkani was introduced as a language but it was kept a ‘limited affair’ by controlling the training of teachers then serving the school and getting the training course recognised by the government. Similar training was not made available to any other aspirant, nor was any other individual or institution working for Konkani involved in this project. No attempt was made to make arrangements to increase the number of schools or number of trained teachers under the facility of provision of teaching Konkani. Whether it is language organisation, educational institution, constitutional provision for minority representation, activity of publication or movement for language recognition, Konkani speakers in general and even those among GSBs who are working for Konkani affirm that the caste interests and to some extent even personal and family interests have been central to the so-called linguistic concerns of the Sabha and its leadership (Interview – Adv. H.B. Shenoy).

This is also clear from certain responses and reactions seen from the groups and individuals who were denied access to the work and benefits of Konkani. As the membership of the Sabha was limited and decided at the ‘discretion’ of ‘specific individuals’ new organisations were formed. Books were published and circulated through different organisations. Cultural programmes were presented on different occasions by these new organisations. Membership of different bodies of the Central Sahitya Akademi was offered to some of the prominent active members of these organisations. Some received awards for their literary
and translation works. Language examinations were planned and conducted by *Konkani Sahitya Samaj* under the leadership of K.K. Subramanyam, a retired Hindi teacher from the Kudumbi community, for propagation and popularisation of Konkani for the benefit of those Konkani speakers who had lost touch with their own language. As a result of all this, the Konkani language community in Kerala came to be better known to the language community in other regions through many others who were active and concerned about their language. Although they had not found opportunity or exposure to gain recognition because of narrow and distorted approach towards the cause of the language on the part of the leadership, they continued to work for the language often against the wishes of this established leadership.

The use of similarity in name — *Konkani* — by the GSB community in Kerala for getting the benefits under the provisions of the Constitution has continued to be a matter of apprehension and antipathy on the part of other castes and communities. GSBs have managed to get their temples, schools and other institutions out of the governmental administrative restrictions and controls by getting them declared as the minority institutions and attracting security and privileges under the Articles 29 and 30 of the Indian constitution. The caste concerns among other castes of Konkani speakers have taken different forms. The depressed caste of Konkani Kudumbis was traditionally tied to Konkanis i.e. GSBs but with the political and social reforms introduced in Kerala over the twentieth century they have got themselves freed from the bondage-like
dependence on GSBs and have received certain benefits under the land reforms introduced by the Communist-dominated state government in the past. Their efforts to secure certain constitutional concessions as Backward Caste have led to their mobilisation under the *Kerala Kudumbi Sangham* and the spread of education, attempt at awareness creation, employment and career training, eradication of social evils such as child marriage, polygamy etc. are the major areas of thrust. They have managed to get only a limited success in getting concessions in education\textsuperscript{14}.

Another most disadvantaged caste among Konkani speakers is that of the ‘*kalavants*’ attached to the temples and their managers i.e. GSBs. Always being ill-treated and humiliated by the GSBs as ‘*chedyanche*’ (children of the concubines), deprived of any scope for building self-esteem and self-respect due to lack of education and employment till the first half of the twentieth century, the caste woke up to the demands of the new era and introduced marriage and family among the girls and boys in the community, acquiring education and strength of association. In order to come out of the clutches of the upper caste GSBs they severed the links with the traditional ‘patrons’ and ‘benefactors’ but acquired the caste name of ‘saraswats’ to establish the link they had through the serving women. In spite of the strong opposition of the GSBs the caste leaders managed to win the legal battle to claim the caste name of ‘non-Brahmin Saraswats’ paving the way to get the benefits that are due to disadvantaged classes and castes (Interview — P.Manohar). The language became a major loser as these castes in

\textsuperscript{14} According to the President of the *Sangham*, they have been striving since 1960s to get the status of backward caste/ scheduled caste, which has eluded them. They receive benefits in the form of OEC which relate to certain quota for admissions to undergraduate courses.
their attempt to distance themselves from the so called official authentic ‘Konkani’ community i.e. GSBs, tried to use regional language increasingly - for the livelihood and socio-economic interaction – at the cost of their own ancestral language. GSBs as the caste elite had the advantages also as the language elite. Moreover, the regional script – Malayalam – that was in use for writing Konkani among all the sections of Konkani speakers in Kerala (though majority of these users belonged to GSBs) was replaced by Devanagari, which factor made Konkani difficult to learn for the people who had lost touch with the language. GSBs had an advantage here because of their strong religious and ritual frame associated with Sanskrit and even Marathi. For their internal communication they still use Malayalam script as can be seen in journals like ‘Saraswata Vani’ and ‘Vaishnava Ratna’ but take pride in Devanagari as it provides them a position of prestige as well as direct access to larger Konkani area of Goa controlled largely by their caste group leading the language and literary scene and also organisational and institutional field. This will be discussed later. More importantly, adoption of Devanagari gives them a sense of freedom from, and equality with, the regional language group of Malayalee speakers whose traditional view of Konkani is that of a dialect, a backward language with no script, a sort of speech variety surviving by the grace of the local script which is rightfully and essentially theirs. This sense of language prestige is clearly more evident in the elite group of GSBs who have economic stability as trader and business community and not so much for other caste groups of Konkani language community whose socio-economic well-being is intimately linked to their use of
regional language at one level and to the modernising trend of English and Hindi at the other.

In their bid to appropriate the folk tradition of Konkani, the GSBs have tried to publish certain material in Devanagari alone (Godde Ramayana by R. K. Rao) or with Malayalam (Shravonn by P.G.Kainath) but the castes to which the lyrics are supposed to belong viz. Vaishyas/ Vaniyas and Kudumbis respectively question the propriety and authority of the GSBs in this respect. This is done more out of caste hatred and feeling of loss than on the basis of academic authority or cultural concern. These groups have not been using the texts as in the past due to some difficulties, but the linkage of these oral texts with certain rituals of these castes is stressed, which forms the basis of protest against this ‘plagiarism’ of a sort. In a way, the text or the performance is not the significant part but the claim and the right over it is. The issue is of positional goods in society in the name of Konkani for which different groups are competing.

Kerala Konkani is at crossroads because the terms of control are not accepted any more by the new generation. The benefits are enjoyed by the elite so far and the elite leadership insists on status quo but with the new awakening and consolidation among other caste groups the language – caste bond will possibly be subjected to legal and juridical and also political scrutiny in the contest for sharing the fruits of constitutional safeguards and benefits in the processes of a competitive democracy. Adv. H. B. Shenoy, the ex-Secretary of the Kerala Konkani Academy is critical of the ways and means used by the Sabha leadership and of Mr. Mallaya in particular. He says he has already offered legal help to any one seeking admission to the courses in Konkani linguistic minority institutions.
on the basis of genuine mother-tongue claims. Sukritindra Oriental Research Institute (SORI), a GSB institution, has co-opted R.S. Bhaskar, a non-GSB on its advisory committee (Interview — D. Nityanand Bhat, Director, SORI). The established caste/language leadership has been questioned in the past by the young activists from the GSBs on the issue of representation on the government bodies, committees and boards of the state government (Interview — D. Shivanand Shennai).

The political economy landscape of Konkani in Kerala is thereby at the crossroads because of three issues: (i) inter-generational conflict, (ii) inter-factional competition, and (iii) disagreement on strategy to be adopted with respect to representation on government bodies.

South Kanara: The Real Battle-ground

In Karnataka the organised Konkani language movement is seen mainly in Mangalore-Udupi area where the contesting groups within the movement are more defined and their respective activities more pronounced. The GSBs as a business community have limited practical utility for the language in terms of literature or culture. But their search for status is focused on 'language as an asset' to acquire certain political and administrative advantages. The GSBs in trade and business have supported the language activities mostly as their community work. Their contribution to academic or creative side of language is

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15 Payyanur Ramesh Pai who was active in the Kerala Konkani Academy had taken up the matter with the Sabha leader Mr. Mallaya and on the basis of the Govt. order related to the provision of representation to Konkani linguistic minority, but the enquiry did not proceed after the relevant papers were reported missing from the government files, according to D. Shivanand Shennai.
very limited as compared to that of the Catholics, who have worked both through the church and outside.

