CASTE AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

‘Even if I am a Christian by religion, I am Hindu by culture. The dress which I am wearing has nothing to do with my religion’.

- Frank Andrade.

Being the first Europeans to come to India, the Portuguese observed the prevalence and practice of the ‘Varna system’.1 The term ‘Caste’ is derived from the Portuguese word ‘Casta’ meaning ‘chaste’ or ‘pure’. It is this concept of purity that is the crucial factor in the determination of hierarchy in the caste system. The Portuguese of the sixteenth century, on observing the social stratification of the population in India, mixed up varnas with the jatis and called all of them indiscriminately by the name of caste.2 The Portuguese discovery of caste however went much beyond giving a name to India’s varna-jati system. Duarte Barbosa identified the main features of (a) caste as a hierarchy, with Brahmans (Brahmins) at the top and ‘untouchables’ at the bottom, (b) untouchability as linked to the idea of pollution, (c) the existence of a plurality of ‘castes’ separated from each other by endogamy, occupation and commensality, (d) the application of sanctions by castes to maintain their own customs and rule (e) the relationship of caste with political organizations3. Since Goa would not remain isolated from the influence of the caste system that dominated the Indian society one has, therefore, to assess the impact of caste and community on the liberation struggle of Goa. In the first democratic elections that was held in Goa the caste and community factor dominated the political scene. Once, Goa was freed from Portuguese rule by the Indian forces, caste and community attachment that had lain dormant in the few

years of the liberation struggle of Goa (from 1946-61) suddenly appeared on the political arena of Goa. Congress fielded 13 GSBs, 10 Catholics and only 5 Bahujan Samaj people as candidates to the first election to the assembly. Bahujan Samaj felt that it was not represented properly in the Congress. Thus in order to challenge Congress and United Goans Party that represented Catholic community the Bahujan Samaj formed its own Maharastrawadi Goamantak Party. Thus caste and community politics had emerged once again to stay permanently after the departure of Portuguese from Goa. It is also from this background, I would like to assess the role of caste and community in the liberation struggle of Goa.

In this chapter, I will draw attention to the role of various caste groups in the liberation struggle of Goa, especially in its last phase. This is necessary not purposely to introduce the caste conflict, but to look at the participation of various caste groups in the liberation struggle of Goa.

Caste Profile Of Goan Society.

The Hindus in Goa before the arrival of the Portuguese were divided on the basis of ‘varna’ system. Unlike the Chaturvarna system of Hindus the Catholic community had only three caste that is Brahmins (Bammon), Charados (Kshatriyas), and Sudirs (Shudras). Although Catholic religion preaches equality and brotherhood, the caste factor that had played an important role in the social life of Hindus before conversions, did not eliminate from the social structure after conversion to Catholicism. The caste system was so deeply rooted in their minds that although the names of the converts changed from Hindus to Catholics their attachment towards their own caste did not diminish or disappear. The converted Goans started writing their caste names after their names to identify which caste they belonged to before conversions.

Portuguese established their rule in Goa in 1510 and around 1560 conversions of local Hindus to Christianity started taking place in Goa, especially in Tiswadi, Bardez, and

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4 Radhakrishna, Vaman (1995), Maharastrawadi Gomantak Paksh, Sthapana Ani Vatchal (Marathi), Panaji: Rajahansa Vitaran, p. 15.
Salcete [old conquest areas]. The missionary work in the first half of the 16th C had been rather on a low key, but the arrival of Francis Xavier and his Jesuit band increased the pace of conversions a good deal. The Christianization of the local population might have been achieved through force, by giving rewards and punishments, or through the teaching of the virtues of Christianity, caste system which was prevalent among the Hindus, before the arrival of Portuguese, got transferred automatically to Catholicism without any rewards or punishments. As Dr. T. B. Cunha noted,

> ‘For two long centuries, the Inquisition of Goa tried to change also the habits of the Goan population using the most intolerable ways of compulsion, but the changes obtained by these methods were superficial. As an instance, I can mention the fact that Goan Catholics are still strongly attached to the Hindu caste system and do not marry outside their caste. Even in the Catholic Churches, there are separate confraternities for different castes’.7

The mission of the Portuguese during this time was to convert the local inhabitants to Christianity.

> ‘To win souls [almas] was the battlecry. But the souls came not pure and simple but as member of various caste’.8

Although the caste was unpalatable to the Church, and it did not encourage the caste practices of the converted to begin with, Christianity could not resist its members from having allegiance to various castes even after conversions. The continued maintenance of the caste system among the Christians in Goa is attributed to the fact that the conversions of entire villages took place and hence was given a new coat of Christianity without affecting its age old social structure which was rooted in its caste foundation.9 Even the Church tried its level best to eliminate the caste practices among the converts. The provincial council [Ecclesiastical councils] passed several resolutions to root out caste practices, but realized that caste prejudices were too deeply rooted to wipe it off totally. However the

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7 Cunha, T. B. (1961), Goa Freedom Struggle, Bombay: Dr. T. B. Cunha Memorial Committee, p. 200
9 Xavier, P. D. (1993), Goa- A Social History (1510-1640), Panaji: Rajahans Prakashan p. 36
10 Gomes, Olivinho op.cit,.p. 83.
provincial council banned the converts from the use of special caste dress and all were asked to follow the western mode of dress. They were not permitted to keep the Hindus surnames, which explicitly indicated their caste such as Prabhu, Sinai, Bhat, Naique etc. However each of them remembered the caste they belonged to before conversions and the status that was attached to their respective caste.

Thus A. K. Priolkar points out,

'Brahmins and Charados [or charodos] were more advanced castes among the Indians in Goa at this time. The attachment of their members to their caste was so deep that even after their conversion to Christianity they continued to mention their caste after their new Christian names and surnames in all documents.'

The emphasis was on the christianization of entire village or communes, rather than on individual conversion to Christianity in the early days of the conversion programmes, because new converts were immediately expelled from their community and ostracized as renegades by their own family and caste. The only political course that appeared pragmatic, in the circumstances then prevailing to the missionaries, was to get the whole commune and consequently the whole village to embrace Christianity.

Caste Conflicts In Goa.

Let me now turn my attention towards the caste conflicts between the Brahman or Bammon and Kshatriyas or Charados. B. D. Satoskar explains,

The existing caste conflict and caste loyalty between Brahmins and Charados had its origin much before conversion. It was a customary to write the caste before their new Catholic names. This is evident from this as well as from a number of documents that are available of that time. There have been a number of books, written by Brahmins and Chardos to prove their superiority. I came across two such books which were written as far back in 1702 and 1713 and were published in Lisbon.

