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## **The Intercultural Impact of the Portuguese on the Vijayanagara Territories on the Western Coastal Areas of Karnataka-A Study**

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**Abstract:**

*History cannot be the chronicle of kings and queens and their wars and campaigns, court intrigues and palace feuds only, but a study of the manners and customs of the people, their everyday life and activities and their social economic problems and solution. The Present Paper deals with the , Portuguese Impact upon the Cultural life of the people in coastal Karnataka with special reference to Vijayanagara Era. The 15<sup>th</sup> century in South Indian History plays a vital role for a historian to study about the above mentioned topic.*

**Keywords:** *Vijayanagara Empire, Portuguese, Social economic Problems and Solutions*

### **1. Introduction**

The territorial dispute is a disagreement over the possession/control of land between two or more territorial entities. Territorial disputes are often related to the possession of Natural resources, and its products. The disputes can also be driven by culture, religion and ethnic nationalism. Territorial disputes are a major causes of wars, and battles, between the nations and the inter states. "Karnataka" as known to the modern world, shares its borders with Goa, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh , Tamil Nadu and Kerala , which has a very vast , glorious and ancient history.

South India, witnessed the Advent of the Portuguese on the western coastal region , the first Portuguese sailor Vasco –da Gama who sailed to India from Portugal in 1498 AD to Calicut, and whose main intention was to have trade contacts with the South Indians, mainly because of the Spices that were available here, brisk trade took place between the two countries, gradually the Portuguese history began swelling by building their establishments like factories, Colonies and ,fortresses, on the coastal areas, which paved the way for the rule of Viceroy or Governors in South India. From 1498-1961AD .(When Goa became an Union Territory) most of the places like ,Mangalore(Mangalur),Bhatkal (Bhatchala),Gerasoppa, Ankola, Honnavar,Bidnur,(Haduvalli Bharangi)Barkur, Karwar, Kumble,etc were under the rule of the Rayas of Vijayanagara and their feudatories, were much influenced by the Portuguese language, Dress mode, Food habits, art, literature, customs , beliefs ,education, recreation and amusements on the Indian folks. The buffer zone was Bhatkal, and other areas while Goa remained the Heartland of the Portuguese.

Thus the Impact of the Portuguese on Vijayanagara people could be discussed with the following points.

- 1. Section A: Influence on language and Literature.
- 2. Section B: Food habits.
- 3. Section C: House Dwellings.
- 4. Section D: The Costumes.
- 5. Section E: Abolition of Superstitious ideas.
- 6. Section F: Upliftment of the downtrodden and untouchables.
- 7. Section G: Introduction of Printing Press.
- 8. Section H: Introduction of Western Science and Education.
- 9. Section I: Urban life and the Portuguese.
- 10 Section J: .Rise of Colonies
- 11. Section K: Shipping and Ship building centres
- 12.Section L: Impact on the social life of people
- 13 Section M :Influence of Christianity and Hindu resistance over the Portuguese
- 14.Section N : Recreation and amusements

### **2. Section A: Influence on Language and Literature**

The Portuguese influenced upon the Indian languages and literature too. The Konkani language spoken in coastal areas contains large number of Portuguese words directly or indirectly derived. Many such words are found in Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali,

Kannada, Tulu, Malayalam, and Tamil also. Indian words particularly the names of the various boats, articles of trade and weights are peculiar to Indian words, are found in the Portuguese language too.

The Portuguese first attempted to translate a few works from Sanskrit. In 1651 A.D. and a Dutch prose version of a translation in Portuguese of the 7<sup>th</sup> century poet, “Bhartriharis” poems appeared in Sanskrit. Language.



Figure 1

### 3. Section B: Food Habits

During the medieval period, many new vegetables fruits and crops were introduced in South India by the Portuguese, but they were all seriously examined to identify their Rasa, Guna, Vipaka, and Prabhava and then only they were allowed for popular usage either as drugs or as food items with their methods of cooking, for example, potatoes, tobacco, papaya fruit, cashew nuts, and foreign alcohol were introduced by the Portuguese, and these food and drinks served as variety to the people.

The food need of the city population was largely satisfied with imported rice and wheat. Green vegetables, beans of various kinds, coconut oil and also fish formed as important ingredients of the diet of the people, which were obtained from local suppliers. Several city dwellers had their own kitchen gardens and their own groves, where they set their servants to work to grow enough for themselves and a surplus to the market.

