

Mass Consumption, Visual Merchandizing, and Konkani Language Emergence of a Consumerist Goan: Review of the Goan periodical *Amchó Gão* (1929-33)

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Abstract

In the twentieth century, consumption is a major feature of South Asia, yet for the history of the Portuguese Goa, there are only passing references to consumerism and the consumerist lifestyle. This essay attempts to fill the gap through a thorough analysis of *Amchó Gão*, Goa's first exclusive Konkani periodical (1929-33), to draw the picture of an emerging Goan consumerist. *Amchó Gão* is an active player in the consumption game lending its pages not only to the advertisers, shop owners and capitalists, but, also offering its print space, for a discursive debate, on consumerism, and, its impact on the society. A discerning reading of the periodical, exposes arguments between modernity vs. tradition, old vs. new and the orient vs. occident, societies defined by reciprocity and status as opposed to those driven by individuality and markets. The periodical has a clever brand promotion strategy in place, aiding the manufacturers and sellers of goods to harness the power of vernacular language, in order to spin a web of consumerism. However, there is a sort of nuanced questioning of the unbridled consumerism in the Goan society during the period of the Great Depression.

Keywords: *Amchó Gão*, mass consumption, Konkani language, merchandising, brand promotion.

Introduction

The history of consumerism in South Asia is an emerging field of study. However, there are few researches dealing with specific aspects of historical consumption on twentieth century India. Douglas E. Haynes and Abigail McGowan, write that scholars of Indian history are rather silent on issues of consumption, dealing only in passing with its role in historical processes, rather than engaging in full-fledged studies of its importance.¹ When it comes to Portuguese Goa, there are just passing references to consumerism and consumerist way of life.² Whereas for the most parts of Portuguese colonial rule in Goa, the consumption landscape is dominated by the agricultural related needs of locals, there is a visible transformation, in the vast expansion of consumption activities, from the last quarter of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, spurred by the remittances of the emigrants.³ The current essay, based on the reading of Goa's first Konkani periodical *Amchó Gãõ*, argues that the articulation of a modern lifestyle in Portuguese Goa is the product of mass consumption, visual merchandizing, and vernacular language, especially in the 1930s. The focus of this study is the evolving Goan consumer as seen in vernacular periodical press.

¹ Douglas E. Haynes, et. al., (ed.), *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 1-8.

² Silvia M. de Mendonça-Noronha, *The Economic Scene in Goa (1926-1961)*, in Teotonio R. De Souza (ed.) *Goa Through The Ages, Vol. II*, New Delhi: Concept Pub. Co., 2009, pp. 280-81.

³ Rice, fish and curry is the staple of the Goans at least since the early sixteenth century. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there is a shortfall of rice production in Goa, to the extent of one-fourth to one-third of the total requirements, to feed the people. José Maria de Sá writes that to meet the yearly shortfall, rice was imported in large quantities from British India, and, Goa paid about Rupees 20 lakhs for rice imports in 1909. This figure rose exponentially, in the subsequent years. People migrated to distant lands in search of work, so that they could despatch remittances, for their families to buy the yearly requirements of rice. António de Noronha, in his seminal essay states that in subsequent years, as the earnings of the migrants marginally increased, they tended or were invited to spend on diverse products, for better living standards. He shows how the living room of the Goan changes in the second quarter of the 20th century with new furniture, chinaware, cutlery and crockery making a grand entry. The imagery provided by António de Noronha offers a peep into the changing lifestyle of the catholic Goan community especially the elites.

See, José Maria de Sá, *O Arroz – Cultura, Produção e Consumo em Goa* (Rice – Cultivation, Production and Consumption in Goa), Nova Goa, Imprensa Nacional, 1909; António de Noronha, *Os Nossos Interiores* (Our homes, lit. Our Interiors), Nova Goa, Tip Bragança & C.^a, 1928; Remy Antonio Dias, *Consumption History of the Estado da India*, in Douglas E. Haynes, et. al., (ed.), op. cit., pp. 76-107.

The periodical *Amchó Gão*, is opulent in short write-ups, essays, poems, letter(s)-to-the-editor, and, innumerable advertisements of diversified products (and services), which assist in drawing the picture of an emerging consumerist – though mimicking – Goan. It is a weekly, published every Thursday, from 1929 to 1933, and, constitutes the pet project of Luis de Meneses, which is primarily aimed at bringing about the revival and renaissance of Goan cultural life.⁴ Attempt in this essay is to meet the challenges of discussion of consumerism, into the broader picture of practices and meanings of consumption, which are woven into social structures and fabric, and, actions that lie beyond the shop counter. The focus is the transformation of Goa, into a mass consumer society, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, by enquiring into, what is consumed, by whom, why and the resultant, immediate and long enduring, changes. The essay also adds to the body of knowledge based on colonial periodical press related to Portuguese Goa.⁵

In the twentieth century, a host of bi- and multi-lingual periodicals (with substantial space for the vernaculars) mushroomed in Goa and Bombay.⁶ A large

⁴ Luís de Meneses, born in the village of S. Matias, (Ilhas de Goa), Goa, on August 7, 1884, completed his studies at the Lyceum and the Escola Normal, Goa. In 1934, he published the first *Anuário Estatístico of Portuguese India*. Over the years, Meneses, with a flair for investigative reporting, contributed to a number of Goan periodicals like *O Heraldo*, *Heraldo* and *Debate*. See, Aleixo Manuel da Costa, *Dicionário de Literatura Goesa*, vol. II, Macau, Fundação Oriente, 1997, pp. 289-91.

⁵ Sandra Ataíde Lobo, *The Languages of the Goan Periodical Press, 1820-1933*, in Garcia, José Luis, et. al. (ed.) *Media and the Portuguese Empire*, Palgrave Studies in the History of the Media, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 69-86. The work locates the press as the main instrument and locus of construction while approaching the modern cultural, political and intellectual history in the period between 1820s (advent of liberal revolution) to mid-1920s (rise of dictatorship); Rochelle Pinto, *Between Empires, Print and Politics in Goa*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007). The book covers in depth a wide range of issues that illuminate the differences between societies, nationalist struggles and print culture that evolved in areas under British and Portuguese rule from the early nineteenth century. According to Pinto, the print medium in Portuguese Goa is harnessed to consolidate oppositional identities of language, class and caste. Frederick Noronha, *Understanding Literary Production of Fiction and Non-Fiction Works in Twentieth-Century Goa*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Taleigao Plateau, Goa University, 2020. Noronha makes an in-depth analysis of the Indo-Portuguese literature with a special focus on the Portuguese literary works of twentieth century Goa; Sandra Ataíde Lobo, *O Desassossego Goês: Cultura e Política em Goa do Liberalismo ao Acto Colonial*, PhD Thesis, FCSH, Lisboa, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2013, accessed at <https://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/10822> on 22/03/2019.