But if we believe in the mythology which says, that Parashurama a Brahmin turned warrior is said to have reclaimed the Konkan from Arabian sea by shooting an arrow

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13 Gomes, Olivinho op.cit., p. 84.
14 Satoskar, B. D. op.cit., p. 443.
westward from the Sahyadri hill and then invited Gaud Saraswat Brahmin families from Bengal to settle on this land and was responsible to eradicate the Kshatriyas from the territory. Brahmins loyal to the belief that the 'Kshatriyas' were totally eradicated by Parshurama do not admit the existence of the Kshatriyas neither in the Deccan nor in Goa. What one legend destroys can be revived only by another legend and so according to another legend, the Gods perturbed by the lack of piety [perhaps of the Buddhist] created new Kshatriyas in the plateau of Mount Abu. Thus we will find that the origin of Goa as a land starts with the caste clashes especially between Brahmins and Kshatriyas.

When the Portuguese rule was established with the help of Brahmin named Timoja or Timmayya, who called on Albuquerque to invade Goa which was then under the rule of Adil Shah of Bijapur. Further it is of importance to note here is that Adil Shah of Turkish origin, founder of the kingdom of Bijapur and of which Goa was a parcel, was married to a Maratha. The Indo-Turkish king of Bijapur protected the Marathas, gave them lands and large properties and gave them titles like Deshmukh, Sat-Desai, Rau, Naik and Raja as a reward for their military services in the wars with the Moghuls. Thus we should look at the enmity of Brahmins and Kshatriyas from this background.

Timoja, with Mhal Pai Sardesai from Verna Goa had invited Albuquerque to conquer Goa and intended that he should hand it over to them. Albuquerque however had other plans and he proceeded to build the walls of the fort and make other arrangements, which clearly indicated that he had come to stay. Considering strategic advantage of having a Hindu as the governor of Goa during the transition period, Albuquerque appointed Timoja as the governor. He was entrusted with the power of creating and distributing administrative position (thanadors). And as expected, he appointed his friends and relatives as administrators and to other position of authority. As a result, the top administrative positions came in the hands of a handful of Portuguese and Goan Brahmins (Bammons).

17 Ibid. p. 253.
20 Furtado, A. D. op.cit,. p. 65.
also created a bond of friendship and loyalty to the Brahmins to the Portuguese regime.\textsuperscript{21}

Being unpopular among the Hindus in Goa, Albuquerque probably appreciated the risk involved in retaining such an unpopular person in that responsible position and replaced him with Melrao (Malhar Rao), nephew of the king. This is whom the people of the land wished to have as their governor, as he was an individual of royal blood.\textsuperscript{22} Thus Portuguese rule from the very beginning was responsible for spreading discontent between the two castes, Brahmins and Kshatriyas.

The Portuguese in order to win the sympathy of local inhabitants began to cultivate the Brahmins who were more flexible and acceptable to the new regime. The Brahmins had nothing to loose as the majority of the owners of the land and rulers came from the Kshatriyas or princely caste, that was constantly engaged in fighting the Portuguese in order to win back their lost lands. The Portuguese, as a reward for their services, married into the Christian Brahmin families. The Brahmins were made the administrators of Communidades that has been confiscated from the Kshatriyas, for their political resistance to Portuguese regime.\textsuperscript{23} Thus the Kshatriyas and the Kshatriya nobility who for all practical purposes were the masters of Goa, even during the Muslim rule, could not strike friendship with the Portuguese rule and work for their defeat and ouster, if their power was to be ever restored in Goa. They failed and their failure brought rich dividends to the Brahmins who thereby consolidated their position of power.\textsuperscript{24}

After Christianisation, Brahmins who had converted to Christianity continued to enjoy the power and status. The life of Hindu Brahmins in the sixteenth century is explained in the following words,

"Yet another feature of Goan life was that even after the Portuguese conquest, Brahmins continued to occupy the position they had on the whole deservedly held in the country through the centuries...By the middle of the sixteenth century they had acquired sufficient knowledge of Portuguese. As elders and scribes they controlled village life and as government officials they wielded influence with the Portuguese administration. In the years 1540-48 the chief thanadar (acted as the

\textsuperscript{21} Coutinho, Verissimo op.cit., p. 27.
\textsuperscript{22} Priolar, A. K. op.cit., p. 62.
\textsuperscript{23} Coutinho, Verissimo op.cit., p. 19.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid. p. 28.
link between government and villagers) was a Brahmin by name Krishna who had earlier visited Portugal and been greatly favoured by the king. In 1543, on behalf of the Portuguese, he negotiated with the Sultan of Bijapur and got him to cede Bardez and Salcette. His son Dadaji held the trusted post of interpreter to the Viceroy, so that letters in the native language passed through his hands. The head farmer of taxes was in these years a Brahmin called Loku, while yet another by the name Anu Sinai was the commercial agent of the Portuguese. We hear, too, of a Gopu whose influence is said to have equalled that of Krishna and Loku and who might have been the person of the two names who figure as chief elder of greater neural in a document of 1553. The Brahmins of Goa also served as couriers along the Portuguese dominated coastline from Mylapore in Diu.25

The Kshatriya Hindus, still militant and opposed to alien rule, were either dispossessed of their lands and oppressed with heavy taxes many of them were reduced to the lot of ordinary peasants as their conflicted lands were given to the loyal Christian Brahmins.26 Although in the beginning, the state had worked hard to root out the caste practices especially among the converts; it was these caste practices, which helped them in stabilizing their rule in Goa. The conflicts among the various caste groups and sometimes among the people of same caste helped the Portuguese to use this caste system in order to keep dissentions among the people. Although it is difficult to find the differences between the Catholics and Hindus, there had been instances of caste conflict within their own community.

Let me give the example of caste antagonism among the newly converted Brahmins and Charados, which took place at the Church of Nossa Senhora de Belem at Chandor, ‘Among three villages of Salcette, which border on the mainland, there was recently a feud between the Brahmins and the Charados, over their respective pre-eminence. They waited for a decision using a feast day when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, for which they showed so little respect and veneration that either side called armed soldiers to fight on its behalf and there was so much bloodshed that the tabernacle in which the lord was exposed came to be stained’.27

The equality that was preached by church did not have any impact on the new converts who were attached too much to their respective caste. This is shown in the following example,

26 Coutinho, Verissimo op. cit., p. 29
27 Priolkar, A. K. op. cit., p. 149.
The two rival confraternities of the church of S. Diogo in Guirim had a separate altar each, one dedicated to Jesus and the other to our Lady of Rosary. A certain lady of the village was being assisted on her death-bed and asked to repeat the popular formula 'Jezu Pau', Jezu Pau' [Jesus! Help me] She managed to pull out of her delirium and cry indignantly, "Jezu! Jezu nam, Jezu tencho". [Jesus, oh never! He's theirs] She would have no recourse to the God of the Brahmins.

Thus rather than religious differences, Goa always had caste antagonisms and its impact was found on the Goan society especially on Brahmins and Kshatriyas who claimed to be the superiors in their own ways.

J. F. Saldhana puts the rivalry among the two castes in the following words:

Whatever, the origin of this caste be, the Christian Brahmons (Brahmins) and Charados have not much improved upon the relations that existed among the ancient Brahmans (Brahmins) and Kshatriyas. They are the two leading rival classes among the Goan and as there is no likelihood of a new Parashurama rising among the Brahmans (Brahmins) to wipe away their rivals from the face of the earth, the only course for both the classes is to shake their hands heartily and make one common cause in the interest of the community.