Organisations in the early part of the twentieth century were essentially community-based, giving a prominent role to the church and temples. The church service and liturgy were in Konkani. In this context creative writing in Konkani got a boost with the appearance of ‘Konkani Dirvem’ but only among Catholics. The Catholic Association of South Kanara (CASK) and other organisations, guided by the missionaries, and the Saraswat Associations, connected to the GSB temples, worked for their respective communities making use of Konkani. In the year 1940 the second Konkani Parishad was held in Udupi (with the support of Dr. T. M. A. Pai) in which the participation of Catholics was ensured. Jerome Saldanha, the Member of Madras Legislature, who presided over the event, was not in favour of a single script as was resolved in the first conference. The first Parishad held in Karwar had included as one of its objectives – ‘To use Devanagari, the original/natural and national script for Konkani’. One of the resolutions adopted said that ‘Devanagari script should be used for Konkani’. This emphasis on Devanagari has to be seen in the light of consolidation of Kannada forces through the Samyukta Karnataka movement of 1930s and ridicule suffered by the Konkani speaking children in Kannada schools which they had to attend. In the First Parishad Adv. Shanbhag mentioned that Hindi and Marathi were using the script of Sanskrit i.e. Devanagari, and the same was the script of Konkani (Prabhu, 1988). In Karwar, which was under the Bombay state for long, this script was in use in Marathi education. But the second Parishad in Udupi was held in the Madras state and since a large number of Konkani users were
Catholics conversant with the Kannada script, it was understandable that the single script proposal was not supported there. The issue of script had to be underplayed in their second Parishad because of the opposition of the President himself. In this way, script symbolised the contesting claims of the GSBs and Catholics seen in the later years in the South Kanara. with regard to Konkani. The later sessions did not pass any express resolution on script for Konkani.

The period of two decades after the Udupi Parishad did not see much happening on the Konkani front in Karnataka, particularly in South Kanara, except for the publication of some periodicals which were restarted in Bombay and later shifted to Mangalore16 (Moraes, 1995). It was only in the 1960s that the Konkani Bhashoddhar Trust was established at Udupi. The Manipal establishment was taking shape during this period and the Business House of Pais had started gaining prominence. In Mangalore, the work of Konkani was yet to start in organised manner. Some periodicals in Konkani were published from Bombay by the Mangalore Catholics. In the decade of 1960s a few of these writers and editors returned to Mangalore from Bombay and continued their journalistic activities. The organisational activities, however, started in 1970s. mainly with the tenth Parishad held in Panaji-Goa.

The major formations in the region were three:

(i) The GSB community and its institutions led by the Pais of Manipal,
(ii) The Jesuits and their institutions,
(iii) The Catholic writers with secular/leftist leanings.

16 The Mangalorean writer J. S. Alvares started Míra in 1953 and Jhelo in 1956, both in Bombay, which later continued to be published from Mangalore.
The first of these was roped in through the Parishad from its early years, as
the 1940 Parishad in Udupi had Dr. T. M. A. Pai as the President of the
Reception Committee. The GSB unification conference (limited to uniting the
Smartas and Vaishnavas) held in Mangalore in the first decade of the twentieth
century was followed by similar efforts at other places such as Belgaum (1909)
and Goa (1910) to unite the different sects in the community. The later decades
also witnessed a growing understanding between different Maths and their
presiding Swamis. These Swamis kept in constant touch with their disciples and
brought about a sense of confidence among all the sections. The Gowda Saraswat
Associations in different towns in South Kanara formed a visible group of
Konkani community. With access to education, economic stability through trade
and business, involvement of some of their members in nationalist struggle
through the Congress, the community got recognition. Attempts to bring in those
left out of the Saraswat consolidation was continued in the decades following the
independence and the formation of Mysore state\(^\text{17}\) (Papers at Vishwa Saraswat
Sammelan 1999). In their struggle to improve their economic conditions, these
backward groups among Saraswats received help from the Pais of Manipal who
had their strong banking network\(^\text{18}\). The involvement of this community in
Konkani work was mainly through the Pais, Mr. K.K.Pai in particular.

\(^{17}\) Rajapuri Saraswats, for example, were not given any importance till 1960s. In a tour of the Kavale Math
Swami, the members of this community were given confidence to come together and interact with the other
sects in South Kanara.

\(^{18}\) Till the time of nationalisation of banks in 1969 under Indira Gandhi regime, the two major banks —
Syndicate Bank and Canara Bank were the leading ones in the South. A large number of officials and
employees in these banks in those years were from this community. Even for the Rajapuri Saraswats, the
House of Pais provided facilities in education and employment.
The Pais of Manipal had begun to build up their economic strength in the first half of the 20th century and their banking enterprises had expanded over the years, giving them a position in the community and especially in the *Matha* administration. For them this economic leadership had to be reinforced by cultural leadership, in which language worked as a tool. Their caste and community identity was of mutual benefit to their business and also to the community entrepreneurship. The Pais ventured into professional education and made it into a paying proposition. Banking provided employment to the community youth. These factors also added to the social prestige of the family and brought community leadership as well as recognition from the community institution i.e. *Matha*.

Involvement of the Pai family in the cultural affairs of the community led to their being supportive of the language movement. As the GSBs had to counter the hostility of the regional Brahmin groups such as Shivallis and also to consolidate the forces scattered in different states they worked towards promotion of Konkani language as their symbol of identity and Devanagari script as the distinct Aryan heritage to which they had a claim. This would also help in developing the distinct identity of the community. This is how the Pais came to extend their support to the Konkani movement started by the GSBs in North Kanara and to their script policy. Their views on script, however, were not clear, because, for them, Konkani as a language carried value which was more symbolic than real.

The role of Jesuits in the work of Konkani has a history of over a century in Mangalore. Fr. Angelus Francis Xavier Maffei not only brought awareness of
Konkani among the local Catholics but also studied the language in absence of any material, preparing the dictionary and grammar of Konkani in Kannada script. The use of Konkani in the church was popularised through the efforts of such priests. St. Aloysius College in Mangalore became a centre of activities for Konkani through the priests and teachers. The prime focus was, however, on religion and the idea of free thought and action outside the church domain was promptly curtailed. The Jesuits have ‘Raknno’ as ‘the organ of the Diocese and of Catholic Action’, which still has the identity crisis. As the organ of the Diocese its main focus is the interest of Catholic community; concern for Konkani language is only incidental. There have been instances of pressures on the editor from the Bishop, not to publish certain material considering it as anti-establishment or misguiding the people. It is the commitment and conviction of the individual editor that decides the scope for the promotion of the cause of Konkani in the Raknno. This is admitted by the three leading past editors viz. Msgr. Alexander D’Souza, Fr. Mark Valdar and Fr. Samuel Sequeira. Though projected as the leading Konkani periodical with the largest readership/circulation, Raknno has made provision for English and Kannada so as to cater to the changing demands of the laity (Interview – Msgr. Alexander D’Souza). Within the Diocese of Mangalore around sixty parishes out of 140 have their own journals, many of them in Konkani in Kannada script. Jesuits have

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19. The two early journals in Konkani had to stop publication because of wrath or displeasure of the church authorities. Konkani Dirvem could not continue for long though it shifted to Canara Press for printing after the Jesuit Kodialbail Press refused to print it. The controversy between Dirvem and Raknno finds mention in the issue of Dirvem dtd. 2nd Dec. 1938. Another journal ‘Samajacho Divo’ was banned by the church as it propagated the socialist ideas. Dirvem issue dtd. 16th Dec. 1937 mentioned about Bishop’s proclamation proscribing the journal.
continued to study the language and popularise it through literary and theatre activities. However, of late, there are public pressures to use more English in the church and some parishes have succumbed to them for economic considerations and 'commercial compulsions'\(^\text{21}\), inviting criticism that 'church has become the caterer' (Interview – Eric Ozario). This is admitted by some priests working for Konkani. This group led by the church has a large following as many leading writers and artists among Catholics prefer to toe the line of the priests rather than antagonise them even on genuine counts.

The third group consists of writers, artists and activists whose commitment to language, literature and culture is based on their socialist ideas and concern for well-being of the masses. Their experience of cosmopolitan life and exposure to the industrial culture in Bombay led them to question the functioning and policies of the church. Late Charles Francis Da Costa (Chafra to the Konkani literary world), the first among Mangaloreans to receive the Sahitya Akademi literary award (1989)\(^\text{22}\) tops the list of this group. Through his journals and his dramas, he criticized the church, supported the toiling masses and upheld the human values. Back in Mangalore he protested against the exploitation of workers in the church-run production centres and suffered displeasure of the

\(^{20}\) Roknna has to balance between its role as the organ of the church and its commitment to Konkani, and much depends on the editor. If the editor is committed to Konkani, the journal can serve the cause of the language well. Some have done this but there have been some with no concern for language.

\(^{21}\) There are parishes where the attendance of parishioners has fallen because English is not used in masses. People have started attending English masses in other parishes. Baindoor parish which was Konkani has now become English.

\(^{22}\) Mr. J.B. Moras received this award in 1985 before Chafra, but settled in Bombay. Moras was considered as one from Bombay Konkani group. Though Mangaloreans consider Moras as their man because he belongs to Mangalore and also because he writes in Kannada script, as the activist of Konkani he is closely associated with the KBM in Mumbai. By giving this award to him the attempt was made to pacify the Mangaloreans’ sentiments against the Goan and Devanagari monopoly, balance the communal and regional distribution of benefits, often seen in the organisation of the events and also in the selection of individuals to hold positions. But the award to Chafra was viewed as a genuine honour.
ecclesiastical authorities who arranged the boycott of Chafra’s drama shows (Interview – Eric Ozario). Chafra as a poet and writer attracted the youth around him and built a brigade of writers and activists with a new outlook. This group could relate with Konkani activities irrespective of church dominance (Interview – Titus Noronha). Some of them found it worthwhile to associate with the GSB elements and moderates among the Jesuits.