⁶ A few of the periodicals which can be accessed at the Central Library, Panjim-Goa, include: *A Vanguarda*, 1954-58, (Portuguese & Konkani); *Leituras Amenas*,

number of Goan emigrants stayed and worked in Bombay to make a living, providing a ready readership for these periodicals.⁷ The emigrants are also contributors to these periodicals, forming a budding intellectual class, from among the working community. Jan Van Der Putten gives an interesting spin, to the burgeoning of the vernacular periodicals, in the colonial world, especially as the Great Depression ravaged the First and the Third World. Putten argues that an increase in the advertisements stimulated expansion of indigenous mass media considerably. This is done with the aim of pushing and promoting relatively cheap Western products, intended to persuade consumers in the colonial world to adopt a western lifestyle.⁸

In Goa, Konkani periodicals like *Amchó Gão* (1929-33), *Porjecho Adar* (Friend of the masses, 1930-1958)⁹ and *Vauraddeancho Ixtt* (The Worker's Friend, 1932 onwards),¹⁰ emerge in the print media and the considerable print space devoted to advertising indicates that the Konkani vernaculars become torch-bearers of the consumerist lifestyle, enticing gullible locals.¹¹ These periodicals emerge when the

(Portuguese, Konkani & English), 1893–1893; *O Liberal*, (Portuguese & Konkani), 1916-1919; *O Luso-Concanim*, (Konkani & Portuguese), 1892-94; *A Luz*, (Portuguese, Konkani & English), 1890–1916; *Niz Bhavarti*, (Konkani & Portuguese) 1930-31; *Aitarechem Vachop*, (in Konkani) 1946-56; *O Amigo do Povo*, (Portuguese, Konkani & English) 1916-20; *Goa Mail*, (in English, Portuguese & Konkani), 1920; *A Voz de Mormugão*, (Portuguese, Konkani & English), 1932; For more information see, Henry Scholberg, *Bibliography of Goa and the Portuguese in India*, New Delhi, Promila & Co. Pub., 1982, pp. 273-90; Aleixo Manuel da Costa, *Dicionário de Literatura Goesa*, vol. I, II & III, Macau, Fundação Oriente e Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1997 & vol. IV Panjim, Fundação Oriente, 2013.

⁷ Teresa Albuquerque, *Goan Pioneers in Bombay*, Panjim, Goa 1556, 2012, pp. 131-136.

⁸ Jan Van Der Putten, 'Negotiating the Great Depression: The Rise of Popular Culture and Consumerism in early-1930s Malaya' in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 41, 1, February 2010, pp. 21-45.

⁹ *Porjecho Adar - Auxilio do Povo*, is founded and owned by José Batista Caetano Vás with Dr. Loreto de Sousa as its director. The periodical is a bi-lingual (Portuguese-Konkani) weekly. Issues affecting the Konkani speakers dominate the pages of this periodical which is published from Bastorá, Bardez, Goa.

¹⁰ *Vauraddeancho Ixtt* is founded in Margao, Goa, on December 20, 1933 as a collaborative attempt of two relatively little known Catholic priests Arsencio Fernandes and Graciano Moraes. Besides its stated intent to guard and protect the Catholic Church from Communist ideology, the periodical sought to democratize the confrarias (confraternities) in the Goan Church, a preserve of the elite ever since the beginnings of Portuguese rule.

¹¹ It is a fact that the vernacular periodicals founded during the period of Great Depression carried a disproportionately large number of advertisements.

Great Depression ravages the Goa economy with ‘falling prices’ (hea sovoit tempar) coupled with increasing unemployment and less purchasing power.¹²

Fig 1.1 – No. 1 issue of the Vernacular Periodicals from Goa in the 1930s



**Amchó Gão, 1
January, 1929, 1**

**Porjecho Adar, 1
January, 1930, 1**

**Vauraddeancho Ixtt, 20
December, 1933, 1**

The Konkani periodicals afford a fabulous opportunity to research on consumption and consumerism in Goa in the 1930s. *Amchó Gão* has wide circulation and is read by Goans, both, at home and by the diaspora. It ran into four pages (sometimes more) through its five year print run. Its content analysis, reveals that most contributors who highlight issues affecting the community are the emigrants settled in British-India and -Africa, Britain and Portuguese-Africa.¹³ What is striking is that *Amchó Gão*, carries a full page of advertisements, most in impeccable Konkani, to appeal to the readers’ varied tastes. Interestingly, the advertisements are overwhelmingly in Konkani language, with just a few in English and Portuguese. Besides, the highly insightful and thought provoking editorials of Luis de Meneses on the front page, provide a window to the understanding of the consumerist mind-set, of the colonial Goan.

Reading *Amchó Gão* indicates that, Goans were exposed over a period of time, to the western world of advertisements in predominantly large measure. By the late 1920s, consumerism which first emerged in Western Europe is already exported to

¹² ‘*Aicat xet camteanum*’ (Listen farmers), *Amchó Gão*, (hereafter AG), February 19, 1931, p. 3.

¹³ J.I.N., ‘*Aadecham pacanim vudo nozo*’ (Cannot fly with false wings), AG, July 18, 1929, p. 2; July 25, 1929, p. 2; F. Fernandes, ‘*Amcho gaum ani amcho bes*’ (The state of affairs in our land), AG, August 1, 1929, p. 2; P.C. de. M. (Nairobi), Letter to the Editor, AG, September 8, 1929, p. 2.

the rest of the globe.¹⁴ Advertisements, promotional articles, and reports of new inventions made mass culture visible, through concrete images, by depicting the commoners who seem to enjoy the fruits of modernity.¹⁵ These images, present new frames of reference, about mobility, class, gender and about how to materialize social aspirations by acquiring a modern lifestyle, in a society, divided by caste and wealth.¹⁶ The essay tries to tackle a host of challenging questions about Goa in the 1930s. What leads to consumerist ethos becoming the central value system among the populace? Did manufacturers of goods and sellers harness the power of vernacular language and visual merchandizing to spin a web of consumerism? What drives the commoners to spend their life earnings on fashions and embracing new fads? Did the permissive nature of the colonial state and the society contribute towards alcoholism in Goa? Did the trajectory of consumerism come to a grinding halt in the immediate aftermath of Great Depression and the Civil Disobedience Movement?

These and other vital questions are sought to be answered in following six sections. The first section contains the introductory remarks and observations. Section two is commentary on *Amchó Gãõ* and the orbit of mass consumption. The third section discusses the developments of the Konkani language and how the periodical is a vehicle for merchandising goods and services. This is followed, in section four, by an analysis of the incidence of alcohol consumption, substance abuse and evolving value system. Section five and six, discuss the nuances of the fashion world and the resistance to consumerism, followed by a few concluding remarks.

***Amchó Gãõ* and the orbit of mass consumption**

What constitutes consumerism and who is a consumerist? Adam Smith first introduces consumption in the modern sense of the term and theorizes that the objective is to seek others' sympathetic attention.¹⁷ According to Stearns, consumerism describes a society, in which many people, formulate their goals in life, partly through acquiring goods, which they clearly do not need for subsistence or for traditional display.¹⁸ Anthony Giddens presents consumerism as the

¹⁴ Mathew, Hilton, 'Consumers and the State since the Second World War', in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political And Social Science*, The Politics of Consumption/The Consumption of Politics, vol. 611, May 2007, pp. 66-81.

¹⁵ David, E., et. al., *Daily Life in the United States, 1920-1940: How Americans lived through the "Roaring Twenties" and the Great Depression*, vol. 99, Ivan R. Dee, Chicago, 2002, pp. 197-201.

¹⁶ 'Cati ani zati' (Race and caste), AG, October 2, 1930, p. 1.

¹⁷ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1976, p. 27.

