CHAPTER II: MAPPING THE KONKANI

LANGUAGE LANDSCAPE

LANGUAGE AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN POLITY

With the advent of the modern era, starting from the French Revolution, the form and functions of the nation-state have lent a prime position to language in politics. The very idea of ‘one religion-one language-one state’ placed language at the centre of the paradigm of the nation and its foundations – be it the concept of nationality or the philosophy of nationalism – made language one of its essential components (Hobsbawm, 1992: 37). The functioning of the state machinery involved making a choice of a language or languages for a variety of areas such as administration, judiciary, law-making, education, official communication etc. in different geographical regions and also for diverse populations within the nation-state.

The political units in modern Western Europe, each based on language, have made the position of language indispensable in any discussion on politics. Also one language having received preference and primacy in the affairs of the nation-state means that other languages are left out of the power fray. Since these excluded minority groups have language as their bond and since the dominant group uses its own language for the running of the state, the communication between the state and certain sections of people proves difficult, leading to protests and demands to learn and promote their respective languages. The issues

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1. In Hobsbawm’s view, possession of a written literary and administrative vernacular was one of the three criteria that allowed a people to be firmly classed as a nation.
of preferential treatment to particular languages, and their use in legislative, executive and judicial functions as also the initiative of the state in planning and development of the state language may face many objections from the other language groups. Even when certain protective measures are prescribed in favour of such deprived languages, their speakers may be apprehensive about such policies due to implementational hurdles (Singh, 1992: 30).

With language-nation-state phenomenon becoming common in Europe, the imagination of communities and nations based on language were facilitated by the advent of print capitalism (Anderson, 1983). There were also predictions of one world with universal language, followed by some unsuccessful attempts to create such language as a medium of global communication and control (Hobsbawm, 1992: 39). But with the dissolution of the empires, the theory of language-based nationality was challenged. Many of the erstwhile colonies tried to enter the world of nations but not with a single language as their criterion of nationhood. While the national governments had to decide on their respective national languages for use in formal official spheres of life, numerous linguistic communities within the political boundaries considered it appropriate to secure a better deal for their languages. In a bid to contain such upsurges, sometimes frequent language reforms were taken up by the official bodies, leading to the creation of varieties of national language used by different sections in different geographical regions within the state. Also as a part of nationalist movement language loyalties were promoted and these later formalised into sub-nationalities that had to be contained in the free nation. Linguistic units in the Indian federation emerged through this process of national identity formation (Brass, 1974).
Even though the provision of national and official language was aimed at bringing about unity and a sense of belonging among the citizens, the local languages of culturally strong and economically powerful sections of the society continued to be promoted as contestants and rivals in politics and culture. Identity politics hinged on language in a large number of cases. The issues of ethnicity and culture in fact could not be discussed without reference to language.

Modernisation and industrialisation also helped in a major way in the shaping of national consciousness, making nationalism a function of industrialism (Gellner, 1994: 186-187). In the case of India the linguistic consciousness in different regions accompanied the process of modernisation. Higher education in regional languages followed the establishment of Universities and introduction of language study on modern lines. Migration and urbanisation also gave an impetus to language loyalties in the urban settings.

Language As A Group Marker

Language is the most important marker of group identity, at the same time it works as a barrier against complete human fulfilment (Narang, 1995: 48) when it operates in the state setting. One’s language is a strong link to one’s group and also a boundary to separate one from others using another language. Existence of different language groups in a state implies competing group demands on the state. State has a responsibility to balance all such demands through the mechanism of its language policy.

The language policy of a state determines the status and identity of speakers of different languages. Allocation of Official Language status to a
specific language and its denial to others offers opportunities and advantages to
the users of the former in relation to the latter. The role allotted to a particular
language in government functioning as well as in other social and cultural aspects
such as education and communication determines the benefits enjoyable by and
available to the members of that language group (Khubchandani, 1988).

State administration in a particular language creates boundaries through
differential involvement and participation of speakers of different languages
within the state. While the general belief is that the speech community as a whole
benefits from such status to the language concerned, it is not entirely true because
the very nature of formal state functions results into further categorisation and
relative deprivation in terms of skills of literacy or their absence among the
speakers. Certain sections of the speech community use their language in cultural
life where the emphasis is on verbal and oral communication, relying on lexical
repertoire pertinent to the sphere of use (Khubchandani, 1991). Other sections
may build their cultural life on some other higher or esoteric language (not in
regular use within the community) as their tradition but stress the use of their
language for contemporary social communication. These sections use the
language in both oral and written forms. The state functions necessarily involve
written language and the latter sections have an advantage to that extent. They
advance in terms of participation in state affairs through the language they use in
writing. The sections using the language in a more regular, intimate environment
but not equipped with the adequate skills of literacy are deprived of this
opportunity of participation and communication. To that extent they are deprived
of their democratic right.
The sense of belonging together is given by the language to a community life which is often built up into a nationality. In a multi-lingual setting the effort is to designate a particular language as official, and thereby expect others to be in a subordinate role to it and to adopt the designated language in all matters pertaining to the state. Other language groups, depending on their economic base and organisational capabilities, decide on the role they envisage for their language in response to this official designation. Group assertion in the form of demands like safeguards to language, freedom to educate children in one’s own language or state support to preserve and promote its literature emerge in the public sphere as issues which are a product of the democratic dynamics of the political processes in the state.

Language And Power

Language represents a resource in terms of a variety of functions and activities in a modern state. Languages have been in use for record keeping, communication and legislation. In modern democratic terms, language acts as a medium of power in a centralising state with competing collectivities (Kaviraj, 1990). The role of language in the evolution of nationalism is widely recognised. In multilingual situations the power-embeddedness of language is revealed through the contests between languages to occupy the official status, state recognition and even claims for grant of language status. In India, one can see languages such as Avadhi, Braj, Maithili being relegated to the background as dialects of Hindi, emergence of which is of much later period (Agnihotri in Sandarbha, No. 13: 37). Centres of political power play a major role in
determining the state language and also the literary standard of the time. In case of Hindi we find that the shift of power centre from Kannauj through Brajadesha to Delhi is reflected in the change in language use from Apabhramsa followed by Braj to Khadi Boli or Hindi as literary standards (Rai, 2001). Also the growing trend seen in the last quarter of the twentieth century to prefer education in English as language of power at the cost of mother tongue or regional languages speaks of the role of language as a lever of power.

Economic potential of language is seen in the employment opportunities based on language skills or proficiency and the resultant incomes. The legal provision of requirements of specific language as the essential pre-requisite for certain categories of jobs also entails the same linkage. Language awards economic benefits through communication networks and entertainment industry in post-industrial society. But with the forces of globalisation the global language system seems to be emerging in which ‘quickly increasing number of speakers interact with each other in a dwindling number of languages, which are becoming homogeneous through the centrally imposed linguistic standards’ (de Swaan, 1990: 3). With more and more languages with smaller sizes of speakers being abandoned under market pressures, migration etc. the political content of language movements is restricted to certain privileges within the marginalised state.

INDIAN LANGUAGE DEBATE

India as a home of thousand tongues has seen the languages functioning in varying degrees in diverse spheres of life. Language issues gained significance in the colonial period and continued to dominate the political scene at national and
regional levels in independent India. Replacement of Persian with vernaculars in legal and revenue proceedings by an Act of 1837, under the British Rule, was a significant step in the empowerment of indigenous languages and the movement for reorganizing the provinces along the linguistic lines (Narang, 1995: 138). Throughout the 19th century the vernacular press played a crucial role in bringing people closer through their languages. At the same time linguistic minorities were at a disadvantage and protests were seen in different parts of the country (Chaklader, 1981: 19). In the 20th century, the Congress policy of using the vernaculars for nationalist mobilisation led to the demarcation of linguistic provinces as units of administration and co-ordination of the movement. In the course of the nationalist struggle the regional groups realised the power of local languages in uniting people and this linguistic potential later became a tool for political demands of regional autonomy. Congress-led nationalist movement was supplemented by the movement to propagate Hindi as a national cause in a bid to make it a National Language. In the course of nationalist mobilisation Congress had understood the problems of using language as the basis of creating administrative units; Dhar Commission (1948) appointed by the Constituent Assembly and the JVP committee (1948) appointed by the Congress to look into the issues had rejected the principle of linguistic states, but against these studied observations on the issue the Congress leaders were presented with demands for autonomy to linguistic regions. As they tried to seek time in order to settle the immediate and urgent issues confronting the nation, linguistic movements gathered momentum and compelled the government to act. The Linguistic Re-organisation of states, while trying to resolve the tangle, raised the hopes and
aspirations of those left out. Regional languages being allowed to function within the state boundaries, nation had to decide on the language for all-India use.

Issues of National and Official Language were discussed at length in the Constituent Assembly but left to be decided and resolved by the future. The question of the role of English in independent India was also crucial in relation to both national and regional governments. The continuance of English, or its replacement, in administration, education and communication would be decisive in terms of the objective of democratic functioning through the peoples’ languages. In this process, while certain languages became the state languages, some others inspite of having numerical strength and territorial contiguity were left out of this arrangement. Having no role in the state functioning for their language, the speakers of the latter mobilised language movements leading to demands for regional autonomy.

National And Official Language

With the imminent exit of the British colonial government the arrangements for self-rule were planned through the Constitution-making exercise. The democratic system of a multilingual nation had to be run in indigenous language to signify the spirit of independence. The choice of native language for this purpose was important. The National movement had projected Hindi as people’s language and suggested its elevation as a National language. In addition to this emotional aspect there was another and more important issue of which should be the Official Language in which the National government was to conduct its affairs. The Constituent Assembly in its debates attempted to address
this issue. But the very composition of the Assembly being ‘strikingly
undemocratic’ the choice of language was determined by the class interests of its
members (Bapuji, 1994: 58). Big industrialists who aspired for the large market
found English as a unifying link language whereas the newly emerging ruling
class of the Hindi-Urdu region proposed Hindustani to promote their regional
interests. As English could not be removed overnight from the administrative and
official scene, its replacement by Hindi (ignoring Urdu after the partition) over
the years was proposed, allowing 15 years for the change over, at the end of
which the final decision could be taken. The language policy incorporated in the
Constitution was referred to the Official Language Commission (OLC) for
making recommendations in regard to its implementation. The terms of reference
of the Commission being somewhat restricted (as stated by the Chairman of the
Commission) some ‘important basic issues’ were kept out of its purview. Choice
of Hindi as the Official Language by the speakers of all the languages of India
was taken for granted, which caused a responsible member like Dr. S.K. Chatterji
to comment adversely on this majority Report in the following words:

> 'The report evinces a subdued but desperate haste to bring in Hindi for the whole of India .... It will mean for non-Hindi peoples the starting of a progressive imposition of Hindi in most spheres of life. The report has been prepared on the assumption (on the basis of the present Constitution of course) that Hindi has been already voluntarily accepted by the whole of India, that non-Hindi people are as much eager for its use in most spheres of our all-India affairs as speakers of Hindi and that it will be something anti-national not to try to replace English in the entire administrative, legal and political frame of India' (OLC Report, 1956: 276-277).

Well before the end of the 15-year period allowed for the transition to
Hindi as the sole official language of India, the Union government tried to seek
Parliamentary consent to the arrangement of replacement of English by Hindi,
culminating in the passage of the Official Languages Act, 1963, which, while
bringing about a compromise on the issue, came close to satisfying most representatives of the Hindi and non-Hindi-speaking regions. But the provisions such as 'a parliamentary review committee with discretionary powers in recommending the retention or displacement of English' in ten years provoked widespread protests and sent the non-Hindi south and particularly the southern state of Tamil Nadu into flames. Massive student demonstrations, riots, and self-immolations over several months in late 1964 and early 1965 came in reaction to the directive from the centre to the states to 'report on the progress made in promoting the use of Hindi for official purposes'. This compelled the centre to forge a consensus under which the non-Hindi states were assured that Hindi would not be imposed against the wish of any one, and that English would be retained (Brass, 1999: 165-166). The implementation of the Three Language Formula was also resisted in different parts of the country. As a result the National and Official Language questions remained undecided.

**English And Regional Languages**

The states in India, which were linguistic administrative units after 1956, were expected to run their government affairs in the respective state languages and for the purpose of communication with the Centre or between themselves they could use either Hindi or English. Most of the states (excepting Meghalaya and Nagaland) passed the Official Language (hereafter OL) Acts to provide for the use of their respective regional languages in the Bills, Notifications and other administrative works within the states (Chaklader, 1981: 46). The recruitment policy of state governments was to adopt the principle of 'sons of the soil' to
tackle the problem of rising unemployment. This was made possible by insisting on the use of Official Language in the functioning of state administration. But the higher levels of administration were manned by the All India Services personnel coming largely from an English education background.

In the states, the question of the role of English in administration and education gained significance with increasing unemployment, growing demand for industrialisation and concentration of power at the centre through the planning process. There were voices from the past that demanded banishment of English to bring regional languages to prominence in the interest of grassroot democracy and the policies that spoke of promotion of the OLs of states; on the other hand rising economic aspirations and urge for social mobility among the educated masses prompted by the forces of urbanisation and industrialisation placed a premium on English particularly in education. Development plans envisaging sectoral shifts in economic activities of people made migration to towns and cities increasingly essential and desirable. Pedagogic principle of learning through the mother-tongue and regional language did not deter the aspirations of the emerging social classes. Regional languages started getting marginalised with a growing demand for English through the spread of higher education and industrial-commercial expansion. Regional languages were provided protection under the OL Acts in administration or ‘Three Language Formula’ in education but the economic forces and social pressures turned the tide in favour of English.

Language Movements

In the Indian situation language - together with caste and religion - has been the visible site of political contests and socio-cultural conflicts. Language
has been used in asserting group identity or confronting the political arrangements. Language movements have been organised for a number of purposes based on a plethora of language-related issues. These could be (i) the designation of a particular language as OL – and thereby finding political space for it, (ii) seeking for a language the position of vehicle of education either as a medium for schooling or at the level of higher education – so that by appropriating the cultural function it can participate in the modernisation process, (iii) the demands for establishing government bodies and associations for the promotion of specific language or languages, or seeking financial assistance from state government to the language bodies and associations formed by individuals and community - asking for a share in state resources, (iv) demanding the status of linguistic minority or inclusion of the language in the VIII schedule of the Indian Constitution so as to enjoy constitutional safeguards and concessions or privileges. Different language groups in India have used one or more of such demands and strategies to meet their aspirations.

