Chapter I
INTRODUCTION
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INTRODUCTION

Culture is the quintessence of men’s knowledge, skill and wisdom.1

The present work has been undertaken to enhance our knowledge about the cultural history of Bicholim Taluka-North Goa since 1510 A.D. Bicholim also called as ‘Dicholi’ in Konkani and Marathi, lies in the North Goa District of Goa State, which in on the west coast of India.

There are various approaches to the Study of History of any region. However, aspect of cultural study has found the basis for undertaking research from the angle of historical study. The concept of culture is far and wide and also very exhaustive. This chapter attempts to survey the current knowledge on the concept of culture, interrelation between culture and history and reviews our present understanding of the cultural history of the topic of study with special emphasis on historical background, monuments and archaeological remain, religious percepts and practices, social life, cultural heritage, education and literature.

The approach adopted for the present work is then discussed with the objectives set for studying the Cultural History of Bicholim Taluka since 1510 A.D.

History, Culture and Civilization

Goan history is a mosaic shaped from every conceivable historical activity which stimulates culture. It is a kind of tapestry woven from Indian traditions of most profound value mixed with the finest element of European renaissance. Goa is indeed a little paradise which has retained a rare pattern of its own. No where nature has been so lavish in its bounties of enchanting landscape, and nowhere has man responded so well
to the call of beauty in building those marvelous temples, churches, shrines, forts, towns and cities. Again, nowhere has man laboured so hard to develop the fine arts of dance, drama, music, folk art, painting and sculpture, which has attracted lovers of beauty from all over the world. History becomes the stir and vibration of life, not because of man’s struggle to build empires, but because of man’s knowledge, skill and wisdom, in the realm of art, faith, belief, literature, religion, philosophy, music, and all other capabilities which help evolve culture. In other words, it is the cultural history that forms the sum and substance of man’s rich heritage from the past.

It is therefore, in fitness of things, cultural history of Goa gains primacy in the scheme of study of Goan past. The greatness of Goa lies in absorbing of ideas from every quarter, ideas which form pulsating currents, giving life to Goan genius. The relation between creative ideas and their impact on society and civilisation results in cultural history, which bequeaths to mankind the master pieces of art, literature, philosophy and science, and elevates the society to intellectual and moral heights. Cultural history in that sense becomes not merely a synthesis of philosophy literature, religion and fine arts, but the “cartography of ideas” which helps us to understand the impact of high ideas on the life style of society. If history is the cause of a nation’s persistent identity, cultural history forms the core of that identity which determines the place of particular group in the broader frame word of the Society and Civilisation.

Our faith, beliefs, morals, manners, ways of living and thinking, all sprout from our roots in the past. History, therefore, is the living cell in our behaviour. Whatever religion we adhere, is all because of the past. One is liberal, Conservative, socialistic, humane or dogmatic, because past has a hold on us. Many of our problems are historical problems, and their
solution rests on their correct understanding and interpretation. History everywhere is a clue to existence.

Viewed from this standpoint, history of Goa, is so rich and fascinating in all sectors of human activity. This is because history has always been here in the process of making, and not of writing.

Culture has many definitions. Etymologically, the word culture has been derived from the Latin word ‘agriculture’ which means to till or cultivate.²

Its German equivalent is ‘Kulture’ which is more comprehensive in scope and meaning. The Sanskrit equivalent for culture is ‘Sanskriti’.³

In his famous book ‘Discovery of India’, Jawaharlal Nehru has defined culture as that which develops into a rich civilization flowing out in philosophy, drama, literature, art, science and mathematics. Truly culture is the sum total of the people’s endeavour in different fields of life.⁴

According to S. Abid Husain ‘Culture is a sense of ultimate values possessed by a particular society as expressed in its collective institutions, by its individual members in their dispositions, feelings, attitudes and manners as well as in significant forms which they give to material objects.’ ⁵

In layman’s words, culture is taken to be the language, literature, habits, dress, and cuisine of a particular community; in short, all the observable elements which manifest in a particular group of people.⁶

Classical anthropologists have taken this step further to include social institutions, mannerisms, world views, values and interactions between people. The more historical definition of culture has defined it as the fine arts and refined tastes and talents of a community in addition to its language, religion, tools, customs, and legacy.⁷

Francis Bacon in his work ‘Advancement of learning’ (written in 1605) used the word culture for the first time.⁸ It was meant to express
all the forms of Spiritual life in man intellectual, religious and ethical. Thus
culture is the evolution of Social History, including such process as
historical accident, diffusion, drift, convergence, synergy, reinterpretation,
and constant and continuous Variation, culture is an expression of people’s
behaviour, psychology and motivations which underline that behaviour.

The linguist, Gulherme of Humbold writing in 1836, defined
civilization as “all that helps to soften the lot human beings in the context
of material interests and development of customs and as a consequence that
help to arouse individuals or people towards sentiment of reciprocal
benevolence. 9

The English word ‘history’ is derived from the Greek word
‘Istoria’ meaning inquiry, research, exploration or formation.10 In a broader
sense, history is systematic account of the origin and development of
humankind, a record of the unique event and movements in its life. It is an
attempt to recapture however imperfectly that which is, in a sense, lost
forever. History is the interplay of men with his environment.

When people come to have a highly complex cultural pattern
resting upon an intricate social organisation and exerting wide control
over nature, they may be said to have achieved what is called ‘Civilization.’11

Civilization in all its varied aspects constituted the subject matter
of history. Such a cultural approach to history would make it a biography
of civilization.

History, culture and civilization - these three words occur
repeatedly in all the social sciences and humanities but it is important to
understand the true import of these words. For a layman, it would be a
tendency to consider them as synonyms which they are not. In fact history
includes culture and civilization and any history without any reference to
those two aspects is bound to be only fiction consisting of an account of the
loot and plunder of conquering armies. History must take into account the
details of reformative movements, discoveries of science, economic advancement, political landmarks, religious reforms and attainments in the field of arts and crafts. A school of historians believes that “culture is the vestige of the ruling classes and a super structure built on the toiling of the subjected people.” This narrow outlook towards history is not tenable in the face of contrary facts. Culture is not merely a study of class struggles and dissensions, it is much more than that as Ivar Lissener in ‘The Silent Past’ says that all that is enduring and artistic has been engendered by the strongest of man’s impulses, not by his far more imperious urges for the things of the spirit and thus for the eternal life.  

**Culture as Unit of Study of Any Society**

Culture is stable, but also dynamic and in a constant process of evolution and change. Goan culture, like all cultures, embodies both stability (tradition) and change (transformation). The very nature of culture allows for change while simultaneously maintaining limits around those changes. Two major type of changes are existent in Goan Society; the slow, normal evolutionary change from within, (characteristic of Hindu culture prior to foreign domination) and the drastic, and rapid change often imposed from the outside (the Portuguese colonial era). Goan culture is likewise both stable and subjected to transformation.

**Oral Tradition (Oral History)**

Oral tradition or oral history is a very important source material from the point of view of obtaining inputs, knowledge of the past and also of the present from individuals, groups, institutions and society as whole. Since such information is available being passed on from one generation to another, besides folk legends also constitute a repository of such treasured
trove of knowledge of the incidents in the past and also present, the oral tradition or oral history assumes a significant role in the process.

According to Louis Starr, “It is a primary source material obtained by recording the spoken words generally by means of planned tape recorded interviews of persons deemed to harbour hitherto unavailable information with preserving.”

On the other hand, folklorists have made significant contribution to the methodology of oral history. Since folkloristic is recognized as an authoritative branch of learning, folklorists could endeavour their contribution to oral history.

The collective oral record and the personal oral testimony provided by a narrator help to construct an objective past. It provides valuable insights into the way in which community members perceive the past. Thus it becomes a significant contribution to the understanding of the local past historically, sociologically and even psychologically.

Selection of Taluka as a Viable Unit for Micro-Level

The micro – level historical studies have been a case of neglect to an greater extent in Goa barring a very handful exceptions. Such micro-level Historical studies through historical and cultural perspectives are very much essential in order to critically analyze the diverse aspects like the evolution, growth and development of Goan Society. A Society which has gone through many vicissitudes and epochal upheavals can’t present a composite picture of it by depending on thorough, published or routine archival material. Since there is a danger of such being influenced by contemporary political systems and thoughts while historical and cultural reality might be different. Therefore, scientific decimation of oral history, especially folklore traditions, properly subjected to critical analysis, will
open vistas to provide new dimensions to or synthesizing a truly composite picture of regional history.

**Importance of Folk Traditions**

Any researcher in Goan history is hampered by the relative lack of primary sources relating to the prolonged pre-Portuguese era. Portuguese era at least provides, to a certain extent, some of primary sources. Published studies have largely ignored wealth of historico –cultural information available in various forms of Goan folklore such as folk song, folk dances, folk tales, and rituals etc. Modern ethno methodological means will a great deal help to utilize the relatively unpolluted store house of traditional folk archives to build in comparison and contrast with other authentic sources, a cohesive and integrated historico – cultural sequence of origin and evolution of the Goan Society.

**Scope for Taluka Level Historic - Cultural Studies**

The entire Goa is politico -administratively divided into two districts North Goa and South Goa, and eleven talukas namely Sattari, Bicholim, Pernem, Bardez, Tiswadi, Ponda, Mormugao, Salcete, Sanguem, Quepem and Canacona [while writing of this thesis, Govt. of Goa has created one more taluka namely Dhabandora adding some villages from Sanguem and Ponda to this new taluka. The Govt. order for creation of this taluka has been issued but actual administrative functioning is yet to start]

These talukas can be divided into midland (Ponda, Bicholim and Quepem), coastal (Pernem, Bardez, Tiswadi, Mormugao and Salcete) and western Ghat talukas (Sattari, Sanguem and Canacona) from the ecological point of view.