The associational scenario of Konkani in Karnataka is characterised by the contesting roles of the first two groups to control centres of power. Konkani Bhasha Mandal Karnataka (KBMK), Akhil Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Parishad (AKKSP) with its affiliates such as the Uttara Kannada Zilla Konkani Sahitya Parishad (UKZKSP), and Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Akademi (KKSA) are seen as the arenas of this contest. KBMK as the veteran body with secular standing was formed in 1974. Goan Konkani leadership, particularly Chandrakant Keni was instrumental in ensuring the support of the GSBs in Mangalore in establishing this organisation which, according to Fr. Samuel Sequeira, was ‘initiated by Raknno’. The role of K.K.Pai in ensuring the presence of GSBs in KBMK is recognised by those who have been office bearers for long. Financial support and collaboration with the Konkani organisations outside Karnataka in the past was made possible through the Manipal factor. While the Jesuits have their St. Aloysius College and Institute of Konkani for study and research along with Raknno for communication, GSBs look at the T. M. A. Pai Foundation and M. G. Pai Memorial Konkani Research Centre as their organisations. For communication GSBs have only Panchakadayi which has very meagre circulation within the community. KBMK has seen the two sides trying to gain control during
every election, sometimes settling for some member with no literary or cultural background, with limited business standing locally, and with low profile in social or literary activities to occupy the post of the President\textsuperscript{23}. Jesuits have also worked to ensure that their representatives also make to the position. This they have done with the support of a large number of their writers, actors, priests. Fr. Mark Valdar, Dr. Edward Nazareth and others, who have contributed to literature have occupied the chair in the past. As a result of this continued contest some of those without much work for the language or literature have also become KBMK Presidents through arrangements with some office-bearers or as consensus candidates to satisfy both the communities\textsuperscript{24}. With this the KBMK, after around twenty eight years of its formation, does not have a permanent office and no records or documents are available to study the growth and functioning of the organisation representing the largest numerical concentration of Konkani speakers\textsuperscript{25}.

\textsuperscript{23} Of the GSBs, Shri.K.K.Pai, V. Damodar Prabhu and Basti Vaman Shenoy have been the three prominent Presidents. A writer, editor like B.V.Baliga has never occupied the post. In the Silver Jubilee official function of KBMK his name was mentioned as one of the ex-presidents and was duly questioned from the audience. Name of Leo D'souza, one of the former Presidents, on the other hand, was missed out. Daily \textit{Udayavani} of Manipal group reportedly carried a front page news in the days preceding the silver jubilee celebrations mentioning B.V.Baliga as the founder of the \textit{Mandal}. Similar claims of G.G.Vasudeva Prabhu as the founder (in a meeting at St. Aloysius College) also angered the Jesuits, who claim that they were in the forefront.  

\textsuperscript{24} Paul Moras in whose term the movement for Konkani Academy was planned belongs to the first category whereas John D'Souza who was the President at the time of the Silver Jubilee celebration of the \textit{Mandal} is the case under the second.  

\textsuperscript{25} Census figures show that Karnataka state has the largest number of Konkani speakers in India. Language leaders in Karnataka place the figure at two and a half million, though in the Census it is little more than 600000 out of the All India figure of 1.7 million in 1991.
As regards the script for Konkani, KBMK has been using Kannada throughout in all its internal matters and records. For contacts with the Konkani organisations outside Karnataka they use the English language. As a policy the KBMK has not stood openly against Devanagari but with persons such as Lawrence Lobo since 1970s (for a number of terms) or Edwin J.F.D'Souza in mid-1990s, who have no knowledge of Devanagari, working as the Secretary of KBMK, there is no possibility of Devanagari being used in KBMK. Even though some GSB individual were to take up the position of Secretary, the scope for Devanagari is not likely to be created because of the language environment surrounding the Konkani community in Karnataka. Tulu, which is the language of the region, has Kannada as its script and Konkani is no different in the eyes of the state. The language policy of the Karnataka state government makes Kannada language and script compulsory and knowledgable people feel that getting state support is possible only with Kannada script. Devanagari has no practical, significant role in Karnataka, especially after the establishment of the Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy which has to use Kannada script as the government body. Even in the activities organised by the institutions of the GSBs Devanagari has only a symbolic presence at best.

Inter-associational contest representing the competing community claims invariably involves KBMK. In early 1980s KBMK was asked by the Manipal group to prepare the plan for a Konkani Lexicon. Fr. Mark Valdar prepared it but

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26. In fact the establishment of Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy was the work of Veerappa Moily, a Tulu speaker, who as the Chief Minister of Karnataka wanted to do something for his Tulu language. Being aware of the work of Konkani he announced the Academy for Konkani along with that for Tulu and Kodagu, the two regional languages of his region.
was denied permission by the Bishop to attend the meeting proposed at Manipal to consider the same. Three months later the Bishop called a meeting, procured a copy of the proposal from Fr. Valdar and approached the government for assistance. The Manipal institution T. M. A. Pai Foundation also sent the copy of the proposal (received from KBMK/ Fr. Valdar) to the government but the project of Lexicon was sanctioned to St. Aloysius College. It was given to the Jesuits but they could not do it. The Institute of Konkani decided to take it up and convened a meeting. The Institute also appealed for material and received some from Konkani people in different parts of Karnataka. But the work did not proceed further. Dr Willy D’Silva, a secular priest who was given the responsibility later, started the work with his own organisation *Konkani Sahitya Kala Samiti* after training youth to assist him. Some knowledgeable senior Konkani writers, activists from different parts of Karnataka, were made to compile lexical items and audio recordings were also done under the project. The material collected this way is still lying with the Institute but the work has been left half way, with no one to state the exact position of the project. The church authorities having become helpless in the matter, the Lexicon project remains in suspended animation. Even after ten years (1995) the Institute was on the look out for a Chief Editor for the project (Amar Konkani Dec. 95). T. M. A. Pai Foundation expressed its intention in 1998 to do the work on similar lines but have not made a beginning as yet.

Dr. Willy D’Silva had problems with the church authorities in the matter of Konkani translation of Bible too. Translation was planned in early eighties on

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27. Dr. William Madta, who was the President of the 21st session of the Parishad, mentioned this in his Presidential Address. K.K.Pai considers Devanagari as a cultural script, prefers it for convenience but at the same time 'has no serious objection to and sees no practical difficulties in adopting any script'.

28. This is based on the interview of Mr. Lawrence Lobo, secretary, KBMK and visit to the Institute.
demand of the priests, for which Fr. Pinto was sent to Rome and Israel to learn Hebrew and the task was assigned to him. He was given five years to complete the assignment. Even after a decade the work was not done. Others like Barbosa, Menezes also could not do it. Fr. Valdar was willing to work if he was assigned only that work exclusively. Fr. Willy completed it on his own and helped the church in a way. He also achieved the goal of freeing the Mangalore Catholic Konkani from massive Kannadisation that was noted by many but not acted upon in the past (Interview-Fr. Mark Valdar). But his translation was not allowed for circulation on technical/procedural grounds. The Bible translation was printed but copies could not be sold as officially approved as Willy D'Silva asked for ‘imprimatur’ after it was printed and it was refused by the Bishop. The official translation was not available till 2001. Willy’s work had to be sold at a heavy discount unofficially. Church authorities are also said to be interfering in the editorial policy of ‘Raknno’ which has led to frictions in the past. The concern for Konkani on the part of the church authorities has also seen ups and downs. The KBMK office and records were ordered to be removed from Raknno premises, without prior notice, which is cited as the instance of ‘subjective’ approach of the church to Konkani movement (Interview – Lawrence Lobo).

Konkani Parishad has had all its sessions held in Karnataka till today through the GSB support but not necessarily that of the KBMK as the state body of Konkani. The sessions in South Kanara - Udupi (1940) and Mangalore (1974) - had the patronage of the Manipal Pais whereas those in North Kanara Karwar (1939) and Sirsi (1995) had Adv. Shanbhag and Mr. Sonde as the leading spirits. Those in Bangalore (1984) and Belgaum (1999) were supported by Mr. Hattikutur
and Mr. Chanda Pai respectively. The participation of Jesuits and others has been ensured but the crucial decisions are taken in a smaller group of GSBs.