Though the linguistic re-organisation of states is said to have resolved major linguistic problems, language movements have continued to appear with diverse demands and claims in the fifty years of the functioning of the Indian Republic. There have been demands on behalf of languages such as Kashmiri having place in the Constitution but no position of Official Language and of Maithili having long history, rich literature, but no constitutional recognition. Tribal language like Santali with an estimated six million speakers (Manorama yearbook 1999: 480) has been striving for its own political ground and Dogri has been crying for state patronage for its survival (Sharma in Indian Express, 24th
There are attempts to link religion, caste and other primordial loyalties to language in a bid to get the due attention in political framework (Brass, 1974). There were at least five languages waiting for the recognition from the central Sahitya Akademi since early 1980s\textsuperscript{2} (Rao, 1985: 63). While some of these languages have a large number of speakers (Manorama yearbook, 1979: 426)\textsuperscript{3} their movements have not experienced the success they have been searching for.

Konkani on the other hand has managed to rise from a ‘non-language’ to a ‘national language’\textsuperscript{4} within almost half a century. The phenomenon of the movement is unique because the language community is scattered and its history as a language beleagured. With less than 40% of the language speakers concentrated in a territory\textsuperscript{5}, the language was used to get a separate state in the scheme of linguistic states. The idea of including larger territory (occupied by the same language community living under neighbouring states as a linguistic minority) did not find favour with language elite or politicians in Goa.

\textsuperscript{2} Bhojpuri, Magahi, Khasi were waiting since early 1970s and Aavadhi and Ladakhi were added to this waiting list around 1980.

\textsuperscript{3} 1971 census figures in respect of Bhojpuri (143405654), Magahi (6638495) rank them much higher in terms of number of speakers compared to others like Konkani (1522684), Dogri (1298855), Nepali (1286824) and Manipuri (780871) recognised by the Akademi.

\textsuperscript{4} All the languages in the eighth schedule of the constitution are considered as national languages and find their place in official use in spheres of administration and official communication.

\textsuperscript{5} The 1981 census figures for Konkani speakers in their statewise distribution were: Goa – 600004, Maharashtra – 212214, Karnataka – 640738. Total speakers – 1584063. Only 37.88% of Konkani speakers lived in Goa whereas Karnataka had 40.45%.
Linguistic States

Formation of the first linguistic state in India was conceded to under immense pressure experienced by the nascent Indian republic from the Telugu speakers demanding separation from the Tamil dominated territory. The major reorganisation exercise in 1956 could not satisfy everyone concerned and the bifurcation of bilingual Bombay was effected in 1960. The next to follow was Punjab with its demand for Punjabi Suba leading to creation of Hindi speaking Haryana and the Union Territory of Chandigarh in 1966. The additions to the list of states in the next two decades were mainly with a view to ensure security by containing insurgency on the vulnerable natural land borders of India\(^7\). The addition of Goa in 1987, as the 25th state of the union was, however, on the basis of language, as can be seen from the passage of the OL Act as a precursor to the conferment of statehood.

In considering language as the major criterion for state formation the consolidation of language identity within the territory was the major factor. The

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6. In a proposal for the Vishal Gomantak (Large Goa) suggested during the decade following liberation there was a suggestion to include the following: Goa, three talukas of Karwar district (Haliyal, Supa, Karwar) from Karnataka, four talukas of Ratnagiri district (Kudal, Sawantwadi, Vengurla, Malwan) and Chandgad taluka in Kolhapur district in Maharashtra, two talukas in Belgaum district (Belgaum and Khanapur) with the estimated population of around twenty lacs, the minimum size for an autonomous state, as recommended by the Morarka Commission. But the GPCC President Purushottam Kakodkar and the UGP leadership were against such an idea.

7. After the formation of Punjab that resulted in the creation of Chandigarh as the Union territory and Haryana and Himachal Pradesh that became states as a fall out of the same process, all the additions were from the North cast ( Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh) and North (Sikkim).
claimant language in every case of states formed till 1966 had a majority of population occupying contiguous territory to be included in the proposed state. The benefits – emotional and constitutional – in each case were expected to accrue to a large majority of the language group occupying the specific geographical area. In case of Goa the statehood was to benefit a small section of the language community mainly because of multiple language identities formed in the name of Konkani over centuries in the coastal areas of the south under the influence of various cultural, economic and political factors.

EVOLUTION OF KONKANI IDENTITIES

The case of Konkani stands out from other Indian languages in certain ways. In many others, a common administrative and judicial system under the British (even in the princely states), coupled with the contiguous geographical territory, was responsible for the mobilisation and creation of consciousness among the language elites. In case of Konkan kshetra (Khubchandani, 1991: 4), such administrative unity or single political control was missing, as Konkani speakers had spread on the entire west coast of India, compelled to do so by political circumstances and economic compulsions. The common destination for a section of almost all such groups of emigrant Konkanis was the prime metropolitan city of Bombay (now Mumbai) which acted as the socio-economic crucible of the twentieth century. It provided opportunities for economic development and social mobilisation, the combination of which groomed internal leadership for the emigrant groups in different spheres of activity and enterprise.
All these worked towards the evolution of regional identities (as against a single or unified Konkani identity) and provided grounds for their assertion. In short, the factors that led to the emergence of these multiple Konkani identities are migration, metropolitan influence, caste as well as community as competitors and certain economic factors. Each of these is briefly discussed here.

Migration

This phenomenon has a history of a few centuries, even before the arrival of the Portuguese, in the case of Goans (Naik, 1938: 87). People from Goa had to migrate to other places as far back as the fourteenth century and the trend continued in the later centuries for a variety of reasons. Although the factor most commonly mentioned as responsible for migration of Goans is the Portuguese rule unleashing religious persecution and social restrictions in the 16th and the 17th century, there were other socio-cultural and economic reasons that caused Goans to migrate in the later centuries⁸. In absence of contiguous language area occupied by the speech community that could shape itself into a single language community, the emigrant groups of Konkani speakers under different language areas and controlled by different political arrangements developed diverse Konkani identities.

Migration from time to time has been known, since the distant past, to Goa, since it was known as a port of repute and a trading centre for a large hinterland (Naik, 1938: 70) beyond the political boundaries of its rulers. Since

⁸ The eighteenth century witnessed emigration of Goans from the Old Conquests and nineteenth century from major centres of Goa mainly in search of employment and education. In the earlier centuries, migrations took place due to epidemics.
ancient times the natural advantage of navigable seas and all season ports of Goa were utilised by the rulers from the hinterlands extending far beyond the ghats. The two Goas — Greater (*Voddlem*) and the Old (*Porne*) — were equally important at different times in history as the maritime centres and flourishing port towns as were the capitals of different dynasties. Trade and business carried out from these places was a major factor in the process of migration. This caused intermingling of tongues among polyglot floating populations, influencing the socio-cultural and linguistic life of the locals (Fernandes, 1989).

Emigration picked up in the wake of the colonial encounter even before the arrival of the Portuguese. Mention is found of those belonging to Goa having settled in the territories far south on the west coast much before the sixteenth century (Mallaya, 1992: preface). The port towns of Honnavar and Bhatkal were the main centres of Goan traders. The religious persecution under the Muslim rulers also led to such migration (Mallaya, 1992: preface). The major waves of migration are seen during the Portuguese period, the first of them being in the 16th and 17th century primarily to coastal Kanara and Kerala and to the upghats, either to avoid conversion or to get away from the pangs of the Inquisition. The second wave of migration was in the nineteenth century and it continued in the first half of the twentieth century. This wave was essentially of a socio-economic nature and its most recent phase is taking place even today in the post-colonial times when there has been large scale migration to the West Asia mainly for economic reasons.

Migration to the Portuguese and the British colonies in Africa in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries (Albuquerque, n.d.), and from there to the
Western countries after the political transformation of these colonies in the twentieth century, has made a great impact on the cultural self-image of Goans in terms of their search for roots and peep into the pleasant past\(^9\). Immigration to Goa is also a significant factor in this regard. As a development of the mid and late twentieth century, non-Goans' entry to and settlement in Goa is linked to the economic activities like mining, and to the expansion of administrative and commercial infrastructure in Goa. Immigration was facilitated by the state policy towards Konkani - conspicuous by its absence - or non-insistence on the use of local language. The role of non-Goans in the industrial workforce or government bureaucracy in the state has its impact on the language identity and policy related to education. With the growth of tourism in the Old Conquests, trade and employment involving non-Goans on large scale are on the rise. With this development, the question of language and identity is acquiring a different dimension.

In the process of emigration the factors of push and pull have worked at different times. In the sixteenth and the seventeenth century colonial compulsions placing cultural and social demands acted as the push factors, forcing the people from Goa to move out whereas the later century marked the period of pull from the metropolitan centre of Bombay which was more socio-economic in nature. The last phase of migration to the gulf in the second half of the twentieth century is an economic phenomenon and reflects on the language scenario in many ways.

\(^9\) There are queries from such Goans about Goa on internet and sometimes letters to the editor columns of the local dailies in English carry impressions, memories and comparisons with the present etc.
Spread of education in Goa resulted in unemployment of the educated, who left in search of employment. Being settled in Bombay for centuries, migration to the middle-east became a common feature among Goan Catholics there, which later gave a fillip to similar trends in Goa. These emigrants made their presence felt in language mobilisation through economic support to language activities and movements in favour of Konkani\textsuperscript{10} and also influenced the public opinion through their choices and preferences in education and cultural life, often in favour of English and going to the extent of even pleading for introducing Arabic in school education\textsuperscript{11}. The Role of Konkani individuals and groups of the middle-east in promotion of Konkani literature and arts as a part of cultural development is quite noteworthy. But their viewing of linguistic concerns in purely utilitarian terms and their preference of English education at the cost of Konkani is often seen as threat to the survival of Konkani\textsuperscript{12}. The dualism seen in this approach has much to do with the traditional large scale economic compulsions on the one hand and cultural anxieties in relation to the language community as a whole on the other. A large section of these migrants come from the lower castes and classes for whom the new found economic security is an opportunity to seek some social mobility. One of the most promising tools for this is the near universal language –

\textsuperscript{10} Writers, theatre groups and musical bands from Konkani centres such as Goa and Mangalore visited the Gulf countries either on their professional tour or to mobilise resources for language movement, certain major events or agitation. Goan writer Damodar Mauzo, different Tiatr groups and singers/artists have involved \textit{Kuwaiikare} in this way. In Mangalore, it is common to find the names of Gulfies among the credits for books publications or release of audio cassettes. The World Konkani Convention (1995) had regional Committees in six Gulf countries, from where sizable monetary support was received.

\textsuperscript{11} Sometime ago a letter to the editor of daily Gomantak Times in Goa mentioned that it would be advisable to provide facilities for teaching Arabic in Goan schools as that would help Goan youth to migrate to the Gulf countries for employment (Lok Adalat in Gomantak Times dtd. 1. 5. 2000). Not many speak of Konkani in education, though calls and appeals to Goans for serving the mother-tongue is a common feature in the writings of many emigrants among Catholic Goans.
English. It also provides them a sense of equality with the traditional upper strata that function as model for these less privileged. Their concern for Konkani is more emotional as that is one cultural area through which they can access the political ground in their country and also project their identity in their homeland. In this way these emigrants try to balance the economic and cultural pressures as individuals and as groups.

Among Konkani-speaking emigrants the Gaud Saraswat Brahmins (GSBs) have also played a major role in defining a Konkani identity. While the GSBs in Karnataka and Kerala engaged in business and trade have spoken forcefully for Konkani and its development, all their essential and important activities have been conducted in Kannada or English (in Karnataka) and in Malayalam (in Kerala). However, they mention Konkani as their language and heritage in every public and literary forum. Their community members in the United States have acquired the nomenclature of ‘Konkani’ to mean a particular caste group viz. the Gaud Saraswat Brahmins of the South Kanara in particular rather than as a regional or a linguistic community. But in case of Goan GSBs who live in the USA the collective identity is Goan rather than Konkani.

12. Eric Ozario of Mandd Sobhann mentions the trend of total neglect of Konkani on the part of many of those working in the Gulf countries, whose children back home are educated in English medium and made to avoid Konkani even at home. Gulf returnees too, he says, look down upon Konkani and prefer English.

13. Their quarterly newsletter ‘KHABBAR’ (news) is ‘North American Konkani Newsletter’ meaning the newsletter of and ‘for circulation to the Konkani community in North America’ and the regional Associations are named to sound Konkani in their abbreviations – MAKA (The Mid Atlantic Konkani Association), AMKA (American Midwest Konkani Association), NAKA (North America Konkani Association), TAKA (The Three River Area Konkani Association), AKA (American Konkani Association) are examples of such abbreviated names.

14. They have Goan Organization in America and Goan Association without any reference to Konkani. Same is true in case of Goan Catholics whose Goans Overseas Associations (GOA) in different countries give primacy to Goa than to Konkani, at least in their names.
In Goa the movement for Konkani is led and supported by the GSBs but their business interests and socio-cultural institutions invariably employ English or Marathi. Their major temples have been employing Marathi alone for internal communication till recently, but with the increasing contacts with their devotees in the southern states of Karnataka and Kerala and the latter's growing involvement in terms of financial support to these temples in their renovation plans/expansion projects, increasing use of English and Kannada is common. Temple records and accounts too are kept in English or Marathi in Goa, in Kannada in Karnataka and in Malayalam in Kerala. Some of the leading individuals among GSBs have taken up the cause of education but their institutions have not considered Konkani fit for the job and have never given any special place to Konkani in organised mainstream education\(^\text{15}\). No organised effort on a reasonable scale to initiate education or communication in Konkani is seen in any territory outside Goa occupied by Konkani speakers. Though GSBs have their educational, social, cultural organisations and associations in their places of domicile, they have remained secluded from the larger language community in respect of their cultural and ritual life which factor has helped in sustaining their own speech.

