

Growth and poverty

Amidst India Inc's euphoria over the big-bang reform measures suggested in the Finance Ministry's Economic Survey 2008-09 presented in Parliament on Thursday comes a sobering thought about the widening inequalities in the country. The report also states that 60.5 per cent of the population of India is capable of spending only Rs20 a day, as per the latest National Sample Survey (NSS).

Reforms and poverty reduction are not necessarily diametrical opposites. Poverty cannot be gotten rid of until wealth is created. And the new Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, free in its second avatar of the shackles of the Left parties, must "revisit the agenda for pending economic reforms" as the Survey suggests.

So getting rid of cumbersome taxes with onerous acronyms like STT, CTT, FBT and DDT, partial disinvestment (5 to 10 per cent of equity) of public sector units to mobilise a targeted minimum of Rs25,000 crore a year, etc, should be on the cards. Chronically sick PSUs must be auctioned. Port Trusts must be converted into publicly listed companies...

But we must recognise that India has profound inequalities; not all of them are adequately captured by the NSS. Over the past few years, there has been a huge surge in top incomes and wealth. Indian billionaires rival Russia, Brazil, Mexico and even the United States. But over the same period, the average household spending power of India's poor—a high proportion of which is scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and Muslims—has hardly changed relative to the overall national average of household spending. Rich as Bihar in 1990; they are almost four times richer, according to the latest data available.

It is the highly skilled middle class youth that get all the new opportunities and the new soaring incomes. The children of the rural and the urban poor get inadequate education, which cannot equip them to grab the chances the global economy throws up. In 2008, 44 per cent of rural children in Std V couldn't read a Std II text, says the latest Annual Survey of Education.

Since World War II, Japan, Korea and Taiwan have made the jump from relative poverty to relative prosperity. In the same period, countries like Brazil and Mexico made brisk initial progress and then stagnated. Studies indicate that the difference between these two groups of countries is in the way they managed their economic inequalities.

Excessive inequalities—in business opportunities, educational opportunities, regional disparities, and in stagnant standards of living for the majority—can create distortions that inhibit growth beyond a point. They also create political and social upheavals.

For example, at present, India's Maoist movement does not attract the country's urban and semi-urban youth; they still have hopes that the brave new globalised economy will reward them too. But if they get frustrated, we may be in for a law-and-order nightmare in the years to come.

That is why, along with the reforms that it hankers after, India Inc must spare a thought for India's poor; in its own interest. If it wants India to grow and become a world power, it must haul up the rest of the country along with it as it rises. That way, millions of hands will give it a push up. But if things go on this way, those very same millions may start thinking their salvation is in dragging the high and mighty down.

Gay abandon

Amidst the chorus of condemnation from religious leaders about the Delhi High Court's decriminalisation of homosexual sex by exempting it from the scope of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), we would do well to listen to the voice of Delhi Archdiocese Director Dominic Emmanuel that though the Christian community does not accept homosexuality as natural or moral, it does not treat people with homosexual tendencies as criminals, and has no serious objection to the High Court verdict (See OPinionated). As former Attorney General Soli Sorabjee says, "To many it may be sinful, but whatever is sinful may not be a criminal offence if done in private."

Ganv thum marodd: Goan Ethnographic Heritage

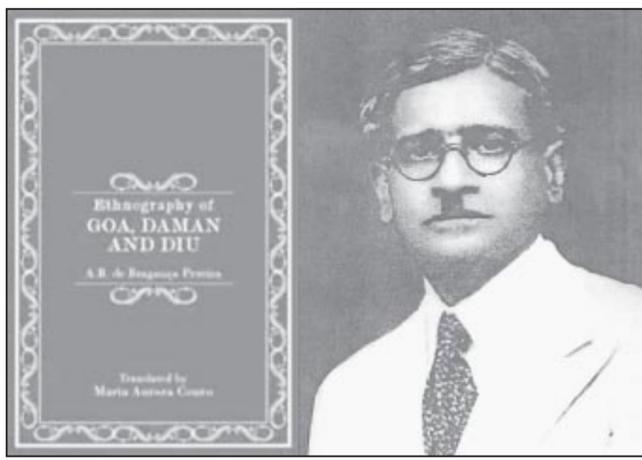
TEOTÓNIO R DE SOUZA recalls the contributions of A B de Bragança Pereira and Pandurang Pissurlencar to Goan ethnography

The Goan Konkani adage in the title of this essay says, "Every village has its mahar zone". That was a first outer barrier against invaders or intruders in a village. The threat of pollution through contact with outcasts was considered effective in a society that believed in the caste system. There is no point in ignoring this unsavoury heritage with the modern tendency to whitewash the past with brushes of enlightenment. Without the village servants (traditional *bara bahlute*) organised in castes that functioned like professional schools, we would have little or nothing that we can read in the recent English version (translation by Maria Aurora Couto) of A B de Bragança Pereira's *Ethnography of Goa, Daman and Diu* (Viking/Penguin, 2008).