As a result of the covert conflict between groups for supremacy in the organisation, there have been attempts to create new bodies. Though KBMK claimed to be the state body, it remained so in theory as different regions of the state were not represented in the managing committee. During the presidency of Paul Moras, *Kumta Taluka Konkani Sahitya Parishat* organised Karnataka State level Konkani Conference at Kumta on 27th January 1991, which was inaugurated in the presence of language leaders from the four coastal states (*Aboli*, souvenir –1991). The organisation was led by the local Hindus - mainly GSBs – though others were involved as members. There was a move to form *Akhil Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Parishad* (AKKSP) as a federal Konkani body at the state level. But after the change in guard at the KBMK29 the AKKSP activities did not move ahead though some district units were formed. Similar units were also formed by the KBMK but their activities were never seen. The General Secretary of the AKKSP found a place in the KKSA in subsequent years under the presidency of Basti Vaman Shenoy who took over while he was the KBMK president. During this time *Akhil Karnataka Konkani Parishad* was registered and inaugurated at Bangalore on 4th December 1993 (*Souvenir*, 1996), which conducted some activities such as All India Konkani Drama Festival every two years. This Parishad was promoted by some Catholics settled in Bangalore.

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29. Paul Moras was succeeded as the President KBMK by Basti Vaman Shenoy, who wanted KBMK to be the apex Konkani body at the state level with its regional and district units.
The formation of KKSA was demanded in a resolution passed in the Pedne (Goa) session of the Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Lekhak Sammelan (ABKLS) in 1990\(^3\) and a representation in that behalf was given to the Karnataka state government in the next session in Karwar (N.K.) in 1992. This was followed by the awareness and mobilisation campaign culminating in ‘Konkani Jatha’. KBMK president Paul Moras roped in people from different groups for the purpose. Mr. Basti Vaman Shenoy, a GSB and Mr. Eric Ozario belonging to the leftist/secular Catholic group worked to make the movement broad-based. But the response on the day of the Jatha was disappointing. As the Indian Parliament had already passed an amendment to include Konkani in the VIII schedule along with Nepali and Manipuri, one of the demands of the Jatha had already been met. The main and the only demand of the establishment of the KKSA under the state government was presented at the state secretariat by the delegation of the Jatha. The public meeting that followed the presentation of the memorandum witnessed a dramatic turn with a demand by some individuals to appoint V. J. P. Saldanha as the president of the proposed Academy\(^3\). There was slogan shouting in support of the demand in this small gathering of Konkani activists. The GSB and the secular group had no inkling of this. Eric Ozario of the secular group objected to this, saying that this was not the time or the occasion for the claim or decision on the issue. The anxiety and impatience of individuals and groups to stake claims was

\(^3\) This was the last one to be called Lekhak Sammelan. The name was changed to Sahitya Sammelan by shifting the word Sahitya from Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Sahitya Parishad and naming the Parishad as Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Parishad in 1992.

\(^3\) Saldanha himself claimed it as a unanimous nomination by the representatives of Konkani speaking people from all over Karnataka. (Bio-data in Souvenir, 1996).
open and clear\textsuperscript{32}. This led to dissolution of the Academy within a year, even before it became functional under V. J. P. Saldanha. Its revival under the GSB President B. V. Baliga fell in the same pattern as KBMK\textsuperscript{33}.

The secular group was engaged mainly in literary and theatre activities after its leaders' early stint with trade-union activities and programme of social reforms. The formation of ‘\textit{Ranga Taranga}’ for theatre activities and ‘\textit{Mandd Sobhann}’ as a group for cultural awakening, experimentation and research in Konkani was a positive step which was followed by annual cultural festivals viz. ‘\textit{Parab}’ (Festival), ‘\textit{Saant}’ (Fair) in 1992 and 1993 to showcase the variety in cultural expression from the whole of Konkan region bringing the creative and active Konkani groups together. The promoters of the event toured the area upto Ratnagiri to invite groups to participate but found the response from Goa very poor both in organisational support and in actual participation of cultural groups (Interview – Eric Ozario). But through these events, Konkani speakers in Mangalore had a close view of the larger Konkani picture. This was followed by the GSB initiative for the \textit{Vishwa Konkani Sammel} (The World Konkani Convention) of December 1995.

Both Jesuits and the GSBs have their own educational institutions providing facilities from the elementary to degree college level but they have not been able to introduce Konkani as a medium or as a subject/ language in studies

\textsuperscript{32} Though the response to Jatha call was very poor, there was lot of arguing within the small group on the issue of members to be included in the delegation to be sent to meet the Chief Minister that day. Even after the granting of the Academy the inauguration of the Academy office was planned (without any official sanction of the accommodation or arrangement of infrastructure) in a private building at the hands of a national political leader to give an impression that the government had allowed free hand to the President. In the first meeting of the Academy the President demanded the perquisites such as official car for himself and also the monthly remuneration/ allowance.
inspite of repeated resolutions and discussions in the sessions of the Parishad. Some examinations of proficiency in Konkani are conducted by the Kanara High School of the GSBs mainly for their own students through Konkani Vibhag and also a Diploma course is run at Kanara College. St. Aloysius College also has its Department of Konkani Studies with provision of Konkani as optional language at undergraduate course in Arts. The Department started with 13 students in 1994-95 and has limited the number of students offering Konkani as optional language to 20. According to Prin. Madta, not many students opt for Konkani on their own. The College also conducts a one-year Diploma and a correspondence course leading to the award of Post-graduate Diploma. The response to Correspondence Course is encouraging and more than six hundred adults from different parts of India and even some Mangliurkars abroad were registered as students.

This work is run parallely in the two community institutions, with no exchange or collaboration whatsoever between them. Contents of the courses are also prepared to emphasise the distinct varieties of Konkani and make use of specific material produced by the two communities. GSB group, while adopting the syllabus of Goa University, has included the history of Saraswats of Dakshina Kannada, folklore of Dakshina Kannada in their Diploma course. The undergraduate course of Mangalore University run in St. Aloysius College includes the study of literary works in five forms viz. Essay, Novel, Drama, Poetry and Short story, under which the writings of Catholic writers are taught.

B. V. Baliga could not continue for long on account of his age and failing health. On his resignation Basti Vaman Shenoy was appointed as the President. He continued for one more term till 2001.
All these writings are in Kannada script and the course is run entirely in the same script. Same is true for the Diploma courses under the Department. In the examinations and courses at Canara College, script option is provided and some 30% are said to be offering Devanagari.

Mangalore University does not have Konkani Department. Even for Konkani in the undergraduate studies, St. Aloysius College is the only institution providing the teaching facility in the entire state. GSB institutions do not find it worthwhile to introduce Konkani teaching even with around 30% of their students coming from Konkani speaking community, as there is ‘no demand for it’ and ‘no prospects’, according to the institutional Heads and management representatives. According to Mr. K.K.Pai, Konkani cannot be a medium of education in Karnataka, as there is ‘no currency’ in absence of any job opportunities through Konkani. He points out to ‘fanatic approach’ of every state in the matters related to language and feels that ‘the practical use of Konkani in Karnataka is almost nil’. Greater popularity of Konkani among Christians there is because of its role in religious practices, he says. But it has to remain as a spoken language, according to him. Production of literature can ensure better future for the language academically, but one can do without Konkani. Konkani Linguistic Minority Educational Institutions Association (KLMEIA) secretary Dr. K. Mohan Pai does not see wisdom in introducing Konkani in schools as there are no takers. Even Kannada is being pushed to the wall by English, in which people see their future. Fr. Samuel Sequeira, during whose tenure as editor of Raknna there were

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34 The Principals of MGM College, Udupi and Bhandarkar College, Kundapura (both under the Manipal management) have no plans for Konkani. K.K.Pai of the management says, ‘it has no practical value here’. here’.
serious attempts to fix orthography of Konkani in Kannada script, is convinced that Konkani cannot survive through one script. Insisting on Devanagari is sure to cause death of Konkani in the region, he feels.

There is a Chair in Christianity under Mangalore University but nothing about Konkani language, culture or community. When asked about this Chair, the GSB representatives in the know of things discount it as insignificant, saying that the University allows establishment of a Chair with a specific amount of endowment from anyone interested in installing the Chair for a specific subject, but avoid explaining as to why there is no Konkani Chair (Interview — K. Mohan Pai). Seen in the light of the existing diversity in dialects, scripts and styles, and more importantly, with preponderance of literature in the dialect used by Catholics, GSBs see no benefit in such an arrangement. As for Catholics, the existing Chair establishes their significance as a community, on the basis of which they can relate to Konkani. Their initiative in introducing the language at the undergraduate level within the university system has provided them the desired leverage in language studies. In any plan for further advances in academic field, this will obviously act as the basis. But, for any development in this direction the hitch lies in the disagreement on the language variety to be adopted for the study, and also the comparative advantage to the communities involved viz. GSBs and Catholics.