Having seen the caste and community profile of the Goan society before and after the advent of Portuguese let me now move on to the role of different castes and communities in revolting against the Portuguese during the first phase of the liberation struggle. Let me first consider the revolts of Castro and Pinto, who challenged the Portuguese rule in 1654 and 1787 respectively. It should be borne in mind that both these revolts had occurred during that particular period of time when along with the caste system, Portuguese Goa had social hierarchy in the sixteenth and seventeenth century with Reinois, that is Portuguese nationals at the top, among the Portuguese Goans and natives at the bottom.

Both the above mentioned revolts were planned and effected by Catholic Brahmins, some of whom were highly educated and aspiring for the important positions in the ecclesiastic hierarchy. It was an insult to them when they found that the religious clergy kept them lower on various grounds in order to guarantee for themselves higher positions and to maintain their own authority. In the words of A. P. Fernandes,

The Brahmins who were accustomed to dominate the Indian society could see that they were not accepted in the Portuguese society. They were not only not allowed higher posts in the ecclesiastic hierarchy or join the religious orders like that of Jesuits or Franciscan but were even barred from becoming secular priests.

Thus it was felt necessary to voice against this discrimination and it first came from Mateus de Castro who was a Brahmin and a consecrated Bishop and Vicar Apostolic to the Kingdom of Adil Shah. The Archbishop of Goa disliked his act of ordaining the native Brahmins to priesthood and Portuguese authorities supervised his every action secretly. The Bishop had developed a hatred for the Portuguese colonial rule in his native land and had been instigating the Goans to shake off the Portuguese rule. In both the cases, the plot of overthrowing the Portuguese was masterminded by Catholic Brahmins and support to them also came from the same caste. In the case of revolt by Mateus de Castro (1654), it was believed that after the defeat of the Portuguese, he wanted to merge Goa in the Adil Shahi kingdom. It should be remembered that with the Catholic Brahmins there were some Hindu Brahmins as well as Desais supported the Adil shah forces who invaded Goa at the request of Castro, in the year 1654.

In the revolt of 1787 (Pinto revolt) it is widely believed that the ‘ultimate goal of rebels was to establish a republican form of government in Goa after expelling the Portuguese. But it is not clear as to how they were going to establish a republican government in Goa which was so much dominated by casteism. In fact under the name of republican government it might have been possible that they wanted to transfer the power to natives preferably to the Brahmins to which caste they belonged.

Thus Cunha Rivara rightly observes,

‘Would the rest of the Christian population which otherwise is not superior in martial valor to that caste, risk their lives to bring the Brahmins to power only with the hope that the victory of the rebels would mean their victory also? Did they think they were less tyrannical than the present rulers? Would the Hindus, among whom

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there are less martial castes, forsake their native chiefs, headmen and Desais to follow Christian priests? All these questions invariably invite a negative answer. And experiences showed that the lone Desai that was arrested and tried initially was acquitted and set free'.

The people of 'Old Conquests' revolted against the Portuguese when it became difficult for them to tolerate the injustice that was done to them by Portuguese. On the other hand, Kshatriyas of old conquests also revolted against the Portuguese when some Jesuit Missionaries entered the villages of Cuncolim (and its adjoining villages) to convert the people of these villages. It was during this time, people of these villages challenged the Portuguese and five missionaries including Father Acquaviva were killed. Though the people had won the first battle, later on the people were punished cruelly. Though many people say that it was a religious struggle, one cannot separate the religion and loyalty to the king or chieftain from nationalism. Because it was the same, religion was identical with nationalism during those days.

French revolution brought the idea of democratic form of government in the country. Later the wind of change blew over almost the whole continent and Portugal was not left untouched. In 1820, parliamentary system of government was established in Portugal and as Goa was ruled from Lisbon, Goans too were entitled to send their representatives to the Portuguese parliament. By a decree of 18th April 1821, Goa was authorized to contest six seats in the Portuguese legislative Assembly amidst jubilation and scenes of popular enthusiasm for the first time in the history of Goa. However, in the new conquests areas, the revolt of Ranes occurred more than fourteen times in defence of their agrarian rights and privileges. Among these the major revolts were the 1852-55 revolt under Dipaji Rane, the Kustoba Rane revolt of 1869-71, Dada Rane revolt of 1895 and the revolt of 1912 under Morya Sawant and Gil Sawant. Thus during the first phase of the revolts in Goa, it was Catholic Brahmins and Hindu Kshatriyas who were in the forefront in challenging Portuguese rule.

34 Ibid. p. 30.
35 Interview with Shri Verissimo Coutinho. (November 2001)
The introduction of the parliamentary system saw the emergence of two political parties strictly based on castes in Goa. Both were run by Catholics and did not have the membership of Hindus. The party named ‘Patriado Indianu’ was run by Catholic Kshatiyas whereas ‘O Ultramar’ by Catholic Brahmins. Both these parties were pro-Portuguese and did not intend to obtain freedom from Portuguese rule. Besides the motive of both these parties was to criticize each other and acquire power. Though some of its members were liberal minded and intelligent they were not anti-Portuguese. For example, the founder of ‘Patriado Indianu’, Mr. Jose Inaciu Loyola was known for his liberal thoughts, Prazerish de Costa, member of ‘O Ultramar’, through his newspaper ‘O Colonial’ raised the voice of Hindus in Portugal. But none of any importance for the cause of Goa’s liberation. 37

Role Of Caste In The Last Phase Of The Liberation Struggle.

The beginning of the last phase of the liberation struggle of Goa by Dr. R. M. Lohia on 18th June 1946 saw the emergence of the patriotic sentiments that had lain dormant over a long period among the Goans. Although this movement was an open defiance on the ban on civil liberties, first time Goa saw the unity among the various sections of the people irrespective of religion, caste and sex. This movement saw the huge crowd for the first time in Goa’s history, which had gathered around the place where Dr. Lohia openly defied the ban on civil liberties in Margao at 4:30 p.m.

Although it becomes difficult to identify the caste to which this crowd belonged to, one thing was clear that the people of Goa were no longer in favour of the Portuguese rule in Goa. But the movement for civil liberties which had continued for about three to four months saw the active participation in the sense of shouting slogans, giving speeches and other anti-Portuguese demonstration that had come from the common people of Goa. The huge crowd, which had gathered on that particular day, had come to see how adopting the methods of civil disobedience could challenge foreigners. Since these common people (Bahujan Samaj) did not have their voice, or probably that their voice was not heard in that

particular gathering, their voice was considered to be 'silent'. But it was during this time that educated Catholic Kshatriyas (henceforth Charados) and Hindu Brahmins (henceforth Gaud Saraswat Brahmins - GSB) provided the leadership because it was these castes, which was educated and influenced by the Indian National Movement, that felt the need to come together and shake hands for the common cause that is the liberation of Goa from the Portuguese rule, although initially the struggle was for civil liberties.

