Reflections on a “Diaspora Within” in India: The Context of Konkanis in Coastal Karnataka

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Abstract. While the presence of a Goan diaspora abroad is amply recognised, intra-territorial movement of the Konkani population within the Indian subcontinent has failed to garner the attention of researchers, as the displacements do not qualify as transnational migrations. The present article is an attempt to address that lacuna. It takes the example of two Konkani communities from coastal regions of Karnataka—GSBs and Mangalorean Catholics—and their effort to establish links with their maiganv, or natal land, of Goa, through their Konkani ethnic culture as well as literature. The diasporic consciousness that the Konkanis display towards Goa has elements of both a transnational diaspora as well as of an internal diaspora, in certain aspects. However, the Konkani diaspora within India needs to be read and understood differently, owing to the historical context/s of the Konkani community migrations. This prompts the present study of the Konkani communities’ migration as being a part of an active ‘diaspora within’ in the geographical territory presently referred to as India. The article also frames the diaspora of Mangalorean Catholics as a “partial diaspora,” as their expression of diasporic consciousness varies from that of GSBs.

Keywords: Konkani diaspora, Goa, migration, GSBs, Mangalorean Catholics, ‘Diaspora within,’ ‘Partial diaspora’

Goa has seen great migrations, from ancient to modern times, within and out of the Indian subcontinent. Traditionally Goa is believed to have embraced the ‘mythical’¹ Saraswata (Kannada variant of the term, Saraswat/s) relocations into Goa or Gomantbak² in a distant past. In modern times, colonialism is credited with facilitating the emigration of Goans to Africa, Europe and the United States. After colonialism, Konkani people have also emigrated to other nations such as Australia, Canada and countries in the Middle East. Portuguese rule also saw the movement of Konkani people outside Goa but within the geographical region today known as India. The common belief holds that Goa was the original motherland of the Konkanis, from where they migrated to various places in the neighbouring states they presently inhabit, such as Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. The Konkanis’ claim of migration from Goa and their constant re-
establishment of links with Goa, to historicize their community past, informs the present study on Konkani dispersal or diaspora within India.

The conventional understanding of the concept of diaspora has at its centre the idea of ‘dispersion’ or ‘migration’, as a physical movement of a population from one country to another, resulting in a diaspora which is regarded as exclusively transnational. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur consider diasporic subjects as those “defined by a traversal of the boundaries demarcating nation and diaspora” (5). Robin Cohen suggests that when in a diaspora, “the old country always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions . . . a member’s adherence to a diasporic community is demonstrated by an acceptance of an inescapable link with their past migration history and a sense of ethnicity with others of a similar background” (ix). William Safran enlists a few characteristics common to all diasporic communities: a dispersal “from a specific original ‘centre’ to two or more ‘peripheral,’ or foreign, regions”; “a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland”; the belief that they are not “fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated”; the idea that they “regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would eventually return”; the fact that they are “committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland”; the idea that they relate to that “homeland in one way or another,” through “ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity” (83–84).

Expatriate Konkanis, spread across many countries, form a vibrant Konkani diaspora which is also an integral part of the Indian diaspora. However, this Konkani diaspora is not necessarily a Goan diaspora alone, as it includes Konkanis from other states where Konkani is one of the spoken languages. There has been a considerable amount of research and writing of both fiction and nonfiction on the Konkani diaspora abroad. Texts such as Tony D’Souza’s The Konkans: Were We Ever Really There? (2008); Selma Carvalho’s Into the Diaspora Wilderness: Goa’s Untold Migration Stories from the British Empire to the New World (2010); Margret Frenz’s Community, Memory, and Migration in a Globalizing World—The Goan Experience, c.1890–1980 (2014); along with Goans in London: Portrait of a Catholic Asian Community (1979), and Colonialism, Migration and the International Catholic Goan Community (2011) by Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes are only a few of the many examples.