\(^{15}\) *Mathagramastha Hindu Sabha* in Margao was headed by late A.N.Naik (Babu), ex-MLA of the pro-Konkani United Goans party for over two decades during the heydays of the Konkani movement in Goa, but there was never any proposal or attempt to start instructions in Konkani in their Damodar Vidyalaya High School. This was confirmed by the Ex-Head Master of the school, Shri. R. V. Jogalekar. Babu Naik's uncle had introduced Konkani in his school for girls (Adarsha Vanita Vidyalaya, Margao) in early 1940s, but there are no records available except a letter from Shennai Goembab congratulating the management of the school for their decision. After liberation, though there were some established city schools under the control of the GSBs, Konkani did not find a place in them immediately. The school that took up the cause of Konkani in the early years of liberation was *Shiksha Sadan* at Priol near Ponda, because of the initiative from Kelekar family there.
Konkani speaking people have migrated to distant lands within India and also outside for over five centuries. Their living in different language communities and adopting their local/ regional languages for education, commerce and trade, communication have helped them maintain cordial relations with natives. As a result of this they have often restricted the use of their own language to home and kinship group. In their new settings they had to learn local languages through their respective scripts. In their cultural memory Konkani was not a written language but a speech. For their social communication in these adopted homelands they used Konkani by applying the scripts they had learnt to write it. Consequently Konkani came to be written in different scripts. Local languages also lent their vocabulary and some structural elements to Konkani. As a result Konkani as a language in use in different territories acquired distinct forms, which became the flags of Konkani identity as seen by the Konkani speakers there. These different images of Konkani are the consequence of constant migration of its speakers but their realisation and consolidation have been shaped largely by the metropolis like Bombay in more than one sense. A small section among GSBs in the volatile phase of search for identity (in the first quarter of the twentieth century) worked towards promotion of Konkani in Devanagari script as a mark of their own community. This roughly coincides with the period of insistence on Hindi and Devanagari as a part of Indian nationalist struggle. There is nothing to suggest that this part of nationalist struggle inspired the campaign for Konkani in Devanagari, nor is there any evidence to the effect that the pioneer of the modern literary movement of Konkani i.e., Shennai Goembab was associated with any events or movement within the independence
struggle. The intra-caste contest for power and prestige among Brahmins was largely responsible for the promotion of the Konkani cause (Priolkar, 1967: 53). The scene of action was certainly the metropolis of Bombay (now Mumbai) where the caste elites from western India mingled over the centuries.

**Role of the Metropolis**

The evolution of linguistic identities among the various language groups in the last two centuries all over the subcontinent have to be attributed to the British policies on education and administration. In case of Konkani, however, the British factor figured in a different sense though the homeland of Konkani i.e. Goa was outside the British political possessions. As Konkani speakers scattered all over the western coast of India were under different political dispensations, their cultural communication and interaction was minimal. Nevertheless, their migration to the metropolis of Bombay compensated for this handicap but not strictly in the same manner for each group. Bombay, with its potential for economic growth, provided opportunities for social mobility and economic development of regional groups and communities. This association with the metropolis, with its accompanying sense of alienation contributed to the growth of linguistic sentiments in the first half of the twentieth century and provided a favourable ground for their consolidation through community organisation, caste mobilisation and literary expression. The metropolitan locale acted as the site of debate between Marathi and Konkani for over three decades in the first half of the 20th century. The *Samyukta Maharashtra* Movement in 1950s and the Maharashtra – Mysore border dispute of 1960s had their field of action in the
metropolis which was also a breeding ground for the interplay of Konkani identities.

With the political and administrative reorganisation by the British in the western parts of the south, there was migration of Konkani speakers to Bombay in a small measure in the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the twentieth century there were pockets of regional groups of Konkani speakers based on castes and communities getting established in the metropolis. With modern industrial economy offering the opportunities to more and more people, these groups found access to different occupations and professions. But their traditional caste or community consciousness was reflected in their colonies. In this dichotomy of primordial versus modern identities, their Konkani language remained neglected and to a large extent there was shift to Marathi inside homes as well as outside. In case of Chitrapur Saraswat community from South Kanara, for example, many families that settled in Bombay became Marathi speakers and produced writers in Marathi. Goan Saraswats, also those from Devadasi/ Kalavant caste and others used Marathi in their homes. The facilities of education, communication through the activity of organised printing and publishing, crystallisation of regional and linguistic sentiments among people, aroused through the political awareness caused by the British policies in the first decade of the twentieth century, resulted in the formation of caste and community associations for economic welfare. Konkani speaking groups from North Kanara, South Kanara, Goa and North Konkan occupied contiguous tracts of the city area.
They established their cultural and social associations in the first quarter of the twentieth century and conducted their cultural life and social activities to maintain solidarity in the world of regional community groups. In many of these community programmes their regional dialect was used for communication and expression. These groups had their community journals and bulletins such as Kanara Saraswat of Saraswat Brahmins and Mangalorian Review of Kanara catholics for sharing information on the happenings and developments within the community in the metropolis as well as in the native towns and villages back home. These groups had little or no communication between themselves and had their sense of autonomy and independence as caste or community groups well preserved. In the evergrowing metropolis these regional caste and community groups acquired education and professional avenues, also seeking social mobility and economic well being in terms of class formation.

Linguistic consciousness about Konkani among Konkani speakers from different geographical regions evolved in different degrees. In case of Mangalorean Christians there was a sense of religious minority that grew with time. Goan Christians who had migrated in large numbers over a century had found better opportunities under the British and had their religious authorities to organise them. In their attempt to maintain the distinct identity based on territory, caste as well as class they had village wise clubs or ‘Kudds’ (literally meaning

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16. The Goa Hindu Association (est. 1919) of Goan Hindus dominated by Saraswats, Kanara Saraswat Association (est. 1911) of the Chitrapur Saraswats, Mangalorian Catholic Association (est. 1901) of the South Kanara Catholics were some of these. Kalavant Samuha was formed by the members of the Devadasi caste in 1913. Goans from other castes residing in Bombay such as Bhandaris and Vaishyas also had their associations.
rooms), which functioned as community dwellings as well as socio-economic and cultural institutions. Their cultural activities and literary projects were restricted to their community and had very little connection with the movement of Konkani carried on by the upper caste Hindu Goans based in Bombay inspired by Shennai Goembab. With the rigid regimentation through the church they had virtually no common ground for cultural interaction with Konkani speaking Hindus even from Goa. Their self-image as ‘Portuguese’ and not ‘Portuguese Indians’ (Priolkar, 1967 - p.66) is adequate to illustrate their complete subjection to the church-state combine’s formulation of their identity as a community, though there were a few exceptions in some intellectuals and nationalists among them. The two regional groups of Christians – from Goa and Mangalore – had their separate publications in the two scripts – Roman and Kannada respectively – without any mutual exchange or sharing of literary or other concerns. Their cultural forms too varied according to regions: while Goan Catholics enjoyed ‘tiatr’ that linked them to the western theatre, Mangalore Christians supported and enjoyed ‘nattak’ on the Indian lines. For Goans lyrics were rendered as ‘cantaram’ on the western lines while Mangaloreans took to ones based on Hindi film songs. Chitrapur Saraswats who had their own community activities and Karwar group that carried on some literary programmes among themselves did not have any connection with each other or with the Catholics. The Karwar group, predominantly Saraswats, by and large, had accepted their Marathi identity as they had lived under the Bombay state and had their education in Marathi. Many of them wrote in Marathi but few

17. In the census in British India Goan Christians refused to be called ‘Anglo-Indians’ and demanded that they be marked as ‘Portuguese’.
18. T.B. Cunha, Evagrio Jorge, Lambert Mascarenhas and others among Goan Catholics got involved in the nationalist movement and their ideas were shaped outside the ‘Portuguese’ framework.
among them wrote also in Konkani. Chitrapur Saraswats used Konkani as a community language but with Marathi education and social communication many of them contributed to literary and creative efforts in that language.

Even after the moves of Konkani speakers for independent literature these multiple images continued within their restricted circles and in spite of the important cultural and language events such as the Konkani Parishad (1939) designed to create a united and single image of the Konkani community nothing much changed in this regard. However, being a part of the cosmopolitan mosaic, Konkani speakers in their caste/community based regional formations nurtured linguistic and cultural bonds. As languages gained prominence in determination of political arrangements after independence, linguistic consciousness among Konkani speakers was on the rise and before the formation of Maharashtra state, there was a demand for Konkan state.

Leadership

While the language movement shaped in the metropolis was in the name of Konkani its social and cultural context was more regional and sectional. This is clearly visible in the leadership that spearheaded the Konkani cause. The widely accepted and promoted claim of leadership of Konkani points to Vaman Raghunath Varde Valavalikar (1877–1946) alias Shennai Goembab, a Goan Saraswat as the father of the modern Konkani literature, though the role of Madhav Manjunath Shanbhag (1873 -1950) from North Kanara as a crusader of

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19. The reputed publishing house in Marathi – Popular Prakashan - is a Chitrapur Saraswat venture. Mr. Bharkal is a publisher and many others in the community have earned name as writers in Marathi.
the language is equally significant. The very name Varde Valavalikar took for the cause of Konkani reflects the casteist and regional basis of his interpretation of the issue. While he spoke of Konkani as a language in its own right his stress was on delinking it from Marathi and rejecting the common view of Konkani as a dialect of Marathi. He attempted to segregate the Konkan from Maharashtra labelling the latter as ‘Marathan’ (to denote its small size in contrast to Maharashtra which implied Great Country [Maha meaning great and Rashtra a country]) in order to prove the separate identity of Konkan - the region of Konkani - that would facilitate the delinking of the two speeches. In his discussion on language his focus was on caste as against the language community as a whole, as he considered Marathi as the language of the Chitpavans and Karhadas, the two major Brahmin sects in Maharashtra (Valavalikar, 1945: 265). His attempt to play on the Dravida – Gaud distinction, to show the local Brahmins in both Konkan and Maharashtra as inferior to the Gaud Saraswats and claiming the Brahmin status in every respect for his community (Valavalikar, 1945: 140-265) are reflective of his sectarian motives. In his leadership of the Konkani movement he did not give any importance to the social realities of regional dialects and while producing texts of scholarly disposition and research value in a particular variety he did not discuss the ways and means to bring the users of numerous styles and dialects to adopt the standard that he was inventing. His

20. George Moraes had written a small booklet around 1957 to propagate the idea of Konkan state, and the proposed state was to include the entire region inhabited by Konkani speakers. Kaka Kalelkar had also suggested a ‘Sagari Prant’ (Coastal State) though without specific reference to language.

21. The essay titled ‘Shennai’, which forms the main part of this collection of essays in Marathi, deals with the different Brahmin sub-castes in Maharashtra and Konkan, in order to prove the superiority of the GSBs among all. The other essay on G.N. Madgaonkar is also full of references about his caste and fixing of the title ‘Shanai’ to his name. The writer’s disapproval of the dress adopted by Madgaonkar or that of the latter’s writing in Marathi speak of the strong caste sense.
discussion of Konkani grammar repeatedly asserts the aspects of difference from Marathi (Valavalikar, 1949).

While the leadership of Konkani among Goans in Bombay was apparently rooted in intra-caste competition, the one among Mangaloreans was more of a caste as well as community issue. The Christian immigrants from Goa are seen in the forefront of this movement. The earliest expression of Konkani linguistic identity is seen in the periodical ‘Konkani Dirvem’, publication of which started in 1912\(^{22}\). Mangalore Christians who were also called as Canara Catholics were in a relatively weaker position in economic terms and had to survive in the Tulu speaking territory surrounded by converts to Christian faith from the local speech community and also, more importantly, amongst the Konkani speaking upper caste Gaud Saraswat Brahmins who were economically better off. Inspiration to work for Konkani came to Canara Catholics from Fr. Maffei and was assisted through the facility of printing that was made available by the Jesuits\(^{23}\).

Going by the issues discussed in ‘Dirvem’ one is led to believe that the Goan immigrants among Christians were trying to address their identity issues and problems specifically with regard to their religious and community concerns through their writings. Much of the writing was religious or moral in content and addressed to the Catholics. With little interaction between Konkani speaking Hindus and Catholics the literary expressions of Christians were reflective of their community concerns and written in their dialect. Even the English journal like

\(^{22}\) Though the title ‘Konkani Dirvem’ suggests to bring out the wealth of Konkani (Dirvem in Mangalore Konkani means wealth), the banner line of the magazine announces ‘Tijjum Raj Ankam Yevi’ (‘May your Kingdom be Ours’), which is a clearly religious expression. Most of the writings in Dirvem were mainly for the Canara Catholics.

\(^{23}\) Jesuits established the first printing press in Mangalore in 1882, in which some religious material was printed in the early years. ‘Dirvem’ was printed in the same Kodialbail Press.
Mangalorean Review did not look beyond the community matters. The primary objective of the Christians was to build up the political strength through finding common grounds with the ‘other sister communities – the Goanese and East Indians’ in Bombay (Mangalorean Review, Christmas number, 1924) so that their voice could be heard. Same thing was true for Mangalore as can be seen from the themes discussed in the issues of ‘Dirvem’24. The religious and communal concern at the base of journalistic and publishing activities can be seen in the developments such as the closure of Dirvem after the Kodialbail Press of the Jesuits refused to print it, and the starting of ‘Raknno’ as a journal of the Diocese to force the demise of the former25. Also many of the periodicals that followed were promoted by the local clergy, some with patently religious names (Moraes , 1995)26.

The Konkani speaking Hindu elite in Mangalore had their own journal ‘Saraswat’ in Konkani edited by V.S.Kudva during the first half of the twentieth century (stopped publication in 1946), but not much is known about its literary or social contribution to the language community as a whole. ‘Panchakadayi’ started in 1967 also continues on similar lines with its limited objective and reach, reflecting the Saraswat life (Moraes , 1995).