Historically, the midlands and western Ghats as also the costal taluka of Pernem has been considered as the ‘Novas conquistas’ i.e. New
conquests of the Portuguese ‘Estado do India’ in Goa. Each of these talukas presents an interlining geographic, environmental, demographical and social setting. It offers a challenge to researchers in micro-history. To cite an example, the Bhandari is a dominant community in Tiswadi taluka while in Bicholim taluka, it is the Kshatriya Marathas is a dominant community although the area distance in between these two talukas is within 15 kms. range of each other. This denotes a notable variation in Social and cultural practices, hierarchy’s, religious fabric and forms of folklore in these talukas.

It is, therefore, if talukas are considered as a potentially viable unit for carrying out and micro level study from historico-cultural context, then there is vast scope for such project of study.

**The Unexplored Potential Of Bicholim Taluka**

The Bicholim taluka offers a rich and largely unexplored potential for the historico-cultural studies. Archaeological studies have been carried in this area fully to study the subject in depth. Certain place name points towards primitive culture. The recorded history of taluka begins from the Arvalem caves inscription paleographically dated 6-7th century A.D. the area was ruled by Satvahanas, Bhojas, Badami Chalukyas, Silaharas, Kadambas, Vijaynagara, Adilshahi, Brief period of Marathas, Sawantwadikar Bhosle and the Portuguese till 1961 A.D. -the year of Goa liberation. From 1510 to 1781 Adilshahi, Bhosle’s of Sawantwadi ruled except for brief period of Maratha annexation of the area. From 1781 to 1961, Portuguese held the sway and Bicholim was under their rule as one of the new conquests.

From 1946 to 1961, freedom struggle activities were in swing as India had attained independence from British domain.
Purpose of Present Study

This taluka offers a rich and varied potential for historical and cultural research. The documentation of oral history and various forms of folklore offer important clues for a chronological and systematic presentation of historical events from a cultural context and hence aims at studying cultural history of Bicholim through an analysis of institutions and problems dealing with people and society, customs, manners, habits, group life, folklore, feasts and festivals, ceremonies, and such other activities which are essential part of human life.\(^{15}\) This includes:-

1. Chronological study of origin and evolution of various settlements and institutions.
2. Evaluation of various forms of folklore such as Ghodemodani, Dashavatara, Morulo, Kalo, Dhalo, Fugdi etc. and worship, rituals and customs.
3. Evaluation of class and communities, structure of their cultural interaction.
4. Detailed survey and classification of Socio-cultural interaction of various forms of folklore in the taluka
5. Intensive historico cultural analysis of selected folk forms of the taluka.
6. Etymologies, socio linguistic, cultural, ethnological analysis of folklorical texts for constructing an authentic folk history of the taluka
7. The main thrust will be to research the vast archaeological remains and monuments, sculptures, hitherto neglected to great extent and therefore to bring to light this treasure trove or repository of unexplored historical and archeological wealth of this taluka for constructing its cultural history for purpose of textual and contextual analysis of this material.
Methodology

Standard historical research methodology has been used for this research work.

Literature survey

The published sources have been examined in detail as far as possible to review the past work in this area although it is much less, and to gain insight into the interpretative and analytical potential of the study.

Field work

The data compiled from the field work has been analysed by using empirical study method.

1. Preliminary survey of various villages and towns of this taluaka for getting first hand information of various natural, historical, archaeological, cultural, and folklorical resources.

2. Identification of authentic and representative source of oral history and folk texts.

3. Documentation of oral history and folk texts, using standard questionnaire.

4. a) Photo documentation of sites of archaeological importance, other sites, folk customs and rituals  
   b) Intensive study of selected folk forms

5. Reference to archaeological and archival data and temple, village communities (comunidade) records. 
   a) Compilation, classification, categorization and analysis of data collected from 1 to 5 above. 
   b) The historical geography or setting given which follows next page.
The Setting

The Land of Goa, with its rich natural resources, abundant rains, temperate climate, long sea coast, placid navigable rivers, dozen ghats of varied flora and fauna, fertile field and fruit groves and soothing lakes, cascades and springs not only offered the most hospitable abode to its inhabitants in matters of sustenance, safety and security but also invoked in them the sense of the beautiful and the sublime by its infinite seasonal manifestations. It also provided them with among leisure to contemplate its beauties and thus acquire a fine sensibility and a sort of an inner calm that exalt man to rise above themselves. This wonderful land of Goa which can be aptly called in the Camonian style, “the Garden of India planted on the sea-cost”, proved both blessed and beautiful to them and laid the main foundations of their personality.

Goa, admeasuring an area of about 3702 square kilometers is perched most strategically midway along the west coast of India in a picturesque setting at the foot of the Western Ghats with waters of Arabian sea washing its coast. It stretches to a width of about 60 kilometers in an east – west direction and extends to a length of about 105 kilometers from north to the South with the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka being its immediate neighbours.16

Origin of Name

There are quite a few versions as to how the name “Goa” or ‘Gomantaka’ originated. The puranic version says that Parashurama, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu credited with introducing Aryan culture to this area, released his arrow to demarcate the area, which dropped at a particular spot. The Vernacular equivalent terms for arrow and land are ‘gaw’ and ‘ant’ respectively and hence the land came to be known as Gomant17. Harivansha Purana makes a reference to a fierce battle fought
between Lord Krishna and king Jarasandha on the mountain of Gomanchal. Similarly the ninth canto of Bhismparva of the epic ‘Mahabharata’ as well as Skand purana makes a reference ‘Gomant’ whereas Suta Sanhita mentions it as ‘Govapuri’.

A copper plate formed during the rule of Vijaynagar king Hariharraya II makes a mention of a phrase ‘Goa bhidam Konkan Rajdhanim’ indicating Goa as the capital city of Konkan.\textsuperscript{18} Hence the name ‘Goa’ was in vogue much before the advent of the Portuguese. Goa is properly known as Gowa or Gova, in Marathi, ‘Goven’ in Konkani ‘Goem’. The Madras Glossary connects it with Sanskrit ‘go’ a cow in the sense of cowherd country.\textsuperscript{19} It is the abbreviation of the term gomant. The reference to the people known as gomantas is traced in the 9\textsuperscript{th} canto of the Bhism parva of Mahabharata Purana. The usually accepted derivation of the term gomantaka is from go mantaka; go means cattle, manta meaning herd of cattle owners with ‘Ka’ as taddhita affix added to the noun to express diminution, deterioration and similarity.\textsuperscript{20}

**Geographical Limits before Portuguese Rule**

Before the advent of the Portuguese, Goa covered very extensive areas on its borders, which included towards the north, part of the Ratnagari district of the Maharashtra state then known as Kudal and Rajapur Mahals upto the river Kharepatan. The southern limits extended towards Ankola and comprised ancient mahals of Supa, Halyal and Karwar, now forming part of the north Kanara district of the Karnataka state. Towards the east, covered a large portion of the Belgaum district.\textsuperscript{21}

Goa state has two district namely, north Goa and the South Goa and are administrated from their headquarter at Panaji and Margao respectively.
Altogether eleven talukas constitute the state of Goa. Recently Govt of Goa has created a new taluka of Dharbandora with some villages of Sanguem and Ponda taluka. The administrative functioning has not yet commenced. Tiswadi, Bardez, Salcete, Mormugao, Pernem, Ponda, Bicholim, Sattari, Quepem, Sanguem and Canacona are the eleven talukas of Goa.

During Portuguese regime Tiswadi, Bardez, Salcete and Mormugao, were the old conquistas where Quepem, Pernem, Ponda, Sattari, Bicholim, Sanguem, Cancona were identified as Novas conquistas i.e the new conquests.

Bicholim originally Bhatgram or Dicholi, fell into Portuguese hands in 1781 and remained in their grasp till the liberation of Goa in 1961.

**Bicholim Taluka**

Bicholim Taluka has a vivid and varied cultural history and the cultural ethos of Bicholim Taluka gives a multifaceted picture of its cultural traditions and patterns. It is a Hindu dominated area but has also a significant muslim and Christian population. The culture owes a similarity to the people of neighbouring Maharashtra especially Konkan part. This pre-portuguese era culture therefore preserved its identity inspite of Dicholi (Bicholim) and Sankhali (Sanquelim) being later conquered by Portuguese as New conquests in 1781. The influence of Maratha powers and later on of Sawant Bhosales of Sawantadi had greater impact and helped to retain its original cultural identity which was mainly Hindu culture. Even Adilshahi rulers did not find it fit to disturb the cultural identity of the people as most of its local officers were Hindus. The impact of Portuguese rule for about 180 years could not make much influence over this area and the people, as the roots of their original cultural identity lied deep within amongst the people of Bicholim Taluka.
Etymology of the name of the taluka Bicholim

Bicholim is corrupted version of the name ‘Dicholi’. The Portuguese have made such confusion in the place names in Goa during their rule over Goa. In Marathi it is called ‘Dicholi’ and in Konkani local language it is called ‘Divchal’.

The earliest reference is in the name of ‘Bhaktagram’ which is mentioned in the Silkahara king Rattaraja’s Valipattan copper plate of 24th Dec. 1010 A.D (Saka year 932). It is mentioned as Kalval Bhaktgram. The Kalyal is ‘Colvale’ of the present and Bhakta gram is ‘Bicholim’ It is also mentioned as ‘Bhattgram’ having Kannada influence because of rulers from Karnataka. Brave soldiers or persons were titled with ‘Bhat’ hence the Bhattagrm. Because of fertile khajan land, there used to be a good harvest of rice and it was also known as Bhatgram ‘Bhat’ is rice in Konkani.