¹⁸ P. Stearns, *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire*, London, Routledge, 2001, p. ix.

simultaneous cause and therapeutic response to the crisis of identities emanating from the pluralization of communities, values and knowledge in ‘post-traditional society’.¹⁹ For other thinkers, consumerism appears as a mind-set, behavioural motivation and individual action, as well as commercial institution and a defining feature of the nature of modern society at large. Over a period of time, consumerism has come to mean the irresistible lure of material goods, and, the frivolous accumulation of things for their *own* sake.²⁰ One school of thought holds significantly that ‘consumers’ are informed, ethical users of necessities, performing important civic roles.²¹ Moreover, what initially, came to mean as a consumer movement, has now, come to mean consumerism.

If there is one agreement between theorists of modernity, it is about the centrality of consumption to modern capitalism and contemporary culture. Consumption, for Thorstein Veblen, is a decisive force behind modern capitalism, its dynamism and social structure at the turn of the twentieth century.²² It is suggested that capitalism and consumerism has its roots in the Protestant movement and work ethic.²³

Another way of looking at it, from the Third World perspective, is to reinforce a sharp dichotomy between the ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ society, the East and West, societies defined by reciprocity and status *versus* those driven by

¹⁹ Frank Trentmann, ‘Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on Consumption’ in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2004, p. 373.

²⁰ Eamonn Lawlor, *Individual Choice and Higher Growth*, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 1988, p. 9.

²¹ N. Thomson, ‘Social Opulence, Private Asceticism’ in Daunton and Hilton (ed.), *Politics of Consumption*, London, Bloomsbury, pp. 51-68; Peter Scholliers, *Review of Consumer Cooperation in France. The Politics of Consumption, 1834-1930*, in E. Furlough, *Social History*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1993, pp. 113-16.

²² Veblen’s so-called ‘conspicuous consumption’ remained one way the leisure class differentiated itself from others. In turn, labouring classes often emulated the purchasing decisions of their wealthier compatriots. See Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, New York: Macmillan, 1915, p. 9; Roberta Sassatelli, a noted theorist of consumer culture states that objects and commodities have always been vital even in traditional societies, but consumer culture’s stringent grip over people’s subjectivities is an unprecedented phenomenon in present time. Globalization of commodities and cultural flows with a substantial role played by sophisticated advertising spurred consumer culture in the late capitalist era; see, Roberta Sassatelli, *Consumer Culture: History, Theory and Politics*, London: Sage Publishing Ltd., 2007, pp. 36-8.

²³ M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London, Routledge, 2005, pp. 114-16.

individualism and markets.²⁴ *Amchó Gão* paints the picture of the large segments of the Goan community as one sucked or getting sucked into the whirlpool of consumerism. This is articulated through a host of write-ups donning the pages of the periodical. The very first issue highlights that Goa is immersed in materialistic culture, what Luis de Menezes writes as ‘*ek sounsarachi khoxalkai*’ (worldly pleasures).²⁵ This for the poet T.X. Fernandes, however, is destroying the age old socio-economic fabric of Goa, with, the poor being at the receiving end.²⁶

Goans are colonized by the mass media, and, a thought provoking article *Vel Acantacho* (Catastrophic times) by someone who initials as Mr. A, argues that people strongly desire a better way of life, but, with least effort.²⁷ This can be interpreted, in the argument of Ho, that consumerism as a value, has replaced the work ethic itself.²⁸ Luis de Menezes in his editorial proclaims that no amount of money is enough for the Goan to satiate his ever expanding basket of wants and desires.²⁹ The prevailing consumerist ethos is laid bare by Caetaninho H.C. Simoes in the poem ‘*Sounsarvourtouta char disancho, munxea zainaca gulam tacho*’ (This world is of few [*lit.* four] days, be not its slave). His verse indicates with abundant lucidity that gratification of worldly wants hardly brings transcendental happiness.³⁰

Similarly, numerous articles and letters-to-the-editor articulate that the consumerist attitude gets traction, in diverse ways. For instance, Dany writes that villagers in Portuguese Goa spend their life-earnings on clothing, apparels and fashions.³¹ In this sense, consumerism represents the actualization of capitalism’s tendency to total colonization, including the colonization of subjects and subjectivity. Karl Marx, for instance, indicates that a totalizing imperative is characteristic of capitalism, and, ‘the development to its totality consists precisely in subordinating

²⁴ A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, UK, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 3-63.

²⁵ Luis de Menezes, ‘Amchó Gão ani amchem Intensav’ (Amchó Gão and our intention), AG, January 1, 1929, p. 3.

²⁶ T. X. Fernandes, ‘Goa’, AG, January 1, 1929, p. 1.

²⁷ ‘Vel acantacho’ (Catastrophic era), AG, August 22, 1929, p. 1.

²⁸ Christina Ho, ‘The Work Ethic: they sell it, but do we buy it?’ in *Australian Review*, vol. 27, July 2001, p. 292. Work ethic refers to the belief that work is desirable and rewarding in its own right. The concept of work ethic has its origins in the Protestant era.

²⁹ ‘Dandol ani acant’ (Chaos and fear), AG, May 15, 1930, p. 1.

³⁰ Caetaninho H. C. Simoes, ‘Sounsarvourtouta char disancho, munxea zainaca gulam tacho’ (Man shouldn’t be a slave of the temporal world), AG, November 28, 1929, pp. 2-4.

³¹ Dany, ‘Amchim kazaram ani amchim nespam’ (Our weddings and formal dresses), AG, October 3, 1929, p. 2.

all elements of the (colonial) society.³² In this regard, J.I.N. through his two-piece article ‘Adecham pacanim vudo nozo’ (Can soar not with false wings) argues strongly that catholic children are lured and mesmerized into a sort of addiction to all things foreign, especially, ‘chocolates, biscuits and confectionery.’³³

The collective acquisitive behaviour is one of the prime reasons cited, for the gradual increase of four wheelers on the Goan roads, making one writer point rather derisively that *Pedru ghetta mhunn, Forsu ghetta*. (For Peter purchases, so does Francis). The common man is caught in the game of imitation, spiritedly.³⁴ This imitating culture is articulated by Sebastiao Carvalho who writes that Peter celebrates his wedding lavishly, Andrew does likewise (*Pedru korta mhunn Andru kazar korta*), even by acquiring loans. The author uses herein the names Peter and Andrew figuratively to refer to commoners. For Sebastiao, the lavish wedding celebrations leads many to emigrate in order to pay the debts.³⁵ This is akin to what Baudrillard outlines consumption as ‘collective behaviour’, ‘something enforced, a morality, an institution’, and ‘a whole (new) system of values.’ This new system of values, that is imitating ethos and spendthrift behaviour, is evident when *Amchó Gão* states ‘...Goa is poor but lives lavishly.³⁶ Look at the roads... it’s full of vehicles. No space for the pedestrians... (Similarly) in the church, one sees silks (and) boots. Shops are full of tin-stuff and beverages... all imported.’³⁷ Imported soaps are also greatly in demand over the local brands. There is a seemingly perceptible craze for all things foreign. Seemingly, Goans have access, through the multitude of emigrants, to foreign goods. To put it another way, Goans are able to draw on a world of goods for their consumption. This brings to mind, the argument of Tomlison that consumerism is based on the consumption of object, not for the materiality of use, nor for what it is or does in a specific sense, but, for what it signifies.³⁸

J.I.N claims that no formal occasion in Goa is ‘complete’ without the consumption of foreign goods. Further, he expounds that the emigrants undertake risks to venture in areas where entry is prohibited on account of skin colour, for procuring

³² R. C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second edition, New York: W.W. Norton, 1978, pp. 222-293.