“Goa Migration Study 2008” also suggests that Goa has a vast international diaspora (13) while indicating that “no Hindu Goan migration outside the Indian subcontinent occurred owing to the old cultural and religious prejudices” (14). It is a study of the socio-economic impact of the migration of Goan Christians to parts of British India and other countries, as well as their return migration to Goa, providing data concerning the percentage of emigrants in different places and countries, their occupations, average cost incurred, and remittances earned that in turn contributed to the Goan economy. While it also discusses migration outside Goa but within India as similar to crossing national boundaries (11) and refers to these migrants as “out-migrants”, it fails to document the diasporic sensibility of these out-migrants towards Goa. Hence, a certain Goan or Konkani
diaspora within India has failed to enter into academic research until my recently completed Minor Research Project,\(^3\) sponsored by the University Grants Commission of India. My project concerns the Konkanis in coastal Karnataka and also includes a study of the Hindu diaspora. The GSBs or Gowda Saraswata Brahmins\(^4\) (Gowda is a Kannada variant of the term, Gowd or Goud or Gaud) and Mangalorean Catholics\(^5\) (traditionally referred to as Kanara Christians) were placed within a diasporic framework, as they both claim a common point of origin, i.e., Goa, and a common place of arrival or settlement, i.e., Kanara or the coastal regions of Karnataka.\(^6\)

Konkani people are a community whose identity predominantly derives from speaking the Konkani language as their mother tongue. However, understanding Konkani identity is not as easy as it appears. Several subgroups exist within the umbrella Konkani community; some are based on religious affiliations, caste and class observances, and some are based on the geographic areas from which the groups hail, and the scripts used/adapted to write Konkani. Different communities speak Konkani. Christians in Mangalore and Udupi districts speak Konkani with slight variations, and the styles of Konkani spoken by Christians in Goa, Mumbai and Karvar is different from theirs, and from each other. While Konkani spoken by Muslims has an Urdu flavour, the Siddis in Karnataka, a tribal group that apparently has its roots in Africa, also speak Konkani. Amongst the Konkani Hindus, especially the Saraswata Brahmins, there are in turn several subgroups, for example, Gowda Saraswata Brahmins, Chitrapura Saraswats, Chitpavan Brahmins and so on who owe allegiance to their own different sects and language styles. Nevertheless, the Konkani language is the thread that weaves all these different groups together to represent one linguistic community. It could be stated that the multiple Konkani dialects\(^7\) as well as multiple scripts\(^8\) to write Konkani best illustrate the dispersal of Konkani ethnicity within Indian territory. Konkani identity hence can be said to be truly dispersed or diasporic.

The history of Konkani migrants as represented and imagined by the GSBs and Mangalorean Catholics is a culmination of many migrations: The GSBs speak of two migrations—one migration from River Saraswati to Gowda desha and to Goa, and then another migration from Goa to coastal areas of Karnataka. The Konkani collective consciousness clings to this mythical migration, perhaps in a bid to claim historicity for the Konkani language group in relation to Indian heritage. Even Mangalorean Catholics, despite their religious affiliation, claim a similar history of migration, ascribing it to their Saraswata ancestry. The migration from Goa to coastal regions of Karnataka was the second migration in the history of Mangalorean Catholics. Of the various political, economic or socio-religious reasons asserted for Konkani mass migrations into Karnataka, the Portuguese and Maratha political and religious policies stand out. Colonization of Goa by the Portuguese and the persecution of Hindus and destruction of their temples and deities\(^9\) is stated as a significant part of GSB history, leading to their dislocation. Also, the Goan Inquisition,\(^10\) part of the Portuguese policy of colonization, which sought to weed out the local ‘pagan’ practices amongst the converts, is claimed to
be one of the reasons for the migration of the ancestors of Mangalorean Catholics. Conflicts with the Marathas, who were known for their fanaticism, is also another supposed reason for their migration. Nevertheless, it is mainly the collective imagination regarding Konkani migrations into coastal Karnataka which ensued as a result of colonialism that can be considered the main claim for arguing for a Konkani diaspora within India.

Hence Goa is treated as a special place in the popular imagination of the GSBs and Mangalorean Catholics in coastal Karnataka; it is viewed as their homeland, as both communities are seen displaying their diasporic sensibility towards Goa. This is despite the communal perception of the mythical origin of the Konkani collective community. The community of Mangalorean Catholics also claims Goa to be their maiganv or natal home, though they have taken on the name Kanara/Mangalorean or Kordiyali, after the place where they have settled. Due to their dispersal from Goa, their ethno-linguistic minority identity, and because they look back to Goa to explain their historicity, both the GSBs and Mangalorean Catholics can indeed be categorized as diasporas. It is the same diasporic consciousness that is documented in historical fictions such as the Kannada novel, Swapna Saraswata (2009) by B. Gopalakrishna Pai, and Shades within Shadows (2012) by Alan Machado (Prabhu), written in English. It is suggested in Swapna Saraswata (which can be loosely translated into English as ‘Imagining Saraswata’) that the ancestors of the GSBs crossed the Goan borders on foot, whereas the ancestors of the Mangalorean Catholics in Shades within Shadows take a water route to arrive in Kanara. Either way, their having had to cross the Portuguese boundaries is the key to understanding their sense of exile from their homeland. Migrations of Konkani communities from Portuguese-occupied Goa to regions that were part of other kingdoms, as well as later British-occupied territories, suggest the crossing of a definite boundary, and thus qualify their dislocation as a diasporic migration. Yet, the GSBs and Mangalorean Catholics are not traditionally defined as diasporas, because their traversal does not involve a crossing of international borders in line with the traditional definition of diaspora.