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24. There were concerns regarding the properties of Catholics going to non-Catholics (16th July 1923), 16th March 1923 issue carried a Notice for a voters’ meeting in an attempt to avoid division of Christian votes in the district in Legislative Council elections.

25. Dirvem issues discussed education for converts as an activity helping conversion (16th July 1923), need to improve the economic conditions of converts to keep the Protestants and Hindu revivalists away (2nd May 1923), reference to the issue of preventing Catholics from seeking admission to non-denominational educational institutions (2nd August 1923). But the church wanted to have the control over the medium for which Raknno was started, forcing the 25 year old Dirvem to close down. Earlier some other journal had to face the wrath of the church authorities who forbid through an order banning the reading of it by the faithfuls.

26. Jejurai, Catolic Yuwak, Sani Ritachi Vardi, Amcho Sandesh, Durballyancho Bhav - are some of them.
Economic factors

Evolution of identity in its social setting needs economic support. As a social group a language community needs both means and media for the communication of its ideas as well as for the organisation of its people. Konkani speaking upper caste people in their different territorial settings had developed economically over the first half of the twentieth century. In Goa Hindu elites had benefitted by the advantages of the Portuguese Republic in terms of education and social consolidation. In the middle of the twentieth century Goa had a small beginning in mining activity which brought some landholding and business families to this industry. Prior to this, through the first half of the twentieth century, the emigration of educated and semi-educated Goans to the metropolis of Bombay, other towns such as Karachi and also to other countries of Africa, either to work for the colonial governments or for trade and business, created a need to communicate within the community. Emergence of educated middle class within the Konkani speaking people scattered over the vast areas led to the growth of print media for the purpose. With an increasing number of Konkani speaking people finding employment in business and industry their regional consciousness grew in such centres. Their relative affluence coupled with the cultural memory of their past enhanced this sense of belonging. With socio-cultural organisations active in different pockets around the independence era, the mobilisation of people for the cause of language became easier. The medium of the radio (though initially opened to Konkani in mid-1940s for countering the Portuguese propaganda regarding the Goan political situation through news broadcasts for overseas Goans) was used to develop the sentiment of one language by
demanding a Konkani language section for broadcasts of other programmes. Emigrants' concern for the motherland was expressed through public expression in journals and literature published from a number of places in and outside India.

All through the first half of the twentieth century, large scale migration and change in traditional occupational structure led to emergence of new socio-economic groups. They adopted language as the symbol of their unity. Colonial government's attitude towards languages and the official mechanism of census also helped in this process. Larger participation of Goan individuals in nationalist movement and first hand experience of regional linguistic machinations through the Congress politics also led to formulation of linguistic consciousness 27. The Konkani language movement in liberated Goa was organised and led by these Congressmen with sympathy and support of the national leadership of Pandit Nehru.

MULTIPLE LANGUAGE DYNAMICS ALONG THE KONKAN

Having looked at the factors that contributed to the evolution of a variety of Konkani identities over the first half of the twentieth century, it will be appropriate to now consider the areas in terms of their specific socio-political linkages based on the cultural and communal aspects. The four sites that can be

27. Many of those who espoused the cause of Konkani were the active Congress workers. Adv. M M. Shanbhag and many of his colleagues at the Parishad were local Congressmen. The arrangements at the First Parishad at Karwar (1939) were made on the lines of the Congress sessions, says nonagenarian Shri. K.N.Rao, an assistant of the late Adv. Shanbhag. In the middle of the 1940s Acharya Kaka Kalelkar had major influence on some of the Congress activists from Goa who, as disciples of Shennai Goembab, later took up the work of Konkani in a broader perspective, going beyond literary sphere. The oft repeated claim of some Konkani veterans to be the 'Writers' and 'Fighters' at the same time has its roots in this consciousness.
identified clearly as the field of Konkani language politics are Bombay, Cochin, Mangalore and Goa. Each of these have their specific historical and socio-political dynamics with regard to Konkani community.

**Bombay As A Cosmopolitan Setting**

Bombay developed into a mega-city only in the twentieth century. The old reference to it as 'islands of no much consequence' was proved false with the enterprise and policy of the colonial rulers. Different social and linguistic groups that settled in Bombay had started searching for social space in the urban set-up. This was possible only through associations based on caste, community, region and language. Certain regional groups derived advantage out of proximity to the city, and also through their traditional occupations and professions, skills etc. It was necessary for each group to organise its members into a body with a definite purpose and objectives to shape civil and political life. The concerns to ensure representation to one's group in the decision making bodies and institutions assumed priority when the policy to allow representation to all in the civic body was formed. Mangaloren Christians called as Canara Catholics had started realising the importance of their unity in terms of seats in Municipal Corporation. North Kanara Saraswats who had become a part of Bombay since the last quarter of the nineteenth century had got into academic activities and found the economic upliftment of community members more significant. Establishment of cooperatives for this purpose was given priority. Language remained at the family

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28. Mangalorean Review –Christmas number 1924, for example, carried an article – Our Community in Bombay (A plea for greater unity).
29. The two banks they established in the first quarter of the twentieth century were the North Kanara GSB Co-Op. Bank and the Shyamrao Vithal Co-Op. Bank.
and community level but was not considered as a tool of social recognition and cultural competition. As regards the Goan Saraswats their attempt to fit into the metropolitan scheme of things was obstructed by Chitpavan Brahmins who had secured their position in the socio-political life of the metropolis since nineteenth century (Johnson, 1970:104-105)\(^{30}\). At the same time the post-Tilak Congress had started considering the vernaculars for mobilisation and those in Goa looked at Marathi as the vehicle of nationalist ideology. Konkani speakers as a single linguistic group did not exist because their territorial distribution over the centuries, communal separation within the territories and caste divisions across the region - reflected in their local colonies - combined to prevent meaningful socio-cultural interaction. Added to this were perceptual variations in terms of regional and national identities across these sections. Hence ‘Goanese’ from Goa, ‘Konkani’ from North Konkan and ‘Mangaloreans’ from South Kanara, all under the Roman Catholic Church had their religious and social performances and events in Konkani but as distinct Konkani groups. Similar was the story with the Goan and Kanara Saraswats, whose family deities were common but beyond that their visions of political future did not match. Moreover their internal differences were carried along and maintained till the first quarter of the twentieth century inspite of attempts like the conferences in the first decade of the century in different centers of their domicile\(^{31}\). The traditional Konkan kshetra

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\(^{30}\) Chitpavans were on the forefront in education, journalism, politics and administration under the British and had labelled GSBs as lower in status in the Brahmin hierarchy.

\(^{31}\) The First and Second Gaud Saraswat Sommelan were held at Mangalore followed by the one in Belgaum called as ‘Samyukta Gaud Saraswat Brahman Parishad’, all in the first decade of the twentieth century, the last being an attempt to remove the divisions among the Saraswat Brahmins. But this was not acceptable to a section of the community and two parallel conferences were held in Goa in 1910, popularly known as ‘Eki’ (for unity) and ‘Beki’ (for duality).
(Khubchandani, 1998: 148) was dismantled over the centuries of diverse colonial experience and imperial occupation by different regimes. With this complex of sectional viewpoints the Konkani identity that was shaped within the larger cosmopolitan climate was that of the political imagination for a Konkan state\(^3\). The role of Acharya Kaka Kalelkar, a close aide of Mahatma Gandhi, in the Bombay Pradesh Congress in the early forties of the twentieth century was also significant in this regard. Kalelkar was a Gandhian close to Nehru in the formative years of the Union and his understanding of the Konkani case was of great help in the later impressions of Nehru and decisions of his government on Konkani. Through their work in the Congress Konkani writers like Bakibab Borkar, Laxmanrao Sardesai and others were able to gain support of a prominent ideologue and opinion maker in Kalelkar who stood by the Konkani protagonists through their fight for their language and their land.

The metropolis in its development as an industrial and commercial conglomerate was also responsible for developing the sense of alienation among the new settlers. In their interaction with others and competition for opportunities it was natural to look for cultural solidarities as tools of identity. The relevance and significance of administrative means like decennial census in the definition of identity was understood in the metropolitan settings. Role of such identity was more obvious in the organisational politics that Congress was trying to nurture especially through the reorganisation of its provinces on the basis of language (Majumdar, 1988).

\(^3\) Shennai Goembab presented the idea of creating a state of ‘Konkanne’, little before independence, to bring back the past glory whereas George Moraes spoke about it in a larger Bombay state in the height of the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement. Madhav Manjunath Shanbhag in Karwar had propagated the same idea.
Mangalore: Communal Divide

In Karnataka the Konkani speaking population is spread mainly in the coastal belt stretching from Sadashivgad in the north to Mangalore in the south. Some hinterland areas like Sirsi, Haliyal, Supa in the Western Ghats are also Konkani majority areas. The North Kanara coast was in the bilingual Bombay state before its bifurcation into Maharashtra and Gujarat in 1960, whereas South Kanara was under Madras. The major concentration of Konkani speakers in South Kanara is in and around Mangalore, predominantly a Tulu speaking region. Among the Konkani speakers the two numerically strong sections are the descendants of Goan emigrants who left their homeland during the sixteenth and seventeenth century to avoid Portuguese persecution. There are mentions of earlier emigrations in a small measure for trade or employment. But the major part of the population refers to their migration as mentioned in the famous song—*Riyor Saibin Goem Soddun Aili Bollara*—which the Mangalorean catholics claim as their history.

In Mangalore, the Konkani issue was essentially a ‘double minority’ issue from a christianity perspective. Almost the entire literature that is worth noting is produced by Catholics since they consider Konkani as their heritage. In their creative literature, journalism, theatre and music, Konkani has precedence over Kannada or any other language, in addition to its use in day to day religious activities. Though they started publishing in Konkani much later (the first

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33. The song speaks of the catastrophe in which Our Lady of Rosary had to leave Goan shores without any preparations or belongings. She had to leave her place with untied hair and with hardships she reached the shores of Mangalore, says the song.
periodical ‘Konkani Dirvem’ was started in 1912, followed by ‘Raknno’ which is doing well since 1938, and a number of others come out from different places; the first novel was published in 1950), they have a sizable readership and a regular demand for their publications. In education, St. Aloysius College has always taken the lead to conduct programmes in Konkani and support its study and research. Their activities in cultural field – theatre and music in particular – have been mainly in Konkani. But all their writing was and largely is still in Kannada script and in their dialect which is different from the one used by Hindus in general and Konkani speaking Hindu elites i.e., Gaud Saraswat Brahmins in particular.

Gaud Saraswat Brahmins or GSBs consider Konkani as their mother-tongue and home language. Their contribution to its development in their literary as well as cultural life is very little or negligible as compared to that among Christians. As GSBs are mostly in trade and business their communication requirements are fulfilled by Kannada and Tulu. As they have their temples and Maths as the centres of community activities round the year, these socio-religious institutions ought to be working for preservation of language as an integral part of culture. But it is common to see their writing in Kannada language and script and use of Kannada language in their day to day life. In terms of academic contribution to Konkani, very little is seen as compared to their service to Kannada. Rashtrakavi (National Poet) Manjeshwar Govind Pai (1883-1963) is known as a Kannada literary luminary and his justification of his pioneering work in Kannada is: ‘my mother had no milk to feed me, so I had to get it from my
aunt. Many others among Konkani Brahmins have served Kannada and taken pride in it. They do consider Konkani as their heritage, but little is seen being done from their side for preserving and promoting the same. In fact their view is more practical and they find it wise to look at Konkani as their rightful advantage in constitutitonal terms. Some attempts to conduct classes and examinations in Konkani are on but in a very small measure, that too in a single institution in Mangalore. They have a Konkani Minority Language Educational Institutions Association (KMLEIA) which has little to show as its planned work for Konkani. Though they have their own educational institutions Konkani is not taught in them even as an optional language. They do not find it of any practical value to attempt its introduction.

Other castes among Konkani speakers such as Vaishyas and Daivadnyas are scattered and have limited numerical strength, which reflects in their meagre presence on the language scene. The working caste among Konkani speakers is Kudubi or Kunnbis who are agricultural labourers or small cultivators living in relatively remote areas. They have retained Konkani at home but their education in Kannada, professional and business demands and other factors of modernisation have affected the speech variety. In their most traditional religious rituals and social customs, celebrations and festivals, the influence of local

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34. Late Manjeshwar Govind Pai was honoured as Rashtrakavi for his poetry in Kannada and in his justification for neglect of his mother-tongue Konkani he is said to have stated as above. This was mentioned in the course of discussion in the National Seminar on 'Konkani Language, Culture and Ethnicity' organised at Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Sanshidhan Kendra, Udupi by Sahitya Akademi and T.M.A.Pai Foundation in November 1999.

35. Manipal group of institutions and the deemed university of MAHE (Manipal Academy of Health and Education) are Linguistic Minority Institutions under the provisions for Linguistic Minorities as per the Articles 29 and 30 of the Indian Constitution.

36. Dr. Kasturi Mohan Pai, who has been the Secretary of the Association and also of the Shreenivas Pathshala considers it impractical in view of the lack of enthusiasm on the part of parents and teachers alike.
Kannada language, culture and religious worship forms is gradually increasing in the recent past (Rao, 1998)\(^37\). Other castes like Siddis, Kharvis are Konkani speakers but have little influence on the larger language dynamics of the Konkani language in coastal Karnataka.

The work for the preservation and promotion of Konkani language among the GSBs in and around Mangalore is said to have been carried on through the temples mainly during the festivals where they present dramas in Konkani. They do not have much to show in the form of published literature in Konkani even in Kannada script. In addition to ‘Panchakadaiyi’ as a community journal, they have different associations for women, children, youth all using Konkani in their cultural presentations but turning to Kannada or English for official and public functions.