³³ J.I.N., AG, July 18, 1929, p. 2; July 25, 1929, p. 2.

³⁴ ‘Goenchim Mottoram’ (Vehicles in Goa), AG, April 30, 1931, p. 1.

³⁵ Sebastiao Carvalho, ‘Amchim Cazaram’ (Our weddings), September 5, 1929, p. 2.

³⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society, Myths and Structures*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1998, p. 17.

³⁷ ‘Dadoxi vo Bixxi’ (Contended or in need), AG, October 23, 1931, p. 1.

³⁸ A. Tomlison, ‘Introduction: Consumer Culture and the Aura of Commodity’ in A. Tomlison (ed.), *Consumption, Identity and Style: Marketing, Meanings and Packaging of pleasure*, London, Routledge, 1990, pp. 1-27.

exotic goods for their family members.³⁹ A reading of the periodical and substantial space devoted to advertising suggests that foreign goods had a special attraction for the Goans. For instance, a survey undertaken by the colonial regime to look into the problems of the emigrants found that foreign soaps have a flourishing market in Goa. On the other hand, local shopkeepers are branding locally-made soaps as ordinary.⁴⁰ A strand of this consumerist culture is visible in the annual fairs held every year – described most vividly in Orlando Da Costa’s novel *O Signo Da Ira* –and which are synonymous with leisure activities, exhibits of foreign goods, Indo-Portuguese food, and other household merchandise.⁴¹

It is argued that consumerism should be seen in the context of upward mobility in Goan society divided on caste and class lines and groaning under Portuguese colonial rule, and as a searing drive to emulate elites who had access to resources. It is contended that by the late 1920s, social solidarities in Goa came to be defined by the practices associated with consumerism. Further, J.G.F. claims that the consumerist ethos is reflected in the pompous celebrations of church feasts and weddings by the commoners.⁴² In this regard colonial periodical press is the medium acting like a sounding board for the numerous village feasts and festivities for the galaxy of catholic saints. In fact, the village level feasts of the patron saints are a catalyst for (over)-spending and the un-frugal lifestyle of the villagers. This, it is put into perspective by Bounto Goencar, who states that a parish in Bardez taluka has been celebrating 16 church feasts year after year, impoverishing its residents in the bargain.⁴³ It’s a question of hunger amidst the feasts, with shortage of rice the staple diet of the locals, and, Goencar claims that villagers are having a sort of hedonistic mind-set with hardly any savings for tough times. He argues that Goans are rather ‘hiding behind a smokescreen of all-is well attitude,’ when in fact ‘they do not know what will be on their table the next day,’ and when the Great Depression is having disastrous toll.⁴⁴ Apparently conspicuous consumption seems only a borrowed habit aimed at hiding the real poverty of the region.

A discerning reading of *Amchó Gãõ* suggests that the society is caught in the tug of war between the old world and new world. This is precisely due to people responding to something quite different, which is, either the social logic or the

³⁹ J.I.N., AG, July 25, 1929, p. 2.

⁴⁰ ‘Emigrantanchi Choucoxi’ (Emigrants: Inquiry commission), AG January 23, 1930, p. 1; ‘Sodanch magat’ (Pray incessantly), AG, July 7, 1932, p. 4.

⁴¹ Orlando Costa, *O Signo Da Era* (The Sign of Wrath), translated by D. A. Smith, Saligao, 1556 & Pangim, Golden Heart Emporium, 2017, pp. 77-84.

⁴² J.G.F., ‘Oxem ani Toxem’ (This and that way), AG, June 20, 1929, p. 2.

⁴³ Bounto Goencar, AG, January 8, 1931, p. 2.

⁴⁴ Bounto Goencar, Mhoji Viajz Goem (My travels to Bombay), AG, January 1, 1930, p. 2.

logic of desire, for which they function, as a shifting and unconscious field of signification.⁴⁵ So, in a way, consumption transforms into moral norm for the Goans. From this perspective, Sebastiao claims, for instance, that dancing the modern foxtrot leads to alcoholism among the youth who are habituated to guzzling whiskeys, after every round of dancing at the wedding parties. For the youth, dancing foxtrot is strenuous, and, alcoholic beverages are an energy drink. So gulp a peg or two for vigour, strength and vitality. More about this malady follows in the section on alcoholism. Sebastiao suggests reverting back to dancing to the tune of the tranquil and sober local *mando* song at the wedding celebrations.⁴⁶ However, singing and dancing the *mando* may not be fashionable in twentieth century Goa, so writes Dory. The latter articulates that since Goans have given up wearing the *caxtti* (loin-cloth) and adopted pants and suits, and so playing the traditional *gumtam* (Goan traditional percussion instrument) instead of the live bands for wedding celebrations may seem 'un-modern'. But in the same vein, Dory appeals to the fellow Goans to avoid holding extravagant wedding celebrations beyond one's means and cites Gandhiji as a mascot of simple living, for the community to emulate.⁴⁷

Another contributor Wester articulates that by mimicking the Europeans, we are not westerners. He wants Goans to imitate the many good habits of Europeans and not their fashions. Apparently, he strongly feels that those wearing fashionable western dresses, among the womenfolk are disinclined, to doing, the daily domestic chores.⁴⁸ Further, a short article articulates that conspicuous consumption has adversely affected Goans' physiology, claiming that men are already old and frail at 40 years.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society, Myths and Structures*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998, pp. ix-x.

⁴⁶ Sebastiao Carvalho, 'Amchim Cazaram' (Our weddings), AG, May 30, 1929, p. 2. Mando is a popular song and dance genre of Goa, sung in Konkani and accompanied by European and local instruments. Mando's four main themes are: lovers yearning for union, of union attained, desolation or despair and a narrative of domestic, local and political events.

⁴⁷ Dory, 'Amchim kazaram ani amchim nespam' (Our weddings and formal dresses), AG, August 29, 1929, p. 1. Traditionally, *gumtam* was played by sitting on the ground during festive occasions. See, A. Lopes Mendes, *A India portuguesa breve descrição das possessões portuguesas na Asia*, Vol. II, (Original 1886), Lisboa: Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa, 2011, pp. 272-75.

⁴⁸ Wester, 'Amcheam ostoreanchem nesson ani Sr. M. M.- achem boroup' (Mr. M. M.'s writings concerning the dressing style of the local women), AG, November 20, 1930, p. 4.

⁴⁹ *Report*, AG, October 30, 1930, p. 1.

The change in local consumption patterns is also indicated by the rise in import of sweeteners. Local jaggery production, for instance, made from coconut toddy or sugarcane juice is not enough to meet the local demands. Large quantities of sugar imports from Bombay, Bengal, Siam, Batavia, Manila, Mauritius and even Brazil, to meet the local consumption needs, came to be a regular feature.⁵⁰ Amchó Gão speaks of large quantities of sugar imported from Mozambique.⁵¹ A breakdown of the sugar and other imports reveals that almost 50 percent is from British territories in South Asia.⁵² The following table of imports and exports in Portuguese India indicates that the consumption patterns did not change even in the face of Great Depression.⁵³

Value of Commerce in Goa (in rupees)

Year	Imports	Exports
1928	1,64,32,281	45,11,023
1929	1,67,27,423	51,86,296
1930	1,74,27,806	40,77,058
1931	1,63,79,870	31,87,395
1932	1,61,81,853	29,23,150
1933	1,52,11,583	23,76,159

Direcção dos Serviços Aduaneiros, Estatística Commercio e Navegação, Nova Goa: Imprensa Nacional, 1933, 11.