The term, “diaspora,” however, has been used to describe Konkanis’ link with Goa in book reviews and blog discussions, although no research work is to be found. The Times of India, a popular newspaper, states that “large populations of the Goan diaspora” are “concentrated in Mangalore, Sirsi and other districts in Karnataka . . .” (“Centres to Bring”). Luis Francisco Dias is of a similar opinion when he states that the Goan diaspora consists of “even non-Goan” but “Konkani-speaking” populations (“Khand—A Novelette”). Frederick Noronha sees a “striking” closeness between Goans and Mangaloreans in his “The Early Diaspora ‘Story’ that Goa MostlyForgot . . .” Some other insights on the Konkani diaspora within India declare that “the Saraswats, Gaud Saraswats and Catholics are highly diasporic, both within the country and outside” (Rodrigues); the Konkanis were “refugees from Goa who formed a diaspora along the coastline of Karnataka and Kerala by the inland rivers” (Kharkongo); “Konkani
is rich in vocabulary and idiom” owing to the “speakers (who) live in diaspora in four different states, and their dialects help enrich the language” (Mauzo); the “Konkani speaking diaspora” is a “part of the socio-ethnic groups” of the neighbouring regions and the “language of these states has naturally influenced the Konkani spoken and written by the Konkani diaspora which has resulted in multiple writing standards and dialects” (Panigrahi).

Although the migration of the ancestors of the GSBs and Mangalorean Catholics in coastal Karnataka is thought to have occurred as early as the 15th and 16th centuries, they are considered outsiders in coastal Karnataka, despite making the region their home for almost five centuries. The Konkanis regard themselves as immigrants from Goa (Tambs-Lyche 15, 18). They are ethnic minorities in Karnataka; their Konkani language is associated with their Goan roots, and despite the fact that Karnataka has a higher number of Konkani speakers than Goa (Menezes), where Konkani is an official state language, they are still linguistic minorities in Karnataka. Their stay in the coastal regions of Karnataka and education in other prominent Indian languages has contributed to their multilingual character, which is also a prominent aspect of their diasporic identity. Most of the Konkani literature written in Karnataka uses Kannada script (Pinto 2). While publications in Konkani written in Kannada script aim to further Konkani, associations and organizations such as the Vishwa Konkani Parishad (World Konkani Centre), Jagotik Konkani Songhatton (World Konkani Organization), Konkani Prachar Sanchalan (meaning Konkani Promotion Movement), and the Mandd Sobann (meaning Beautiful Stage) also strive to preserve and promote Konkani language and culture. Attempts to unite the dispersed Konkani population are also mostly spearheaded by GSBs and Mangaloreans in coastal Karnataka, as part of their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity. Towards this effort, research is encouraged into Konkani history, culture and traditions.

As already stated, in life as well as literature, both GSBs and Mangalorean Catholics adhere to a collective Konkani memory of their Goan natal home. For the GSBs, Goa is the ideal home, and members of the community proclaim their diasporic sensibility by visiting the family temples and kuladevatas\textsuperscript{14} in Goa at least once in their lifetime. Like most diasporic communities, Mangalorean Catholics follow Konkani ethnic traditions related to attire, food, weddings and other celebrations, and retain pre-conversion family names alongside their Christian surnames,\textsuperscript{15} writing genealogies that link them to Goa\textsuperscript{16} and so on. Many ancestral customs, including those which we may call “folk customs,” which the Christian converts were prohibited from practicing by the Inquisition, are considered to have survived till today, owing to these migrants. For instance, the practice of singing Ovi/Ovya/Voviyo/Oviyo\textsuperscript{17} at the Roce or Ros\textsuperscript{18} ceremony which has gradually faded in Goa, “is probably a custom that survives largely in Kanara” (Machado, “Hello”). The Ghumat, an earthen vessel with both sides open, is a Konkani musical instrument that has been in use in the Konkani diaspora in coastal Karnataka. Even Manddo, a type of Goan song form developed in the 19th century
and influenced by Portuguese music, is popular today amongst Mangaloreans, owing to Konkani activist Eric Ozario’s efforts (Fernandes 203).