The Pai business family of Manipal (Karnataka) has a prominent role in the local language dynamics. With a strong network of educational institutions imparting general and professional training the internationally acclaimed Manipal Group has Konkani as one of its priorities for which it has established a Research Centre at Udupi. Under the auspices of T.M.A. Pai Foundation they hold drama competition, give literary awards and honour prominent Konkani personalities every year. The Foundation is a recognised Linguistic Minority institution and has managed to get most of the professional education institutions under its control to enjoy benefits of the constitutional protection available to minorities. As regards the use of Konkani in education not a single institution has any provision in that

\(^{37}\) They have retained some Konkani songs of the ‘Shigmo’ festival celebrated after the harvest season, but there are a number of Kannada interpolations in them. Some songs are in Kannada language.
regard in spite of having a reasonably large percentage of Konkani speaking students on their rolls. Pais have a stake in the Konkani Bhasha Mandal at Mangalore and any Konkani activity in the region is supported logistically or financially through the Foundation. But the introduction of Konkani in education or Konkani publication has not occurred for the obvious reason of a lack of demand. The project on Konkani Lexicon was proposed to be taken up under the Research Centre for which the initial meetings were held but the project was ‘hijacked’ by St. Aloysius College and has remained incomplete for the reasons never disclosed. Research Centre of T.M.A. Pai Foundation decided to go for Tulu Lexicon instead and completed it.

The Foundation organizes a number of programmes in the name of Konkani of which many are in the nature of ‘popular’ events and only a few are academic or cultural activities. According to some seniors in the know of things the Foundation was an arrangement to stall the attempt of take-over by the government of some of the ‘paying’ and ‘profit-making’ institutions of the Manipal Group. The admission policy in many of the institutions for higher education in professional courses at Manipal has inbuilt preference for foreign students who bring foreign exchange; the reservation quota for linguistic minority students is filled in a subjective manner by using the specific interpretation of ‘Konkani’, say some, who have definite knowledge of the procedure. Equating

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38. In the colleges at Udupi and Kundapura, for instance, the percentages of students coming from Konkani speakers are in the range of 20-40%. But the Principals of the two institutions do not see any possibility of starting the instruction in Konkani language as an optional language.

39. Fr. Mark Valdar had prepared the proposal on behalf of KBMK but when it was to be finalised he was not allowed to attend the meetings or participate in the process. Then the same proposal was presented by St. Aloysius College and work on the Lexicon was started under the leadership of Dr. Willie D’Silva. But it continued for hardly a year or two after which Dr. D’Silva was not available for the work. The collected material is still with the Institute of Konkani. No one is in a position to say anything clearly on the issue.
‘Konkanism’ with ‘Saraswatism’ (based on Kuladevatas or family deities and Kulaswami or Matha links) is a part of this strategy.

In the light of this it can be said that the evolution of Konkani identity in Mangalore is almost entirely the result of Christian view of themselves. Hindus inspite of being identified as ‘Konkane’ as distinct from other local Hindus, have used language as a marker of that identity but their attitude towards it is guided by limitations to its practical utility in their broader sphere of socio-economic activities and commercial interests. They have managed to adapt to the local language and use it for their creative expression, social communication and economic interaction. Their stand on dialect, script, and literature has been guided by Goan Hindu leaders in the language movement but has not influenced the larger regional opinion on these issues because of their effective absence on this front. At the same time the influential section of Mangalore Hindus (Pai Group of Manipal) have used the language as a tool to safeguard economic and commercial interests through the constitutional provisions but found larger fundamental work unviable. On the whole the Konkani language identity in Mangalore is influenced by dynamics of communities in contest for power and prestige that a language represents in a competitive democracy.

According to K.K.Pai the two are linked and the Kerala case that was used to gain legal protection to the Manipal institutions (from the proposed government take-over) enforces this thinking. Mr. Pai mentioned cases of GSB youth from the families of industrialists in Goa getting married to non-Saraswats as decline of Konkanism.
Cochin – The Caste As Language

Kerala has a few pockets of Konkani speaking population, mainly in the coastal districts of Ernakulam, Kozikode, Kottayam, Alleppy. The major concentrations, however, are in the Ernakulam district with the influential section of GSBs engaged in trade and business having prominence among them. While there is a common claim of being migrants from Goa during the Portuguese rule, there are evidences to show their presence there even earlier (Mallaya, 1992). The common pattern of intra-Brahmin rivalry and conflicting claims to status vis-à-vis local Brahmins is recorded in the historical accounts (Menon, 1932: 53). The rigid caste functioning within the language community is still prevalent and the entire social life is understood in the context of math membership. In Kerala, the language and caste overlap in both public/social and administrative/official parlance.

There are other Konkani speaking castes such as Vaishyas (or Vanias, traditionally a business community but with little economic soundness in current times), Daivadnyas (goldsmiths), Devadasis (claiming, of late, to be non-Brahmin Saraswats), Kunnbis. The last among these claim to have a population of around five lac in Kerala. But their claim to Konkani is under a cloud because of a number of socio-political intricacies comprising of the functions and policies of democratic welfare state in relation to positive discrimination. As the depressed and the deprived, this caste group has been striving for the benefits available to backward castes and communities. They have received the rights of land ownership for the housing sites occupied and also the land cultivated by them. But for being included under the backward category, they have to prove their domicile
as locals, for which they need Malayalam as their language. As the term Konkani in Kerala stands for the upper caste Gaud Saraswat Brahmins, Kunnbis fear that their claim of being Konkani speakers may deprive them of the constitutional safeguards and politico-economic advantages offered by the state policy. Language dynamics in Kerala is reflective of diverse perceptions of language-culture-state relationships.

The royal documents and courts refer to GSBs as ‘Conkanies’ and their community ‘Conkanastha Mahajanum’ (Cochin Diwan’s letter of 1858 in *Konkani Vikas*, August 1979) and providing them securities and privileges of different kinds. Their trading and diplomatic skills were recognised in the past and European colonial powers found these Konkanis useful in many ways. Contribution of ‘Konkanis’ to commerce and economy of the region finds mention in the historical records (Mallaya, 1994: 7-12). As influential elites among Konkani speakers, maintaining the rigid caste barriers intact till today, GSBs in Kerala have managed to appropriate the power, prestige and benefits of the language to themselves using their intellect, diplomacy and resources.

The Konkani language movement in Kerala, with this background, has been obviously equated with more closed and guarded caste affair, at least till the last quarter of the twentieth century. The large number of Kunnbis claiming their roots in Goa through the deity Mallikarjuna have found the language identity a liability because of this upper caste link approved by law\(^ {41} \). As a practical political strategy they have shifted to Malayalam as their mother-tongue for the census

\(^ {41} \) The GSBs having local status as ‘Konkani’ or ‘Konkanastha’, in their bid to resist the state interference in the cultural life through temple administration, managed to get their community ‘the linguistic minority’ status through a court verdict and have tried to keep other Konkani-speaking castes out of the spoils of this safeguard in the name of language.
purpose. Also in their emancipatory efforts under the Left-sponsored reforms, they have chosen to distance themselves from the elite Konkanis, losing contact with the language. This latter process is hastened by the education in regional language made compulsory by the state government. Other castes have also been subjected to the same predicament, which makes them Konkani and un-Konkani simultaneously.

Using the Constitutional safeguards GSBs have got themselves declared as a Linguistic Minority on the basis of Konkani and the pioneer language body in the state - Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha (henceforth Sabha)- is an individual-centred, caste-based institution enjoying mandatory positions in advisory committees of the state government, seeking government benefits for its activities, representing on behalf of the language community and claiming the credit for all the statutory attainments for Konkani (Mallaya, 1993, 17-19). This has affected the extension of benefits to other Kerala Konkani speakers as a whole and prevented their large scale whole hearted participation in the promotion of the language. Some efforts of limited reach - e.g. Kerala Konkani Academy - to involve all sections of Konkani speakers are continued by others (mainly due to their resentment on being sidelined within the Sabha), though the leadership has remained invariably with the GSBs. Some have seen this as a clash of individuals in the Sabha but going by the views of the ‘father figure’ of the

42 Vaishyas, for example, look for opportunities under constitutional provisions, to be considered as vanians rather than vaishyas, a higher caste nomenclature, which deprives them of any scope to contest with the Tamil varnans for some state concessions. Leaders of the Devadasi community, in their efforts to wipe out the humiliating denomination of ‘concubines’ children’ (chedyinche) fought a case to get themselves declared as ‘non-Brahmin Saraswats’. The two instances speak of the primary concerns they have in relation to their economic and social conditions, and also of their hostility to the GSBs who claim Konkani as their monopoly. In the strong Malayalam linguistic milieu, they find little practical worth, social prestige or economic sense in preserving Konkani as their cultural possession.
Konkani movement in Kerala - Shri. N. Purushothama Mallaya - and also the observations of a number of Konkani activists it can safely be said that the conflict of caste interests is intrinsic to Kerala Konkani.

**Goa – The Caste-Community Combine**

Goa is identified with Konkani, firstly historically as a part of the ‘authentic’ Konkan, secondly as the homeland of the Konkani-speaking people who are spread mainly on the western coast of south India or elsewhere in the country and the world, and thirdly, as the smallest state in the federation which was conferred statehood on the basis of the Konkani language. This last political decision has to do with the dynamics that determined the destiny of the territory and its people in the federal arrangement. The evolution of Konkani identity is rooted in Goan soil in the sense that: a) The multiple dynamics seen in the locales discussed hereabove have their origin in Goa in its socio-historical setting, and b) Goa presents a combination of all these in their multiple facets.

Konkani in Goa has been at the centre of controversy for a long time. There have been arguments over its origin, nature, and status. There have arisen questions regarding its constituency and its geographical terrain. Doubts have been raised regarding its cultural sanctity and national character. Problems have been posed regarding its economic sustainability and sociological complexity. Most significant of all, it has been subjected to the test and scrutiny of political identity.

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43. The Academy was headed by Prof. R. K. Rao, followed by Shri. P.G.Kamath, in the past and currently by Shri. K.R.Vasant Mani, all G.S.B.s.
At the inauguration of the liberation of Goa, the question of the very survival of Goa was paramount and it was pinned on the stand of Konkani as a language, culture, identity. This was the spill over of the debate in the nineteenth century that questioned the Brahmin status of Gaud Saraswat Brahmins. The defence of their Brahminic status was presented by Gunjikar and Sharma (Wagle, 1970), whose discussions looked at Gomantaki as a language. The work of Gunjikar was primarily 'to describe the Marathi-speaking Brahmin castes in Bombay' in order to 'respond to the official interest in the matters of Indian castes' (Preface of 'Saraswati Mandal'). To him, not only Gomantaki was close to Marathi because the latter evolved from the same source but it also followed Marathi closely on account of contiguity. Some time earlier, the Portuguese Chief Secretary in Goa had asked 'the Goan Youth to restore their mother-tongue (Konkani) to its rightful place' (Priolkar, 1958: 220). In the second quarter of the twentieth century Shennai Goembab had created a strong defence against the attempted 'Goa's Marathi identity' thesis through his creative and research-based literary works.

The issue had been debated in the first half of the twentieth century mainly in the Marathi press in Goa and Bombay as has been discussed earlier. The real problem of asserting this identity was posed by the liberation. On the one hand there was a section of Goan Hindu population that was illiterate, economically backward and politically inexperienced. Its views were guided by the upper caste landed gentry and religious institutions. The lower caste Catholic population was

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44 In his Saraswati Mandal published in 1884 Gunjikar discussed Gomantaki as the language of Saraswats, considered it as a form of ancient Saraswati and found it quite similar to the ancient Balabhasha. He mentioned that it was found in its pure form in the speech of Goan Saraswats. (p. 58)
under the control of the Church and had been alienated from anything Indian or Hindu in their public formal life though they had retained many traits of their ancestors’ culture prior to their christianisation. The general consensus among Hindus was that they belonged to Maharashtra through Marathi. This was against the Church policy of holding Goans or ‘Portuguese Indians’ together, saving them from the undesirable influence of Marathi which taught anti-Portuguese ideas. A section of the Catholic elite in Goa stood for the Portuguese Goa and looked down upon every thing Indian. Their interests lay in getting some form of autonomy while a few among them were led to believe that the Portuguese would clinch back the power from India. Many among the Hindu elites were aware of the changes taking place in Maharashtra and were not willing to lose their traditional hold on society. It was a coalition of Catholics as a whole together with a section of upper caste Hindus that combined to ‘save’ Goa from the ‘merger’ that the Goan Hindu masses, oriented by Hindu intellectuals, had planned for.

In addition to this community aspect, there also developed a caste contest in liberated Goa. The Hindu masses in Goa looked at the local Saraswats as usurpers, exploiters and opportunists (Chopadekar in Dudh Sagar, Diwali 1968: 85). The awareness and mobilisation of depressed sections like Devadasis or Kalavants had taken place since the beginning of the twentieth century and Saraswats as a community had looked at this development with apprehension (Radhakrishna, 1999: 24), though some of its members had supported the progressive movement. The attempts of Devadasis to be freed from the bad practices involving prostitution in the name of bonded service to temples and temple authorities had been foiled by the Saraswats and their Swami (Painginkar,
1969). Some educated and progressive minded individuals in the Devadasi community had managed to get the Portuguese government to ban the practices like Shens by law in 1930 (Painginkar, 1969) and their efforts to educate the community members - especially the female members - had made certain orthodox sections among the Saraswats uncomfortable. In case of Vaishyas the age-old rivalry in economic field and also that in relation to socio-cultural issues like the temple control (Verekar, 1937 quoted in Gomantak 3.10.1982) served as the basis of their opinion of the Saraswats. All these castes looked at Saraswats as usurpers, exploiters and opportunists. As liberation provided opportunity for political mobilisation all these forces had to unite under the banner of Bahujan Samaj - the term hitherto unknown to Goans. It was the Saraswat domination of the Pradesh Congress which culminated in the rejection of the electoral candidature claim of Dayanand Bandodkar, a true Congressman, that led to the consolidation of this combine in the new name of Maharashtrian import i.e. Bahujan Samaj (meaning the mass community). This Bahujan Samaj was to become the backbone of the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party for the next decade and a half under the charismatic leadership of the same man - Dayanand Bandodkar or Bhau to masses - a member of the Devadasi community. The caste axis of Goan politics was partly a product of the changed face of Congress politics in Maharashtra during the course of the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement of the 1950's. Later developments in Goa strengthened the anti-Saraswat campaign

45 Narayan Dattatray Verekar of Calangute published a booklet ‘Os Chardos sao Shudros?’ in reply to an article by Panduronga S. Pissurlencar on the Hindu members of Chardo caste in which there were observations regarding the hegemony of Saraswats in control of Hindu temples. N. Shivdas published a summary of the preface to this booklet in his article published in the midst of Nakul Gurav dispute.
especially through the Marathi Press reaction to the Pradesh Congress decisions and actions.