Actually, from the above table it is crystal clear that export of Goa products declined substantially from 1929 to 1933. There is more than 50 per cent fall in exports from Rs. 51,86,296 in 1929 to just Rs. 23,76,159 in 1933, affecting adversely the fortunes of the business community and landed gentry as most exports are agro-based products. On the other hand there is a steep increase in

⁵⁰ Historical Archives of Goa, Panaji, *Alfandega de Goa*, Vol. 2668, fl. 10v. The currency of circulation for major part of Portuguese administration in Goa was the *xerafins*. Following the Anglo-Portuguese Trade Treaty of 1878, the exchange rate was fixed at one British Indian Rupee equivalent to two Portuguese *xerafins*.

⁵¹ 'Cholti Khobor' (Current news), AG, February 6, 1930, p. 5.

⁵² Antonio Maria da Cunha, *A India: Antiga e Moderna e O Darbar de Corroação de 1911*, Nova Goa, Casa Luso-Francesa, 1935, p. 148; Tristao Braganca Cunha, *Goa's Freedom Struggle*, Bombay, Dr. T. B. Cunha Memorial Committee, 1961, p. 35.

⁵³ For more information, see, Celsa Pinto, 'Between Two World Wars: Normalcy in Goan Economy?' in Fatima Da Silva Gracias, et. al. (eds.) *Indo-Portuguese History: Global Trends*, Proceedings of XI-International Seminar on Indo-Portuguese History – Silver Jubilee Session, Dona Paula, 2005, pp. 381-96.

imports from Rs. 1,67,27,423 in 1929 to Rs. 1,74,27,806 in 1930. Over the next three years Goa's imports are marginally less at Rs. 1,59,24,435 annually from 1931-33. The huge imports during the period of the Great Depression indicates dumping of goods from British India. With less purchasing power, following loss of jobs of the emigrant Goans in Bombay the manufactures felt the need to advertise in the vernacular press and the language of the locals in order to create a market for the varied goods and services. In the early twentieth century, spurt in manufacturing resulted in an expanding set of goods becoming accessible to more people. It is argued that the consumerist society in Goa is the outcome of an expanding set of goods becoming accessible to more people following incessant advertising in the Konkani periodicals. However, class distinctions through possession are becoming more complex as consumption became connected with many more social, political and cultural formations.

Konkani Language, merchandising goods and services

At the turn of the twentieth century, Konkani language was the key to creating a discourse of modernity and consumerism in Goa. As *Amchó Gão* is in Konkani, a background of the developments in Konkani in print form was essential. After the arrival of the printing press in Goa in 1556 (first in Asia), the Christian missionaries published literature both in the literary language and the spoken dialect. Cunha Rivara, the Portuguese civil servant in his famous mid-eighteenth century essay, 'An Historical Essay of the Konkani Language', refers to *Concani*, *Concanica* or *Concana* as rooted in the Konkani territory. He claims that though Konkani language possesses grammar with appropriate rules, there are attempts in the sixteenth century to obliterate the language.⁵⁴

Konkani witnessed positive developments in the second half of the nineteenth century as a number of bi- and tri-lingual periodicals are published in British India.⁵⁵ Fulfilling the aspirations of Goans for a Konkani periodical published from Goa itself, Luis De Meneses starts *Amchó Gão* in Roman script.⁵⁶ From the beginning, *Amchó Gão* is a vehicle for the manufacturers and sellers of goods to

⁵⁴ J. H. Da Cunha Rivara, 'An Historical Essay of the Konkani Language' (translation by Theophilus Lobo) in A. K. Priolkar, *The Printing Press in India, its Beginnings and Early Development*, A Quarter Centenary Commemoration Study of the advent of Printing in India (in 1556), Bombay: Marathi Samshodana Mandal, 1958, p. 152.

⁵⁵ Teresa Albuquerque, *Goan Pioneers in Bombay*, Panjim, Goa 1556, 2012, pp. 131-36.

⁵⁶ In the post-liberation period, the Devanagari-script, determined, the contours of Goa's civil society, to the detriment of the interest of the low-caste and low class Catholic Goans, who use, till date, largely the roman-script Konkani, in their socio-religious discourse. Jason Keith Fernandes, *Citizenship Experiences of the Goan Catholics*, Doctoral Thesis in Anthropology, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Lisboa, ISCTE-IUL, 2013, pp. 119-58.

advertise their merchandise. The advertisers used signs and symbols associated with visual culture to reach out to the audience.⁵⁷

There is a quantum leap in advertising in the colonial periodical press in the early twentieth century. The ground breaking improvement in transportation (railroads) and communication (telegraph) associated with mass production and distribution give significant encouragement to large-scale brand advertising and marketing activities.⁵⁸ The role of advertising is to attract attention, create impact and stimulate interest from indifference. Advertising, stirs and induces, a strong desire among customers, to consume new and newer products. In this regard, the vernacular periodicals in the colonial world, serve as vehicle to usher in modernity in the first half of the twentieth century.

Interestingly, advertising and vernacular press merge seamlessly as the crisis of the Great Depression unfolds. The capitalists endeavour to make the employees labour. However, the capitalists narrowly escape destruction in 1929, for it seems they did not know, how to effectively make people consume. The crisis marks the point of asphyxiation. The problem was no longer one of just over-production but that of circulation. To come out of this quagmire, consumption of goods is strategically important. The people, especially those in the colonial world, are henceforth mobilized as consumers and their 'needs' become essential. Obviously, advertising and luring the consumer turns out to be critically important.⁵⁹

This is true of 1920s and 1930s, the period that marks the rise of consumer culture, as large scale production create a flood of consumer advertising to drive the idea of mass consumption, determinedly.⁶⁰ In colonial Goa, Amchó Gão in the very second month of its publication increases its pages from four to six, with relatively more space devoted for advertising and classifieds.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Sarah Monks, 'Visual Culture and British India' in *Visual Culture in Britain*, vol. 12, Issue 3, 2011, pp. 269 -75.

⁵⁸ The emergence of large-scale advertising is also attributable to income growth, printing and literacy advances and urbanization. N.H. Borden, *The Economic Effects of Advertising*, Chicago, Richard D. Irwin, 1942; Socrates de Noronha Jr., "Como Valorizar o Emigrante Goês", in 7.º Congresso Provincial (Memorias, Secção VI – Emigração), Nova Goa, Imprensa Nacional, 1927, pp. 1-9.

⁵⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, Translation, with 'Introduction' by Mark Poster, St. Louis, Telos Press, 1975, p. 144.

⁶⁰ Jung Suk Bae, 'Consumer Advertising for Korean Women and Impacts of Early Consumer Products under Japanese Colonial Rule' in *Icon*, vol. 18, 2012, pp. 1-5.

⁶¹ AG, February 11, 1929, pp. 4-6.