In the Hiregutti copper plate of Bhoja king Asamkit Varman, there is a mention of Dipak Vishaya and Sundarika gram (village) which is identified as Sundar peth (Sundarika) in Dicholi (Dipak Vishaya).

It is in Shivcharitra Sahitya volume 13 of Bharat Itithas Sanshodhan Mandal there is a mention of Bicholim as Bhatgram Dicholi referred in a document of the year 1740 A.D

Dr. P.P Shirodkar is inclined to infer that the original name ‘Dicholi’ might have been originated from the word ‘Dicha’ which means a water – bird, a pelican as well as a stork. Hence Dicha signified Dicha + valli, i.e. a village where pelicans and storks existed in a great number.

The Geographical Limits of the Bicholim Taluka

Bicholim Taluka covers an area of 238.80 square kilometers, and its percentage to total geographical area of Goa is 6.45. It is located at 15’35’ 15’ North Latitude and ‘75’ ‘56’ ‘45’ East longitude. The taluka is surrounded by Sattari taluka in the east, boundaries of Maharashtra state in
the North, Ponda taluka in the South and by Bardez and Tiswadi taluka’s in the west. This taluka comes in the North Goa District (North Goa Map Fig 1.1).

The Taluka Headquarters is the Bicholim Town. It has altogether 31 revenue villages (Bicholim Taluka Map Fig 1.2)

Revenue villages include:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Villages</th>
<th>Revenue Villages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sal</td>
<td>1. Sal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Mencurem</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Dumacem</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Latambarcem</td>
<td>1. Latambarcem</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Advalpal</td>
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<td>3. Mulgaon</td>
<td>1. Mulgaon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Sirigaon</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Maulingem (North)</td>
<td>1. Ona</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Maulingem North</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Cudchirem</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Maem</td>
<td>1. Maem</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Vainguinim</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Aturli</td>
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<td>2. Bordem</td>
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<td>3. Lamgaum</td>
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<td>7. Piligaum</td>
<td>1. Piligaon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Naroa</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Sanquelim</td>
<td>1. Cassabe de Sanquelim</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Maulingem South</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Arvalem</td>
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<td>Original</td>
<td>Changed under Portuguese</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Maye</td>
<td>Maem</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Dicholi</td>
<td>Bicholim</td>
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<td>3. Amone</td>
<td>Amona</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Nhaveli</td>
<td>Navelim</td>
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<td>5. Surl</td>
<td>Surla</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Pali</td>
<td>Pale</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Kudne</td>
<td>Cudnem</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Karapur</td>
<td>Carapur</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Harvale</td>
<td>Arvalem</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Sankhali</td>
<td>Sanquelim</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Mhavlinge</td>
<td>Maulingem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Pilganv / Pilgao</td>
<td>Piligaon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Borde</td>
<td>Bordem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The names of the villages were spelt by Portuguese in different way and as such the original names came in corrupted version as given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Changed under Portuguese</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Sarvan</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Cudnem</td>
<td>1. Cudnem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Surla</td>
<td>1. Surla</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Pali</td>
<td>1. Pali</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Cotambi</td>
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<td>3. Velguem</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Lamganv</td>
<td>Lamgao</td>
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<td>15. Haturli</td>
<td>Aturli</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Vaingini</td>
<td>Vainguinim</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Kudchire</td>
<td>Cudchirem/ eurchirem</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Van</td>
<td>Ona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Shirganv</td>
<td>Sirigao/Shirgao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Mulganv</td>
<td>Mulgao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Advalpal</td>
<td>Adwalpal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Ladfe</td>
<td>Latambarcem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Sal</td>
<td>Salem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Menkure</td>
<td>Mencurem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Dhumase</td>
<td>Dumacem / Dumchem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Latambarcem is the biggest village areawise having six hamlets and an area of 3652 hectares. The six hamlets include Ladfe, Nanoda, Cansarpale, Usap, Kharpal (Dodamarg) and Vadaval.

**Other Details**

**Climate**

The Climate is pleasant and cool in winters and humid and hot in summer. The rainfall is average 100 inch per year.

**Area**

The total area of Bicholim taluka is 238.80 sq kilometers and its percentage to total geographical area of Goa is 6.45.
Population and Density

The total population is 90,734 and its percentage to total population is 6.73 and the density per sq kms is 380

Out of total 90,734 the male population is 46,707 and female population is 44,027 and the sex ratio (females per 1000 males) is 943

Out of the total population of 90,734 rural population is 53,647 and urban population is 37,087 and the percentage of rural to total population is 59.13 whereas that of the urban population to total population is 40.87

Towns and Villages

In Bicholim there are 2 municipal towns and 2 census towns. There are 22 inhabited villages in the Taluka.

Historical Background

Before entering into a discussion of the Goan history and also the Historical background of Bicholim taluka, it is important to explore the concept of ‘recorded history’, because this very concept has evolved over centuries. For instance, during the vast majority of recorded human history, importance was awarded to the rulers of kingdoms, their wars and conquests, their political exploits, etc. Later the history of trade relations was given its due importance, the rise and fall of great international ports and the economics of regional politics. Because most history had been written by scribes (scholars employed by their kings), importance was concentrated on the lives of individual men and their administrative policies, rather than on society as a whole. History in the past was, thus, seen entirely through the perspective of the ruling families. Thus, it is a
tendency to ‘glorify’ battles and other such instances where the historical records paint a very subjective picture of what has occurred.

The life of the common man was rarely a matter of historical concern for any given ruler and neither was it left to posterity in the annuls of scribes. People as such were documented in historical memory only when detailing the body count after a war, uprising, epidemic or famine. Thus, one knows a lot about wars, a lot about regional economics, too much about politics, but very little about the life of the common man. How did common people of ancient times think, feel, and/or behave in their Worlds? How was their culture influenced by that of their rulers? It was only after the ‘common man’ began to receive an education and discover his own potential for action that the ‘social history’ of man came into being as a subject Worthy of scholarship And only very recently in recorded history, within the last 200 years, has attention been paid to what we call ‘the common man’; his trials and tribulations, customs, lifestyle, rituals, etc. Gradually the ‘voice’ of the common man emerged and, thus, we have some of our first great writers which introduced into literature the feelings, philosophical queries, successes and failures, loves and enmities, and a myriad of other issues which confronted man in his daily social environment. Minds were awakened and having few empires to run or people to control, they turned to pursuits of a more intellectual nature, eventually questioning the whole foundation of society and transforming the evolution of thought in an unprecedented way. Thus we have our Marxists, our Gandhi’s; and so many others who, upon finding a voice, began to exert themselves in a way which brought the life of the common man into importance and in a way, into recorded historical existence.

Thus, began a new evolution of the historical process itself as well as ‘historical importance’ and ‘historical perspective’ No longer was
historian merely the scribes who had ingratiated themselves to their kings. Soon poets, novelists and researchers started asking questions and left these discussions in written forms to posterity. As more and more ‘educated common people’ had their own stories to tell, the ‘historical perspective’ (any particular lens through which history is written), evolved over the centuries. Issues surrounding daily life, religious faith, humanity, identity, culture, love, treachery, and basic human emotions began to get their due place in society. Even then, however the social history of mankind was left seriously incomplete.

Of late, with the education of Women and otherwise marginalised communities, issues surrounding the ‘interpretation of history’ were again opened and space was created by those communities to enable themselves and others to hear ‘their voice’ and view issues from their perspective American history is an excellent case in point regarding these latest trends. Today students read about what it was like to be a slave in American society not just a wealthy landowner. We can discover the trials and tribulations regarding Spanish-American migrants, questions regarding their identity and what it feels like to be a marginalized member of society In India as well we are beginning to hear the voice of women, how they feel within their culture and how ‘out castes’ were treated by those believing themselves superior. Thus only in recent years have many segments of society formerly ignored begun to find their voice. Sadly, much has been lost in our history owing to this filter which prevented most groups in society from participating in both the making and the retelling of their own history. But to lament is pointless, to rectify is the key.

The point here one wishes to make is that ‘recorded history’ is ‘an Interpretation’. It is defined, at least under the American Educational System, as ‘an objective description of facts, names, dates, and places.’
Only in high school and university do students begin to hear the words ‘interpretation of events’, to mean facts, which is often ignored and history is again taken for granted. Yet history is a collection of generally accepted truths which circulate among members of a society and are interpreted in a way consistent with the characteristic modes of thought within that society. Thus in American society during the 1600’s to 1700’s, wars won against the Native American Indians were looked upon as glorious and deserving of merit. In the 1900’s these wars are now viewed as atrocities committed on one race by another thinking itself superior. To site another instance, British writers of the 19th century discussing Indians would refer to people of the Hindu faith as “heathens” and in other instances as ‘debased creatures’. While scholars of today recognise this as a grossly subjective and ethnocentric description, during the time when such research was written this was the generally accepted set of attitudes among the British community. Even the question of sovereignty arises when attempting to find an ‘objective’ historical representation. How many dynasties over the centuries recorded a particular territory as theirs, only to be faced with war when this ‘fact’ was contested by another kingdom?

For several important reasons, the most important of which is to fully grasp that everything we know, think and feel regarding history has been and will be subject to these boundaries It will be subject to the current political sentiment in our era, the current value orientation, Prevailing economic conditions and the current perspectives which arise to examine again the annuls of history That which we interpret as ‘such’ today will tomorrow be interpreted as a different ‘such’. Thus, in today’s society we define an Indo Portuguese war as a ‘massacre’, when through the lens of that age it was a completely justified war based upon current beliefs which were prevalent in that society. Tomorrow that same war may be interpreted
in a different manner, depending upon the prevailing social climate. Thus, how we as individuals come to understand history is in truth an ‘interpretation’ of an ‘interpretation’.