An early section of the book discusses the place of the caste system in traditional Goan society. My choice of the Konkani adage for the title is to point out to one glaring lacuna in this book. The section dedicated to spiritual life starts with language, but neither there nor while dealing with native musical compositions is there any attention paid to Goan adages or *mhnun'neo* which are veritable ethnographic heritage capsules that have survived to date better than many traditional artefacts and costumes. We look forward to Valmiki Faleiro's study of Konkani adages in the very near future.

Ethnography of Goa, Daman and Diu is the first English translation of the *Etnografia da Índia Portuguesa*, Vol II (Bastorá, Goa, 1940) by António Bernardo de Bragança Pereira, a Goan judge of the Goa High Court, containing illustrated descriptions of customs, manners and rites of the people in the former Portuguese colonies in Western India. Born in Utordá (Salcete) on 9 May 1883, he completed his MA in Law at the University of Coimbra in Portugal, and served successively as Municipal Judge in Mormugão (1909-1915), Delegate of the Attorney of the Republic in Bicholim (1915-16), Civil Judge in Daman (1916-20), in Bardez (1921) and in Bicholim (1920-24). He was elected in 1929 as member of Higher Judicial Council for the Colonies (Conselho Superior Judiciário das Colónias). He exercised functions of Judge of the High Court of Lourenço-Marques (1924-31) and retired as Judge of the High Court of Goa (1931-48) on completion of 65 years of age on 9 May 1948. He moved his residence to Bangalore in 1951, where he died of cancer on 16 March 1955.

I am particularly grateful to the author's son, Dr Armando Félix Pereira, for confirmation of some of these biographical details and for some other tidbits that one could hardly glean from published sources. Dr Armando Félix Pereira himself arrived in Portugal in 1942,



HISTORICAL EXPLORATIONS

and registered for study of law at the age of 19. He still attends to his clients in Lisbon at the age of 85.

In the *Annals of the Portuguese Academy of History* (Vol 41, 2003, pp 455-471) one can read an account of the growth of Goa Historical Archives during the past 400 years or so. It contains my account about how P S Pissurlencar worked out his professional career as the Director of the Goa Historical Archives, benefiting from the Portuguese republican mood which favoured the Goan Hindu community that had suffered from many administrative handicaps until then. At the age of his career Pissurlencar reacted as an Indian nationalist siding covertly with the Indian authorities against the Portuguese in the case of the 'Right of Passage' at the International Court at Hague. This response was provoked by what he considered Portuguese lack of trust in his political loyalty to head their research cell in the Hague case.

My conversation with Dr Armando Félix Pereira gave me a fresh insight into the workings of Pissurlencar. Dr Armando Félix Pereira believes that his father was greatly responsible for proposing to the Governor João Carlos Craveiro Lopes the appointment of Pissurlencar as the curator of the new archives. He heard from his father that Pissurlencar corresponded ungratefully by

producing a private report against a Government proposal to reprint *Etnografia da Índia Portuguesa* when the 1940 edition was sold out within a very short period of time.

Without discounting entirely this version, we have a different story in S N Sen's classic report on 'Historical Records at Goa', first published in *Calcutta Review* (1925), soon after his official visit to Goa Archives as Curator of the Imperial Archives (Delhi). It was during that study visit that Sen discovered Pissurlencar's ability to read Portuguese and non-Portuguese records in the Goa Archives. Sen saw in Pissurlencar a promising researcher who could enrich Indian history and spoke favourably about him to the Portuguese governor of Goa at the time, Dr Jaime Morais. Hence, it was all before Bragança Pereira's influential presence in Goa as a Judge of the Goa High Court. Sen also introduced Pissurlencar to a prominent contemporary historian of the Marathas, G S Sardesai. The trilateral collaboration among them proved very productive and gave Goa Historical Archives the place it deserved in the Indian national historiography.

Against this background, it is not surprising that Pissurlencar was conscious of his self-importance and adopted a behaviour of calculated pragmatism, as he

deemed opportune. Without any formal doctorate, he got himself recognised at the end of his life as a PhD guide in History at the newly created Centre of Post-graduate Studies of the Bombay University (the forerunner of the Goa University) soon after Goa's Liberation, in recognition of his resourcefulness that enabled the Government of India to defend its case at the Hague.