**Inter-Language Scenario**

Along with the social basis of language dynamics there was the issue of relationship of Konkani with other regional languages, which accounted for the mobilisation of the Konkani forces. The Konkani speaking people had settled in the four language areas viz. Marathi in the north Konkan and Bombay, Kannada in North Kanara, Tulu in South Kanara and Malayalam in Kerala.

The common view of these different language groups was that Konkani was not a language because it had no script of its own and had no literature. In the Konkan region under Bombay state there was spread of Marathi as language of education and culture, official and social communication and the local varieties were considered as dialects, sometimes in the common denomination of Konkani after the region of Konkan. In fact, the process of Marathiisation of Konkani areas was noted with a sense of appreciation in the Marathi literary circles (Komarpant, 1992). Enrichment of Marathi literature by the Konkani speaking writers was viewed as natural and commendable.

Kannada was accepted by the Konkani speakers who settled in the erstwhile Mysore state. But Konkani caste groups were described as ‘Konkane’ and did not have the social recognition on par with their local counterparts. The

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46. Many writers from Konkan were recognised as Marathi literateurs on the basis of their creative output. C.T. Khanolkar, Madhu Mangesh Karnik, Jayawant Dalvi belonged to Konkan and Subhash Bhende, Mahadev Shastri Joshi, B. D. Sadoskar and many other Goans identified with Marathi. In liberated Goa most of the Konkani writers had begun their writing in Marathi and later shifted to Konkani. B. B. Borkar and Lakshmanrao Sardesai had got recognition in Marathi literary world but were later sidelined because of their close association with Konkani.
Kannada Brahmins did not consider the Konkani Brahmins as equals and pointed to their diet as a mark of their lower and impure status (Interview – Prof. Tantri, K.N.Rao). Their language was looked down upon. As Konkani speakers got educated in Kannada and some of them started writing in that language they had to get themselves Kannada sounding names to avoid neglect, hatred and despise. With little written literature in Konkani from the Hindu side, the language was never given any importance by the Kannada speakers among Hindus. With large scale migration of Konkani speaking Hindus of North Kanara to the metropolis of Bombay over a century (1860s to 1960s), the vigorous campaign by Karnataka government for implementation of Kannada as Official Language after 1970s and expansion of Kannada medium in place of Marathi for school education in the disputed areas since 1980s, Konkani was pushed out of use.

Tulu land was occupied by the Konkani speakers on their migration from Goa and the upper caste Hindus, especially GSBs took to trade while the Catholics were mostly agriculturists. During the British rule the latter found government employment and were also given large tracts of land that remained unclaimed after the British war against Tipu which claimed thousands of lives (Interview – Dr. K.Mohan Pai). The trading Konkani Brahmins had major interests in the market and they used Tulu in their business. Catholics, as a religious minority, on the other hand, kept Konkani in use in religion and worship, while opening educational institutions for English and Kannada education. There was little consciousness about their language among Tulu speakers and there were

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47 K.N.Rao who has written in Kannada and Konkani said that his original name Narasinha Kamath did not find favour with the editors of Kannada periodicals and the same writings were published when sent in the name of K. N. Rao, because of the familiar Kannada surname Rao.
no efforts to create literature in Tulu till very recently (Interview – Eric Ozario). Konkani as a socio-cultural medium in public sphere remained restricted to Catholics since GSBs claimed it as their language but did not work specifically for it. Their major activities went on in Kannada or Tulu. Some prominent GSB Konkani speakers patronised Tulu when their efforts to develop Konkani language were stalled by the Catholic church authorities in a bid to corner the credit for the historic work of a lexicon for Konkani (Interview – Eric Ozario, see footnote 39).

Relationship between Malayalam and Konkani is not quite clear, because Konkani language community is quite small in the Malayalam area and general impression about Konkani is that of a speech without script and literature. The Konkani language community there being rigidly caste-ridden, its image is not very positive and with little literature of prestige produced locally there is not much interaction between literary and creative areas of the two. The sense of inferiority among the small Konkani language community is reinforced by the linguistic fanaticism of Malayalam. Konkani speakers have contributed to Malayalam language and literature in the past; in the strong literary and cultural environment of Malayalam, Konkani remains low-key also due to its inherent social deficiencies.

In the entire Konkan kshetra, the four language areas of Marathi, Kannada, Tulu and Malayalam contained a number of pockets occupied by the Konkani speakers whose search for identity through language remained a distant dream till the liberation of Goa in December 1961. With little knowledge about Goa especially in the southern areas on the coast, Konkani speakers’ sense of
community was shaped by the local variants of caste and culture. It was only after the Goa liberation that the contest for the identity came into the open in the form of political process in the course of integration of the territory in the Indian Union.

GOA - KONKANI LANGUAGE MOVEMENT

The process of mobilisation for Konkani was strengthened in the metropolitan settings of Bombay mainly under the leadership of Goan intellectuals\. Through their addresses and deliberations or resolutions in the Konkani Parishad they demanded the place for Konkani within the Goan administration and education (Jaag, Aug.1993). It was also said that, with liberation, Konkani would find its rightful place. Involvement of Goan youth in literary activities and their association with the liberation struggle prepared the ground for the movement that was later seen in Goa.

Liberation of Goa raised the issue of its political and administrative future in the Indian Union. Many among the nationalists, being of the opinion that Goa belonged to Maharashtra, expected immediate integration. But the Goans who descended from Bombay soon after liberation had the experience of cosmopolitan contestation for identity and exposure to the movement of 'Samyukta Maharashtra' for Marathi state. The sense of anxiety and uncertainty among Goan Catholics (especially the clergy and the elites among them), which followed the 'shocking' 'annexation by conquest' led to their political vulnerability, which prepared the ground for a movement for a separate Goa. The changing face of

\[\text{After Shennai Gocmbab, the work was carried further by Bakibab Borkar, Ravindra Kelekar, Manohar Rai SarDessai, Vaman Sardessai. Prof. Mariano Saldanha contributed through his research, George Moraes was another academician actively involved with the work through his Konkan Institute of Arts and Science.}\]
Congress politics in the neighbouring Maharashtra was also instrumental in shaping the movement. As a result of all these factors, the Konkani language movement had its beginnings in Goa. The language movement in Goa was conducted broadly in four phases:

(i) Autonomy and the Opinion Poll – 1962 – 1967,

(ii) Education and Literary Status – 1967 – 1975,

(iii) Official Language Status and statehood – 1985 – 1987, and


**Autonomy and the Opinion Poll**

At the time of liberation the ideas about the political future of Goa were diverse. They were based on religious, socio-cultural and economic aspects of Goan public life. Catholics by and large were uncertain about the prospects in the new democratic set up with certain advantages to Hindu majority. The linking of Goa and Maharashtra on the basis of language was viewed with concern by those who believed in the separate identity of Goa. The Congress politics in Maharashtra had thrown up the leadership from the non-Brahmin sections and Goa’s merger would bring up similar situation depriving the traditional political elites among Goan Hindus of their position. Also the land reforms proposed in that state were a matter of worry for the Goan 'Bhatkar' section. The assurances in the past from the Prime Minister Pandit Nehru of 'an autonomous administrative existence' (Cruz, 1974: 274) were a ray of hope for those who feared being swept away by the sheer numbers in the event of merger with Maharashtra. The Socialist-led National Congress Goa under the leadership of
Peter Alvares was for immediate merger which the upper caste Goan leadership in the Congress found undesirable. All these factors led to the Movement that ensured separate political identity of Goa.

The earliest attempt to demand autonomy and statehood for Goa came in the political conference (the first in liberated Goa) at Margao in early 1962 presided over by the nationalist Dr. Antonio Furtado. The issues like small size, lack of experience, non-viability were raised by the mergerists (Karmali in Shankar, 1988: 29). The conference was partly successful in creating consciousness about the need for autonomy. But the future developments like the Marathi Sahitya Sammelan and Konkani Parishad held in the same year brought the issue of language to centrestage. In the next five years language occupied an important position in the debates on the political status of Goa. With the first Marathi daily (Daily Gomantak started by the industrial family of Chowgules) siding with Marathi and merger of Goa with Maharashtra, the Konkani side felt the need to counter the propaganda and started daily ‘Rashtraimat’ in September 1963 for three main objectives – (i) statehood for Goa, (ii) opposition to merger with Maharashtra and (iii) independent language status for Konkani language of Goa. The financing of this venture was done by the two local Saraswat mine owners Timblo, Salgaonkar and a Gujarati co-businessman Shantilal Khushaldas.

On political front the caste equations were fundamental to the process of party formation and the two regional parties reflected the clear caste-language combine. MGP had the support of the local business caste of Vaishyas and all other non-Brahmin castes bracketed under the Bahujan Samaj with their traditional loyalty to Marathi whereas the UGP was supported by Goan Catholics
and Hindu Saraswats with their commitment to Konkani. The first three years after the liberation under the elected MGP government were full of political mobilisation by the UGP on the issues related to administrative and political status of the territory, including the language issue. This was supplemented by the pressure building tactics of the Saraswat-led Congress through agitations and campaigns in the name of development, autonomy and culture. These together culminated in the Congress decision of holding an ‘Opinion Poll’ in Goa. The 1967 Poll removed the immediate threat of merger.

In the course of this political battle language gained significance. Konkani Bhasha Mandal formed in 1962 promoted primary education in Konkani by supporting the existing schools and starting one of its own in Margao. The response to these schools was seen rising during the years preceding the Opinion Poll. Between 1963 and 1965, the enrolment in Konkani medium primary schools increased from 2161 to 5551 (Satoskar, 1970), which was less than 3 % and 7 % respectively of the total student population in Goa at that stage in the two years. There were also attempts to introduce Konkani as a third language in the secondary schools.

The major thrust of this phase was the creation of political opinion favouring Konkani as the regional identity encompassing communities. The local Congress leadership comprising mainly of Saraswats provided the essential arguments for demanding statehood and stalling every attempt of merger. With Congress government and leadership in Maharashtra awaiting merger, the High Command was under pressure to settle the issue. It was Pandit Nehru’s idea of ‘individuality and personality of Goa’ that helped the Goan leaders to demand
‘Opinion Poll’ on the issue after Nehru’s demise. The real threat was the presence of Y. B. Chavan who occupied a responsible position at the centre. To overcome the uncertainty and to ward off the danger of ‘dissolution’ of Goa into Maharashtra the Opinion Poll was accepted. The issues of merger and Marathi were propagated on the one side in a tension-filled campaign by the politicians, journalists, writers and cultural artists from both Maharashtra and Goa, whereas on the other side, the Konkani side, the campaign depended on the local Catholic theatre form of Tiatr and the support of the Congress ruling at the centre. The choice being restricted to merger with Maharashtra or the maintenance of Union Territory status, the educated voters were influenced by presenting the comparative picture in terms of pecuniary benefits, administrative advantages and political status. Economic benefits in the form of better payscales and political advantages in terms of local decision making were presented as the gifts of the status quo. These were highlighted to convince the immigrant working population (especially teachers hailing from outside Goa whose influence in the areas having illiterate, politically inexperienced population was quite significant) to oppose merger. Locals with the newfound freedom were roped in to side with the anti-mergerists through the interpretation of merger as cultural colonialism. The language and culture figured prominently in this neck to neck contest that mergerists had already considered as a guaranteed win. But with economics and politics weighing more than history and culture, the opinion swung in favour of the status quo.
Educational And Literary Status

The use of Konkani as a household language, as a medium of social communication including public speech was acceptable to those who believed that Marathi was the language of Goa. The distinction between the spoken and the written was used to deny the language status to Konkani, which, for them, was a dialect of Marathi. The controversy over the language–dialect issue was academically addressed by the work of S.M.Katre but the political debate continued as Marathi has been in use in religious and administrative spheres in addition to education. Konkani forces having managed to keep merger at bay, had to think of making the language a literary vehicle. It was admitted that the language had very limited number of books and most of them were for religious use of the Catholics in their daily worship. There were exercises in compiling bibliography and anthology to project the strength of Konkani, which showed that the number of Konkani books in Roman and Kannada scripts were larger than those in Devanagari (Kelekar, 1960) which was always mentioned as the natural script of Konkani. In Goa Konkani had a Roman script tradition of literary output starting from the last decade of the nineteenth century but the protagonists of ‘modern’ Konkani spoke of Devanagari and wanted to develop literature in that script. The ‘emergence of new Goa from the old one’ was to be penned through this script.

49. His ‘Formation of Konkani’ (1946) is considered as an authoritative linguistic treatise in the language debate though later works e.g. the one of Prabhudesai (in early 1960s) under the guidance of A.K.Priolkar call Konkani a dialect.
50. In his writings in the short-lived quarterly ‘Novell Goen’ published from Bombay in 1937, Shennai Gaembab had spoken about the ‘New Goa’ that was to reflect the ‘Old (Ancient and glorious) Goa’ he had depicted in his research writings on the issues of language and migration in the earlier decade.
Use of daily *Rashtramat* to encourage the newly educated non-Brahmin sections of Goans to write in Konkani marks this phase of language movement in Goa. The Marathi language Daily, after its role in the Opinion Poll worked to attract the youth towards Konkani. Its annual short story competition has brought into Konkani at least three top-ranking Konkani literateurs of today. Another medium of greater reach was the Panaji station of All India Radio. The influence of the poets Bakibab Borkar and Nagesh Karmali is acknowledged by everyone locally involved in the movement. These two instruments of creative expression have contributed immensely to this phase of literary consolidation in the Konkani movement.