Two broad categories of ‘interpretative history’ are in vogue today. The first involves the collection of many ‘facts’ with the intention to explain certain social phenomena. The second involves the creation of an explanation using only certain ‘select facts’ which best agrees with the current social sentiment and/or attempts to influence that sentiment by directing the flow of thought within. In either case, the results show that though the first may be a better ‘interpretations of a situation, the latter is often more persuasive because it is designed to affect one’s emotions. Consequently the latter often becomes generally accepted as correct, thus, fulfilling its aim to shape mood and/or create a particular type of behaviour and/or thought. This is in fact one of the most fascinating evolutionary trends in the interpretation of the Goan history and its discussion indeed has something to do with the current ‘crisis of identity’ within which some Goans found themselves in the Post-liberation era.

What we find in the annals of history today is that until the Portuguese made their presence felt and were respected in Goa, there were very few accounts of the social history of people in that region. We know about them in relation to their economic activities, political leadership, and one or two folk arts and temple zatras. We know that they were Hindus and tribal’s Owing to the prejudice against them by the Muslims and the lives which were lost on account of cultural differences Still, what we know about the pre-Portuguese era in Goa has been obtained through the observations of travellers, missionaries and records within the temples such as taxes, population, numbers of marriages, satis, etc.
However, scholars were able to determine some particular aspects of a community’s culture and identity through historical records. During the Middle Ages when the Muslim armies imposed their religion and customs on the people, for example, the position of women in Goan society declined. Likewise, more the battles that occurred in a region, the less their rulers worried about cultural differences and the more they tried to create an identity which would cause men to take up arms in defence of their ruling dynasty. Politics, it is soon discovered, plays a significant role in the formation of regional and subsequently cultural identity in the early days the highest point of secular identification was centred around dynasties and local chieftains. Later some individuals in Goa identified with Portugal and following liberation, the common man was asked to identify with his state and nation. Given that much of a community’s ‘cultural identity’ is both political and economic at the cores much can be inferred from the political and economic history of people as seen through the ruling administrations. Generally, the less certain communities were in contact with any particular ruling power, the less the customs, language and lifestyle of those people were influenced. However, the more dominating and pervasive the ruling power, the more culturally conditioned the people would become.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the historical background of Bicholim taluka of North Goa in since 1510 A.D in special contest to the brief political history of Goa, particularly beginning from the first conclusive records in 300 B.C. to the most recent political developments leading to the creation of Goa, a state in the Indian nation. Knowledge of this ancient political history is necessary in order to more fully understand the various cultural, economic and political forces that arrived in Goa and exerted their control and influence over the region and its inhabitants. It helps to place in proper perspective the advent of the Portuguese along the
time-line of Goa as well as set the backdrop for the events which culminated in liberation. In addition to helping to discover the past and explain the present, an outline of classical Goan history enables the scholar to predict what may happen in the future course of events in Goa.

An outline of Political History of Goa with reference to Bicholim taluka

**Political History of Goa**

Stories of genesis abound in the world. But the history of the Goa and also perhaps the entire west coast is tied to the legend of *Parshurama* and creation of the west coast of the Arabian Sea. The legend of Parshuram – the Aryan war hero has definitely travelled down from north, from the areas of Vedic Sanskrit influence. It differs from the folk narrative of genesis in which Parshurama has no role. This shows a clash of cultures in Goa & Konkan – between the dominant Vedic settlers and the indigenous abstract nature worshiping non – sanskrit

The historical scientific fact, however, remains that Holocene sea-levels change (10-20,000 B.C.) uplifted considerable part of Goa and Konkan from the receding waters of the Arabian Sea. A new rich land was created to which were witness pre-history humans – an event unprecedented and powerfull enough to live selective impressions on the pre-historic folks. It appears that this folk imprint was skillfully employed by Brahminic legend makers at later period to glorify Parshurama’s role.28

Archaeological evidence found in Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka show that Homo-sapiens or the primitive humans entered this region around one lakh years ago. The discovery of the petroglyphic rock
art in South Goa in 1993 has shown that the ‘hunter food – gatherer culture was very much evolved in Goa around 10,000 B.C. 29

Practically, the whole of Goa is covered by the rocks of Dharwar super group of Archaean Proterozoic age except a strip in the north eastern part of the state which is covered by the Deccan trap of the Upper Cretaceous – lower Eocene age. Roughly the upper group is called the Goa group. Bicholim formations include Chloritic Amphibole Schist, ferruginous pink phylite and manganese, iron. 30

The above outline was created to give the reader an overview before delving into the more detailed aspects of the history of Goa. Goa’s history has been well-documented from the information available and an exhaustive study of this subject is not undertaken in this work. However in order to understand the Goan culture and identity it is necessary to have at least fundamental knowledge regarding the political and economic history of a region. Goa as its current size and statehood is a new construction dating only from 1987. Prior to that it was under the Portuguese administration from roughly 1510, and only four of the 11 talukas experienced her culture directly. The other areas were occupied by the Portuguese much later in the late 1700’s and were used as a ‘Buffer Zone’ between the British and the Portuguese imperial powers. Prior even to the Portuguese the region of Goa was ruled by petty chiefs, Hindu dynasties and Muslim army. The history outlined below is that of political history, which is important in the understanding of identity and culture.

The earliest known records of the Bhoja empire date from the 3rd century B.C. (time of Ashoka), and were found in the town of Shiroda, 31 41 kilometers from Panaji. However, human settlement had been living in Goa for many years prior to the Bhoja Empire, and were Predominantly tribal
leading a seminomadic existence as herdsmen, fishermen and early farmers. Theirs was an oral language and culture, however, and few records have been left to posterity. Their religion combined elements of animism and belief in spirits and many of these early beliefs are still visible in the religious rituals of these communities today.

According to Puranic tradition, the Bhojas belonged to a sub-group of the Yadavas of the Aryan race of Kaikeyas and settled in the Konkan during the 3rd century B.C. Two copper plate grants were also unearthed in the village of Bandora in Ponda taluka, written by King Bhoja Prithvimallavarman. Another copper plate of the Bhoja dynasty dated from the late 5th and early 6th centuries A.D., was found in the Hiregutti village near Karwar (South of Goa). From the 4th to the 7th centuries A.D. historians have concluded that the Bhoja rulers of Chandrapur were ruling over a region that included Goa, Belgaum and North Kanara. These records are sustained by the current Christians of Chandor (modern-day Chandrapur) known as Charddos, who claim their ancestors were the original Kshatriyas of the ancient Bhoja Empire.

Another copper plate of Bhoja dynasty discovered at village Hiregutti in Kumta taluka of North Kanara district of Karnataka registers the grant made by king Asankitraja of the Bhoja lineage, to a Buddhist Vihar in the village Sundarika in the Dipaka Vishaya. The same is identified with Sunderpeth area in Bicholim. Lamgao hamlet in Bicholim has the cave believed by local tradition as Vihar used by Buddhist monks.

By the 2nd century B.C., Krishna Satakarni of the Satavahanas annexed the region of the Konkan, including the territories of the Bhojas. The Satavahanas had been ruling in areas in the South of India and claimed that they belonged to the clan of Manavya’s. Under them, Kolhapur was
the capital and Chandrapur remained as a major commercial city ruled still by the Bhojas, who had since become the feudatories of the Satavahanas. Their reign lasted until the 4th century A.D., when their territories in the Konkan and western Maharashtra were conquered by the Abhir King Ishvarasena.\textsuperscript{33}

Thus, began the Kalachuri (Chedi Samant) era in the years 249-50 B.C. The Traikutakas established themselves as the feudatories of Abhir. His rule was effective until the mid-400’s A.D. when King Dahrasena performed the Ashvamedha sacrifice and afterwards declared himself independent from his overlord Abhir\textsuperscript{34} by 416 A.D. The former’s son Vyaghrasena ruled over the Konkan from 465-92 AD. Until the mid-6th century the Kalachuris were ruling over the Konkan, though their rule was contested by the Chalukyas of Badami on several occasions.\textsuperscript{35} Eventually the Kalachuris placed the Mauryas in charge of the south Konkan and the Mauryan Kings, Chandravarman and Anirjitavarman, were the only Kings known to have ruled over this territory during the 6th and 7th centuries.\textsuperscript{36}

The reign of the Chalukyas of Badami dates from 540 A.D.,\textsuperscript{37} and they are thought to be princes belonging to the Manavya Gotra (family line). In 543 A.D., Pulakeshi I, the first prince of the family, established his capital at Badami. He defeated the Maurya King Anirjitvarman and gave his lands to Swamiraja, also of the Chalukya family. The latter established his headquarters in Rewatidwipa (modern-day Reddi in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra) just across the northern border of modern-day Goa. He had two sons; Mangalesha and Kirtivarman, the former who ruled from 597 to 610 A.D. During his reign he ousted King Buddharaaja (son of Samkaragana) and conquered the Northern territories up to the Kim River in 602 A.D. Mangalesha was also responsible for the death of Swamiraja
who betrayed him and sided with King Buddharaaja right before Mangalesha entered his territories to defeat the King. He also uprooted the Mauryas in the North part by the early 600’s. Kirtivarman, Pulakeshī’s second son, expelled the Mauryas by 578 A.D. in the South Konkan.