Introduction of Konkani in primary education is equally problematic. While journalists, literateurs, leaders, educationists stress on the need to introduce Konkani in elementary education, no one has taken any practical steps in that regard. The state government has not included Konkani in the list of languages to
be taught at elementary stage, against which the KBMK filed a writ in the High Court (Amar Konkani, July 1994). But the Konkani Linguistic Minority Educational Institutions Association (KLMEIA) as a specialised body has no plans to encourage the learning of Konkani by the children of Konkani speakers. Jesuits have their own Catholic Board of Education for the Mangalore Diocese but has taken no specific action on the matter. KLMEIA published a pictorial primer for Konkani using Kannada script but could not ensure its use in schools under the managements of their own members, due to 'teachers' indifference' and 'overall apathy' (Interview - K. Mohan Pai). Also the KLMEIA worked more as a GSB organisation than a broader one covering all the Konkani institutions, because 'their (Catholics') response is poor, as they have the minority protection through religion', according to a responsible office-bearer. This explains the remoteness of possibility of Konkani getting place in education in Karnataka.

Linguistic Minority Issue

What is significant for the GSBs is the protection of interests - essentially their business and economic interests - through Konkani. Manipal Pais have made it happen through T.M.A.Pai Foundation registered in 1981 as a Konkani linguistic minority Trust which owns and manages different educational institutions of higher education in all the major professional fields like Engineering, Pharmacy, Law, Education, Commerce and Business Management along with some secondary schools. This Foundation came as a way out of the potential threat of governmental intervention in the managerial control of educational administration of professional institutions in Manipal. It was the
advice and support of Shri. N.Purushothama Mallaya that came handy. All the institutions which were seen as the income-generating enterprises were brought under the Foundation to keep them out of the clutches of government policy (requiring allotment of specific admission quota to the state government) by shielding them with the constitutional safeguards applicable to Linguistic Minorities. The case of Konkani caste in Kerala being recognised as a Linguistic Minority and all the protection provided to the institutions run by the managements in this community helped in securing the same benefits to the community in Karnataka, to which the Pais belong. Mr. Mallaya was made one of the Trustees of this Foundation, having as its main objects ‘the promotion of Konkani language and the culture of the Konkani speaking people and the promotion of education in all its branches for the benefit of Konkani speaking students and also students of all castes and communities’. This is done through Fellowships to students of Medical and Engineering colleges, annual Book Awards for best books in Konkani irrespective of script used, also All India Konkani Drama competition and annual Felicitation programme to honour five outstanding Konkanies, one of them posthumously, for their distinguished achievement in different fields of human activity. There are prominent Konkani speakers questioning the loyalty to Konkani in this context on account of the use of English made invariably in conduct of these functions held in the name of Konkani by a Konkani language body. The House of Manipal Pais have their Academy of General Education established in 1942 under which all the educational institutions functioned till 1981. Now the Academy has under its control only primary and secondary schools and colleges of general education.
Under the provisions of constitutional safeguards to Linguistic Minorities, now there is the Manipal Academy of Health and Education (MAHE) which is a Deemed University. While all this is done in the name of Konkani, the language finds place in not a single institution belonging to the enterprising family symbolising the Saraswat pride and Konkani world.

K.K.Pai, the President of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation feels that in spite of 20-25% of Konkani speaking students in the Manipal institutions like schools and colleges of general education there is ‘no possibility of introducing Konkani as there is no particular advantage, but every disadvantage’ (Interview) from it. As a medium, Konkani stands no chance, ‘has no currency’, according to him, because job opportunities through it are very little. He feels that a proper beginning in this respect was possible in Goa but the enthusiasm in Goa is on the wane, he feels, saying that leaders are getting old. The House has a daily Udayavani in Kannada language which is seen as a purely commercial, profit-making venture by many among GSBs while Konkani speaking Mangalore Catholics consider it communal. To deal with the problem there is an alternative ‘Janavahini’, which is seen as church-sponsored by the GSB elements.

On the whole, be it education or communication, Konkani speakers, supporters and activists have patronised English keeping practical benefits in view. The church authorities have felt the ‘pressure’ of the laity and started English masses in number of places. The only means of survival of Konkani for Catholics, the Mass, is slowly losing to English. This community is also divided over the nature of work needed for the movement. Some claim doing ‘service’ to
Konkani while others feel the language does not need service or sacrifice (Interview – Edwin J.F.D’Souza). The issues of culture connected with customs, rituals, dress etc. often figure in this debate.

Communal divisions operate in the KKSA formed by the state government. After the initial hiccups because of the ‘arbitrary demands’ of the first President V. J. P. Saldanha, the body was revived in October 1995 with efforts of R. V. Deshpande, the then Minister for Industries in Karnataka government, under the captaincy of the GSB veteran B. V. Baliga, who had to resign later due to ill-health. The contribution of both the stalwarts – Saldanha and Baliga - to the world of literature and journalism was undisputed but when it came to managing the organisational affairs, the Academy did not benefit from their long experience. Basti Vaman Shenoy who had managed to take over the reins of KBMK within almost a year after he entered the movement during the Jatha phase in 1992, succeeded Baliga as the Akademi President on 17th April 1997. This was questioned by the Konkani Lekhakancho Ekvott (Unity of Konkani Writers). The Ekvott, formed in 1994, and comprising wholly of Mangalorean Catholic writers\textsuperscript{36} raised objection on the appointment of a ‘non-literary’ person on the body having literary function (the Academy has ‘Sahitya’ - literature - in its name) and wrote to the concerned minister in the state government. They noted the neglect and

\textsuperscript{35} The Daily newspaper does not carry any editorial. ‘It is both commercial and communal’ says Fr. Samuel Sequeira.

\textsuperscript{36} The Ekvott has only one member of GSB community in H. Raghavendra Rao. The group claims to be working in the interest of Konkani writers. But according to Fr. Samuel Sequeira (the ex-editor of Rakmo) it was formed to challenge his policy of making necessary changes in orthography to bring some uniformity while publishing their writings in ‘Rakmo’. Some of the KKSA members look at the Ekvott as anti-Academy collective.
sidelining of literateurs in the formation of the body. They also considered the
cultural festival organised by the Academy in Delhi as unwarranted and
wasteful. Academy members clarified that there were no specialised Konkani
Academies for literature, culture, folk arts etc. in the state and the single Academy
was supposed to attend to all these aspects of Konkani culture and society. The
matter was debated in Konkani circles for quite some time. Continuation of
Shenoy as Academy President for the second term also raised eyebrows, more on
communal lines, as it was seen, perhaps, as depriving the Catholics of their turn
the second time.

The GSB attempt to retain the control of the Konkani movement was seen in
the organisation of the World Konkani Convention (Vishwa Konkani Sammelan
-VKS in December 1995) under the auspices of KBMK. Basti Vaman Shenoy as
the KBMK President was the Chief Convenor and could get the support of the
Manipal group as well as the secular group in Mangalore. He had realised that the
AKKSP had defined its role as a state body with federal structure, trying to have
the District Parishads as its units. That would impinge upon the status of KBMK.
In order to make KBMK appear as the state level organisation he initiated the
process of opening regional units of the Mandal. The plan of VKS was ambitious
and the event unprecedented. The awareness campaign spread over a few months
including a 65-days All India tour by a cultural troupe and involvement of people
and groups from different parts of India as well as other countries all over the
world gave the event a wide publicity and good response. The objectives of

37 The real issue was that Catholic writers of Mangalore had not found any place in the Akademi. In the
first body there were seven Catholics (including the president and a Siddi community representative)
whereas the second team under Baliga had four Catholics. The only Catholic member from Mangalore was
Eric Ozario, who belonged to the third group formed by Chafra, considered as anti-establishment.
‘bringing together Konkanis, identifying the areas of unity and diversity, facilitating preservation and promotion of language, arts and culture, prioritising for unified development, expressing concerns relevant to Konkanis and enhancing pride and prestige of the Konkanis’ (Vishwa Konkani, 1995) were highlighted through the event. But the deliberations in the Convention and observations by prominent sections of the movement brought to the fore some issues of authority and antagonism. The whole project was seen as the GSB attempt to strengthen its claim over Konkani. All the major committees in the organisation were headed by the GSBs though a balance was maintained in the numbers by allotting equal positions to the Catholics. There was a charge that the apex national body ABKP was ignored in the process of organising this world event. The exhibition in the Conference showcased the cultural aspects on caste lines which was said to go against the unifying role of the movement (Goa Today January 1996). The script issue came out forcefully through a presentation and the discussion following it took regional and communal turn. The 21st session of the Parishad that was organised in Bombay about a year later (18th and 19th January 1997) had a special sitting to assess the impact of the Convention on the Movement, wherein the representative of KBMK, the organising body of the event was himself critical about the organisation and the later developments, whereas the ABKP functionary and Goa Konkani Akademi President Uday Bhembre in his capacity as the editor

38. The change has now come with Rev. Dr. Alexander F. D’Souza taking over from Shri. Shenoy.
39. Rev. Dr. Pratap Naik, S.J. was to speak on ‘The main features of Konkani Literature and Culture’ but the paper he read on the occasion was titled as ‘Elements and Writers of Modern Konkani Literature’ in which the emphasis was on regional contribution to Konkani literature in different scripts limited to published books, comparison in quantitative terms to show that Kannada script literature of Konkani in Karnataka was not given its due, and that Devanagari users’ leadership was dictatorial.
of daily *Sunaparant* questioned the validity and relevance of the issue on the *Parishad* platform (*Sunaparant*, editorial dtd. 22nd Jan.1997).