Let me examine this carefully. I have mentioned above that the Charados and GSBs came together to drive-off the Portuguese from the Goan soil. The unity of this GSBs and Charados was possible due to the influence of Indian National Movement and liberal education especially in English that these upper caste people from both the communities received in British India and outside India. If we look at both these communities and castes, before 18th June 1946 movement for civil liberties, one would note that neither these communities nor these castes were united, even socially. There were not just community restrictions on their members, but even the different caste people had their own caste restrictions. Since these social restrictions prevailed in different castes and communities, the unity among them for the liberation struggle of Goa was not possible. This is the reason that Goa's liberation struggle was never a mass movement before and even after 1946 movement for civil liberties. It is still a doubt whether 1946 movement for civil liberties would have been a mass movement if it was not organized and led by Dr. R. M. Lohia or to that matter any other Indian leader. This perfect separation of Goans on community and caste basis kept them aloof from one another for a long period of time.

Further it must be borne in mind that Portuguese by adopting the policy of conversions, which followed inquisition, was instrumental in keeping the Christians and Hindus in watertight compartment for about a period of 400 years. Divakar Kakodkar, a Goan freedom fighter gives a clear picture of Hindus and Catholics in Goa,

'In Goa there are two worlds, Hindu world and Catholic world. Many of us have ignored this aspect, under the influence of our notion of “Goan brotherhood”, when a Goan Christian utters the word Goan, he does not take into consideration the Goan Hindu masses. The same is the case with Hindus. When they say the word Gomantakiya they do not take into consideration other half of the Catholic
population…. I am not passing this remark from the Hindu angle at all. Communal feelings are present in both the communities’. 38

This was the result of Portuguese policy of keeping the converted people away from their Hindu brethren. Portuguese state was responsible to create such laws, which were meant to break this unity between Hindus and Catholics, which had prevailed among them before conversions. No social intercourse was permitted. The laws such as Christian agricultural labourers were forbidden to work in the lands owned by Hindus and Hindu landowners were prohibited to employ Christian labourers. 39

All this was done with the help of the church. It played a major role in the life of Catholics. The role of the church in the life of Catholics is best explained in the following words by A. P. Fernandes,

`Control of the religious on the social life of the people was complete. The lives of the converted were circled around the church. Their old habits as Hindus had to be completely given up. They were separated from Hindus. If any of them found visiting the Hindus or going to the main land to witness their festivals, he was liable to be persecuted and tortured by the tribunal of Inquisition and usually lost his property and had to suffer harsh sentences’. 40

Under these circumstances, how would friendship and a sense of unity and nationalism develop between Hindus and Christians? If nationalism means feeling of oneness irrespective of caste, religion, sex, creed, race, etc, a question could be asked as to how this feeling of oneness would be brought about in a society which was so much divided on religious and caste basis? Though Portuguese can be blamed for creating and perpetuating the divisions between Hindus and Catholics in Goa, it is the Goans who should be blamed for maintaining these divisions not only on religious basis but also on caste basis. Portuguese thus took the maximum advantage of this difference or rather caste conflict in both the communities to rule on Goa.

However, though Portuguese to some extent were successful in keeping both these communities in separate compartments initially for many years, they could not do it in the

38 Satoskar, B. D. op.cit., p. 457.
later years of their rule in Goa, especially after the beginning of civil disobedience movement in Goa. This was because there was one peculiar thing about Goa and that was the concept of brotherhood, which was deeply rooted in the history itself. Catholics before conversions had roots in Hinduism. And these ties of blood relationship or kinship could not keep them away from one another. May be in the eyes of society, they were different from each other on the religious basis, but deep attachment towards each other helped them to come above the community differences in the liberation struggle of Goa. To put it more clearly in the words of shri. Verissimo Coutinho,

‘Our lands were taken... and prohibitions came with inquisitions. After taking our ‘communidade’ we had very few pieces of lands left with us... and we had to hold on to these lands. So one brother became a Christian and another remained a Hindu. This I consider very unique in Goa. I remember my father telling my mother and us, if this time we did not get good crops, I do not want my brothers children to starve and we eat. It was an equal share even though we were Hindus and Catholics. We all came from the same background and had same origin’. 

Role Of Community In The Liberation Struggle.

The liberation struggle of Goa saw the participation of both the communities that is Catholics and Hindus. It was widely believed that the Catholics in Goa were loyal to the Portuguese rule and considered themselves more as Portuguese than the Portuguese themselves. But this was not true in regard to all the Catholic population. Even the Portuguese asserted that the talk of liberty, swaraj, etc. was the business of Hindus. Because it was the Hindu community they believed to have suffered the most under the Portuguese rule. Catholic community, on the other hand, had prospered and Portuguese wanted to hold on to their empire in Goa with the help of these Catholic people.

Purushottam Gaonkar explains,

‘Hindus and Christians form the two main communities in Goa, the respective percentages being 54 and 46. There are of course, sub-castes among the Hindus; the Brahmins, economically and otherwise are an advanced class. Sub-caste, though in a lesser degree, exists also among the Christians for their forefathers were originally Hindus. Here again the Christian Brahmins have scored in progress, but not so markedly as the case of their Hindu prototype. The Hindu non-Brahmins

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41 Interview with Shri. Verissimo Coutinho. (November, 2001)
42 Interview with Shri. Ronaldo Coutinho. (December, 2001)
who form majority are more backward than the Christian non-Brahmin and hence in point of education and economic position, Christians are far better off than Hindus generally'.

As the above passage goes, one thing is clear is that in both the communities, Brahmins especially GSBs are economically better off than the other caste people. It should be noted that after the conversions to Christianity only three castes that is Brahmin or Bammon, Kshatriyas or Charados and Shudras or Sudirs continued to remain as main castes, the first two being the dominant castes among the Christians of Goa, the sub-caste system prevalent among their counter-parts was not given much importance and eventually disappeared among the Christians. Thus all castes or rather sub-castes or Jati which were then distinct by themselves such as Saraswats, Karhades, Chitpawans, Padhyes, etc. among the Brahmins were lumped into Christians caste of Bammon or Brahmins.

As we have already seen earlier that these Catholic Bammon have taken the advantage of Portuguese rule right from the beginning to consolidate their position of power. Again Portuguese had taken the advantage from age-old enmity and continued conflict between Catholic Bammon and Charados, which had helped them to gain the support of Bammon. These Bammons even lately sided with the Portuguese against Goan nationalists forces that were dominant in the last phase of liberation struggle of Goa. Juliao Menezes remembers an incident that had occurred at Margao police station when Dr. Lohia and himself were arrested and taken after the meeting at Margao on 18th June 1946. In his words,

'In the midst of our conversation (at the police station) a Brahmin Catholic actionist sent his visiting card to the Commandante and forced an interview on him. In our presence (Lohia and Menezes) he told the Commandante that he should not think that the happenings could be isolated. They would be a permanent feature if the Commandante did not take a strong action against us. He offered his services in Bombay where he was proceeding...'