The Nerur copper plate issued by Chalukya Prince Mangalesha during the reign of Emperor Kirtivarman dated about saka 500 and A.D. 578 refers to the grant of Village Kundiwataka from the Konkan Vishaya. Kundiwataka is identified with the village Cudnem from Bicholim taluka.\(^{38}\)

Mangalesha’s son, Pulakeshi II, helped expand and consolidate the Chalukya Empire. In 610 A.D. he began his reign and annexed the North Konkan after defeating the Konkan Mauryas. In 613 A.D. he defeated Harshavardhana, Lord of North India who was attempting to expand his empire in to the Deccan. Upon his defeat, Pulakeshi II acquired the title of Parameshwara (Lord Paramount) and became the ruler of three countries. His fame spread far and wide and an ambassador from Persia was sent to establish trade relations. Pulakeshi’s second son Vikramaditya succeeded him from 654 81 A.D. He was known for stopping the rebellion of three Kings on different occasions. His son, Vijayaditya, advanced to the throne of the Chalukyas at Badami from 680-96. Vijayaditya succeeded his father from 696-733-34 A.D., whose empire at that time extended as far north as Gujarat. He ruled for 37 years, was awarded the title of Niravadya Sahasarasika (conquest in Chalukya history) and encouraged art, culture and learning throughout his kingdom. He was succeeded by Vikramaditya II (733-34-745 A.D.). During his reign, the Tajakas (Arabs) invaded the region of Gujarat in the Chalukya territory.

In 742 A.D., Rashtrakuta Dantidurga defied Kirtivarman and the Chalukyan forces,\(^{39}\) defeated their armies, and placed the Chalukyan
princes as his feudatories. He laid the foundation for the Rashtrakuta dynasty of Manyakheta, which had effective Control over the Deccan, Karnataka, and Gujarat from 753 to 973 A.D. He reigned supreme in Malkhed and Maharashtra. In 980 A.D. he was overthrown by the Chalukyas of Kalyani around 980 A.D. and the Deccan was once again come under the control of Chalukyas. The Konkan including Goa, was considered a feudatory province and as far as the Goan people were concerned, they were ruled by the Shilaharas from 750 A.D. to 1020 A.D.

Under the Shilaharas, a succession of rulers exercised control over the region including Goa. Shanaphulla had lordship over the territory from 765 to 795 A.D., followed by Dhaminiyara from 795 to 820 A.D. Aiyapa, a Vijigishu ruler, invaded Chandrapur and held sway over these territories from 820 to 845 A.D., before being usurped by Avasara I who ruled for the next 25 years. Under his command, the power and influence of the Shilaharas increased and they held sway over the whole of the Konkan from Goa to Thane. He was followed by Avasar II (895-920 A.D.) and then by Indraraja between 920-945 A.D. Under the former the empire expanded, but the latter was content to rule the region and did not engage in expansionary battles. During the reign of Bhima (945-970 A.D.), attempts began by the Kadambas to become feudatories of Chandrapur. He was forced to invade the city to stop the Kadamba insurgence. Avasara III (970-995 A.D.) was the next in the line of succession, and his son Guhallasdeva (980-1005 A.D.) also seemed to be ruling at this time. With Rattaraja (995-1020 A.D.), the reign of the Goa Shilaharas came to end. Amongst the grants made by Rattaraja through Kharepatan Copper plates, one grant in Saka 932 corresponding to 24th December A.D. 1010 mentions a plot of land named Kalvala from the village Bhaktagram. Bhaktagram Village is identified with the present Bicholim which is also mentioned as Bhatgram. Jayasimha II, brother of Chalukya Vikramaditya Vth, invaded the Konkan
in 1024 A.D. and helped to capture the territories under the Shilaharas. The Shilaharas had been faithful feudatories of the Rashtrakutas, but owing to a war over the Deccan which divided the two Shilahara families, they were susceptible to attacks from outside forces.

The Kadamba Dynasty

The Kadamba Dynasty ruled over Goa and the south Konkan as feudatories of the Chalukyas of Kalyani from 973- 1162 A.D., and later under the Yadavas of Devagiri. They had made common cause with the Chalukyas of Kalyani for the overthrow of the Rashtrakutas, which was a successful venture. Under the Kadambas, the main capital was shifted from modern day Chandor to Vodlem Goem (Velha Goa). The Kadamba Dynasty is considered by historians to have begun in 1008 A.D., owing to unearthed records of their dynasty found in Goa and other outlying regions which date back to that year. Shasthadeva I was the founder of the Goa Kadambas and his reign coincided with that of the Chalukya King Taila II, who overthrew the Rashtrakutas and established his new empire at the city of Kalyani in the Deccan by 973 A.D. in 1020 A.D. The next Kadamba King was Jayakeshi I who reigned from 1052-80 A.D. He was very influential and appointed the Arab merchant leader Chhaddama as governor of Gopaka, the then prosperous mercantile city on the mouth of the Zuari River. Jayakeshi I created a powerful navy at the city’s Port (Velakuia) to protect the Arab traders and their merchandise. He further developed that city and made it Gopakapattana, the capital of his Kingdom. Under his administration many Arabs were appointed to high official positions. In the later years of his reign he defeated King Mummim of the Thana Shilaharas (1045- 70 A.D.) which was the result of another civil war between the two Shilahara families. His successor, Guhaladeva III, took over in 1081 and was the first Kadamba King to be titled “Gopakapura vardhishva” (Lord of
Gopaka, the best of the towns). His younger brother is also mentioned in early records dating from 1081 to 1104, and historians surmise that he might have shared power with his elder brother Guhalladeva III. The latter is remembered as a pious ruler who promoted the establishment of monasteries, patronised the arts and gave financial grants to centres dedicated to Vedic instruction. Guhalladeva III also encouraged the settlement of Brahmin communities into Gopaka. A copper plate grant of 1106 A.D. refers to the ‘establishment of a Brahmapuri of 12 Brahmin families and an image of the Goddess Saraswati’ in Gopaka, the then capital of the kingdom. (Hence, the probable origin of the Gaud Saraswat migration). During his reign the maritime power of the Kadambas declined and their rule was again contested by rising powers from all sides.

Thus, when Jayakeshi II succeeded Guhalladeva in 1104 A.D., the power of the Kadambas reached its zenith. Their rule was attacked from all sides and by 1122 A.D. the Kadambas were compelled to recognize the supremacy of the Chalukyas. Jayakeshi II held out, however, and during his reign peace, prosperity, and progress were the defining characteristic. The next ruler, Shivachittapermadideva (1147-81 A.D.) promoted arts and learning. His wife Kamaladevi instigated the construction of two temples; the first dedicated to Kamalanarayana and the second in reverence of Mahalakshmi. As the Kadambas hailed from the South, Kannada was their official language and most records from this period were written in that language, a few in Sanskrit. During the Vijayaditya II (1180-88 A.D.), several attempts were made by outside powers to subdue the Kadamba dynasty. Jayakeshi III took the reign from his father and ruled from 1186-1216 A.D. He was succeeded by Sovideva from 1212-38 A.D., the latter who coined the Royal symbol of the Kadambas in the raised palm of the
lion’s left foot. He ruled independently from his brothers, but the Kadambas generally were feudatories of the Kalyani Chalukyas.

The Goa Kadambas used the epithet which indicated their family God: “Sri Saptakotisvara–deva” and had donned the titles “Sri Saptakotishvar labdhvaraprasad” and “Nijaradhya Sri Saptakotisvaradev.” It may be noted that the Saptakoteshwar temple presently at Narve in Bicholim originally existed at Old Narve in Divar Village of Tiswadi taluka.

During the reign of Sovideva, the Yadavas were busy gaining control over the Deccan under the Emperor Singhana II (1209-47). Their Royal emblems were the golden eagle and the God Hanuman and they controlled a total of 84 fortresses with their capital at Devagiri. In 1020 A.D., during the reign of Shasthadeva II, the Bhojas tried to recapture the north Konkan, but were not successful in their attempts. In the years 1218-19 A.D. he conquered the Bhojas and acquired their territories. Ramchandra was the 9th Yadava King whose territories included the Deccan, Konkan and Karnataka by 1294 A.D. His reign coincided with that of the First Khilji Emperor of Delhi (1288-94 A.D.) and within a few years the two met and forever changed the evolution of history on the Western Konkan coast.

The Medieval Rulers

The period between 1294 and 1335 A.D. was characterized as a time of chaos and confusion owing to Muslim invasions and the rise of petty chiefs. Though the succession of the Delhi Sultanate seemed inevitable owing to their growing power and compulsion for territorial expansion, the Kadamba King Ramchandra was able to prevent the imposition of their rule even after they defeated him in 1294. Alla-ud-din
(nephew to the first Khilji emperor) gained control over the capital city of Devgiri in a surprise attack against the Kadambas. The Yadavas, who served as their overlords, had been weakened by the Muslim invasions and the ancient conflict between the Kadamba and the Hoysala houses ended only in 1301 in favour of the Kadambas. Ramchandra worked alongside of the Muslim conquerors to maintain the kingdom, but his son Shankar fought against this new dominating power. In 1312 A.D. he withheld tribute (tax) from Malik Kafur, who in retaliation attacked and looted the main cities of Shankar’s territory and murdered the ruler himself. Gopakapattana was also burned and looted at this time, after which the Kadambas retreated to their old capital at Chandrapur (Chandor). In 1315 A.D. Harpaladeva succeeded Shankardeva, but by this time his was merely a puppet administration. When he also slighted the Delhi Sultans in 1318 A.D., the Emperor Mubarik (1317-21 A.D.) invaded the Deccan and killed Harpaladeva. In 1325 A.D. Muhammad Tughluk was given the task of subduing the distant provinces, and under the Muslim armies again invaded the Konkan and destroyed the Kadamba capital of Chandrapur. From 1327 to 1336 A.D the Muslim invasions ceased and the Kadambas again regained control over the Konkan territories. King Bhimabhupal ruled Pernem as a feudatory of the Kadambas and Govapuri became the administrative centre. By 1347 A.D., Malerajya and Palasige, which formerly belong to the Kadambas, now fell under the empire of Vijayanagar from the South.