The World Konkani Convention was announced in 1994 after Basti Vaman Shenoy had taken over as KBMK president from Paul Moras. As the establishment of KKSA was announced by the Karnataka state government on the representation of KBMK under Moras and the Catholic side had managed to gain some prominence in the new body, the GSB side wanted to make sure that its place in the movement was highlighted through this event. Also both Kannada and Marathi, the two major neighbouring languages as well as Tulu, the regional language had already organised such world events. While the GSB group managed the event well, when the KBMK leadership shifted to Catholic group soon after the Convention, the issues of resources and finance raised for the grand event cropped up. The balance in the Convention kitty after meeting the expenses was transferred to the account of ‘Konkani Bhas Ani Sanskriti Pratishthan’ a Trust promoted and established by the KBMK and ‘entrusted with the dual task of establishing the “Vishwa Konkani Sanghatan” (The World Konkani Organisation) and the “Vishwa Konkani Kendra” (The World Konkani Centre) in order to implement the resolution passed at the *Vishwa Sammelan* (proposed Preamble, n.d.). Some amount was invested in the land for construction of the proposed *Vishwa Konkani Kendra* (The World Konkani Centre) building, causing furore within the incoming team of KBMK office bearers who took over from the team led by Basti Vaman Shenoy. The *Ekvott* leaders had managed to gain control of
the KBMK\textsuperscript{40} but were not able to use the money collected in the name of the Convention by the Mandal as the organiser. The formation of Konkani Bhas Ani Sanskriti Pratishthan under Basti Vaman Shenoy, appointment of M. Raghunath Shet as the Convenor of the Vishwa Konkani Kendra Committee ensured the continuance of the GSB hold on the resources and the wider movement.

Literary developments were largely under the Catholic group influenced by the Jesuits. To neutralise their influence the third group of secular, progressive activists among them was promoted through the Academy and the Convention, giving it wider exposure and opportunity to mobilise resources and goodwill for certain projects planned by its leaders\textsuperscript{41}.

**Goa and the Identity Issue**

The homeland of Konkani – Goa – has a special place in the Konkani language and script debate. The major shift in terms of language loyalty among Hindu elites is said to have occurred here in the twentieth century. But the literary and cultural activities and movements led by these sections have all made use of Marathi. The major educational institutions under the GSB managements provided education in Marathi medium till early 1980s, after which they gradually changed over to English. A small section among the GSBs (intellectuals and ideologues) propagated Konkani and even started schools but made little impact

\textsuperscript{40} Dr Edward Nazareth became the new President and Edwin J.F.D'Souza the secretary of the Mandal. D'Souza had earlier resigned as the secretary protesting against mismanagement and non-co-operation.

\textsuperscript{41} Eric Ozario represents this group. He has worked closely with Basti Vaman Shenoy for the Convention and in the Academy. After the ‘Bhomveddi’ of 65 days (undertaken to create awareness around the country for the Convention) on the lines of his earlier tours for his events like Paroh and Saant, he later he used the same method to mobilise resources for his ambitious Kalaangan project through ‘Dayja Divya Yatra’ (The pilgrimage of the lamp of tradition) blessed by the Bishop of Mangalore.
on the larger scene. However, these few were identified with the creative genius of the community and also known for their proximity to national leadership.\footnote{42}

Having realised the need to assert their identity and status in the face of ridicule and humiliation at the hands of the Brahmin castes in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala, GSBs used language as a tool and managed to get their spiritual leaders (Swamis) bless their efforts. The strengthening of the spiritual seats in the community in the last decades of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and the early decades of the 20\textsuperscript{th}, which was necessitated by the problems emerging out of modernisation,\footnote{43}, had also facilitated this representation of language in community terms. Some intellectuals acted as advisors to the Swamis and ensured their support and blessings to these language activities. Presence of swamis at the inaugural functions of the Parishad, their presiding over the ceremonies and cultural programmes organised in the name of caste associations helped in convincing the community members of the genuinely communal nature of the cause of language and gain their support in the language activities. With the religious freedom gained during the Republican phase of the Portuguese colonial rule, the benefits were reaped by the GSBs as the Hindu elites. With increasing expansion of business opportunities the trade and business section in the

\footnote{42}. B. B. Borkar (Bakibab) and Laxmanrao Sardesai were close to Kaka Kalekar in the years of Indian independence, Ravindra Kelekar, Chandrakant Keni were the disciples of Kaka Kalekar, and through him came in touch with Nehru. Purushottam Kakodkar, Pandurang Mulgaonkar were also close to Nehru. Gurunath Kelekar had Sarvodaya influence.

\footnote{43}. Issues like foreign travel supposedly prohibited by the Dharmashastras raised storm in the community. The Swami ostracized the caste members for their journey abroad. After mediation and negotiations, the members were readmitted on their performing certain rituals.
community managed to get hold over the administrative affairs of the *Maths*. The role of *Math* and *Swami* as the community symbol was now strengthened with growing material wealth in the name of the *Maths* and business skills were needed to manage the estates. Following the competition among the powerful sections in the nationalist struggle through cultural and linguistic claims the GSBs gained prominence in the southern parts of the west coast. Goa, as a territory isolated politically and also economically to some extent, was ideal for such programmed glorification of the community. Also the position lent to Goa by the community members settled in other parts of western India (for whom Goa was the home of their culture, blessed by their family deities) made such claims stronger.

Control of temples by the caste leaders through the means of law under the Portuguese rule in the nineteenth century provided them with socio-cultural leadership and economic control. Goan temples were brought under legal framework by the Portuguese rulers by making the registration of ‘Compromissos’ (compromises or agreements related to temple management) mandatory and it is accused that as the educated caste among Goan Hindus, also more familiar with procedures and codes, GSBs registered their own caste members as the members of temple managements (Mazanias) in many cases thereby depriving other castes of managerial rights\(^4\). Temples owned large landed properties and income from them was at the disposal of their managers.

(*Konkan Times*, 19)

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\(^4\) The movement for open access to temples – *Devalte Khulee Karaa* – in 1980s was based on this issue. According to the leadership of the movement the Portuguese Regulations of 1886 and the amended ones of 1833 are mentioned in the discussions but there were earlier regulations of 1858 which do not figure anywhere. Cases of the temples of other castes appropriated by the Saraswats find mention in the booklet by N. D. Verekar mentioned elsewhere in this study. The Hanuman temple (Mala, Panaji) membership rules allow no Saraswat as *Mahajan* after bad experience in case of Mahalakshmi temple in Panaji.
The access to literature, media and social organisations beginning from the 20th century helped in brightening this projection of their community as the cultured and advanced one (Swayamsewak, March-July, 1920). The revenue administration had members mainly from the Saraswat community and their role in maintaining records and using information for their benefit is reflected in the literary works of the time. The self-projection of the community in the Goan scenario became easier with the branding of Catholics as pro-Portuguese and ignoring the silent majority of the Hindus. This is seen in the picture of Goa liberation struggle drawn by them in which the leadership is attributed to them, even though there were many others from other communities and castes who had worked with equal zeal and commitment but found scant mention. The coincidence of the Konkani language movement and Goa liberation struggle in terms of period also helped to some extent. GSBs forming a large section of landed gentry or business community among Goan Hindus looked forward to gain control over the affairs of the territory after liberation. The negotiations undertaken by Purushottam Kakodkar with the Portuguese government in the concluding part of the Goa liberation struggle (Interview — Prafulla Priolkar) to

45. Recently there have been demands for recognition and facilities by a group claiming to be the freedom fighters, saying that they were left out because of their underground role in the liberation struggle. The recording of freedom fighters in Goa was done on the basis of certificates issued by particular leaders of the liberation struggle, most of whom were the Saraswats. Those from other castes were mostly illiterate and did not find mention. The intellectual class among Goan Hindus was mainly of the Saraswats and the literary productions being their creations, the descriptions and analysis reflect the feeling of prominence. The history of Liberation Struggle written by M.H. Sardesai was questioned on different counts, one of which was that it glorified a Saraswat leader, taking little note of others who worked in the same period. Many Catholics involved in the liberation struggle did not get the same attention as the Saraswats. These observations were made in the course of discussion with Shri. Madhav Korde, a freedom fighter from Ponda.