44 Gomes, Olivinho op.cit., p. 84.
45 Interview with Shri. Joaquim Dias.
46 Menezes, Juliao (1947), Goa Freedom Struggle, Bombay: Printed & Published by Dr. Juliao Menezes at Shiva Printing Press, p. 54.
Even the Publicity officer of Gomantak Prajamandal had criticized the Brahmins in the following words:

'We repudiate categorically the completely false suggestion that the Gomantakis or people of Goa are so degraded and denationalized as to boast the superiority and inspiration of Portuguese culture and citizenship. The truth of the matter is that a handful of Brahmins who are well entrenched in the colonial bureaucracy and class privileges are making the ridiculous claim of 'assimilation' of Portuguese culture'.

All the above mentioned examples make clear why Portuguese considered Catholics and especially Catholic Brahmins as their friends. Since they were better off, and had enjoyed the important government positions under Portuguese rule, Portuguese felt that this could be a good reason to win the sympathy of the Catholics. Besides this, Portuguese propaganda generally believed that Christian religion would be in danger if Goa was integrated into India.

But as I have said earlier that all the Catholics cannot be considered as pro-Portuguese because for many of them nationalistic sentiments were more important. They believed in freedom. Thus to the surprise of Portuguese rulers, the voice in terms of freedom and nationalism came from the Catholic community first, whom the Portuguese had considered as their allies. The voice came from enlightened aristocratic Catholic Kshatriyas that is Charados. Francisco Luis Gomes, lit the flame of Indian nationalism and proclaimed the inspiring message of Indian nationalism in Europe and was warmly greeted by spirits de libre who imbibed their inspiration from the French revolution. He was a child of the 19th century and his noble spirit registered all the reactions and influences of his noble epoch.

Luis de Menezes Braganza who trained an entire generation in liberal thought and rationalism followed him. The concept of nationalism was so strong in them that they could not suppress their feeling even under the strong hold of Portuguese colonialism. And they expressed their feelings when they got a chance. Thus Goan parliamentarian Dr. Francisco Luis Gomes in 1861 proclaimed in Paris that, 'I belong to that race which

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47 Kunte, B. G. op.cit., p. 71.
49 Kunte, B. G. op.cit., p. 95.
composed Mahabharata and chess... and further in his novel ‘Os Brahmanes’ (1862) asserted that ‘Impartial men, who are moved by justice and not by racialism, want India to be ruled by Indians’. Menezes Braganza categorically stated that ‘the principle of self-determination is as organic to the life of peoples as the principle of freedom to the life of individuals’. He noted that ‘if to be Portuguese, we depend on foreign will, to be Indian we depend on nobody’. It was then the turn of Dr. T. B. Cunha who in an effort to start the real struggle on the soil of Goa established Goa Congress Committee and linked it to the Indian National Congress. By doing this, he proclaimed Goa to be integral part of India. Dr. Juliao Menezes, who was instrumental in bringing Dr. R. M. Lohia to Goa, had formed ‘Prajamandal’ in Bombay, which had united a number of Goans irrespective of caste and religion. All these were educated and landed gentries of Goa who visualized the better future of Goa with the integration of India. And all of them were Roman Catholic Kshatriyas (Charados) who did not recognize any caste difference and differences based on religion but strove for the unity of Goans on Goa’s future. For them, majority of community of Hindus are indistinguishable from their brothers in India, while the Christians, ethnologically, culturally and economically are indistinguishable from their Hindu brothers. A change in the faith imposed historically through historic forcible conversion does not change a people’s cultural heritage.

As I have said earlier that the voice against the Portuguese colonialism in Goa came from Charados who were enlightened, educated and landed gentries. These Charados never made any distinction between India and Goa. It was during this time that the Hindus of Goa had no voice. Before the establishment of Republic (1910), Hindus were considered to be third class citizens. It was only after the establishment of Republic in Portugal that Hindus were given equal status with the Catholics. It was then that the Hindus, especially

50 Gomes, Joquim Manuel Aires (2000), Indo-Portuguese Historical Encyclopaedia- Corre do Combo Da Casa Da India, India: Goa p. 3
53 Ibid. p. 26
54 Kunte, B. G. op.cit., p. 71.
GSBs, took to Portuguese learning and occupied government jobs. It was this caste among Hindus who took the maximum benefit from the Republic. They started the publication of a number of newspapers, periodicals, and journals and established a number of organizations. However, these educated and enlightened GSBs were only concerned about their own progress and did not think in terms of nationalism and freedom of Goa. Some newspapers like ‘O Bharat’ started by G. P. Hegde Desai, a GSB voiced against the Portuguese injustice and preached the nationalistic feelings. But the organization like ‘Pragatik Sangh’ started by GSBs concentrated only on political, social, cultural and educational progress of its own caste people.

However it was during this time in Portugal (1925) ‘Centru Nacionalist Indianu’ or ‘Indian National Centre’ was formed which strove for the unity of Hindus and Catholics in Goa. It had the membership of Charados and supported by few Bammons. Though it seems to be a strange union of two castes, here loyalty to nation was far stronger than the loyalty to the caste. Further these Indians (as they called themselves) were in Portugal for studies and were impressed by the French revolution and the concept of liberalism. Goan Youth League, which was formed in Bombay in the year 1943, comprised of the people of not just both the communities but of different caste. These organizations were more liberal and did recognize religious, caste differences as the enemy to the unity and progress of Goa. These people were in fact united forgetting their differences much before 18th June 1946 movement for civil liberties. But one should also remember that neither Centru Nacionalist Indianu nor Goan Youth League functioned within Goa.

If we consider Goa Congress Committee, which was started by Dr. T. B. Cunha in the year 1928 in Goa, we would find that majority of its members came from Charados and GSBs. Here for the first time we find the coalition of the upper castes that is Charados and GSBs cutting across the community lines. This was possible due to the efforts of Dr. T. B. Cunha, who included the members of ‘Pragatik Sangh’ in his founding membership of Goa Congress Committee. However what Goa Congress Committee lacked was the

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55 Interview with Shri. Joquim Dias. (October 2000) (Goan Youth League)
membership of the lower castes from both the communities. Although it was established in Goa, efforts were not made to integrate the masses into the main stream of political life in Goa.

On the other hand Hindu non-Brahmins, though in majority, were lagging behind. Being uneducated, poor, socially backward and agricultural labourers right from the beginning they had no voice. They neither understood the meaning of Monarchy nor did they understand about Republic. They only knew that their rulers were foreigners. They could not take any benefit from the Portuguese Republic. They could voice their resentment neither through newspapers nor through organizations. Even the organizations such as GCC did not recognize the necessity to align with them in their efforts to liberate Goa.