Most of the locals conversion to Christianity consequently changed their diet also. Beef was an important diet. It was regularly consumed by the inmates of the monasteries and also by the Christian city dwellers. The cattle, for slaughter was imported from the main land. Slaves brought meat in earthen vessels from the Bangany and sold it at the road junctions of the city and also supplied fresh drinking water to the people. The cutleries like forks, spoons, bowls and furniture like tables, chairs, etc many kinds of soups and different varieties of sea food dishes were introduced by the Portuguese in India.

As regarding eating utensils, the Portuguese had Chinese crockery imported from Macao, while the clay pottery was manufactured in Bardez. It served the needs of the Christian and non Christians who were served food in containers made of leaves.

### 4. Section C: House Dwellings

There were the sumptuous mansions of the Portuguese settlers in urban areas and also magnificent out- houses in the suburbs. As the houses of the downtrodden were largely made of stone and lime, there were residences of these people, close to the suburbs. From the point of view of labour demand, it is important to note that most of the building material was obtained locally. The laterite stones were quarried out of the oyster shells in the kilns working in some other neighboring villages and the roof tiles were also manufactured there. The illumination of the houses was done by lighting with torches and lamps fed with coconut oil, while it was common to use wax candles for the church services.

### 5. Section D: The Costumes

Conversion to Christianity meant the converts not only to Christian faith but also the outward trappings of European culture, such as European clothes, with new Christian names and new food habits like gowns, skirts, shorts, frocks, socks, forks, spoons, soups etc. Wearing western clothes, eating pork and beef and drinking alcohol seemed essential elements of being a Christian over the years. Indian Christians have evolved their own hybrid culture. The converts and the descendants of the Portuguese have accepted an alien religion, but their way of living is a mixture of Indian and European ways. The non –Christians have taken to certain modes of dress, which indicates Portuguese influence.

**6. Section E: Abolition of Superstitious Ideas**

Not only in matter of religion that the Portuguese have shown such enthusiasm but even in general cause of humanity they have left their mark on the western coastal areas. It was the Portuguese Viceroy Lopez Soares (1515-1518 A.D.) the successor of the great Albuquerque who when held his political supremacy over this coast abolished the barbarous custom of killing the children by listening to the astrologers, which prevailed in the western coast. The Astrologers and Sorcerers in these areas condemned death to the children born under unlucky stars, so to avert this calamity that would befall, such children were ruthlessly killed and the happy children born under lucky stars were allowed to survive. Lopez Soares interposed on the western coastal parts, which had no other alternative but to implicitly obey the orders of the Portuguese Viceroy.

The Hindu religion had become ridden with rituals and superstitious observances. Religious festivals and ceremonies were held with lavish expenditure and entertainments.

The fear of ghosts and spirits was widespread and the belief in astrology was unchallenged, religious observances assumed greater importance than knowledge of Hindu religious texts or the practice of Hindu spiritual and ethical teachings.

**7. Section F: Upliftment of the Downtrodden and Untouchables**

The low caste men were excluded from the government services and were looked down upon by the high caste people thus, the condition of the untouchables continued to be deplorable in South Indian states from time immemorial. Thus with the intervention of European governments some reforms like admission to schools of the untouchables and to other public offices, permission to use public roads were granted to make their life better that it used to be. Here the church played a significant role in the line of promoting social welfare to these people. Each province had a Father (priest) of the Christians, whose sole concern was to look after the welfare of the native converts and to favour them in every possible way.

Concretely among their measures of social welfare, the Father, made arrangements for the training of the converts in different skills like Carpentry, Tailoring, Tools and Dye making etc. which could help them to find the employment and also sought to check the treatment of the low caste.

**8. Section G: Introduction of Printing Press**

A valuable contribution of Portuguese to the growth of Modern India was the introduction of the Printing Press in Goa in 1556 A.D. It was the first Press in India. The Portuguese were responsible for introducing the first printed book in India, it was the "Bible" in Tamil in Roman script printed in Lisbon in 1554 A.D. obviously to aid the missionaries to preach Christianity amongst Tamilians.

**9. Section H: Introduction of Western Science and Education**

With the arrival of the Portuguese, the scientific study of India's flora became a matter of worldwide interest. The British carried on the pioneering work done in this direction by the Portuguese and the Dutch in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The "Calcutta Botanical Gardens" came up at Sibpur near Calcutta (Kolkata) in 1788 AD. and it became a Centre of Research and Experimentation.