46. According to Priolkar, the civil rights of those imprisoned by the Portuguese for their anti-colonial activities were suspended for long periods. Kakodkar was trying to get all such individuals — mostly the GSBs — an opportunity to contest the municipal elections in the concluding years of the colonial rule. He also advised Priolkar to stay at home and not to take up any salaried job, as they had a different role in the changing scenario. Kakodkar felt that they would play a major role in the making of free Goa.
acquire the opportunity of participation in the political process, for those released from the Portuguese prisons after long terms in jails, indicate this approach. The same policy continued in the reorganisation of the Congress in Goa by installing the separate Committee in order to sideline the more broad-based National Congress Goa and also in selecting the Congress candidates for contesting elections to the first legislative assembly in liberated Goa.

The major concerns of the community were the land ownership gained over the centuries and also administrative leadership, which its members had come to hold in the last years of the colonial regime, thanks to the liberal attitude of the Portuguese rulers during the Republic and the policy of appeasement adopted by the imperial authorities in the last decades of their rule. In Indian federal set up, the place of Goa was seen by many Congressmen, particularly those from Maharashtra, and some well meaning Goans, as a part of Maharashtra, considering the size and resource base of the territory. The state formation on linguistic basis was seen as a policy suiting the GSB interests. The others who would work for separate existence were the Goan Catholics at large, especially their elites close to the colonial powers, for whom departure of the Portuguese created a psychological shock and cultural void. The language question came

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47 In modern times, Goa was always dependent on the remittances from across the Goan borders and abroad. As much as 25% of Goan population was believed to be living outside the territory and supporting the locals financially. Industrial base was non-existent, local produce was inadequate and the major significance of the territory as a transit point and port for imported goods supply to hinterland since centuries had been lost during the colonial period.
handy as a plank to establish Indian identity with the common socio-economic interests.48

The association of the leading nationalists among GSBs and Catholics in the early years of liberation had to be justified to seek autonomy which could be claimed on the basis of language and culture. For language (Konkani) the Catholic element was important whereas for culture masses among both Catholics and Hindu had to be counted upon. Initial emphasis was on the unique cultural elements developed over the centuries of colonial rule. The story of sufferings as a language group under the Portuguese was acceptable to the secular Congress and numerical force of Catholics as Konkani speakers was necessary in the new democratic dispensation. Language being the focus of debate the use of Roman script was viewed as a gift of history. For cultural expression in Konkani, one had to refer to forms and performances such as Tiatr, Manddo, Cantar and the same were used in mobilisation, political propaganda, language events like Konkani Parishad. The script policy in this period was open and the fact that the Roman script was widely in use was accepted while insisting on the adoption of Devanagari. But the essentialisation of script was ensured in education through the arguments before the Education Commission in 1962. Starting of Konkani schools was attempted mainly in Salcette - 'terra Catolica' proper - where the

48 The GSBs had prominence among Hindus in Goa which they would lose if Goa was to be a part of Maharashtra. Congress leadership in Maharashtra had already gone to the non-Brahmin Marathas, whose major thrust was on land reforms. Among Brahmans in Maharashtra, GSBs stood below others like Chitpavans, Deshasthas etc. For Catholics, the traditional hold on administration would be lost immediately. Moreover, they would become insignificant minority in Maharashtra, suffering the loss of position as major political, social force in Goan scenario.
Catholic majority had continued even after liberation\(^49\). Detractors of Konkani had been emphasizing on the fact that there was not a single literate in Konkani in the Goan population, no school or teacher imparted Konkani education (Daily Kesari 2\(^{nd}\) May 1954), to imply that the language written in Roman script was not to be taken as authentic. This was in line with the claim of Konkani stalwarts that Devanagari was the natural script of Konkani.

In Goa the movement of Konkani remained in the GSB hands though missionaries contributed the substance of the movement in the form of periodicals, Catholic artists provided it with action in the form of live theatre movement (*tiatr*) and rhyme and rhythm through music (*cantaram*). Most of the Konkani films were also produced by these *tiatr* artists. The plan to introduce Konkani as a medium of instruction at elementary stage of education was made possible because of financial help provided by the Pilar Society of local Catholics and some others among Catholics (Nagesh Karmali in KBMK Silver Jubilee, Mangalore, 2000). The founder President of *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* was Pedro Correia Afonso whose image as a reputed administrator – technocrat and opinion-maker among the Catholics was utilised to organise people for Konkani. This was necessary in the early years of liberation to ward off the possible threat of merger that was proposed by the ruling party MGP. In the years between the liberation

\(^49\) General impression in British India was that Goa was Catholic dominated. Catholics in Goa were made to believe in this by the Portuguese rulers and the Roman Catholic church. To dispel this image of Goa, journalists such as B.D.Satoshkar wrote in the decade of 50’s in the leading Marathi journals and newspapers showing the factual position on religious composition of Goa. (Daily Kesari – a series of articles in April – May 1954)
and the Opinion Poll the role of Catholic youth, publications in the Roman script and the church schools, all of which had Roman script as an element of their cultural identity, was significant. In the Margao Parishad in 1962, Manoharrai Sardesai gave a call – Konkani Bhas Amchi Mai, Amchi Mai Amkam Zai (Konkani language is our mother, we want our mother) to counter the slogan of Marathi protagonists that Marathi was the mother-tongue of Goans. Konkani slogan had a vibrant appeal in the later movement for maintenance of Union Territory status through the Opinion Poll in 1967. To ensure popular response to the appeal of ‘Amchem Goyem Amkam Zai’ (We want our Goa) the GSB leadership of Konkani made use of economic indicators under the Union Territory status. Government employees, Marathi school teachers were convinced of the economic advantages in terms of pay-scales and service conditions they could continue to enjoy. Those from Maharashtra and Mysore who had experienced a decade, or even less, under their respective states could easily judge the benefits in Goa as an independent unit and supported the ‘two leaves’ (symbol for anti-mergerists in the Opinion Poll) in the decisive victory over the pro-merger side. The ambiguous stand on language taken by the Congress in the first assembly elections in 1963 was now replaced with the clear pro-Konkani view to suit the linguistic state principle and also to facilitate collaboration with the UGP that was formed with the twin principles of Konkani and Statehood. The UGP though identified with Catholics in general and led by Dr. Jack Sequeira, was the result of the initiative of Vasudev Sarmalkar and Narcinva Damodar Naik, both GSBs from Margao. The issue of merger being settled once for all, the immediate threat to the socio-economic interests was averted.
The post-Opinion Poll situation in Goa was marked by rethinking on the language stand by the ruling party members (*Sagar Diwali 1969*). Some observers state that the MGP leader and the Chief Minister Bandodkar had started admitting in private that his stand on language was counterproductive in the Poll. This could be certainly to the advantage of the Konkani leadership and some attempts to exhibit the assertion of Konkani before Goans by using the situation of uncertainty would be in line with the perceptions of Goan Konkani leadership. But this was not done as can be seen from a long silence in the organisations such as the Konkani *Parishad*.

This period is marked by the strengthening of the Hindu social base of Konkani work by attracting the Hindu youth from among the masses. Due to opening of educational institutions of higher liberal education in Goa, the mingling of youth from different sections of Hindu community became easier. While at the time of the Opinion Poll there were only two individuals from non-Brahmin castes in the Konkani circle, by 1970 many were roped in through literary activities and mainly by the local station of All India Radio, which had Konkani as its language. Margao-based Marathi daily *Rashtramat* which had

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50. The ninth *Parishad* was held in Bombay in 1967 to coincide with the silver jubilee of the first KBM (formed there in 1942) and the next one was held only in 1974 in Panaji. This was similar to the long silence in this regard between 1942 and 1949, when the nation was witnessing transition from colonial rule to independence. But in case of Konkani the period was crucial as the medium of Konkani was allowed in education and the movement had to extend support in educational efforts. But the success in the Opinion Poll, perhaps, brought a sense of complacency among Konkani activists.

51. The two degree colleges of Arts and Science were started by the two industrial houses of Chowgules and Dempo - in Margao and Panaji respectively - within two years of liberation.

52. This arrangement was due to earlier efforts of Bakibab Borkar and P.M. Lad, who had played significant role in bringing in Konkani in broadcasting. Lad was in the civil services of the central government and played a crucial role in his capacity as secretary in the concerned department. Borkar had worked with All India Radio in Bombay and Poona before he came down to Goa.
worked towards the success of the anti-merger group in the Poll was edited by Chandrakant Keni and encouraged new writers to write in Konkani.