The situation, however, had changed after 18th June 1946 movement for civil liberties. Here what was required was the active participation and full-fledged co-operation from amongst the lower caste people (Bahujan Samaj) from both the communities. Since the integration process of Catholic with Hindus had begun to some extent with the formation of GCC, it was restricted to the Charados and GSBs only. It was these caste people who were behind Dr. R. M. Lohia to start the movement. In fact, it was only after discussing with these people Dr. R. M. Lohia took the decision of defying the ban on civil liberties under the Portuguese rule in Goa. These Charados and GSBs participated directly by organizing meetings, shouting slogans, giving speeches throughout the civil Disobedience movement which had lasted for few months. Even on 18th June 1946 a number of people who were arrested by Portuguese police for organizing demonstrations, etc. was from the above mentioned castes. Thus it would not be wrong to say that Charados and GSBs led civil disobedience movement, which had lasted for few months. But at the same time, their leadership to some extent had drawbacks. When it became evident to Dr. R. M. Lohia, just after four months of 18th June 1946 Movement, that the leaders of the movement, who were drawn from the upper strata were avoiding jail under the pretext of looking after organizational work. Lohia reorganized the executive of the Goa Congress in a bid to
provide representation of non-Brahmin mass. Yet the eleven member executive included nine Brahmins.  

The formation of revolutionary organizations like Azad Gomantak Dal (AGD) in 1947 and Goa Liberation Army (GLA- Revolutionary wing of NCG) in 1955 saw the participation of a number of Hindu Kshatriyas (henceforth Marathas). The formation of GCC with Charados and GSBs was the beginning of unity between two different caste and community, the union of GSBs and Marathas was second step forward in the integration process. Thus GSBs Shri. V. N. Lawande and Shri. Prabhakar Vaidya led AGD, but its followers and workers were Marathas like Shri. Dattaram Desai, Shaboo Desai, etc.

On the other hand Kshatriyas dominated GLA from both the communities as the leadership also came from them. All the five founding members or the 'High Command' were Kshatriyas like Shri. Augustus Alvares, Shri. Shivaji G. Desai, Shri. Jaisingrao V. Rane and others. The GSBs and Bahujan Samaj from remote areas from Sattari and Bicholim supported this organization and actively participated in its activities like Shri. Vasant Malye, Shri. Vasant Karapurkar and others. Thus the formation of GLA was the third step in the integration of Charados and Marathas, GSBs and Bahujan Samaj.

National Congress (Goa), the only organization with satyagraha and Non-violence as its ideology, initially had the membership of Bammon and GSBs with the exception of very few educated Goans who belonged to Bahujan Samaj from both the communities. However, with the growth of awareness among the Goans, NC(G) assumed the character of an umbrella organization. With the incorporation of Bahujan Samaj its membership increased with its publicity and active work on the Goan soil. This organization under the leadership of Shri. Peter Alvares, a Charado was responsible for organizing the mass satyagraha of 1954 and 1955 on 15th August. He was in fact responsible with many others to create awareness among the common people by working among them.

Kelkar, Indumati (1996), Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia- His Life and Philosophy. Pune: Published by Sripad Kelkar, Sadashiv Peth. p. 123

Interview with Shri. Krishnarao Rane (GLA) (October 1997)

Interview with Smt. Sulochana Katkar. (November, 2000)

Interview with Shri. Prabhakar Ghodge. (December, 1999)
Let me in these following paragraphs clear some doubts regarding the misconceptions, which people have in their mind.

It is generally considered that with the exception of very few rich people from either community, the entire freedom struggle was considered to be a 'middle class luxury'.\(^6\) Thus this makes us to believe that neither rich nor poor were directly involved in the liberation struggle of Goa. If we believe in this aspect that the rich class from either community was found to be more loyal to the Portuguese rule as these are the people who always support the ruling classes, one thing that we overlook is the Charados who, although, were landed gentries were the first to voice against the Portuguese colonialism. Their class interest never came in the way of their concept of nationalism and of regarding India as a 'Nation'. By believing that rich classes were against liberation and by generalizing this concept one cannot forget these Charados. It may be true that some rich people for their own petty interest might have sided with the Portuguese. The reason may be as below;

'We all know that the petty Zamindars, the so called battcars and the traders are not for integration. They fear that with the disappearance of the Portuguese masters, they will not have the things moving in the way they are moving now. The Zamindars are at present paying insignificant land-tax. Neither they nor the traders pay any income tax. They are therefore free to exploit the country without sharing their profits with the government. This state of affairs, howsoever profitable to the landlords and the capitalists, is ruinous to the country...'\(^6\)

It should be understood that these battcars and traders did not just come from the higher caste only. The concept of battacar (landlord) is a very narrow concept. Even a person who possesses a small piece of land of his own or has few tress or plantations like coconut plantations, cashew plantations or beetle plantations (may not be on huge lands) are called as battcars by those people who work for their masters or even by others in the village\(^6\). Thus in Goa class and caste should not be brought closer to denote that upper castes people are upper class also. It may be true in certain cases but not always. By saying

\(^6\) Interview with Shri. Ravindra Kelekur. (October, 1999)
\(^6\) Kunte, B. G. op.cit., p. 157
\(^6\) Interview with Shri. Jaisingrao A. Rane. (October1996)
that these battcars were not for liberation of Goa is again generalizing the things, which is unjust.

Certain other misconceptions prevail with regard to the participation of Bahujan Samaj. The entire liberation movement was led by the educated, enlightened classes\(^6\) some of who were Charados and others were GSBs or Marathas as we have seen above. But to call an entire movement a middle class luxury is to exclude the fact of contribution of Bahujan Samaj in the movement. Any movement is not possible without the support of Bahujan Samaj. Leaders lead the movement, direct it, guide it but it is no doubt that the actual work comes from the common people. It may be true that their work is considered to be negligible, but definitely it is not the least. If we look at those who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of GAO's liberation were actually these common people. Thus the common belief that these Bahujan Samaj were after their daily necessities and the concept of nationalism was far lower than bread and butter is false. They silently and even actively participated in the movement.\(^6\) As Smt. Prema Purav notes;

> 'But the contribution to the liberation which came from the very downtrodden people should not be forgotten. Postman, Dhanagar, Mahar, Kansar were in the forefront in this type of work. They acted as messengers, distributed pamphlets, etc. and this work was very easy for them. Even the Portuguese police had no doubt about them.'\(^6\)

The second misconception about the absence of mass participation in the liberation movement of Goa is attributed to the battcar-mundacar relationship. This is entirely a false belief. Even if we consider that the relationship between battcar and mundkar in those days of Portuguese rule were cordial. During Portuguese rule few business houses, especially those who had mining business, might have profited a lot and sided wholly with the Portuguese. But poor battcars whose agricultural products like coconuts, beetle nuts, etc. which did not have much economic benefit in Goa, had to be exported did not earn much from the sale of these products. As discussed in chapter II, of how economic mismanagement

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\(^6\) Interview with Dr. Vinayak Mayekar. (October 1998)
\(^6\) Interview with Shri. Rambhau Kakodkar (May 2000)
by Portuguese had exploited Goans we would get a sense of how well off or poor were battcars. After their exploitation by the Portuguese nothing was left for the exploitation of mundacars who worked for them. 'O Bharat', a newspaper edited by a Hindu Brahmin (GSB) Shri. G. P. Hegde Desai writes;

'There is no conflict between these two classes (landlords and agriculturists or battcars and mundcars). Never has the battcar put obstacle in the way of the mundcar, when he wanted to emigrate at his will, when he wanted to buy property and build houses'.