All the efforts of the Konkani movement leaders were directed towards constitutional status to the language as can be seen from the demands and resolutions in the successive Parishads after 1962. The *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* in Goa was now functioning as the representative body as most of the active Goan workers of Konkani had returned to Goa from Bombay, after liberation. The Mandal kept on trying to convince the government about the need to introduce Konkani in education but nothing changed. The enrolment in primary schools in Konkani medium had fallen (from 5551 in 64-65 to 3256 in 68-69) in the years following the Opinion Poll (Satoskar, 1970: ). MGP rule continued uninterrupted but the mergerists had started protesting against Bandodkar’s leadership (Fernandes, 1997: 39-45) and masses had sensed the need to opt for English in

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51 Mr. Pundalik Narayan Naik, the ex-Vice President and now the President of Goa Konkani Akademi, Mr. Mahabaleshwar Sail and Mr. Damodar Mauzo, the President of *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* (2000-2002) began with Marathi writing and were brought into Konkani mainly through their association with daily *Rashtramat*. Most of those who were active on the Konkani scene in Goa in the last three decades of the twentieth century have started their literary apprenticeship through *Rashtramat*, especially its weekly Konkani supplement *Somar*. 
education (*Sagar*, Diwali 1969). In this situation scope for Konkani in education ought to be limited to that of an optional language in the Three language Formula. In another development related to language situation at national level, the position of English was confirmed by the Amendment thereby reducing the potential monopoly of Hindi as the Official Language. This was seen as a positive development by the Catholics for whom Konkani in Devanagari was offered as a means to facilitate their adoption of Hindi.

The Parishad as a voice of all Konkani people also became weak after the success of Konkani in the Opinion Poll. The ninth Parishad was held in Bombay in 1967 to coincide with the silver jubilee celebrations of the Bhasha Mandal there. The period between the Opinion Poll and the tenth Parishad in Goa was seven years during which the literary side was sought to be organised through *Lekhak Sammelan* (writers’ conference) started in Margao in 1968. It was limited to Goans initially and most of the delegates who attended were those writing in Devanagari. The second Sammelan was held in Panaji in 1969. While the language activities through Parishad and Mandal continued, the stress on Devanagari in education paved way for the popularisation of the Hindu elite variety of Konkani for use by those learning Konkani. On the other hand, the consistent creative efforts in the Roman script produced a large volume of literature, which was losing its readership due to ever growing number of English educated youth preferring English. In the early years of liberation language politics was clearly visible but within that were laid the roots of the politics of script that surfaced little later.
Once the danger of merger with Maharashtra was averted Konkani forces remained dormant in the fields like education. Only few periodicals were started but could not survive for long and even during the short life spans they remained at the level of amateur efforts rather than professional ones. With scanty readership their publication was always non-sustainable. A few of them were annual numbers on the lines of Diwali special issues of Marathi periodicals. Language in education received attention of the political leaders especially those from the Bahujan Samaj, who found no opportunities for their children through Marathi (*Sagar* Diwali 969). English medium schools were opened in increasing numbers and Konkani was sought to be introduced as one of the languages to be studied as an option for Marathi.

The important step taken by the Konkani protagonists in this period was the attempt to seek recognition to their language from the central Sahitya Akademi as a modern Indian literary language. As a part of that exercise regular professional publishing activity was started in the form of *Jaag Prakashan* in Priol in 1970 (Jorge, 1975). The issue of the Sahitya Akademi recognition became very sensitive with opposition from the Marathi language representatives in the Akademi and hostile approach of the local rulers. However, the recognition was managed through the good offices of Dr. Sunitikumar Chatterji (1890-1977) who was the President of the Akademi. As there was no Konkani speaking person in the bodies of the Akademi there was no one to convince the members about the Konkani case. The Akademi General Council consisted of the academics, language representatives, state nominees whose support could be secured through some contact persons. The then Congress MP from Goa Mr. Purushottam
Kakodkar was instrumental in arranging for the support. Mr. Ravindra Kelekar and Mr. Uday Bhembre were the main lobbyists and Dr. Chatterji himself was totally for the recognition and had almost promised it in his address to the tenth Konkani Parishad in Panaji in 1974 (Inaugural Address, 1974)\textsuperscript{52}. In the first attempt in 1974 the recognition was postponed and in the next annual meeting of the General Council in 1975 the request for recognition was considered favorably mainly due to the forceful plea of the Akademi President Dr. Chatterji (Bapat in Daily \textit{Navashakti} (Marathi) dtd. 14.09.1975 ) based on his sympathetic view (Rao, 1985: 62). With this the debate on the status of Konkani – whether it was a language or a dialect - was expected to be over. In the opinion of Konkani language leaders ‘the controversy has become a part of history’. But the Marathi side in Goa formed a \textit{Gomantak Marathi Bhasha Parishad} to carry on the struggle to save Marathi as they felt that the recognition to Konkani was the major attack on the Goan Marathi identity of the masses. To them, Konkani was a political weapon of vested interests and a plot to kill Marathi (\textit{Gomantakachi Asmita}, August 1999). They had their moves to seek justice from the government authorities, the first among them being All India Radio, where Marathi was neglected according to them. Although the Marathi lovers mobilised public opinion and built some pressure on the government the strategic gain of Konkani could not be undone.

As a part of its activities Kala Academy of Goa started the annual \textit{Tiatir} festival in 1974 which was followed by the Konkani Drama Festival in 1976. The

\textsuperscript{52} Dr. Chatterji in his address said, “Konkani ...should be recognised as one of the major languages of India” and also that it was “receiving sympathetic consideration”.
annual Marathi Drama festival had started soon after liberation under Gomantak Sahitya Sevak Mandal and was later taken over by Natya Academy which was later converted into Kala Academy. Theatre in Konkani in Goa was the domain of the Catholics till then. There were hardly any stage plays in Konkani among Hindus. But with the coming of youth from the Bahujan Samaj into Konkani literary activities as a result of the media influence (mainly All India Radio and daily Rashtramat), the literature was freed from the control and dominance of the middle class and from its Saraswat image. Till then the writing in Konkani revolved around the issues and dreams of the middle class or family matters in the upper caste Saraswats. The publishing activity was controlled by the GSBs. But with the coming of a writer such as Pundalik Naik, the literary output changed in approach and quality alike. Themes reflecting the sufferings, concerns, dreams and aspirations of the working class were introduced, as a result of which the rural youth educated in Marathi and thereby close to Devanagari started relating themselves to Konkani. The tenants, farm labourers, fishermen who had never found a place as a part of the Goan community in the Goan writings in Devanagari (both Marathi and Konkani) became the prominent characters in most of the creative works by the young writers from the masses. Konkani literature became a vehicle for the voices unheard so far. It thus began to address the issues and concerns of the toiling masses.

With the Drama festival in Konkani the leaders of the movement could use this new force to establish this popular medium in the language, making the use of the experience of the traditional Marathi stage patronised by Hindu Goans. While the spread of English education had an adverse impact on the popular Konkani
theatre of Goan catholics, in terms of an extensive audience, in contrast the Hindu Konkani created a space for itself in the field through the Kala Academy Festival.

**Official Language Agitation**

On the basis of the Sahitya Akademi recognition Konkani could now answer the common charge of being a ‘dialect’. The publishing activities got a boost mainly in Devanagari script with the newly acquired ‘official recognition to the literary status’ by ‘the highest court of languages’ in the country. Konkani writers as a whole looked at the recognition as a historic achievement. Konkani also found its place in education as an optional language in the curriculum of the newly set up Goa, Daman and Diu Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education. But in all these avenues opened for Konkani the benefits hinged on the element of script, as Devanagari was ‘officially’ accepted as the script for Konkani. Roman script users had to work for themselves outside the ‘official’ framework.

The attempts to run daily and weekly papers in the Roman script had a mixed success in the past. A few publications that survived over the decades were the ones coming from the Diocese, religious societies of the Goan catholics or some priests among them. Many had tried the combinations of Konkani–English, Konkani-Portuguese, Konkani-English-Portuguese etc. In the early years of liberation Felicio Cardoso had tried to publish two papers on his own, free from the church influence, but had to close down. Gomantak Publications published daily *Uzvadd* from Panaji under the editorship of Evagrio Jorge for the Goan Catholic readership. It could not continue beyond five years. The efforts of Jorge to run his own publication (*Novo Uzvadd*) did not go much further. After the
closure of this last one, a Roman Konkani weekly ‘Goencho Mog’ was started from Margao in 1977 by Gurunath Kelekar, a GSB, a writer and protagonist of Devanagari, who had his own printing press and a publishing house for Devanagari books. His new venture in Roman script became popular among Goan Catholics in Goa, Bombay and also in the Middle East. By 1980, there was a proposal to start two Konkani dailies in two scripts – Roman and Devanagari - under a common management. Novem Goem Pratishthan was established as a Trust under the leadership of the popular catholic politician Froilano Machado and another lover of Konkani, Dr. F.M. Rebello, a renowned physician from Margao. A rally was planned to go around Goa to collect people’s contribution to this proposed enterprise in people’s language. Mr. Kelekar was in the forefront of this task of creating awareness of Konkani and mobilising support for the proposed Konkani dailies in both the scripts – Roman and Nagari. Many others from the Devanagari camp were skeptical about it and tried to discourage Mr. Kelekar (Interview- Gurunath Kelekar). But the rally was completed and the Trust project took off. The Romi edition was started in 1981 but survived for a short time whereas Nagari edition did not take off.

Political Factors

In the years following the Sahitya Akademi recognition to Konkani, the political situation in Goa became quite unstable in the last tenure of the MGP rule before the imposition of the President’s Rule in 1979. Not much was expected
from the local government which had tried, although unsuccessfully, to prevent the Sahitya Akademi from giving recognition to Konkani\textsuperscript{53}.

For Konkani leaders the end of the MGP rule was a positive sign and they looked forward to the coming of a pro-Konkani government to power. At the end of nine months of central rule the Union Territory came under the rule of the Congress through the Congress-U victory that saw the return of the MGP dissidents and some ex-UGP elements to power. Though the architect of the formation, the ex-UGP leader Babu Naik, a Saraswat and the Congress leader Dr. Wilfred de Souza, a Catholic – both strong supporters of Konkani - were the real claimants to the post of the CM they had to offer the chair to the Maratha candidate and the MGP dissident Pratapsingh Rane. While both Naik and de Souza were the known pro-Konkani politicians, Rane was fully a pro-Marathi CM. For Konkani language leaders it was the time full of hope as the Congress had promised in its election manifesto to get Konkani included in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution and also to work for statehood. As both the pro-Konkani stalwarts remained out of the cabinet, Konkani language leaders could use the time only to remind the government of its promises. Rane was invited to address the Konkani Parishad session in Bombay in 1980 and the influence of Babu Naik was expected to work in making Rane commit to Konkani.

The first tenure of Rane government was full of bickerings and internal dissidence which the CM thought it wise to overlook and as far as possible

\textsuperscript{53} Mrs. Shashikala Kakodkar, the then CM is said to have written a letter to Sahitya Akademi saying that 'recognition to Konkani would cause bloodshed in Goa'. Maharashtrian members of the Central cabinet were also approached to stall the decision favourable to Konkani. (Bapat, 1975).
avoided facing the same himself, running to the High Command with complaints of all sorts (Fernandes, 1997). He did not think that the issue of Konkani deserved any serious attention. He had strong support of the New Conquest legislators many of whom were the ex-MGP pro-Marathi elements. The hopes of Konkani language leaders from the Congress were belied and they started thinking of having a more pro-Konkani government on the basis of their earlier proposals (Jaag, Republic day special 1977). In their opinion it was Babu Naik who was expected to use the Government for Konkani. But nothing much was achieved during the period, even after his entry to the cabinet in 1983, except the resolution in a party meeting to form Konkani Akademi. Having found Babu Naik not of much use for the cause of Konkani, these leaders (Ravindra Kelekar, Manohar SarDessai, Uday Bhembre, Gurunath Kelekar and many others who were active in the organisational matters) had to find other ways to make things happen as they desired.

As a result of groupism and dissensions the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) President was changed twice by the Congress High Command in the later part of the first tenure of Rane ministry. The elections in 1984 were seen as crucial by the Konkani language leaders to press their demands such as the Official Language status to Konkani and its constitutional recognition (inclusion in the schedule of the recognised languages of India i.e., VIII schedule of the constitution). Congress had enjoyed power but Konkani was not attended to in the first tenure. This time they had to make sure that Konkani was not overlooked. They found the opportunity in the candidature of Uday Bhembre as an independent candidate supported by all the non-Congress forces including the
MGP against Babu Naik from the Margao assembly constituency in 1984 elections. With Bhembre’s electoral victory the hopes were raised. Another positive factor was that the PCC President during this time was Smt. Sulochana Katkar, a staunch follower of Purushottm Kakodkar, the senior Congresswoman who had been close to the Nehru family. Both the parliamentary seats for Goa were with the Congress. Also Goa Congress formed by a break-away group of Congress under Dr. Wilfred de Souza was a pro-Konkani force that was considered a favourable factor. With all these it was considered the appropriate time for a major move for Konkani.

In the new Congress government Rane as the leader of the legislative wing had become more confident and assertive. His stand on the language issue remained the same though as a part of the party propaganda he spoke of support to Konkani. His stand on language was put to test when a private member’s bill to make Konkani the Official language of the territory came before the House. His remarks against the language were more than the rejection of the Bill itself were primarily responsible for the later mobilisation of the Konkani forces with the initiative of writers and artists.

Language Agitation

The CLP resolution of 10th September 1985 in favour of Konkani as the Official Language was the beginning of the over 18 months long agitation that made Konkani the Official Language of Goa and finally brought statehood to Goa on the basis of language. The strategy was planned entirely under the leadership

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54 CM advised the Goa Congress MLA to learn and improve his Konkani and arrange to produce literature in the language before asking for status.
and guidance of the Saraswats among the Konkani stalwarts, although the agitation was projected as that of the Goan masses. The issues of leadership, nature of organisation and agenda were addressed in the small circle of writers and artists. It was decided to give the leadership to the Bahujan Samaj and the choice fell on Pundalik Naik who had epitomised the creative potential of the masses and inspired loyalty to Konkani among Goan Hindu youth mainly from the masses. His handling of the number of literary forms in Konkani had brought laurels to the language at national and also international levels and given a sense of new era to local Konkani literateurs. The non-partisan political image of the man was essential to draw the sections of youth among the masses who had started getting disillusioned with the policies and programmes of government.