The Konkani leadership comprising largely of GSBs chose to use the new force in Konkani for Devanagari, providing these sections increasing opportunities to create literature in that script. This would enable the leaders to reduce their reliance on the Catholics writing in the Roman script (who were the main force in terms of quantity throughout the movement till then). A new forum called Konkani Writers’ Conference (*Konkani Lekhak Sammelan*) was created in 1968 which had its second session in 1969. Prominent Catholic writers in the Roman script were involved in organising the event on the basis of their support in public to Devanagari, but the stress was on literature in Devanagari and the choice of these individuals was made after ensuring that they would be supporting the Nagari stand publicly. Involvement of Catholic youth in these events obviously declined and the representation to Catholics and Roman script became symbolic through certain positions to senior writers and Goan priests. Newly educated, socially conscious Hindu *Bahujan Samaj* youth participated in significant numbers as they were the new writers who came with the sensibilities and issues hitherto unknown and untouched by the GSB writers in Konkani. This new body also remained dormant for five years after the initial work.

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53. The first *Sammelan* in Margao had GSBs as main organisers and dignitaries. Fr. Moreno D’Souza (Panaji, 1969), Evagrio Jorge (Margao, 1975), Felicio Cardoso (Margao, 1979), Fr. Alvaro Renato Mendes (Canacona, 1981) headed the Reception Committees, Fr. Antonio Pereira (Mapusa, 1977) presided over the session.
Language in Education

Introduction of Konkani as a regional language in schools beyond the elementary stage was managed in mid-1960s during this phase. Books for supplementary reading had to be made available to students of Konkani. Grammar books, dictionaries and such other material suitable for school students was also lacking. The response to elementary education in Konkani reduced after the Opinion Poll, when the general choice rose in favour of English. At the same time, the majority of the people particularly among Catholics, availing of education in increasing numbers, started opting for Konkani as the third language under the scheme of Three Language Formula. Hindus started more and more secondary schools in English medium but not many offered Konkani as a subject. While Devanagari writings, largely of Hindu writers mainly the GSBs, found place in text books, those who patronised it belonged to the traditional users of the Roman script. They opted for the language as they had little choice in the matter. In order to popularise the language among students, some leniency was shown even in the evaluation, according to some teachers. The pass percentages in this language at the Board Public examinations substantiate their observation. The educational administrators' attitude towards the teaching of Konkani was casual and church authorities made arrangements to teach the language but very

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54 In most of the missionary schools Indian languages are taught as per the prescribed rules but are given minimal importance in comparison with English language and all other subjects taught in that language as a medium of instruction. In case of third language, the choice is between Marathi and Konkani in most of the institutions, though provision for instruction in French or Portuguese is made in very few, selected schools in major towns. Marathi has been labelled as the language of Maharashtra and offered generally by the Hindu students, leaving most of the Catholic students in mofussil area schools with Konkani as the only choice.
few could appreciate Devanagari. In the initial years some Hindu teachers had to be employed in church schools to teach the Indian languages and quite a few of them often complain that Konkani, Marathi and Hindi are generally ignored by the superiors and even teachers teaching these languages have secondary status in their eyes.

Church too adopted English in its functioning and for communication with the English educated members of the community. In order to satisfy the rising demand for English from the modern well-educated faithful, sermons came to be delivered in English. With this the use of communicative Konkani in school, church and community, in social and cultural communication declined drastically. The general feeling of inadequacy and inefficiency of the language within the upper classes among Goan Catholics now percolated to the lower rungs. Distancing from Konkani became a sign of prestige.

While the switch-over to English in education was finding favour with politicians and people in the two decades after the liberation, production of literature in Devanagari Konkani was gaining speed around the same time. The political control in Goa remained with the pro-Marathi MGP even after three periodical elections to the state assembly, and the pro-Konkani UGP developed fissures over the years, unable to capture power. GSB leadership in the UGP was therefore drawn into the major effort to present a show of strength for Konkani from all the states having Konkani speaking people, in the face of anti-Konkani stand of the Goa government. The case of recognition for Konkani presented by

55. The elites or Cristao Bamonn considered Conceano as Kriyadanchi Bhas i.e. servants' language and despised it. For them Portuguese served the purpose of communication within the family and also community. All their social exchange was done in Portuguese, during the Portuguese rule. Liberation replaced Portuguese with English.
the language bodies from Goa and Kerala was pending with the Sahitya Akademi and was threatened by the anti-Konkani stand of the local government as also the strong opposition expected from the Marathi language representatives in the Akademi. To overcome this problem, the Goan Konkani leadership invited the President of the Sahitya Akademi to inaugurate the tenth session of the Konkani Parishad, which was organised in the hall of The Institute Menezes Braganza in Panaji on 9th February, 1974, under the leadership of the UGP MLA of Margao, A. N. Naik, popularly called Babu Naik.

The Turning Point

The Panaji Parishad of 1975 is considered as a landmark event because on this occasion the GSB leadership in Kerala and Goa managed to bring the Catholic writers and activists of Konkani from Goa and Karnataka on the common platform to commit to single script for Konkani in presence of the Sahitya Akademi President Dr. Chatterji. The welcome address affirmed that all had agreed to the position of Devanagari as the natural script of Konkani (Naik, 1974). In his presidential address, K.K.Pai saw multi-literalism of Konkani as a hinderance in the unity of Konkani people and urging for adoption of Devanagari, underlined the following benefits of it:

- There will be unity in the language community,
- Pronunciation of words will be preserved,
- Learning the Vedic language Sanskrit, National language Hindi and the neighbouring languages Marathi and Gujarati will be easy,
- Other language speakers will find it easy to learn Konkani.
In his inaugural address Dr. Chatterji discussed the problems in the full development of Konkani, giving first place to the question of script. His view was that continuing with two scripts – ‘gradually increased use of Devanagari and continuation of the Roman’, but ‘restricting the use of Kannada and Malayalam’ - would help resolve the script issue. He, however, opined against any time frame, saying that it would amount to compulsion. The major suggestion was to translate Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagawata and other Puranas in Konkani as a means to ‘bring the sense of self- respect and strength among all the Konkani people, especially the Saraswats, who have preserved the Sanskrit literature and the Shastras for the past many centuries’ (Chatterji, 1974: italics mine). This view about Saraswat interest in and self-respect through Konkani finds credence in the observation of one of the active organisers of the Conference, that Dr. Chatterji wanted to make reference to the role of Saraswats in particular in the development of Konkani, which he was requested to avoid, keeping in mind the role of ‘others’ in the ‘consensus’ on script issue that was being aimed in the course of the event.

Dr. Chatterji expressed happiness over the agreement among the Konkani speakers on the use of Devanagari alone for writing Konkani. Mentioning the testimonial in Konkani pertaining to 1665 A.D. published in Van Rheede’s book *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus* of 1678, he said that Devanagari was in use as the script of Konkani for centuries. Speaking of the Goan Catholics, he said that they also felt that it was necessary to write Konkani in Devanagari script in order to

56. Mr. Pundalik Naik who was encouraged as a leading youth representative from the masses to take lead in the matters of organisation says that it was Mr. Ravindra Kelekar who sounded Dr. Chatterji about the possible fall out of such statement and requested him not to make such an open and direct reference to Saraswats alone.
become one with the rest of India. It was not necessary to remove the Roman
script outright, but in the interest of Catholics of Goa and of South Kanara
Konkani should be written in the two scripts. He had given this advice sometime
earlier when approached by the Konkani Script Council formed for the Catholics.
But in his view, the problem of script could be resolved by using the two scripts
for time being, before switching over to Devanagari, which was the script in
optimal use in India. Ideally, Indian languages should have a common Indo-
Roman script, and Devanagari should be employed for Konkani till the time such
a common script is accepted.

A delegation of around fifty writers, activists and journalists of
Konkani came from Mangalore and in the course of discussions committed to a
single script keeping in view the larger interests. They were given an impression
that it was the script that was a major hitch in the process of getting the Sahitya
Akademi recognition for Konkani and almost everyone concerned spoke of
allowing time for the transition to uniliteralism. Fr. Mark Valdar from this
delegation spoke in favour of Devanagari and it was accepted that as Konkani had
a place in education and government administration in Goa and Kerala, Karnataka
will also follow them (Interview – Mark Valdar). The next Parishad organised in
Mangalore in 1976 under the auspices of KBMK received tremendous response of
locals and the announcement of Sahitya Akademi recognition was made on the
concluding day of the Parishad. Also it was decided to give the Parishad a
permanent set-up with its bye-laws and a permanent executive. This meant that
the regional and religious groupings would gain significance in the formation of
the organisation and its policies.
While the major requirement for the Constitutional recognition was fulfilled through this standing as a modern Indian literary language acquired from the apex literary body, the contentious issue of script remained to be resolved and it showed itself in the regional, religious and caste formulations that operated in the later years. The period starting from the Sahitya Akademi recognition in 1975 to the present is marked by a number of actions and reactions on the part of these groups vis-à-vis the official policies and decisions. The politics of script is very much in operation, though certain strategies are seen as emerging to contain the situation or share the benefits. The last quarter of the twentieth century has made this politics more evident, even within the regions identified with Devanagari, as can be seen in the chapter that follows.