In some cases the titles of battcar continued even if he had lost the land. It is also a misconception that many of the migrants from Goa who settled in Bombay were loyal to the Portuguese rule in Goa as loyal as they were to the British rule. Since they were pro-British they were also pro-Portuguese. But to my mind this may not be so as most of the migrants who had settled in Bombay established their own organizations in Bombay which were anti-Portuguese such as Goan Youth league formed in Bombay in 1943, ‘Gomantak Prajamandal’ formed in 1939 and many others. Even GCC was shifted to Bombay after it’s derecognition from Indian National Congress. These Bombay based Goans during the Portuguese rule ran the Goan movement in Bombay under different organizations and came together to end the Portuguese rule in Goa. They were these Goans who could feel the air of independence and freedom in India and worked for the same for their brothers in Goa. Again there were Goans in Bombay and in other parts of India who were fascinated by Indian National Movement and had a vision of free Goa in Free India. Besides the economic reason, there were many other reasons for their migration to Bombay and other parts of India like education. When the liberation struggle had subsided in Goa, it was, active in Bombay. Having discussed the place of Caste let me now examine its impact on the liberation struggle of Goa.

Impact Of Caste On The Liberation Struggle.

The impact of caste on the liberation struggle of Goa especially during the last phase beginning from 18th June 1946 movement was telling. Although in the beginning,

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66 Kunte, B. G. op.cit., p. 94.
the movement was in the hands of Charados and GSBs, slowly it cut across caste lines and even the Bahujan Samaj represented their caste to fight against Portuguese rule.

Although it could not be a mass movement on the line of India's freedom struggle several reasons, one should not forget the contribution of various caste groups in the liberation struggle of Goa. There was mass support but not mass participation in the movement. Mass support, in the sense that majority of the Goans wanted Portuguese to leave the territory and supported morally and to some extent monetarily, but did not have physical participation in the movement. The Portuguese, who had tried to keep the Catholics and Hindus apart for about 400 years of their rule in Goa, did not succeed in separating them once the last phase of the movement for liberation had begun.

The Catholic Brahmins, in general were held to be loyal to the Portuguese rule. The reason can be given in the following words;

'This policy of forced Christianization brought about changes in the power structure of the Goan community. In this new power structure, those of the Hindu Brahmins who had converted to Christianity continued to enjoy the power and status, which they formerly shared with their Hindu caste men. The Catholic Kshatriyas or Charados were freed from the Portuguese wrath but did not enjoy the privileges enjoyed by the Catholic Brahmins'.

Another reason held responsible for this is its minority population in Goa. Being in minority they feared that if Goa is integrated with India and if Bahujan Samaj acquired power after the departure of Portuguese, their status in the society would be undermined and the respect that they enjoyed would disappear. Thus the only way out of this was to continue to support the status-quo under the Portuguese rule. And their support for them was very open as we have seen in Dr. Juliao Menezes narration of an incident that took place at Margao police station after the arrest of Dr. Menezes and Dr. Lohia on 18th June 1946.

It is not however true that Catholic Brahmins were pro-Portuguese. Further it does not mean that all Charados, GSBs were anti-Portuguese. But those people who had their vested

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67 It was because of the lack of proper guidance in the absence of leadership, no proper organizational work done on the Goan soil, the fascist nature of the Portuguese rule who had no respect for satyagrahis, and the movement was divided in many organizations, etc. (Refer to chapter II).
68 Interview with Shri. Ronaldo Coutinho (December 2001), Shri. Joaquim Dias (October 2001), Dr. Vinayak Mayekar (October 1998)
69 Coutinho, Verissimo op.cit., p. 21.
interest sided with the Portuguese rule no matter to which caste or community they belonged.

When we study the role of caste in the liberation struggle of Goa, one thing that can easily and surprisingly, be concluded is that the caste factor had more influence than the community factor in the social and political life of Goa during the days of the liberation struggle. For centuries the people of Goa have been living without the slightest tinge of religious differences. The social relations between the two sections of the populations the Christian and non-Christian have been very cordial and friendly. The reason attributed to this is the Hindu roots of Catholics before conversions. I have noted before that there were many instances of caste conflict in Hindus and Catholics, but find no instances of religious antagonism between the two communities. This is the very special case of Goa. However, during the Inquisition, that preceded the conversions these two communities did not have a close social links. In the words of Satoskar;

'There is no doubt that the Hindu and Christian community in Goa are like two sides of the same coin. They can never see each other and understand one another. They stay in the same village as close neighbours. They love each other. But both these communities are ignorant about each other’s religion, religious rites and practices, traditions, customs and social interaction. Catholics only know that the Hindus celebrate Ganesh, Diwali and Jatra and are non-vegetarians always except on the occasions of their religious functions. But they do not know much about the social and religious life of Hindus. Similarly, Hindus know only about the Pasca, Natala, Misa, Besarva and Pusarva in Catholic religion. But they are unaware about their traditions and religious rites among Catholics.'

Thus it is not wrong to say that these communities came together to fight the Portuguese rule. But they met each other in their common goal to fight against the Portuguese rule. This is evident from the fact that the Pragatik Sangh, which was formed in 1930, was only of Hindus and did not have the Catholic membership. And the political parties like ‘O Ultramar’ and ‘Patriado Indianu’ that is Indian Party, which had Bammon, and Charados as their members did not take into consideration the Hindu population. But it was much later on, that is after the introduction of the Republic in 1910, Hindus mainly GSBs started supporting these parties. It was ‘Centru Nacionalist Indianu’ in 1925 desired to take the

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70 Satoskar, B. D. op. cit., p. 457.
help of Pragatik Sangh and other Hindus to rouse the nationalistic spirit in the minds of Goans and to drive out the Portuguese from the land of Goa. Later on after the formation of Goa Congress Committee in 1928, one can see the integration of Hindus and Catholics for the common cause of liberation of Goa and its integration into the National Union.

Thus by the end of 1960, a large number of Hindu and Catholic population were assimilated together, forgetting their caste differences. There had been even inter-caste dining among them and usually both these communities used to stay in each other's place in the days of liberation struggle of Goa. They crossed caste codes such as dress habits and food habits. They took shelter at each other's homes in order to escape from the arrest and imprisonment. In order to disguise themselves from the Portuguese administration, many of Catholics took the names of Hindus and dressed like them and stayed at their place like family members. For example Shri. Urselino Almeida, a member of Goa Liberation Army, changed his name five times on different occasions and these names were often Hindu names. Shri. Peter Alvares, President of National Congress (Goa), worked among the common people by dressing like a Hindu. Smt. Sindhutai Deshpande, a Brahmin by caste and Hindu by religion changed her dressing style according to her visits. She used to wear a dress whenever she went to the house of Catholics. Both these communities, Hindus and Catholics understood each other much better during the liberation struggle. In the words of Ronaldo Coutinho;

'I was unaware about the social life of Hindus, although I was in Goa. I did not know anything about their cooking, eating and dressing habits etc. But when I was imprisoned in Aguada jail along with many Hindus, we functioned like a family. Although I did not know to prepare tea before, I learnt everything in cooking and was at ease with Hindus'.