The Penguin edition of *Etnografia da Índia Portuguesa* will remain a tribute to Maria Aurora Couto and her supporters and collaborators, including her recently deceased husband Alban Couto. They have done yeoman service to Goan cultural heritage. As a Goan who loves Goan culture, I wish to express my personal gratitude to them, and to Dr Armando Félix Pereira who financed the venture. The publication will certainly fulfil the proposed dual objective of the publishers, namely of presenting it to a new generation of readers, and in a language accessible to a wider readership. A comparison with the original in Portuguese will reveal that it is more than a mere translation. There are discrete and useful adaptations and additions to the original structure of the book. This permits forgiving some small errors: the death of the author is wrongly recorded as 1956, the Colonial Act is dated 1934, and the title of the "magisterial volumes" published by Bragança Pereira is spelt wrongly. Neither Cunha Rivara's work nor this series had that title.

One wishes this English edition can redeem the author from the harsh judgment of the late Prof C R Boxer, who wrote in his 'A Glimpse of the Goa Archives' (and elsewhere) with particular reference to his edition of the *Arquivo Português Oriental* that it was not a new edition at all of its namesake predecessor edited by J H da Cunha Rivara, as promised and proclaimed in the introduction to the series. To cite Boxer: "The work has been compiled, edited, and printed so carelessly that its numerous omissions, misreading, and misprints render it in many ways more of a hindrance than a help" to scholarship (C R Boxer, *Opera Minora*, I, Fundação Oriente, 2002). On p 254, instead of coming at the end of a long representation of the inhabitants of Betki seeking suspension of the Ban of the Practice of the Hooked Ones, we read in a separate paragraph: 'E R M Minguel da Costa'. It looks as if the first three letters are the initials of the clerk who drafted that petition. The capital letters meant *Espera receber mercês*, a routine Portuguese ending of any official petition, meaning "hoping to gain the favour". But none of these nitpickings diminish the lasting value of the contribution of this veritable mini-encyclopedia of Goan cultural heritage that we shall continue to examine.

Tongue in Cheek

Whenever it rains outside I am reminded of the song 'Listen to the falling rain' by Jose Feliciano. The sound of raindrops falling on the rooftops and window panes is something we eagerly look forward to this time of the year.

After a lull in the month of June, the sky has opened up and it is now raining cats and dogs. Thanks to the rains the valleys turn green, our wells get filled to the brim and the croaks of the frogs fill the air. There is something magical about the rains which can keep us spellbound. Getting wet in the first showers, after the hot summer season, can be very thrilling.

But there are some souls out there who detest the rain. They feel that the rains are a hindrance in their everyday lives. They complain about the heavy showers, the gusty winds and even the loud thunder. But then all this is part and parcel of the magical monsoon. "There is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather," wrote John Ruskin.

Fortunately, some leisure activities for a rainy day have stood the test of time. One of them is angling. The first downpour, and die-hard anglers are seen carrying their rods and reels and heading towards the nearest waterfront. Some spend the entire day fishing with the hope of getting a good catch for dinner. With the fish-market almost empty and fish scarce on the dinner table, spending time fishing could

Games in the Rains

By Adelmo Fernandes

could be preoccupied playing games on their computers. In the good old days, rainy times meant family members getting together for a game on the carom-board or play cards. Such indoor games can have a binding effect on the family. Unfortunately, now very few families enjoy a game of carom. With modern entertainment available at the touch of a button, people do not have time for such things.

In my childhood days we used to make tiny paper boats and let them float in the rainwater collected outside till the falling rain would overturn the little boats. In today's world, how many children actually know how to make paper boats? Well when games can be played on the keyboard of the PC, who needs to make paper boats? In the past, rainy days also meant children of the neighbourhood getting together for a game of marbles. Now playing with marbles seems outdated.

Fortunately, some leisure activities for a rainy day have stood the test of time. One of them is angling. The first downpour, and die-hard anglers are seen carrying their rods and reels and heading towards the nearest waterfront. Some spend the entire day fishing with the hope of getting a good catch for dinner. With the fish-market almost empty and fish scarce on the dinner table, spending time fishing could

be considered as time well spent. A drive through the countryside on a rainy day can be very invigorating and soothing to the nerves. Just absorbing the beauty that nature has to offer can be very relaxing. Rains also mean more work in the gardens for those with a green thumb. It is time to grow new plants in the backyard while getting rid of the weeds. For those residing in modern flats, it is time to get home some potted plants. With so much to do during the rainy season, rains are anything but boring.