Apart from their cultural practices and their folklore traditions, even in writings on the community, fiction as well as nonfiction, the Konkani communities constantly display a diasporic consciousness towards Goa. The migration from Goa has been a key motif in the literature produced by Konkanis in Karnataka, which depicts Konkani communities as being a Goan diaspora. Machado’s book on Mangalorean Catholic Konkani history, titled *Sarasvati’s Children* (1999), traces the community’s journey from the banks of the Saraswati river to the nineteenth century, and claims a mythical origin and Goan past for the community, along with a Brahmin identity. His *Shades within Shadows* (2012), though predominantly about the history of the community’s captivity under Tippu Sultan at Srirangapattana for 15 years, begins with Goa and documents the nostalgia of Christian migrants in Kanara for a lost Goan homeland. A similar attempt has been made for the GSBs by Gopalakrishna Pai, author of *Swapna Saraswata* (2009), who referred to the exodus of the GSBs from Goa during the Portuguese colonization as “Goa’s first diaspora.” *Swapna Saraswata* imagines their forced exile to be a curse cast by Nagdo Betala, a sage representing the Saraswata community conscience. The passing of the curse would allow them to go back to Goa after 400 years, coinciding with Goa’s achievement of freedom from the Portuguese. It also suggests loss of home, by portraying the estrangement of a daughter from her mother and later separation of a wife from her husband, using well-known Konkani folksongs such as “Rodonaka Baye” and “Kakk mama.” *Shades within Shadows* (2012) also establishes Mangaloreans’ connection with Goa by suggesting that they are one of the aerial roots of a big banyan tree. It also claims that “there is never a total break, something always remains” (158). These two fictional narratives encompass the family histories of the Machado and Pai families respectively, and yield narratives of history, memory, identity, survival and displacement or exile that indicate that the GSBs and the Mangalorean Catholics are diaspora communities in coastal Karnataka. They suggest that the two communities look back towards Goa for a sense of belonging, though they have become an integral part of the place they have inhabited for so long.

Although there is an understanding of the diasporic dispersal of Konkani communities in coastal Karnataka amongst a few Konkani writers, researchers and activists, as discussed earlier, and though the GSBs and Mangalorean Catholics fulfil most of the conditions of diasporic communities, they cannot be posited as diasporic communities if one goes by the requirement of transnational migration. The migrations of Konkani people from Goa to other parts of the Indian subcontinent are intra-territorial and, hence, cannot be theorized as transnational diaspora. Could one then designate the diaspora of Konkani communities in coastal Karnataka as an internal diaspora? ‘Internal diaspora’ is a phrase substituted to mean “local diaspora or ethnic diaspora” (Barna 59). These communities are described as “communities with distinct regional identities living outside their home areas” (Gold 171). For Murray Stewart Leith and
Duncan Sim, internal diasporas are intra-regional movements caused by economic factors or political conditions and even everyday reasons such as higher education, retirement or family reunion which provide a “scope for a diaspora to exist within the territorial boundaries of a single state” (102).

Going by these views, the Konkani dispersal would qualify as an internal diaspora, i.e., an internal movement of communities within stipulated political boundaries. This Konkani diaspora is also ethnic in nature, as the Konkanis occupy a minority position in the places where they have settled down. However, although this diasporic dispersal resembles an internal displacement or diaspora, it is not quite the same, as it is not an intra-national migration in its strict sense. The presence of a Konkani diaspora today might seem internal to the present-day Indian nation, but these migratory movements actually came about before the Indian nation gained its political freedom. The internal migrations occurred during the pre-colonial and colonial periods in pre-Independent India. India at that time was more of a cultural region than a nation state. Owing to their historical context of migration from Goa, the Konkani communities in coastal Karnataka cannot be strictly categorized as an internal diaspora, and hence the concept of internal diaspora does not completely suit the Konkani context. This is what led me to term the diaspora of Konkanis in coastal Karnataka as a “diaspora within,” a phrase that incorporates aspects of both transnational and internal diasporas.

