

## **Mangaloreans, who are they?**

Written by Walter J. Pais

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With the passing of time people of Mangalorean origin have moved to other lands and become part of other cultures, eventually the younger generation has lost sense of their roots. Not that change is bad. However, it is good to understand the reasons behind the nostalgia of their parents, and grand parents. Why did they speak &quot;Konkani&quot; which was also the language of Goans. How did words of other languages spoken in nearby districts enter the Mangalorean Konkani, and are not found in the Goan Konkani. Why are the food recipes of Mangaloreans and Goans similar. Why, Why and Why? This is only to give you an appetizer to your curiosity. You can make further research by asking the elders and from visits to your ancient towns and villages.

### **India, our Mother Land**

India is often pictured in the form of a lady dressed in a saree, with her legs crossed at her ankles. In this picture, Bombay, her Financial City appears to be dangling from her left hip, as if it is her bunch of keys. Goa strides along her thigh and Mangalore, like a small jewel decorates her left knee, as the Arabian Sea on its West Coast bathes it. In physical terms the distance between the two coastal towns is quite large. An 18 hours bus ride going southwards from Bombay takes you first to Goa.

Goa

These are times where a lot of misinformation is spread, but some four hundred and fifty years ago, the Portuguese had come to trade with India, with their great and famous explorer Vasco Da Gama. After showing their credentials at the Court of Akhbar the Great, the Portuguese purchased Goa from the Nawab of Bijapur and made it their Eastern Head Quarters.

Panjim, the capital of Goa, was known as 'Ponjem' in olden days and many Konkani songs called Mandos celebrate the name. The Portuguese folk songs were called Fado, (pronounced 'faad' (and the Konkani name for songs, Pod might be a corruption of the Portuguese word.

As the trade developed, the Portuguese founded legal trading centers on the west coast, and among such centers was one at Coondapur Catholic missionaries came with the migrants and settled in Coondapur, and the Portuguese built many churches, and their influence has lasted till today. Many of these Portuguese might have intermarried with local people, and that could be an indication, why many of the Catholics in the north are fair, with light eyes. The boats, which used to sail on the coast, were called 'Patmars'. Perhaps the name might have had something to do with Bat' de Mar, meaning ship of the sea. In those days the sea-wind powered the boats with the help of sails. On some such Patmar the Portuguese and the Goans might have sailed to South Kanara. My maternal great grandfather, Custodio Castelino owned three such Patmars, which went down on a fateful stormy night in a raging cyclone. He ended up in bankruptcy, as in those days there was no insurance cover for sailing vessels.

### **Goa Inquisition**

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St. Francis Xavier arrived in Goa and his mission lasted ten years. He died in 1552 and by 1560 Portugal had acceded to the demand of Spain to institute the Inquisition, similar to our CBI investigation. It was partly meant to safeguard the Catholic faith, and protect Catholics from heretical influences and also the projection of the European divisions in the Portuguese territories. Somehow, due to political compulsions, and lack of understanding of Indian customs there was misunderstanding among the Portuguese officials led to people left the area to safer places. This is said to be one of the reasons for the Goan Catholics moved to Mangalore and the surrounding areas. The Inquisition was suspended from 1774 to 1789 and then resumed, during which there was a rebellion of the Pintos in Candolim, in which Abbe Faria was implicated and many Pintos and Farias family members escaped the dragnet and moved to Mangalore.

At this period Tippu Sultan was ruling Mysore, and felt the Catholics of Mangalore to be British collaborators, and took them into captivity for 15 years, which ended with the Anglo Mysore war and the death of Tippu Sultan.

### **Mangalore**

During the time of the Mogul rule, Mangalore a small town on the West Coast of India was ruled by a Hindu king. Perhaps he was the King of Mysore. It gets its name from the Kannada words "Magala Uru" which means The Daughter's town. Some say, that the king had two daughters and he gave this town as a gift to his elder daughter. There was also another town called Chikamangalore, in the Coorg district nestling in the Western Ghats with its verdant coffee estates. It was known for its famous warriors, the 'Kodagas' who have always been a part of the Indian Armed Forces. Chikka in Kannada means young or small and the town might have been given to the younger daughter.

In the course of history, Mangalore came under the rule of Hyder Ali, the father of Tippu Sultan. After the defeat of the latter by the British, it was incorporated into the British Raj, as part of the Madras Presidency.

### **Coondapur**

In the days of the Madras Presidency South Kanara, the 26th district was divided into six talukas, and the northern most one was named Coondapur where the Portuguese had a trading post. With its rivulets, backwater creeks, and villages full of coconut trees, this is regarded as a very beautiful part in South Kanara, Towns like Karwar, Belgaum to its north, were part of North Kanara.

Catholics of the western coast speak Konkani, in different dialects. In Maharashtra, Marathi, the language spoken by the people, is very similar to Konkani, in Ratnagiri; the language turns to Konkani. Down to its south in Goa it takes the shape of the Goan dialect, and as we go further southwards to Karwar the shade of the language changes, and finally in South Kanara we get the Mangalorean dialect. Even in South Kanara, the nuances of the spoken language vary from village to village. Konkani does not have its own writing script. Ratnagiri area uses Devanagiri script. Goa used the Roman script under the Portuguese and in South Kanara the

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language was written in Kannada script. Each language has left its stamp on the spoken language, with local words added to it.

Thus from Ratnagiri to Mangalore, the coast is called the Konkan Coast. The Railway, which runs along the coast, is also named after it: The Konkan Railway.