The formation of the Konkani Porzacho Avaz (Voice of Konkani People - henceforth KPA) was essentially to pressurize the government to act on the promises given by the Congress in its election manifesto. The Official Language agitation was carried on through mobilisation of people with the help of the local cultural groups in the Hindu dominated areas and the active involvement of the Church to ensure major Catholic presence for show of strength. The three demands viz. Official Language status to Konkani, Statehood for Goa and inclusion of Konkani in the eighth schedule were in fact built around the single issue of language.

KPA was not given the shape of a statutory registered organisation but was allowed to grow as a public agitation. The planning was worked out in a small group dominated by the Saraswats with its enforcement left to the numerically strong non-Saraswat sections led by the young Bahujan Samaj leader
along with the Church-supported Catholic masses. The composition of the Council kept the politicians out to give the group an image of non-party popular exercise. Politicians figured in the movement only at the time of open confrontation and ultimatum at the mega rally in Panaji on 14th November 1985. In their bid to get the objectives of the KPA fulfilled the Konkani language leaders repeated the formula of the Opinion Poll by holding public meetings to convince the people of the significance of a language based state. The major demand was the Official Language status exclusively to Konkani as against the hitherto practised use of Marathi in official and administrative matters. The Congress legislators were divided on the issue but the pro-Marathi members being in a minority in the House, it was felt that the demand for ‘Konkani Alone’ could be attained under the Congress government. With the rise of KPA in the first three months of its formation the Marathi organisations mobilised public opinion to demand equal status for Marathi, which implied that the territory of Goa, Daman and Diu would be tri-lingual with Konkani, Marathi for Goa and Gujarati for the other two districts of Daman and Diu. In the statehood terms, Goa would still be a bi-lingual state, which, according to Konkani side, was a risky proposition due to the possibility of re-emergence of the merger demand and also because it would deprive Goans of their opportunities in the face of ‘outsiders’ who would find access in jobs and administration through Marathi (KPA, 1986).

Congress leadership was also divided on the language issue as they had been before. The Legislature party leader i.e., CM Mr. Rane was pro-Marathi whereas the organisational chief Smt. Katkar was pro-Konkani. Rane used his weight to get the representative democratic institutions and the local self-
government bodies to pass resolutions favouring Marathi to counter the Konkani attack. There were rallies, demonstrations, delegations and discussions at all levels of the territory. The central leadership was approached by both the sides. Konkani side used the policy decisions, resolutions and manifesto to press the demand whereas tradition, popular practices and ‘principle of justice’ were invoked by those demanding Marathi. The major shift was in the relative emphasis – while in the earlier phase Marathi was in commanding position, now it was pushed to the wall and made to seek parity as a compromise.

The constitutional privileges and economic benefits of Konkani were stressed by the KPA through its meetings in towns and villages, while Marathi side insisted on traditional use of Marathi in all the spheres of Goan life and government, pleading for the rightful place to Marathi as the Official Language along with Konkani. The Konkani side projected the language as the cementing factor that held together all the communities in Goa, stressed the status of Konkani as equal to any other Indian language, consequent upon its recognition by the central Sahitya Akademi, and emphasised its importance in democratic participation of people in administration and law. Also they made a case against Marathi saying that it was being used for arousing communal sentiments and also that allowing it a place would open the doors for thousands of jobseekers from

55. The Marathi protagonists were of the opinion that the very fact of Marathi being in use in all the domains of public life, cultural and social activities of the majority of Goans (Hindus) was a proof enough to grant it the status of Official Language along with Konkani. To ignore the large readership of Marathi newspapers and periodicals, also regular publication of Marathi books and periodicals in Goa, the role of Marathi in primary education would amount to total injustice, according to them.
Maharashtra, depriving the locals of employment opportunities. The argument that Marathi had a state of its own in Maharashtra but Konkani had none was quite common.

Marathi side, on the other hand, spoke of the popular use of that language in all spheres of Goan life, its recognition and appreciation by the Roman Catholic priests in the 16th century, Konkani as a recent development and inadequate means of public or official communication, lacking any standard and support in public or administrative sphere. Konkani was seen as a dialect unable to handle the complex and multifarious functions of a language in modern context. It was also projected as a ploy of appeasement of minority by the vested interests.

In the whole movement on Official Language issue, the Konkani side depended heavily on the church authorities for support from the Catholics and a section of youth from the Hindu masses to demonstrate people's strength. Marathi side, on the other hand, had traditional support-base of cultural groups and organisations, sympathy of majority of Hindu legislators mainly from the New Conquests, a large number of local self-government bodies in most talukas. Konkani claimed the sole Official language status whereas Marathi was seeking a share in the arrangement. Though the numbers on both sides could balance, Konkani side had an advantage of the skills unique to its traditional leadership, primarily the GSBs.
Role of the Saraswats

The 555 days Official Language agitation saw Goans resorting to violence in the name of language. The issues of linguistic identity and communal animosity were debated with frenzy. The voice of youth from the Hindu masses was louder this time but the crucial decisions were taken by the nucleus made up of the Saraswats. Though the KPA convenor was made the final authority on the actions and decisions in official terms, the contents and details were worked out through the advice of the think-tank which was predominantly made up of Saraswats. It was their skill of diplomacy and sense of political accuracy that made a difference. They made use of growing frustration among educated youth, internal bickerings of the local ruling party, feeling of uncertainty and insecurity in the minority, and the favourable political situation at the centre to get the long pending demand fulfilled.

The choice of leader, name and nature of the organisation and the basic arguments for the agitation were provided by Ravindra Kelekar, the Saraswat leader who was in the forefront of the Konkani language movement in Goa from the day of liberation of the territory. The functioning and policy-making of the KPA was guided and monitored constantly by another Saraswat, Uday Bhembre who was identified with the ‘Brahmastra’ of the Opinion Poll period. Others

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56. ‘Brahmastra’, a popular column (in daily Rashtramat of Margao) consisting of comments on the happenings and moves/decisions of leaders/government in Goa in the period between the liberation and the Opinion Poll, is credited with a major part of opinion-formation in favour of the status quo and known for scathing attack on the idea of merger. Brahmastra in mythical context belonged to Lord Parashurama, who is credited with the settlement of the GSIs in Konkan and Goa. Many believe that it was the writing and oratory of Uday Bhembre during the Opinion Poll campaign that converted a large number of youth and wage earners to the supporters of the status quo and against the merger.
such as Damodar Mauzo, Nagesh Karmali, Datta S. Naik were close to the decision makers. Chandrakant Keni, though not a part of the formation, played a very significant role in formulating the arguments in the course of discussions with the central leadership (Interview – Pundalik Naik).

**Catholic Concerns**

The support and contribution of the Catholics to the Official Language agitation was mainly in the mobilisation of men and money, show of numerical strength. Their concern was essentially emotional rather than practical, because they looked at Konkani as their identity but moved towards English increasingly in all the aspects of personal, socio-cultural and economic life. Their assessment of party positions and share in political institutions was more in terms of religion, which was reflected in their electoral behaviour in the first two decades after liberation. The Catholic political leadership playing the role of the opposition during the MGP rule was now with the Congress and Catholics hoped for a better role for their representatives. Willy-Luizinho’s Goa Congress which was born out of their sense of being neglected wanted to get the most out of the Konkani agitation. With the build-up to the Official Language agitation under the eyes of the saraswats, Catholic forces responded to the appeal for the cause of their mother tongue, with the encouragement of their leaders in search of political gains.
Bahujan Samaj

With the crumbling of the MGP the Bahujan Samaj was fragmented in terms of political party representation. Many MGP dissidents had landed in the Congress via the Congress (U). In the new situation they were a party to the Congress manifesto that had promised Konkani its due. The youth who aspired for employment and higher education were becoming aware of the limitations of the Union Territory status and found sense in the demand for statehood. The cultural and literary expansion and strengthening of Konkani through the work of young Konkani writers from the Hindu masses gave added confidence to youth from the Bahujan Samaj. The choice of Pundalik Naik as the convenor of KPA provided opportunity for these youth to assert themselves for a cause of culture that they could claim as theirs. The impact of Marathi had receded in the wake of expansion of English education, which also worked in favour of Konkani, though in a limited way. KPA appeared to be a people’s movement led by their own man.

Official Language movement spearheaded by the KPA had managed to pressurize the politicians to come to a compromise in the form of Official Language Act which was passed in the Goa, Daman and Diu Legislative Assembly on 4th February 1987 under the whip of the High Command. It provided for the Official Language status to Konkani and equal status to Marathi. Goa became the 25th state in May 1987. Two out of the three demands of KPA

57. Education in English medium provided for a choice in third language between Marathi and Konkani. Hindi as the national language remained as the second language in the Three Language Formula. Those who offered Konkani in education were mainly Catholic students in the early years. But being made to learn the language in Devanagari their links with Konkani writings in Roman script were weakened. They took to reading English instead of Konkani. The benefit to Konkani was limited and sectional at best.
were fulfilled and the third – that of inclusion of Konkani in the VIII schedule of the Constitution - was beyond the purview of the local government. The main advantage of the Official Language Act from the point of view of the Saraswat leadership was that it gave primacy to Konkani over Marathi and specified the script of Konkani as Devanagari thereby defining the specific variety of the language as acceptable to and recognised by the state.

Medium of Instruction Issue

With the passage of the Official Language Act followed by the grant of statehood for Goa as the state for Konkani, the language controversy ought to have been settled. But the provisions of the Act raised questions about the nature of ‘equal’ status to Marathi and instead of removing the debate from the electoral agenda invigorated it in the first elections to the state legislative assembly. Though the elections were held nearly thirty months after the attainment of statehood and almost thirty four months from the day the Official Language Act was passed, the results reflected the public mind in the form of equal number of seats – 18 each - to the pro-Konkani Congress and the pro-Marathi MGP, two independents taking two sides bringing the tally to 19 each. MGP could make a comeback and soon managed to share power with the people who had been active in Konkani agitation. The leaders made claims of ending the language controversy but the language issue, which Konkani leaders considered as already decided and settled permanently, surfaced in a different form in the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) rule. The Goan Peoples Party (GPP), a component of the PDF, was under pressure to support the agitation for government grants to private primary
schools mainly the English medium ones. In their development agenda the PDF ministry included ‘reviewing the contentious issue of grants to private primary schools in order to accommodate all views’ as one of the six proposals. (Fernandes, 1997: 121). Also the portfolio of ‘Official language’ was created out of the General Administration during this time. The Grants issue in a way turned into the language issue as most of those who were fighting for either Konkani or Marathi now joined to oppose government grants to English medium primary schools. Their argument was that primary education was supposed to be in a child’s mother-tongue, but English could not be the mother-tongue of Goans. The argument was ideational and ideological but far from realistic. Because over the decade of the Congress rule primary schools in English medium had increased in number as well as in enrolment figures at the cost of government primary schools in Marathi medium. Though the issue had come up in the form of demand in parity of wages to teachers in these English medium primary schools the government was obliged to respond since primary education was the state responsibility. The issue was addressed by asking the primary schools to switch over to any of the Indian languages in order to be eligible for government grants. In the years following the liberation the pro-Konkani sections had been charged with ‘double standards’ as they sent their wards to English schools. After nearly three decades the English primary education had spread among all sections but the language leaders did not see it as a reality. Under financial compulsions a large number of private primary schools officially changed their medium but in practice they invariably continued their old system of teaching in English. As Konkani medium schools they taught Konkani through English (Juag, Nov.1997: 1). A
bulk of them belonged to the Diocesan Society. The Society, having decided to switch over to Konkani, faced parents' wrath (Interview – Tomazinho Cardoso). There were practical problems too. Teachers in these schools had no training or abilities to teach Konkani in Devanagari script and they interacted with students in English as before. There were protests by parents through their Action Committee on Medium of Education (ACME), against the policy to deny freedom of choice. The question of language in education remained neglected as before though government claimed to have resolved it.

In the debate on medium of education at primary stage the two language groups – Marathi and Konkani – stood united against giving grants to English medium schools (Daily Gomantak Times) but the state has the whole of its secondary education and higher education in English and the popular belief is that the use of English from primary stage onwards would solve the problems faced by students at these later stages. English having come to be recognised as the language of mobility and future prospects, parents, irrespective of divisions like rural/urban, rich/poor or Hindu/Catholic, seek admissions for their children in English medium schools starting from the nursery stage. But there is no government support and the discriminatory measures like absence of government grants have not discouraged or dissuaded parents in any way. The support to English came from a large section of the same people who had worked to place their Konkani ‘ma’ on the ‘throne’ (Newman, 2000). In the emerging global situation Goans wanted to catch up through English while identifying themselves through Konkani. Their experience showed that English provided an advantage in the larger Indian context and was necessary for mobility in search of overseas
opportunities, which was the mainstay of Goans particularly from the Old Conquests.

While the process of defining Konkani as a linguistic identity evolved through the major part of the twentieth century on the west coast of India as a whole, its political benefits were available to a small section of Hindu elites, mainly Goans, whose organisational skills and mediating methods succeeded in getting the actual stake holders in the language to agree to Devanagari script. Though written works of any consequence were not available in Devanagari at the turn of the nineteenth century, the period of around fifty years (1925-1975) was used by a specific group (GSBs) to create a situation favourable to Devanagari, using the performance in other scripts by other regional Konkani groups (Goan and Canara Catholics, some Kanara Saraswats and also GSBs from Kerala) for sustaining the various claims in favour of the language and limiting the benefits to Devanagari (script) in the name of Konkani (language). In this sense, language politics in respect of Konkani was the politics of script writ large.