Muhammad Tughluk set his aims towards making Devgiri the capital of his empire, which by now included all but the Southern portion of India. By the end of 1358, the Kingdom of Alla-ud-din Hassan Shah, from the Bahamani family, extended from Mandu in the North to Raichur in the South; from Bhongir in the East to Dabol and Goa in the West. Due
to its size, he was forced to divide his kingdom under four separate
governments. From 1358 to 1375, he followed a policy of Hindu
persecution which was also felt in Goa. As the persecution of Hindus
reached its peak around 1360, many were compelled to migrate to north
towards Sangameshvar or South to the Kanara district and beyond. The
Gaud Saraswat Brahmins formed a part of this migration wave and formed
the Chitrapur group of Saraswat Brahmins.

Rebellions against the Muslim invasions were common, and in
1365 a battle between Muslims and Govindadev (the Maratha chief of the
Naiks) supported by other petty Naik chiefs occurred. The latter collusion
was defeated decisively, and in 1380 the Muslims gained absolute control
over the Konkan and part of the Vijayanagar Empire. They regained some
of their empire and by 1390 the Araga-Gutti province was separated and
Mallap-Odeym became the Vice-Royalty of Goa in 1391. In 1396 under
the Wodeyar Empire, Bachanna-Wodeyar extended the boundaries of the
kingdom of Goa-Gutti and continued as Viceroy of Goa until 1406.
Bachanna is thought to be the last Viceroy of the Goa-Konkan Empire
under the Wodeyars (Vijayanagar Kingdom). Savana (1412-13), was the
first to rule among the later Vijayanagar administrators of the Goa-gutti
Kingdom. In 1415 Trimbakadev was appointed as the administrator of Goa
and was given the title of Immadi Deva Raya. In 1422, during the
administration of Mallarasa, Chandra-Gutti was separated from Goa and
annexed to the province of Hampi.

After 1445, there are no records or names of Viceroys’ in the
annuls of history, and it seems likely that Goa was administered by local
chiefs (Naiks) from that time. Similarly, those territories to the immediate
North and South were also ruled by independent Chalukya chiefs. Goa was
probably under the jurisdiction of Bankapur at this time, whose Appaji
Chiefs were administering the territories when they were conquered by the Bahamani Sultans in 1472.

**Era of the Bahamani Sultanate**

During the 1460’s, the Bahamanis attempted to dominate the territories in the Konkan. The Marathas who were in possession of those lands defended such invasions, and retaliated by pirating the vessels of the Muslims which called at the Port of Goa Velha. In 1469 this piracy reached its height and the result was a serious decline in the commercial activities and revenue of the Arab traders. Consequently, the Bahamanis invaded Goa and the Konkan coast for three years continuously, after which time all the forts in Goa and surrounds were completely subdued in 1472. The Bahamani army then invaded the city of Goa and acquired it for their empire in that same year. The Marathas tried in vain to recapture their territories, but by the end of that year both Goa and the Belgaum regions were annexed by the Bahamani Empire. Fakr-ul-Mulk became the governor of the forts in Goa and Belgaum.

In 1490 Bahadur Gilani, the governor of the Konkan under the Bahamanis, openly revolted and declared the territories of Goa and Belgaum as his independent kingdom. He was easily defeated by the Bahamani army who annexed his territories and took his life In 1500 the three most powerful Bahamani nobles agreed to divide the kingdom which had reached such extensive limits. The Commander of Goa agreed to acknowledge Yusuf Adilshah of Bijapur as his Sovereign and the whole of the Konkan south of the Bankot River came under the domain of Bijapur. However, the administration was such that the villagers experienced relatively few of these changes. They were under the supervision of the village Gaonkars, who were chiefs by inheritance and were of the Dessai,
Sardessai and Maratha families. The latter in turn owed their allegiance to a succession of overlords which eventually made its way through the ranks until finally reaching Yusuf Adil Khan himself.

**From Voddlem Goem to Old Goa**

Owing to the silt which had collected in the harbour of the Zuari river as well as the devastating attacks on Voddlem Goem by the Bahamani armies, the capital of Goa was moved to Old Goa (Ela village) during the Bahamani administration. This new city was located on the Mandovi River which also had the topographical advantage and easily defensible harbour. Owing to the international traffic and trade brought by the Arabs, the city of Old Goa soon gained importance as the main centre for international commerce. By 1510 it was an entirely Muslim city inhabited by Moors, Hindu gentry, foreigners and a standing army. They maintained a roaming sea fleet which protected ships from piracy and the construction of ships from Oak wood was a city specialty. Horses from Ormuz, muslin, spices, betel and areca nuts, food stuffs and a variety of other items from emporium-around the world were traded from here.

**Arrival of the Portuguese**

It was this city which the Portuguese discovered and coveted when they landed on the island of Anjediva off the coast of modern-day South Goa and built a fort there in 1505. They were helped in their aims by Timoja, who was the brother to the King of Honawar, Malharrao. The latter was a well-respected King by the Naiks (chieftains) in Goa and belonged to the Vijayanagar Empire. The latter had been trying unsuccessfully to oust the Muslims from the Konkan territories, and hoped that the Portuguese would come to their assistance. The people were weary of the heavy tax burden on the villages and trade activity. In addition, recent victory the
Portuguese had over the combined forces of the Sultans of Egypt and Gujarat had boosted their morale to an unprecedented level.

Thus, with Timoja’s help, the Portuguese defeated the troops of the Panjim Fort on 1st, March 1510. The armies of Adilshah did not go quietly, however and they gathered in the forts of Banastarim, Cortalim, and Dhavji to launch a counter-attack. Meanwhile, to discourage the Muslim troops, Albuquerque burnt down the Muslim city of Old Goa and beheaded some well known Muslims who had been held prisoner in the fort. A naval battle followed, and the islands were recaptured. Not until their second attack on November 25, 1510 did the Portuguese gain control of the islands of Goa, Chorao and Divar. This time, Adilshah surrendered peacefully and the majority of Turkish and Egyptian residents left Goa to escape the clutches of Albuquerque. Timoja, as a reward for his services, was made the chief magistrate over all of Goa’s citizens and was given revenue from the islands of Divar and Chorao.

Once Goa fell to the Portuguese, the Samorin (Zamorin) of Calicut and the Sultan of Gujarat made their peace with the Portuguese, at least for the time being. Consequently, from 1509-15 Afonso de Albuquerque solidified his control over the recently conquered Goa Islands, and further gained control of Malacca in 1511, whose port was considered the key to trade with China. In that same year, however, Puladh Shah, who had been gathering an armed force at Banastarim, again tried to recapture Goa from the Portuguese. The Vijayanagar emperor offered help against Shah’s forces in return for a regular supply of Arabian horses. Together they routed the Muslim forces but again in 1534 war broke out to contest the Portuguese acquisition of Salcete and Bardez, which Ashad Khan had demanded them to return to his territory. In this first battle, Khan attacked the Rachol Fort with a force of 10,000, sorely defeated the Portuguese and
destroyed the Fort. In 1540 the Muslim armies again attacked Salcette, destroyed the newly constructed church of Salcette and burnt and looted several villages Vijayanagar again assisted and in the final outcome by the end of 1543 the islands of Salcette, Bardez, and Tiswadi (Ilhas) period also witnessed the capture of Bassein, Chaul, Honavar, Basrur, Mangalore, Cannanore, and Quilon.

In 1570, however, those rulers displeased by the Portuguese formed an alliance to oust the latter from their possessions on the West Coast of India. The Adilshah of Bijapur, Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar, the Samorin of Calicut, the Queen of Gersoppa (N. Kanara), the Queen of Ullala (S.Kanara) and the King of Achen (East Indies) attacked on the Portuguese but were successfully defeated under the captaincy of Luis de Ataide.  

**Annexation by Spain**

Between 1580 and 1640 Portugal came under the sovereignty of the King of Spain, Phillip II. He annexed the Portuguese territories and as a result the latter’s attention was diverted towards issues pertaining to the mother country, specifically the recapture of lands annexed by Spain. Troops were needed in the mother country, thus, the Spanish monarchy also contributed to the neglect of Portugal’s eastern empire. Meanwhile, the Dutch, who were at war with Spain, thus entered into war with Spain’s annexed territory with whom they were no longer permitted to trade. Consequently the Dutch set sail for India and rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1597. In 1604 they established an alliance with the Zamorin of Calicut with an aim to obtain spices and oust the Portuguese from their possessions. Between 1636 and 1641 the Dutch effected a blockade at the mouth of the Mandovi River in Goa which proved detrimental to the
Portuguese colony. In 1639 the Dutch burnt three Portuguese places of worship in the Mormugao harbour and caused an estimated loss of 1,500 men and 155 ships in total between 1580 and 1640. In 1640 the territory of Ceylon fell to the Dutch and in 1641 Malacca was also lost by the Portuguese to the Dutch. Between 1641 and 1644 the Dutch naval fleet again blocked the Goa Port, causing considerable financial loss to the latter. Even after a treaty between the Spanish and Dutch was established in 1648, the hostilities between the Portuguese and the Dutch on the Western Coast of India intensified. The Dutch continued to attack on the Portuguese forts and by the end of the rivalry in the late 1660’s the Portuguese had lost most of their forts except for Diu, Daman, Bassein, Chaul and the three talukas of Goa (Tiswadi, Bardez, and Salcette). An alliance between the English and the Dutch had resulted in the cessation of Bombay Island to the British in 1661 and in the end the commercial relations of the Portuguese had been substantially affected.