But what I probably enjoy doing the most on a rainy day is playing football in the slushy mud with the boys from the neighbourhood. There is something about playing football in the rains that attracts many. It is advisable to play the game barefoot, as the shoes can get soaked and heavy in the rainwater. The diving tackle, getting muddy and wet all over, with the jersey sticking to the wet body and raindrops hitting your face—well, it's all part of a game of soccer in the rains.

If you are one of those who prefer to stay indoors on a rainy day, read a good book. Books are man's best company. Otherwise you can just look out through the window for the rainbow. Remember there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Go get it!

Letters to the Editor

Unfair allegations

Jonas Correia, Aldona

This refers to the letter by Sayed Iftiyaz titled 'Kabrastan allergy' (*Herald*, 25 Jun) regarding land for kabrastan. Mr Iftiyaz has made unfair allegations against Christians without applying his mind to the real issue.

Some years ago, when I was the Attorney of Nachinola Comunidade, one Mr Khan, who claimed to be a retired Customs Officer, met me at the Comunidade office, armed with the entire survey of Comunidade land given by an ex-CM. I told Mr Khan that there are no Muslim residents in Nachinola and asked for whom was the burial ground was required. He told me that it was for Muslims from Vasco.

We told him that there are kabrastans in Vasco and surrounding areas. He agreed but said that Sunnis do not allow Shias to use their graveyard. He explained that the Shia population of Goa had swelled, though when asked how this happened, he brushed aside the question. Even then we

tried to help him, but he wanted an area of 5000 sq m, that too in a prime locality.

The main problem with kabrastans is that the graves are not reused as Christians do. I think if Mr Iftiyaz could examine why Sunnis are refusing burial for Shias in their graveyards and also convince his religious leaders of the need to reuse graves, his problem could be solved. He also needs to do some introspection before pointing accusing fingers at others.

Apathy to lotus

Pachu Menon, Margao

The BJP of late thrives on controversies and bask in the glory of all the publicity thus garnered.

It is an open secret that the BJP today is a collection of individual leaders who have outgrown the party, with ego clashes overriding the loyalty factor. Once reckoned to be a worthy alternative to the monopolistic rule of the Congress and its allies, the BJP has in the course of time become a spent force. Having started off its flourishing innings in national politics using the Hindutva plank, the party finds itself miserably isolated following the submission of the Liberhan Commission report.

The BJP rank and file continue to remain in the news with their penchant for raising silly issues. Some party leaders of the BJP in Mumbai are attributing their humiliating defeat at the polls to faulty Electronic Voting Machines and have filed election petitions in this regard in the courts.

Or are they saying that not only man but even machines now show apathy towards the lotus emblem?

Ill-informed views

Marcus Johnson, UK/Goa

With respect to Mr Marcus D'Sa's letter 'Reduce visa duration' (*Herald*, 1 Jul), I would like to tell this gentleman that he should get his facts correct before he starts making statements about foreigners being a drain on the Goan economy and how long he feels they should be allowed to stay in Goa.

Goans live in the UK, USA and countless other countries in Europe and around the world. The concerned governments have not stopped them making a home for themselves over the years by limiting their visas to a shorter period of time. In

Letter of the Day

Jobs yes, but for whom?

Marcos Alemao, Varca

The statement of Chief Minister Digambar Kamat (*Herald*, 26 June) that the Hindujas plan to set up an auto park at the Verna Industrial Estate, which will generate employment opportunities for the educated, unemployed youth of Goa, is most welcome. However, the Chief Minister has failed to state what percentage of jobs will be given to Goans.

I remember that when a starred hotel came into existence in Goa, the then Labour Minister and ex-Chief Minister of Goa, Luizinho Faleiro, had promised that 80 per cent of the jobs in hotels would be given to Goans. But, on the contrary, 80 per cent of the jobs have been given to outsiders and only 20 per cent to the sons of the soil (Goans). This is the policy of the government to fool Goans and bring in industries, hotels, food parks, and so on and so forth, for their self-interest and not for the benefit of Goans.

Another big blow is to the Goan youth working on the casinos. The ad hoc committee, under the chairmanship of Opposition Leader Manohar Parrikar, has decided to block the NOC for the operation of offshore casinos very soon. The boys and girls of Goan origin working on those casinos are going to lose their jobs due to the undemocratic policy of the government.

Is there any guarantee from the Chief Minister or Leader of the Opposition that government white-collar jobs will be provided to these young boys and girls, stopping the current practice whereby government jobs are allegedly sold at a price by the ministers?

fact they have been made very welcome and are given all the allowances that are available in the UK. They get free medical treatment and also unemployment benefit if they are out of work.