The Portuguese began scientific investigations in India in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The tropical vegetation attracted their attention first, the renowned Portuguese scientist, Dr. Garcia da Orta (1478-1570 A.D) had come to Goa in 1534 A.D and he mainly concentrated on the scientific studies of the flora of that region.

In Bombay, which was also one of the Portuguese settlements, Garcia da Orta built a herbarium and cultivated rare medicinal plants. The Portuguese Jesuit missionaries brought with them the European scientific knowledge as Astronomy, Mathematics, Geography and Natural History. They acted as intermediaries between Europe and India.

**10. Section I: Urban Life and the Portuguese**

The Portuguese contributed a great deal to the development of the coastal towns of Vijayanagara empire like Karwar, Honnavar, Bhatkal and Mangalore. Above all developed faster than the other towns and became thickly populated with a number of establishments. The chief weighing place called PESO, on the western coast was established in Cochin and the ships loaded with commodities left from here to Portugal country and the other ports on the routes which were used for inter coastal trade. Similarly commodities imported from Europe and other Portuguese colonies were stored in Vijayanagara empire and then sent to various factories and markets on the Indian coast as well as South East Asia. Therefore the movement of the commodities and the other works connected with trade required more workers and offered chances of employment for the people. Reportedly there were about 3000 Nairs as daily wage workers in the service of the Portuguese in 1510 AD.

**11. Section J: Rise of Colonies**

From the time of the establishment of factories and fortresses during Vijayanagara period on the western coast, a number of Portuguese men began to reside in this area. Gradually, in and around the fortresses and in these places colonies came up of the Portuguese, which were known as Casaclose e-moradores (Married settlers). Many of them married local women giving rise to a mixed race. Even some of the Germans, who were in the service of the Portuguese power, married and settled down on the western coast of India. By 1512 A.D, there were one hundred Portuguese men married with local women in Portuguese settlements. Muslim and Brahmin ladies were preferred by the Portuguese for marriage, because the Muslim ladies, according to Affonso-de-Albuquerque, were fairer in complexion, chaste in morality and reserved in social contacts, being shut up in their houses while the others were more of a liberated nature. Brahmin ladies were also of desirable since they too were fair complexion and supposedly of better conduct than the others. Both the King and Affonso-de-Albuquerque encouraged mixed marriages and a

permanent settlement of Portuguese blooded population on the west coast was for the sake of the protection of the interests of Portugal. The most important Portuguese colony on the western coast was Cochin. According to a list submitted to the King of Portugal in 1514 A.D by the Vicar General, Dominicus there were fifty- eight Portuguese families in Cochin, which was originated out of the marriage of the Portuguese men with the local women, mostly Muslims. There were forty- eight children born of these unions. Besides the Muslim women also married the Portuguese men, but outside wedlock. The women included in this group are categorized in the records according to sections of the society that they came from, such as the Muslims, Nairs, Canarese etc. All these people constituted the colony of the Portuguese in 1514 A.D .In unregistered Offspring's also on the Malabar coast as was seen even in the case of the missionaries at Cannanore and Cochin. There were a number of solteiros (bachelors), and other Portuguese officials with their Portuguese wives.

### 12. Section K: Shipping and Ship Building Centres

Several people from western coastal area were also employed in the Portuguese vessels for example twenty men from Malabar were employed in the ship of Santo-Espirito in 1509 A.D. Six under captain George Da Silveira, thirteen in the ship of Santa-MariaDa vitoria and thirty seven in the ship of Esapara Bowmen (Archery experts) from Malabar were employed in the Portuguese vessels for the protection of the cargo. Malabar men acted as ship-boys, (Grumetes) in the Portuguese vessels. Several people from Malabar were employed in the ship of San Thome in the period between 1511 to 1514 A.D.



*Figure 2*



*Figure 3*

There were seventy local men in the ship Belem\_ in 1515 A.D. Twenty men under Jacome a Christian from quilon worked in the fleet of the captain in chief in 1515 A.D. Similarly there were fifty Nairs Serving as guards in the factory of Calicut in 1514 A.D . As noted elsewhere , several other posts like interpreter, persons to see the weighing of the commodities in the factory and so on were filled by people from coastal region thus a number of them were in the service of the portugese, most of them settled down in Cochin adding to the population there.