**Influence of the Marathas**

Just as the Dutch attacks diminished, the Marathas led by Shivaji began to prepare for territorial expansion. The Portuguese became concerned with their activities as Shivaji extended his territories into the Konkan region and began to establish a naval fleet. By the end of 1659 he had amassed a fleet of 20 warships and had erected forts at Bhivandi, Kalyan and Panvel. The Portuguese, fearing that the Maratha troops would attempt to capture Goa, refused to allow his fleet to enter the Portuguese ports. Caution is the word which best describes the Portuguese attitude towards the Maratha leader during this time, because although they had a superior naval fleet, the Marathas had more territory and able-bodied men in their domains.
Shivaji requested help from the Portuguese to defeat his bitter enemy, Adilshah. Mir Mohammad Qasim was the Adilshahi Subhedar at Bicholim in 1663. The latter declined, however, not wishing to upset the balance of power which had stabilised in the Deccan. Shivaji continued with his plans, however, and captured Kudal (north of Goa), Pernem, and Bicholim from Adii Shah. The Dessai family including Ravlu Shenvi of Bicholim gave assistance to Adilshah as they were his feudatories and were provided asylum in Goa after the successful capture of their territories by the Marathas. In 1665, fuelled by his conquest, Shivaji signed a treaty with Jai Singh, against his rival Adilshah. Their combined forces defeated Adilshah’s general, Khawas Khan, on the Konkan coast, yet throughout the war the Portuguese kept a neutral stance. In 1666, Shivaji besieged Ponda, a territory still belonged to Adilshah, and at that point the Portuguese decided to enter the war on the side of the Adilshah. Latter in retaliation, the Maratha troops attacked Bardez in 1667, burnt and plundered many villages, took hostages, and caused sporadic violence for three days in succession. Shivaji justified his invasion on the grounds that Goa was harbouring the Dessais who were heavily involved in activity directed against the Maratha leader, and for helping Adilshah by sending Portuguese troops to man the garrison at Ponda. Other reasons for the invasion were less obvious; the Maratha leader needed finances to continue his invasions and the Dutch encouraged hostilities against their European enemy. On 5th December, 1667, a treaty was established between the two rivals which involved the return of captives, the expulsion of the Dessais from Goa if they made further incursions into Maratha territory the payment of tax in commercial dealings, the sale of arms to the Marathas if necessary and the decision to negotiate before entering into formal war.
The treaty was short-lived, however, for in October 1668 the Portuguese discovered that Shivaji had amassed 8-10,000 troops and was planning to invade Goa. Because the Portuguese made it known that they knew of the secret attack, the battle did not occur. In 1672, however Shivaji attacked the King of Ramnagar, the latter who had ceded some territory of Daman to the Portuguese in exchange for a regular payment of tax. Shivaji then demanded that the tax be paid to him, whereupon the Portuguese entered into an alliance with King of Ramnagar and assisted him with resources and troops in battle against Shivaji. In 1677, King of Ramnagar was defeated and the Marathas, to punish the Portuguese for assisting the former, planned to attack Goa. Preparations for war started on both the sides, but owing to Shivaji’s sudden death in 1680, peace was established for two years.

This was again Short-lived, for Shivaji’s successor Sambhaji was as determined as his predecessor to expand his territories beyond those which already existed. In 1682, Sambhaji for then time being requested for peaceful relations with the Portuguese to enable him to attack and defeat his other rival Rajaram, but the Portuguese had already concluded that they could not trust the Marathas. In 1682, upon learning that the Mughals planned to attack Sambhaji, the Portuguese agreed to allow them safe passage through their territories. In 1683 Sambhaji captured Chaul and destroyed the Ponda Fort On 11, December 1683, Sambhji’s troops entered Bardez and attacked, plundered, and burnt several villages. Tivim Fort fell to the Marathas and the Chapora fort fell without firing a single shot. Concurrently, the Maratha army attacked Goa from the South, entered Salcette and destroyed the churches in Margao. The villagers of Assolna and Cuncolim agreed to become Maratha subjects and the troops stationed themselves in Salcete to prepare for an attack against Tiswadi.
The Mughals Descend on the Konkan

At this point of time, the Portuguese were in an extremely vulnerable position owing to the loss of many men, resources and the lack of necessary reinforcements from other colonies. Sambhaji’s forces could have easily routed the Portuguese in Tiswadi while they were in such a depressed state. Yet, before the Marathas could realise their goal, a massive Mughal army descended from the Deccan led by Shah Alam (son of Aurangzeb) and arrived in Bicholim ready for war with the Maratha forces on 15\textsuperscript{th} January, 1684.\textsuperscript{55}

The Mughal forces captured and plundered Bicholim, defeated Sambhaji decisively in 1684. They established a friendship with the Portuguese, the latter whom allowed them a safe passage through their territories through the Chapora River. In that same year, Sambhaji signed a treaty with the Portuguese which restored to the latter all lands, forts, armaments and provisions taken as the spoils of war. Sambhaji also pardoned his bitter enemies, the Dessais, and agreed not to construct forts along the borders of Portuguese territory. The Portuguese, in return, agreed to pay them the tax from the territories of Daman on time and in full.

Though the Portuguese seemed to have established peaceful relations with her neighbours at this point in time, the events which followed proved quite the opposite. Neither party lived up to the treaty nor did the Forts of Bardez remain in the possession of the Marathas. They again began stationing troops at Ponda with the goal to capture Tiswadi and the Marathas continued with sporadic attacks until 1689. The friendship established with the Mughals similarly proved negative and, Aurangzeb instructed his son Shah Alam to capture Goa by force while maintaining a facade of alliance. As the Portuguese discovered that their allies were truly
enemies, they entered into an alliance with the Dessais of the Konkan in 1685 against Sambhaji.

In March 1689, however, the Mughal forces raided Maratha territories, killed Sambhaji. This outraged and united the Maratha forces and further led to the Dessais joining in against the Mughals. Sambhaji’s successor Rajaram, however, was unprepared to continue where Sambhaji had left off and immediately offered to form an alliance with the Portuguese before retreating to Jinji in Karnataka. The Portuguese decided to keep a neutral stance; however, Goa soon became a place of political asylum. They remained neutral and peace existed between Rajaram and the Portuguese administration until the former’s death in 1700. His successor was not as peace-oriented and in October 1702, the Maratha army invaded Ponda which had been under the control of the Mughals since 1689 (when it was captured from Sambhaji). It was again recovered by the Mughals in 1705, and given in 1707 by the Mughal army to the care of the King of Sonda who was a feudatory of the former.

**Rise of the Bhonsles of Sawantwadi**

Meanwhile, a new local chieftain was making an appearance on the Goan stage and in 1698 the Bhonsles captured Bicholim, Pernem and Sanquelim (modern Sattari) from the Mughals stationed in those territories. In 1705 the Portuguese invaded the Bhonsle territories and destroyed the forts erected at Amona in Bicholim Taluka and Volvoi. In 1706 the fort of Bicholim was likewise captured, and in 1707 Panelim and Corjuem were captured by the Portuguese armies. Ponda was offered to the Portuguese in 1716 by the Mughals, but they declined the offer preferring to consolidate and fortify their existing areas.
After 1707 the Portuguese relations with the Marathas steadily deteriorated and in 1717 the latter attacked and plundered many villages in Salcete. This southern taluka was again invaded on 23rd January 1739 by Venkatrao Ghorpade and Dadajirao Bhave Nargundkar at the instance of Peshwa Bajirao-I and owing to the weakness of the Portuguese, fell to the Marathas three days later on the 26th, following Margao. Soon all of Salcette, excepting the Forts of Rachol and Mormugao came under the domain of the Marathas forces. The Marathas also took Sanguem, Supem, and Ponda, the latter territory which helped them in their invasion. However, Bhave in an act of betrayal, receded from Goa after signing a pact with the Portuguese. That same year Ramachandra and Jayaram Sawant, rulers of Kudal, invaded the neighbouring territory in the South, Bardez, with the encouragement of the Marathas. Following their invasion, the entire region excepting the Forts of Aguada and Reis Magos came under the sway of the Bhonsles. In 1739 the Portuguese opened negotiations with Peshwa, wherein the Marathas demanded the end of the Inquisition and the right of the Hindus to live by their own moral code and way of life. A second treaty signed in 1740 in Bombay ceded Chaul and Morro (Korle) to the Marathas. The latter agreed to withdraw from Cuncolim and Assolna in return for the cession of the territories adjacent to Daman and those of Bassein.

The Bhonsles would not leave Bardez and except for the aforementioned Forts of Aguada and Reis Magos under the Portuguese, they controlled the entire region. The treaty of 1740 gave the Portuguese back the Bardez region, but in 1741 the Bhonsles again waged war against the Portuguese hoping to capture all of their possessions. Were it not for the unexpected arrival of a British fleet off the coast of Goa, the Portuguese may not have been able to defend themselves against this latest attack. In
May 1741 the Viceroy Marques de Lourical arrived in Goa with reinforcements which together were able to expel the Bhonsles from Bardez.