Both Konkani communities in coastal Karnataka form a “diaspora within” India, as they view Goa as their natal home and relate to their homeland by different means. However, although they share many similarities in terms of being Konkani migrant communities from Goa residing in coastal Karnataka, they differ in their degree of diasporic consciousness. While the GSB community is diasporic without a doubt, Mangalorean Catholics do not consider Goa as their lost home; their diasporic sensibility is only partial. Instead they only seek to establish their historicity in connection with GSBs who claim to have migrated from the north of India and from Goa. This is due to the fact that not all ancestors of the Mangalorean Catholics share a history of migration from Goa. The Portuguese were known to have converted local people to Christianity in coastal Karnataka. Also, not all Christian converts who migrated from Goa belonged to the Brahmin caste and asserted a Saraswata origin; many converts were from the local tribes in Goa, such as Kunbi or Kunubi. While these aspects certainly might have had an influence on the ancestors of the present Mangalorean Catholics in choosing Mangalore as their destination, it is also suggested that Tippu’s Captivity (another event in the history of the Mangalorean Catholics in the Kanara region) resulted in a further dispersal of the Konkani community. Hence, unlike the GSBs, it is not the Goan migration that is viewed as one of the main factors that impacted the community, but rather the deportation and captivity of the community by Tippu Sultan, which is supposed to be a watershed moment that adversely affected the community. Machado (Prabhu), in his “Goan and Mangalorean Identities: A Shared Heritage,” addresses the Mangaloreans’ loss of links with Goa, which according
to him was due to the community’s persecution under Tipu Sultan. Ironically, this same event is claimed by scholars as having first instilled a sense of community among the Christians of Kanara who survived the Captivity (Rajath 14). Most of the Mangalorean Christians “considered themselves expatriates from the malgado gaon” (meaning ‘land of the elders or ancestors’), suggesting a diasporic homeland. Goa was that homeland until the Mangalorean identity was more firmly established after Tipu’s Captivity (Machado “Goan and Mangalorean”). In recent decades, however, efforts to re-establish that ‘lost’ connection with Goa have been undertaken. Konkani writers and activists have contributed greatly to this diasporic consciousness.

Notes

1 According to a traditional belief, one that is claimed to be supported by Indian epics, the Saraswatas were originally from the banks of the river Saraswati and migrated to other regions when the river went dry. According to the legend relating to Parashurama (one of the reincarnations of Hindu deity, Rama, his name suggests Rama with an axe), the Saraswatas from the Gowda desha accompanied him to the south (Kamat 5–7), where he is supposed to have thrown his axe into the ocean commanding the water to retreat and hence create the coastal land of Konkan and Malabar known as ‘Parashurama Srishti’ or Creation of Parashurama. All Konkani communities, in spite of differences in religion, caste, dialect spoken or script written, begin with this ‘mythical’ migration as their point of origin, as Konkani is thought to be the language of the Saraswatas from the north who migrated to Goa.

2 Gomanthak is the name by which Goa was referred to in the Indian epics. It is a Sanskrit word denoting fertile land or land of paradise.

3 The present article takes its cue from the chapter titled, “Diaspora and Its Relevance to Konkani Communities,” of my MRP (Minor Research Project) report, and builds on the argument that Konkanis form a “diaspora within” in India.

4 The Gowda Saraswata Brahmins, as the name of the community indicates, primarily develop their identity in connection to the banks of river Saraswati and Gowda desha. They also claim an elite caste identity—that of Brahmins—despite fish being a part of their diet. According to the myth, after the bloody carnage of the Kshatriyas, Parshurama asked the Gowda Saraswata Brahmins to join him as he was going south for penance. It was he who is supposed to have sanctioned the practice of eating fish amongst the Saraswata community.

5 Also known as Kanara Christians, Kanara Catholics, Konkani Christians of Karnataka or simply as Mangalorean.

6 The coastal regions of Karnataka are a part of the Konkan coast that spreads from Gujarat to Kerala. The Karnataka coastal region was referred to as Kanara and was divided into North and South Kanara. The Christians in South Kanara are known as Mangaloreans even though South Kanara was further divided into Mangalore and Udupi districts in recent times. These districts also have separate dioceses.

7 Maharashtrian Konkani, Mangalorean Konkani, Goan Konkani, Chitpavani Konkani, Malvani Konkani, and Karwari Konkani are some of the many dialects of the Konkani language.