Fig. 1.2 – Advertisement for photography, AG, February 25, 1929, 4

In twentieth century, there is a rapid development of photographic and printing technologies, which increasingly invades, the spaces and moments of the daily private and public life.⁶² This new found obsession, with photography finds its way in Amchó Gão too, wherein, considerable space is devoted to advertise it. The above advertisement entices the readers especially newly married couples to take benefit of the new technology to click beautiful pictures at cheap rates. Recent research has highlighted the power of photography to entice people to adopt new lifestyles, behaviours and desires.⁶³ On similar lines, there is an attempt to orient the behaviour of Goans by carrying on the front page the photographs of celebrated Indian nationalist leaders like Kasturba Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhagat Singh and others in different issues. The brief write up besides the photograph places before the readers the ideals of self-sacrifice, commitment and total surrender exhibited by these leaders ready to lay down their life for India's independence.⁶⁴ Moreover, fashion photography, in

⁶² Elizabeth Harvey and Maiken Umbach, 'Introduction: Photography and Twentieth-Century German History' in *Central European History*, Cambridge University Press, September 2015, vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 287-99.

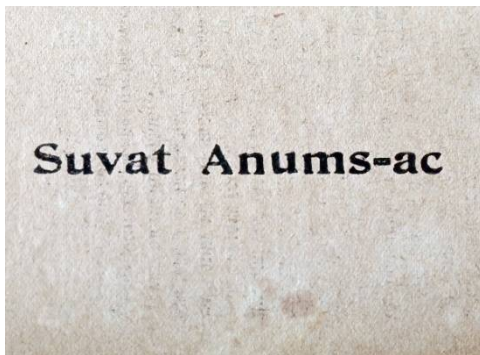
⁶³ Patricia Holland and Jo Spence, *Introduction to Family Snaps: The Meanings of Domestic Photography*, in Jo Spence, Patricia, Patricia (ed.), London, Virago, 2001, p. 5.

⁶⁴ 'Mrs. Gandhi', AG, June 12, 1930, p. 1; 'Mahatma Gandhi', AG, February 19, 1931, p. 1; 'Vallabhai Patel', March 26, 1931, p. 1; 'Bhagat Singh', AG, April 16, 1931, p. 1; 'J. Nehru', AG, September 7, 1933, p. 1.

which art and consumerism become intertwined, promotes new ideals of beauty.⁶⁵ Like other forms of consumerism, photography did not seek to fulfil needs but rather desires. For instance, the full page write-up along with photographs of eminent Portuguese aviators (aviators) with a bold headline – ‘Doriar toxem varear’ (Like the Oceans, so in the skies) – invoking the Portuguese maritime legacy, with the fledgling attempts to conquer the skies and in the process urging the Goan masses to look towards the Portuguese world and kindling a desire to imitate these new heroes.⁶⁶ Over a period of time, the advancement in technology seems to make photography the ideal medium of a modern society shaped by the international mass production and mass consumption.⁶⁷

It is quite interesting to note that the periodical, often carried empty, white, print-less space, captioned either as ‘suvat annums-ac or suat anunsac’ (space for advertising), in people’s own spoken language Konkani, or ‘reservad/reserved’ as is understood by the manufacturers or the shopkeepers in British India and elsewhere, soliciting advertisements. Luis de Meneses asks several times, in such brazen manner the manufacturers to advertise in his periodical. This valuable print space could otherwise have been offered for publishing insightful articles, rhymes, quatrains, write-ups, letters-to-the-editor, or Konkani proverbs, for enriching the intellectual history of Goa.

Fig. 1.3 – Announcement by *Amchó Gão* regarding space reserved for advertisements



AG, February 11, 1929, 4



AG, July 11, 1929, 4

How is merchandising done in *Amchó Gão*? One instance is of advertising tea for promoting its consumption in a big way. Tea consumption in the world, generally

⁶⁵ Nils, Roemer, ‘Photographers, Jews, and the Fashioning of Women in the Weimar Republic’ in Greenspoon J. Leonard, *Fashioning Jews, Clothing, Culture, and Commerce*, Indiana, Purdue University Press, 2013, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁶ ‘Doriar toxem varear’, AG, November 27, 1930, p. 2.

⁶⁷ Elizabeth, Harvey and Maiken, Umbach, op. cit.

suffers due to the Great Depression, with corresponding drop in prices in the international market. With the export of tea from British India declining, new markets need to be created, for the unsold or surplus tea. The producers, then, turn their attention to the domestic market in the vast Indian sub-continent. Around this juncture, the Tea Cess Committee is reorganized as the Indian Tea Market Expansion Board, in British India. Empowered by an increased budget, the Board embarks upon the largest and most aggressive marketing campaign in the history of Indian tea industry. Lutgendorf shedding light on the campaign writes that tea propagandists are now despatched in the Indian sub-continent ‘in the hundreds, sometimes in motorized tea vans equipped to dispense millions of cups of free tea and to deploy colourful, vernacular language signage produced by leading commercial artists.’⁶⁸ In this regard, the periodical, carries an interesting flyer of the Nectar Tea Factory from British India (located in Mettupalaiyam, Nilgiris) wanting ‘influential agents in every town to canvass (among) readers for (their) Nilgiri tea (loose and packets)’ on ‘salary and commission against guaranteed business.’⁶⁹ This explains for the flood of advertisements on tea marketing for almost two years, from September 1929 to February 1932 in Amchó Gão. A reading of advertisement, shown below, suggests that the advertisers had their antennae up and gathered information on the Goan economy and culture, finally culminating in eye catching slogan – Cha! Cha! Cha! This sustained brand advertising, seamlessly fits into what Ann Stoler calls, in another context, ‘as an education of desire.’⁷⁰

Fig. 1.4 - Advertisement for Tea



⁶⁸ Philip Lutgendorf, *Making Tea in India Chai, Capitalism, Culture*, Thesis Eleven: Critical Theory and Historical Sociology, 112(1): 11-31, December 2021, p. 3. Also see, Gautam Bhadra, *Making Tea in India: Chai, Capitalism, Culture*, AJ, Kolkata, April 20, 1935.

⁶⁹ Situations Vacant, AG, September 5, 1929, p. 3.

⁷⁰ Ann Stoler, *Race and Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*, Duke University Press, North Carolina, 1995, p. 165.

AG, March 5, 1931, 3

Elders in Goa do reminisce how the emigrants sent tea consignment to families in Goa in the 1920s and 1930s. The import of tea was substantial and its consumption gradually increased. In 1928, tea imported was of value Rs. 1,02,310 which declined in the subsequent two years 1929 and 1930 when the Great Depression was at its height, i.e. Rs. 97,308 and Rs. 95,120. Sustained advertising by the tea companies has its impact, and, tea imports in quantity and value, rise. Goa imports tea of value Rs. 1,00,000 annually on an average for the next three years from 1931 to 1933. The rise is not just in monetary terms. Quantity of tea imports also jumped exponentially.