More men were needed for the work in the shipyard. Ships were built and repaired in Cochin, Cannanore and Calicut. In 1505 A.D the King of Portuga; instructed Francesco-De-Almeida the Viceroy , to see that the ships were constructed in cochin if possible. Therefore it was quite possible that the viceroy after having established his headquarters at Cochin made provisions for construction and repair of the ships.Santa Catarina de Monte Sinai was one of the ships that was built in Cochin between 1511-13 A.D. Another ship was built in 1512 A.D at the shipyard in Cochin. By October 1514 A.D three caravals were constructed in Cochin and the construction of two more vessels were undertaken in the same year. The Portuguese secured the necessary timber from the interior parts of Malabar with the help of local men and took it to the shipyard at Cochin. Several Carpenters and caulkers(one who stop up seams of ship) worked under their chiefs under the shipyard .

Timber(wood) for the construction of vessels was available at a cheap rate at Chale near Calicut therefore as soon as the factory and fortress were established at Calicut the Portuguese began to construct ships there, as the king had suggested to the Portuguese Viceroy that, if he wanted he could construct ships in the port of Calicut, hence a ship began to be constructed in Calicut in 1514 A.D and another almost ready by October of the same year Further.two more ships were constructed in Calicut under the supervision of Duarte Barbosa for a few Chettis ,the merchants of Calicut who wanted to export goods to Aden in 1515 A.D and again in the same year, DuarteBarbosa got constructed two more ships for the muslim merchants of Mecca. Occasionally a ship or two were constructed in Cannanore, thus in the year 1514 A.D the Portuguese built a ship center in the port of Cannanore. However none of these could come to the level of the shipyard at Cochin where there were permanent establishments for the construction of the ships.

### 13. Section L: Impact on the Social Life of People

The advent of Portuguese in south India in the midst of 15<sup>th</sup> century had produced drastic and revolutionary changes in the political, economic, social religious life of the people. Amongst the foreigners, the first to come to India were the Portuguese. Their stay lasted for over one and half century. It was mainly on the western coastal areas that the Portuguese were much confined and have left remarkable changes on life of the people staying there.

The natives were being acquainted with these foreigners, regarding jobs and wed locks and majority of the low castes, were converted to Christian faith. Naturally these downtrodden people,were under the influence of Christian missionaries and with their liberal western ideas, started agitating for securing the simple civil rights which the governments had permitted their citizens to enjoy. Thus the Portuguese impact was felt upon the dietary changes, dress, entertainments, house dwellings, language, art, architecture etc.

### 14. Section M : Influence of Christianity and Hindu resistance over the Portuguese

As the capital of the Estado da India, the Portuguese colonial empire in Asia and East Africa, Goa was subjected to a blizzard of policies designed at once to transform and fossilize life there. Desiring to preserve much of the precolonial village economic structure, yet determined to force their Goan subjects to total conversion to Catholicism, the Portuguese created policies that had a dramatic impact on Goan culture and identity. The focus of this paper will be on the impact of the Portuguese on Hinduism, in which resistance to the policies that were applied by the colonial regime and its role in the shaping of the regional culture: in the face of over-whelming physical force, direct defiance revealed itself primarily in the religious life of Hindu Goa as archival records of the Portuguese rule and temple histories demonstrate. Even forms of religious syncretism that are pervasive in Catholic Goa and might initially be perceived as indications of the success of Portuguese repressive and discriminatory policies represent a subtle pattern of 'everyday resistance' and are not simply the blending of Portuguese Catholic and Hindu cultures.

### 15. Section N: Recreation and Amusements

Gambling, dancing, drinking were also an irresistible attraction for many of the people, and there were well- furnished houses in the cities for that purpose. For example the city of Goa was no exception as far as evil of prostitution was concerned. Female slaves were very much in demand for the sexual gratification, but the Portuguese had developed a preferential taste for the Hindu naach girls.



Figure 4

**15. Conclusion**

The Portuguese considered their duty to do all they could in effecting a change for the better in the educational, social, religious and cultural conditions of the people in South India, especially to the western coastal areas. The Rayas of Vijaynagara and the Portuguese Governors were equally brave, able administrators and politically shrewd people. They were full-fledged in all the fields that retained them a unique status in the history of South India.

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