Goan and Indian people are very nice. We have many friends here, some of whom are like family to us. Goa itself is a lovely place. But such ill-informed views will only vitiate the situation.

Muslims isolated

Sayed Iftiyaz, Margao

With reference to Peter Andrade's letter 'Setting themselves apart?' (*Herald*, 27 Jun), I fear Mr Andrade has not understood what I meant to say.

More than nine places were demarcated for a kabrastan in and around Margao over a period of time. In most of these cases, the opposition came from the Christian community. I do not want to criticise my Christian brethren but only to draw the attention of the Goan Christian community towards our genuine problem and the treatment meted out to us.

The media and communal forces trying to isolate Muslims from the mainstream and make them feel outsiders. I request Mr Andrade and

all other citizens to support us in our just demand. Let us help each other and let the generation of unity, brotherhood and peace for lightnings to follow.

Lowering AG's image

Albert D'Costa, Margao

The 'Opinionated' article 'Goa Government's exorbitant legal fees' by Aires Rodrigues (*Herald*, 28 Jun) is nothing but old garbage meant only to settle scores with the Advocate General.

How can the AG overcharge the government when his fees are fixed and bills scrutinised by the High Court staff. However, if Aires feels that there is some hanky-panky, he should have by now been knocking the doors of the judiciary. Interestingly, he has forgotten to mention which government had fixed the AG's fees.

A very interesting point in the article is the statement that the Constitution mandates that the AG has to be a person who is qualified to be a High Court judge. Will such a qualified and seasoned lawyer be interested to be AG for Rs 700 per effective hearing? Or is the whole exercise an attempt to lower the image of our AG, who

does not have freedom to go to the press as he holds a constitutional post?

Rehabilitating illegalities

Arwin Mesquita, Abu Dhabi

All Goans need to support the people of Navelim, who are fighting to prevent their landfills from being used to rehabilitate illegal migrant *gaddas* at Rawanfand. Corrupt Goan MLAs will do anything to stay in power, even if it means displacing Goans from their own land to house their migrant vote-banks who were illegally occupying land.

The Goa Government feels it can do whatever it wants. I think we Goans are ourselves to blame for this as we electing and re-elect them over and over again. Nevertheless, it is not too late for us to wake up and force our corrupt MLAs and ministers to act in the interest of Goa and Goans.

Congress sycophancy

P K Pal, Panjim

Sycophancy, thy name is Congress. The Bandra-World sea link, an engineering marvel, has been named after Rajiv Gandhi as if in Maharashtra and India there lived no better or greater leader like Rajiv Gandhi. The name was suggested by none other than the so-called *Marathi manaos* Sharad Pawar and happily agreed to by another *Marathi manaos* Ashok Chavan, the CM of Maharashtra.

I don't know if Mr Pawar has forgotten that there are hundreds and hundreds of Maharashtrais who became martyrs for the sake of the country, and one of those names could have been suggested by Mr Pawar. But for him that was not important—what was more important was his sycophancy for the sake his existence in the ministry with his handful of elected MPs.

Degree clarification

Dr Kiran Kerkar, Panjim

With reference to my interview conducted by Sharon M (*Herald Mirror*, 28 Jun), I would like to clarify that I have completed my post-graduation at GMC and not my doctorate (which means PhD). I am clarifying this to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.

Paths of Wisdom

Sufi Dervishes



Sufi Dervishes

A Dervish is someone treading a Sufi Muslim ascetic path or "Tariqah", known for their extreme poverty and austerity, similar to mendicant friars in Christianity or Hindu/Buddhist/Jain sadhus. *Dar* in Persian means "a door", so Dervish literally means "one who goes from door to door". The word is also related to terms for "ascetic" in some languages, as in the Urdu phrase *darwaishana thubayath*, "an unflappable or ascetic temperament".

As Sufi practitioners, Dervishes have been known as sources of wisdom, medicine, poetry, enlightenment, and witticisms. For example, Nasrudin became a legend in the Near East and South Asia, not only among the Muslims.

Many Dervishes are mendicant ascetics who have taken a vow of poverty, unlike mullahs. The main reason they beg is to learn humility, but Dervishes are prohibited to beg for their own good. They have to give the collected money to other poor people. Others work in common professions; Egyptian Qadiriya—known in Turkey as Kadiri—are fishermen, for example.

Rumi writes in Book 1 of his *Masnawi*: Water that's poured inside will sink the boat. While water underneath keeps it afloat. Driving wealth from his heart to keep it pure King Solomon preferred the title 'Poor'. That sealed jar in the stormy sea out there Floats on the waves because it's full of air. When you've the air of dervish-hood inside You'll float above the world and there abide... (Source: Wikipedia)