Tea imports in Goa from 1928-33

Year	Quantity in (ceiras)	Value in Rupees	Year	Quantity in (ceiras)	Value in Rupees	Year	Quantity in (ceiras)	Value in Rupees
1928	54988	1,02,310	1930	53479	95,120	1932	76879	1,01,187
1929	59479	97,308	1931	71223	1,11,487	1933	71847	87,160

Anuário Estatística-Ano de 1932, Nova Goa, Imprensa Nacional, 1932, 30-31

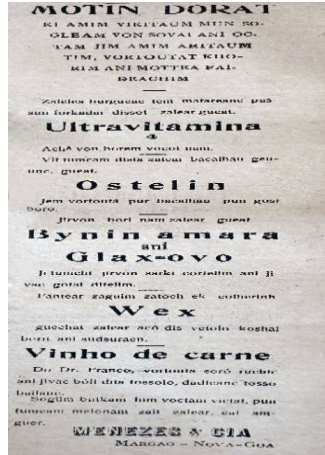
Analysis of the advertisements in *Amchó Gão* right from insurance schemes, baby products, tonics and pills, to fertilizers, photography, tea and others brings to the foreground, commonality of the words used, namely, ‘sobit, sovai, soglleavon sovai, borem, sogllea von borem, chodd boro, faido, vhoda faiddeache, mottea faideanchim, gost boro, and surprisingly even as best’, (attractive, cheap, cheap in comparison, worthy, better than all, advantageous, very effective, highly advantageous, salivating taste, the best). This is a clever play of words to loosen the purse strings of the consumerist. As it is, like in the rest of the colonial world, despite the economic downturn, Goans were beginning to appreciate a new way of life centred on variety items. The advertisements convey a message that goods and chattels are within everyone’s reach if only one makes the right effort. Stated in another way, advertisement in the language of the local, financed by the manufacturers and distributors, are to lure and ensnare the gullible Goans.⁷¹

A thorough examination of the advertisements throws an interesting picture. During the period of Great Depression, the vernacular press was a reliable medium to promote pharmaceutical products. The significantly large number of advertisements for pills, elixirs, and health supplements is, however, also a global phenomenon during this period. Pharmaceutical companies across the globe

⁷¹ Jan Van Der Putten, ‘Negotiating the Great Depression: The Rise of Popular Culture and Consumerism in Early-1930s Malaya’ in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, February, 2010, vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 21-45.

quickly embrace print advertising especially to promote their products as ‘health in a bottle’ which came to be seen as a consumable commodity worldwide.⁷²

Fig. 1.5 – Advertisement for Vitamins



AG, January 30, 1930, 4

The large number of advertisements suggests that pharmaceuticals are a thriving business. Moreover, the Report of the British Indian Drugs Enquiry Committee (1930-31) states that a ‘craze’ for medicinal products had developed in India.⁷³ As it is, words like: ‘magic pirlam’ (magical pills),⁷⁴ ‘akho dis vetolo kuxalkaiem’ (day long happiness, or rather, the elixir of life),⁷⁵ which are repeated issue after issue is rather visual enticement at its height. Further, advertisements for treatment of STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) like syphilis, gonorrhoea, and lifestyle diseases like diabetes and other ailments appear regularly, promising cure for the sick.⁷⁶

Analysis of the images in the advertisements suggests that advertisers leveraged the mimicking behaviour of the commoners. For instance, in Fig 1.6, the advertisement for Allenbury’s Foods, a supplement for baby food has a picture of an adorable white baby-boy. The advertisement proclaims that this is the food which ‘doctors and intellectuals give to their children.’ Moreover, it asserts that bottled milk is safe as compared to the local cow-milk, and sellers of the latter are berated for adulterating milk. The baby boy in the following advertisements also mirrors the idols and images of angels in the churches, and, which is what mothers

⁷² Nancy Tomes, ‘Merchants of Health: Medicine and Consumer Culture in the United States, 1900-1940’ in *Journal of American History*, vol. 88, no. 2, September 2001, pp. 519-47.

⁷³ *Report of the Drugs Enquiry Committee*, Calcutta, 1930-31, p. 1.

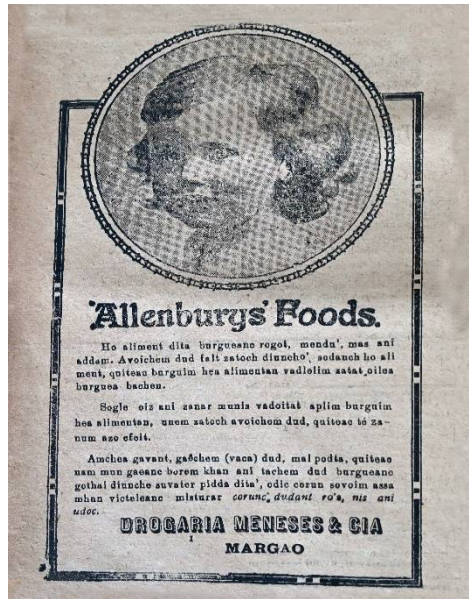
⁷⁴ ‘Kherit treatment Popsac ani Od’dheac’ (Remedies), AG, February 30, 1930, p. 4.

⁷⁵ ‘Motin Dorat’ (Keep in mind), AG, March 12, 1931, p. 6.

⁷⁶ AG, March 7, 1929, p. 6.

‘wish their baby to be.’⁷⁷ Captivatingly, Allenbury’s Foods claim bottled milk as the better alternative than even mother’s milk.⁷⁸ Glaxo vitamins also regularly finds space in the periodical.⁷⁹

Fig. 1.6 – Advertisement for Baby-foods



AG, March 14, 1929, 4



AG, May 23, 1929, 4

It can be safely said, that the text, dominated the advertisements equally like the images, if not more.⁸⁰ Further, while the specific maladies change over time, the

⁷⁷ Allenbury’s Foods, AG, January 1, 1930, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Allenbury’s Foods, a British baby food manufacturer, advertised heavily in a market that was already well established and highly competitive. See Manderson, Lenore, ‘Bottle Feeding and Ideology in Colonial Malaya: The Production of Change’ in *International Journal of Health Services*, 1982, vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 597-616.

⁷⁹ Glaxo, originally a firm of traders from New Zealand, later became a British multinational, ventured into baby food manufacturing. The company eventually built a strong vitamin portfolio during the inter war period. For more information, see R. Davenport-Hines R. and J. Slinn, *Glaxo: A History to 1962*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 73-5. On the history of British vitamin research between the wars, see H. Kamminga, ‘Vitamins and the Dynamics of Molecularization: Biochemistry, Policy and Industry in Britain, 1914-39’ in S. de Chardrevian and H. Kamminga (eds.), *Modularizing Biology and Medicine: New Practices and Alliances, 1910s-970s*, Amsterdam, Harwood Academic, 1998, pp. 83-105.

advertisements give an insight into the health concerns of the time. The community anxiety must have included weakness, fatigue, sexual health and other general health concerns. The advertisements, seem to address, the sensibilities of the consumers, especially concerning the general health.

The periodical had a clever brand promotion strategy in place. For instance, advertisements in the form of teasers are strategically placed in different issues to create interest among the readers about the chemical fertilizer. The first advertisement proclaims that there is ‘a solution for less yield’, while the second one would claim of ‘dramatic increase in yield per hectare’, while the third advertisement carries a sitting judge’s testimony about ‘the fertiliser’s extraordinary powers is transforming the coconut trees in to lush green palms within just a month.’ This is followed by an editorial that a third ‘miracle’ crop of rice has been harvested in Goa, in contrast to the normal two crops (*rabi* and *kharif*) in a year.⁸¹

Fig. 1.7 – Advertisement for Fertilisers and Editorial on Third ‘miracle’ crop



AG, February 19, 1931, 3

AG, August 7, 1930, 1

That, the periodical has an active brand promotion strategy, is abundantly clear as it lent it space for an epic poem titled *Vogot Munchem Kitem* (Time’s worth), by entrepreneur cum poet Costa Bir, published in parts from February to July, 1929.⁸²

⁸⁰ ‘*Motin Dorat*’ (Keep in Mind), AG, March 12, 1931, p. 6.