As I have said in the beginning of this chapter that the participation of caste and community in the liberation of Goa should be also looked from the view point of the first democratic elections which were held in Goa in 1963. It was in this election both caste and community factors played an important role. It was on the basis of caste and community

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71 Interview with Shri. Urselino Almeida (May 1999)
72 Interview with Shri. Ronaldo Coutinho. (December 2001)
that the elections tickets were distributed, political parties were formed and at the end it was Bahujan Samaj ideology which triumphed.

Before going into the detail, let me first look at the concept of Bahujan Samaj in Goa. It largely comprises of all the non-Brahmins who during the Portuguese rule lagged behind in education, opportunities in jobs, and generally with respect to cultural, social, economical and political progress. They formed the majority of the population in Goa. They largely believed that the Catholic community benefitted the most during the Portuguese rule due to the Christian religion and next were Hindu Brahmins especially GSBs who took the maximum advantage of Portuguese rule. Since Bahujan Samaj were lagging behind in all the above mentioned aspects, they naturally had pessimistic approach towards everything. Since some from the Catholic community and GSBs supported the Portuguese rule, Bahujan Samaj believed that it was due to Portuguese that they could not achieve progress and Portuguese rather than concentrating more on the development of these people, were happy to keep them in poverty.

As we have seen in the earlier part of this chapter, how GSBs supported Portuguese and how Portuguese took the help of GSBs to conquer and establish their rule in Goa. It was only after the conversions of local Hindus to Christianity that Hindus were subjected to a large number of atrocities between the years of 1560 to 1812 for nearly three hundred years of Portuguese empire. It was during this period that Hindus were generally treated as third class citizens. However, things had changed a little-bit after Marques de Pombal who was very liberal in his thought became the Prime Minister of Portugal. He was the precursor of the liberal movement in Goa and proved himself to be the great champion of the rights and privileges of Goans.

Further with the establishment of Republic in 1910, Hindus were treated at par with the Portuguese. And it was during this time, GSB took the benefit of the Republic. They took the education, went out of Goa for further studies, some occupied important

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73 Interview with Dr. Pandurang Kamat. (NCG) (November 1999)
74 Prof. D. Ribeiro, 'Denationalization and Political Life In Goa During the Colonial Period', a paper presented at the Seminar on the 'Advent Of Portuguese In Goa And Goa's Struggle For Freedom' held on 14th and 15th December 1990, under the Aegis Of The Cuncolim Educational Society and The Cuncolim College of Arts and Commerce- Cuncolim.
government jobs under Portuguese rule. With the education and a lot of opportunities within and outside Goa, GSBs achieved a tremendous progress. Some of them who had gone out of Goa for further studies were influenced by Indian National Movement and leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, etc. The Goan nationalists like Francisco Luis Gomes, Menezes Braganza had a tremendous following not only among the Catholics but also among the Hindus. Thus it was GSBs with the educated and enlightened Charados, who had become conscious of their Hindu culture were responsible initially to support and then to lead the liberation struggle in Goa. If GSBs and Charados understood the concept of liberalism and nationalism after getting influenced by INM, Bahujan Samaj believed that India is a country of their own religion, culture and Portuguese are different people, that they should leave Goa.

Initially Bahujan Samaj was a silent spectator to the movement. Slowly when GSBs and Charados took the movement for liberation ahead, Bahujan Samaj got involved in the movement. Before 18th June 1946 movement, both GSBs and Charados, had kept Bahujan Samaj a little away from the movement when they had established their organizations. Since the movement required the mass support, it came from the Bahujan Samaj. On their own they started supporting the movement. Since GSBs and Charados required the support of Bahujan Samaj, they also took it happily. The caste and community factor had to be placed lower in the order in political priorities during the liberation struggle of Goa. Here both had only one enemy and it was the rule of foreigners. It was natural for the uneducated, socially, culturally, economically and politically backward people to accept the leadership of educated, enlightened and progressive people. And this leadership came from GSBs and Charados. ‘Leaders are not appointed, they are elected’, were the words of Pandit Nehru on the question of Goa. Thus NC(G) flourished under the active leadership of Shri. Peter Alvares, a Charado. AGD revolted against the Portuguese under the leadership of Shri. V. N. Lawande and Shri. Prabhakar Vaidya, both GSBs. And GLA threatened

75 Interview with Shri. Verissimo Coutinho (October 2001)
76 Interview with Shri. Armando Pereira (AGD) (August 2000) and Dr. Pandurang Kamat (November 1999)
Portuguese rule under the able leadership of Marathas like Shri. Shivaji G. Desai, Shri. Jaisingrao V. Rane and Charado like Shri. Augustus Alvares, and Shri. Urselino Almeida. Whether you are a Hindu or a Christian or upper caste or lower caste did not matter. Everybody worked like a cohesive group. Whether it was NC(G) or AGD or any other organization for that matter, caste and community factor was not significant. Thus the last phase of liberation struggle of Goa with its ideology of nationalism transcended caste and incorporated all communities and castes. It should thus be regarded as a secular movement. On many occasions, Goan nationalists crossed their caste barriers, built solidarities, and came together to fight against Portuguese rule.

However, one thing I would like to emphasize here is that except few cases of inter-religious marriages, to a large extent the attachment to one’s own caste or community was found in the liberation struggle of Goa especially in cases of marriage. There were marriage alliances between GSBs and Charados, but there seems to be no marriage alliances between the different castes in both communities. I have come across not a single instance of this. This points to the greater importance of the caste factor than the community factor that was prevalent during the liberation movement even among the liberal minded freedom fighters. Not only this, one does not come across marriages, in the families of these freedom fighters which crossed caste boundaries. Thus, even during the freedom struggle of Goa, one cannot deny the fact that attachment to one’s own caste was important and both Catholics and Hindus adhered to their own castes strictly.

Although Goa’s liberation struggle saw the participation of the various castes, one can find that the representation from Catholic Brahmins (Bhamon) was negligible. The credit of starting the actual freedom struggle goes to the Catholic Khsatriyas (Charados). However as the liberation struggle of Goa advanced further, we saw even the participation of Catholic Shudras, GSBs, Hindu Brahmins (Bhattas), Marathas, Bhandaris and Gomantak Maratha Samaj, etc coming forward to end the Portuguese rule in Goa. However, this caste integration remained at the political level during the liberation struggle and there were no

77 Interview with Dr. Pandurang Kamat. (NCG) (November 1999)
instances of it in the social life at that time. Social life, however, remained attached to the practice of age-old caste system which some of our freedom fighters tried to combat as they did the Portuguese rulers but were unsuccessful and hence it surfaced again after the liberation struggle in 1963 taking the form of political parties with their social base in caste in the first assembly elections.