8 Konkani is written using Kannada, Malayalam, Devanagari, Roman and Urdu scripts mostly depending on the geographical dispersal of Konkani population. The Konkanis use Devanagari script in Maharashtra, Kannada script in Karnataka, Malayalam script in Kerala, both Roman and Devanagari scripts in Goa and Urdu is the script in use among the Konkani Muslims.

9 “... the iconoclastic campaign (therefore) resulted in the almost complete surrender of the Hindu population, driving a majority into Christian conversion and forcing those who were not willing to convert to abandon their homes and property and flee from their villages and lands in large numbers” (Henn 46).

10 The Inquisition was established in Goa from 1560 to 1812 with the intention of punishing the insincerity of the new converts who furtively practiced their ancestral customs and traditions.
Inquisition also barred people from staying back in Goa unless converted, destroying their temples, forbidding them from building new temples, or visiting the old ones (SarDessai 67–68).

European Colonialism is accredited with enabling diasporic migrations in the modern times as opposed to the traditional notion of diaspora signifying the historical exodus of the Jewish population from Palestine.

Kadiyali derives from the term Kadiyal which is one of the names of Mangalore. The belief is that the term connotes Kadla (Tulu language name for Mangalore) which stems from Kudal/Kodali meaning axe. A mythical connection to Parashurama or Rama-with-an-axe is to be noted.

Kannada is the state language of Karnataka.

Means family or lineage deities.

While Portuguese surnames like D’Souza, Pinto or Coelho are common among Mangalorean Catholics, some use their pre-conversion surnames such as Prabhu, Kamath, Naik, Shenoy. The author Alan Machado also annexes Prabhu to his Christian family surname.

An example is Michael Lobo’s A Genealogical Encyclopaedia of Mangalagang Catholic Families.

Vorypo/ORypo/Vorypo/Vorpyo refers to the two lined folk verses sung by Konkani women at various wedding rituals such as Race.

Race or Ros is a pre-wedding function among Mangalorean Catholics. Race here refers to the coconut milk with which the bride and groom are anointed with, in the company of their families and relatives, as the mark of an end of bachelor life.

Nagdo Betala’s name indicates nakedness; the Konkani word nagdo means nude or unclothed and betala means spirit. Nagdo Betala is a pre-Hindu deity of folk worship and Pai draws his character from the Konkani folksong. Read more on Nagdo Betala in my earlier published papers “From Folklore to Religious Politics: A Study of the Character of Nagdo Betala” and “Laying Bare the Colonial Values: An Analysis of Nagdo Betala’s Nakedness in Swapna Saraswata?” (Mascarenhas “From Folklore to” 1–11; “Laying Bare the” 652–660).

Rodonakka is a popular wedding song that marks the giving away of the daughter in a Christian Konkani wedding in Mangalore: Rodonaka baye, baye suzainaka dolle, ata disam fudem, bhav thuzo apovn vortha polle (Do not cry daughter, do not swell your eyes, within eight days your brother will come to take you back home—translation mine) Pai’s version replaces the latter part of the verse by including “parthoon Goam vachcha assa” (156) meaning—we have to return to Goa (translation mine).” The distance from the homeland and the resulted displacement is painful and hence the desire to go back is a much awaited one. The second song “Kakk mama thum Goam gellalve? Angelumunoolem Bannana deklave? Tha bannan yedhila mhallave? Angelumunoole golila sanglave?” (225 Pai) which translates to ‘Crow uncle, did you go to Goa? Did you see our dear daughter’s husband? Did the husband say that he will come? Has he asked our dear daughter to come?’ (translation mine). Mama refers to mother’s brother. By mentioning these songs, the novel Swapna Sarasrata throws light on the estrangement caused by migration between a motherland and a daughter community on the one hand and expression of parents’ anguish at the separation of their daughter from her in-laws. However, while the first song ends with a hope of returning, the second song, which involves a lot of rhetorical questions, indicate doubt at the option of returning to Goa.

I have referred to the diaspora of Mangalorean Catholics towards Goa as a “partial diaspora” in my MRP on “Diasporic Nature of Konkani Communities in Coastal Karnataka.”

Captivity refers to the forced exile of the Kanara Christians from the Kanara region to Srirangapatna where they were held captive by Tippu Sultan for 15 long years from 1784 to 1791. It is believed that the community lost many members to starvation, punishment, and conversions to Islam.

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