In 1746 war again broke out between the Portuguese and the Bhonsles, the results of which put the Fort of Alorna in the hands of the Portuguese. The latter also entered into an alliance with the King of Sonda, the Ranes of Sanqueli, Quepem, and Manerim, whereby all transferred their loyalties to the Portuguese. On 23 November of that year, the Tiracol fort was captured from the Bhonsles and on 20 December the Reddi fort (on the Northern border of present-day Goa) also fell to the Portuguese. In 1752, the Portuguese again attacked the territory, including Fonda and made incursions into Canacona with 2,000 troops. During the monsoons of 1756 the then Viceroy Conde de Alva attempted to seize Mardangad (at Fonda) from the Marathas and lost both his life and territory in the ensuing battle. Confusion resulted in the Portuguese administration owing to the power vacuum left behind from the Viceroy’s unforeseen death and their defeat at Fonda. The Bhonsles used this time to their advantage and attacked the Portuguese in Pernem, Sanqueli, and Maneri. They besieged the Forts of Bicholim and Tiracol, and waged war until a new treaty was signed on 24 December 1761, which ceded the lands once again to the Bhonsles. In 1762, to counter the Maratha invasions, the Portuguese joined forces with the King of Sonda to regain control of Fonda for the King. In 1763 with assistance from Naraba Naik and the Dessais of Fonda, the Portuguese troops attacked the Fonda Fort (Mardangad) which surrendered two weeks later. The nominal sovereignty of Sonda over Fonda was subsequently recognised.
The Arrival of Hyder Ali

Hardly had the Portuguese and the King of Sonda had time to celebrate their victory when Hyder Ali of Mysore in that same year attacked Fonda and declared himself sovereign of all the lands owned by King Sonda. The latter took shelter in Goa and gave his territories of Fonda, Quepem and Canacona to the care of the Portuguese until he was capable of regaining them. In so doing, he saved the lands from Hyder Ali who wished to remain in friendship with Portugal. The King was given a yearly maintenance subsidy by the Portuguese and as he was unable to regain his lost lands, ceded them permanently to the Portuguese in 1771. This did not occur without argument as both the Peshwa Madhav Rao (overlord to the Sonda King) and Hyder Ali claimed ownership of the lands. The contesters also happened to be arch rivals and as their territories came into close proximity each solicited the aid of the Portuguese for help in defeating the other.

Thus, followed a general period of dissension and chaos between 1776 and 1782, in which the Portuguese took full advantage. Specifically, they coveted the land between Bardez and the Tiracol River to its North (Pernem) which belonged to the Khem Sawant, a Bhonsle of Sawantwadi. Consequently, when the Bhonsles asked the Portuguese for assistance in repelling the invasion from the North by the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur, they readily agreed. However once they ousted the invaders and seized the Forts of Bicholim and Sanquelim, they claimed these territories for the Portuguese empire. In 1782, war ensued to recover these lands from the Portuguese and in 1783 they hoisted the Portuguese flag over the Alorna Fort. In 1785, the armies of Kolhapur again descended into the territories of the Bhonsles, and the Bhonsles were again compelled to seek assistance from the Portuguese. In 1788, the latter agreed to help repel the Kolhapur
armies in return for the remaining lands of Pernem, thus succeeding in their original mission. Thus, by the end of 1788, the new conquests were complete and Pernem, Bicholim, Satan, Fonda, Quepem, Sanguem and Canacona all came under the domain of the Portuguese empire.

**Revolts**

During the Portuguese regime there had been a few attempts of revolt from the local elements. Fr Castro made the first attempt in 1654. Fr. Matheus Castro e Mahale was the Vicar Apostolic of Adilshahi Sultanate and he had made Bicholim town in that kingdom as the centre of his activities. His intention was to drive out the Portuguese and bring Goa under Adilshah’s rule. Many Hindus supported him in his efforts; however, due to leakage of information, Fr Castro’s revolt was not successful. But this event was a clear indication of the fact that the population at that time considered the Mohammedans more amenable than the Portuguese. Subsequently, in 1787 another attempt to overthrow the regime was made by the native priests and which came to be known as Pinto’s Revolt. Abe Faria, the famous hypnotist of international fame, was one of them and had to flee to France to avoid prosecution in Portugal.

This uprising was the result of injustice meted out to the local priest by the dominant Dominicans, Franciscans and Jesuits. Two learned priests led the movement, Fr Caetano Francisco Couto of Panaji and Fr Jose Antonio Gonsalves of Divar. Both were denied their rightful positions because of their coloured skin. Other native priests and some army officers promised them the necessary support. A priest named Fr Pinto had offered his house to the ‘conspirators’. Unfortunately, as in Castro’s case, rulers received prior intimation and the attempt failed.
After the conquest of Sattari the Portuguese had to face periodical armed attacks from the Ranes, the former rulers of the area. The revolt of 1852 under the leadership of Dipaji Rane gave a tough time to the Portuguese who were compelled to adopt a submissive stance before the Ranes. Mention must also be made of the British attempt to take over Goa. Fr C. F. Saldanha in his book ‘A short History of Goa’ refers to the offer of £500,000 made by the British to purchase Portuguese possession in Goa.

The Portuguese turned down the offer. During British-French war a battalion of the East India Co. had settled in Goa from 1799 to 1815 to help the British. The war ended and the East India Company left Goa.

**Liberation movement**

After India became independent in 1947, it was expected that the Portuguese would follow suit with the British and wind up their rule in Goa. However, they refused to follow the lead given by the British and the French (Pondicherry) on the grounds that Goa was not a colony but an overseas province of Portugal, since, as per dictator Salazar’s contention, Goans had imbibed and developed, over the years, a distinctive Portuguese culture and India had no business to annex the territory to its area. The liberation movement was given the spark by the socialist leader Dr Rammanohar Lohia in June 1946 through a display of civil disobedience. The Portuguese dealt with freedom fighters in an uncivilized manner. In 1954, the Portuguese possessions of Dadra and Nagar Haveli were liberated by Goan freedom fighters with the help of the local population. Since the nearby Portuguese possession of Daman had no direct road access to the liberated territories, the Portuguese took the issue to the International Court of Justice claiming the required free passage. The Court turned down the request in 1960. On 19 December 1961, Goa was liberated by the Indian
Army and the Tricolor Flag was hoisted on Goa’s Secretariat. The military rule, which was initially established, was soon replaced by civil rule. On 20 December 1963, the first popular ministry of the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party was sworn in. The Legislative Assembly of Goa passed on 22 January 1965 a resolution approving Goa’s merger with Maharashtra. The Government decided to hold an Opinion Poll on 16 January 1967 to decide whether Goa should be merged with Maharashtra or remain a Union Territory. The poll decided in favour of the latter alternative. Goa continued to function as Union territory till 30 May 1987 when the Government of India granted full-fledged statehood to Goa which became the 25th State of the Nation.

**Conclusion**

Goa’s political history prior to liberation, therefore, is hardly the tale of a homogeneous, integrated society. Rather, history demonstrates that the territories of Goa remained divided, ravaged by a series of political conquest and re-conquest throughout most of its history. While in the early years and medieval ages, these periods of rule were longer and more stable, the era ushered in by the Bahamanis a period of confusion, chaos, and rapidly changing administrations vying for control of the Konkan region. Under the Portuguese administration itself, the people were hardly united in their political and cultural identification. While many people in the old conquests felt compelled to identify with the policies and aims of the Portuguese colonists, those in the new conquests were busy fighting in the armies of the Marathas, the Bhonsles, the Dessais, and the Satari Ranes. Yet the events which took place in the new conquests had serious repercussions in the old, even though the people were isolated from each
other in the social sphere. At times the Portuguese were compelled to form alliances; in other instances they provided assistance in wars beyond their territorial boundaries.

With various layers of the ruling administration came also the high culture advocated by these individual administrations. These influences, though top-down, did influence the cultural identity of the people to a certain extent. During the rule of Ashoka, for example, Buddhism flourished in Goa and many institutions (monasteries) and cultural practices (meditation, non violence, etc.) were advocated as socio-cultural ideals. Later under the Kadamba dynasty, the culture and literature of south Kanara was patronised and as a result Kannada became the official language and Hinduism the ideal religion. During the rule of the Bahamanis certain Muslim practices were in vogue such as the use of slaves, the practices of polygamy, and the seclusion of women from the public eye. Following the latest historical administration the Portuguese language, religion, and culture were imposed upon and eventually accepted by the people with the result of a large Catholic community flourishing in Goa today. After Liberation and the realisation of ‘freedom’, all of these various cultural layers surfaced within particular communities. Today Muslims, Hindus, and Catholics practice their religions and lifestyles freely with little fear of persecution or economic insecurity.

Throughout these successive administrations, the ways of life of the tribal communities and their original mother tongue have survived and resurfaced among the Goan tribal communities of the present day. This continuance of tribal cultural forms despite constant persecution and condemnation is a remarkable example of cultural resilience in Indian society. Despite being labeled as ‘backward’ among all of the successive administrations, the communities of the Kunbis, Gaudas, and Dhangars
have remained intact, a bit worn down, for thousands of years. This is most likely because theirs is a culture born from within and based upon the cycles of life and nature rather than one borrowed, imposed, or otherwise adopted by a people from a ruling administration. The existence of the tribal culture in modern-day Goa, thus, exposes the paradox surrounding the origins of cultural identity. While a ruling administration has the ability to impose its laws, language, religion, and economic structure on the ruled society, the foundations of that particular human culture arose from within and have the ability to withstand the most powerful of destructive forces.
Fig. 1.1
Plate No. 1 – Map of North Goa District
Source: Administrative Atlas (Census of India 2001)
Fig. 1.2
Plate No. 2 – Map of Bicholim Taluka

Source: Administrative Atlas (Census of India 2001)
Notes and References


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