⁸¹ ‘*Picavol unnim Zata*’ (Production falling), AG, May 22, 1930, p. 3; ‘12 Khandieche suater, 20 khandiechi picavol zata’ (Instead of 12 mounds produce 20 mounds), AG, May 29, 1930, p. 4; ‘*Chotraien Vachat*’ (Read with utmost care), July 17, AG, 1930, p. 3; Luis Menezes Braganca, ‘*Tisri pic goeam*’ (Third crop in a year), AG, August 7, 1930, p. 1.

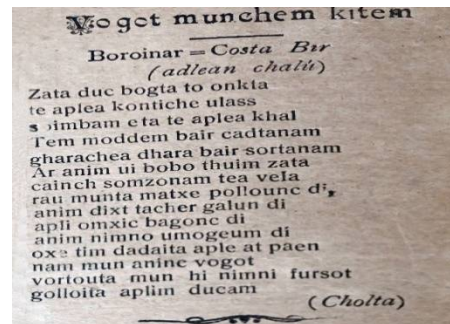
⁸² ‘*Vogott Munchem Kitem*’ (Time’s worth), AG, February 11, 1929, p. 1; February 25, p. 1; March 7, 1929, p. 1; March 28, 1929, p. 3; April 11, 1929, p. 1; April 18, 1929, p. 1; April 25, 1929, p. 1; May 2, 1929, p. 1; May 23, 1929, p. 2; June 13, 1929, p. 2; June

Incidentally, Costa Bir also calls and urges the colonial authorities to open up New Conquests for development.⁸³ There is a slow build-up of a hype around the theme and need why Goans ‘ought to be time conscious’. Simultaneously, *Amchó Gão* tactically places the advertisements for watches as it publishes Costa Bir’s poem. The issue of July 4, 1929, carries the serialized piece of *Vogot Munchem Kitem* on page two, while an ad for watches graces page three.⁸⁴ Further, although advertising was meant to sell products, it circuitously serves colonial cultural and political designs.⁸⁵ Out of the many goals, one is making the people time conscious and instilling a sense of work ethic. This can be put in perspective, as reports swarm, about the government staff being habitually late to office.⁸⁶

Fig. 1.8 - Fig 1.13. Advertisement for watches & Poem on Time’s worth



AG, July 4, 1929, 3



AG, July 4, 1929, 2

Further, one can find articles imploring Goan emigrants to invest in small saving schemes of Indian Post Office and other similar schemes.⁸⁷ Goans thus are to

20, 1929, p. 1; June 27, 1929, p. 1; July 19, 1929, p. 1; July 4, 1929, p. 2; July 19, 1929, p. 1. Born in Margao, Goa in 1869, Costa Bir went on to work in British Africa as part of the commission of the Government Land Arbitration Board for the Island of Mombasa, East Africa. He returned to Goa to fulfill his entrepreneurial leanings by importing and distributing carbonic acid. Over the years, he contributed immensely to the vernacular press, mainly through poems, in Bombay and Goa. He passed away in 1943.

⁸³ Costa Bir, ‘Novas Conquistas’ (New Conquests), AG, May 9, 1929, p. 2.

⁸⁴ *Vogott Munchem Kitem* AG, July 4, 1929, pp. 2-3; Costa Bir berates youth who gloats about dropping out of schools after wasting time, only to lament in age. The wishes the youth to be like the daily-wage labourers for whom a day without work would mean no wage and so hunger and deprivation. For the poet, time is money. For Bir, time is everything and those who make the best use of time are on the road of success.

⁸⁵ Jung Soo, Bae, ‘Consumer Advertising for Korean Women and Impacts of Early Consumer Products under Japanese Colonial Rule’ in *Icon*, 2012, vol. 18, 2012, pp. 104-121.

⁸⁶ ‘Emigrantacho Sounsar tachim...’ (Emigrants’ future...), AG, December 18, 1930, p. 3.

⁸⁷ ‘Postal savings’, AG, October 2, 1930, p. 2.

imbibe the pan-Indian ethos, of, seeking a guarantee that the nuclear family would survive, even if the head of the family passes away.⁸⁸ This brings together many of the aspects discussed in this section about consumerism: the thrust of the journal is towards development of the New Conquests of Goa.⁸⁹ The New Conquests comprised the hinterland talukas of Goa, namely, Pernem, Sattari, Bicholim, Dharbandora, Sanguem, Kepem, Canacona, and Ponda, captured by the Portuguese from 1760 to 1788, long-running advertisements luring Goans to invest in insurance schemes,⁹⁰ the end result being to make people spend, in a big way, which is the ultimate goal. In addition, *Amchó Gão* also becomes a site for colonial and nationalist discourse. Advertising takes a ‘nationalist’ turn as an advertisement proclaims opening of Samart Swadeshi Store showcasing a variety of goods. The advertisement is significant in the backdrop of Civil Disobedience Movement launched by Indian National Congress with *Swadeshi* (made in India) as one of its planks and boycott of foreign goods as a key form of protest. The advertisement for the Novem Loz (New Swadeshi Stores) proclaims that that they are selling only *Swadeshi* (Indian-made) goods, cheap and of immense utility. It lists household goods for sale like chandeliers, bed-sheets, table cloth, lamps and Indian textiles. Evidently, Goans seek to beautify their homes with chandeliers – a symbol of public display of prosperity – among other things.⁹¹ Significantly, the advertisement claims that Goans are not knowledgeable about the whole range of goods manufactured in British India.⁹² During Civil Disobedience Movement the boycott of foreign goods and reliance on locally made goods was a key form of protest.

Fig 1.9 – Advertisement for Swadeshi store in Panjim

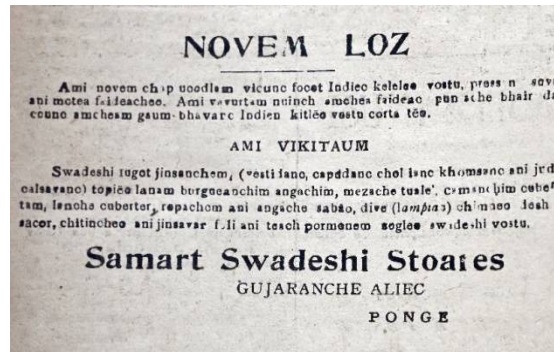
⁸⁸ For an idea of the saving and investment patterns of middle class Indians, see testimony of Sir Manmohandas Ramji, President, Native Piece goods Association, Mulji Jetha Market, October 3, 1929 in Bombay Provincial Banking Enquiry Files 29/b/2, ‘Memoranda of Witnessess, Part 2’ Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai, as quoted in Douglas E. Haynes, ‘Creating the Consumerist? Advertising, Capitalism, and the Middle Class in Urban Western India, 1914-40’ in Douglas E. Haynes and others (ed.), op. cit., pp. 185-223.

⁸⁹ ‘Zanno zal’leank Goem noclo taca poem...’ AG, July 17, 1930, p. 3; July 24, 1930, p. 4.

⁹⁰ ‘The Indian Life Assurance Company Ltd.’ AG, October 17, 1929, p. 3.

⁹¹ Dourad Zumbo, AG, July 25, 1929, p. 4.

⁹² Novem Loz (New Shop) AG, March 12, 1931, p. 3; March 26, 1931, p. 3.



AG, March 12, 1931, 4

Indianization of the public sphere is also evident during this period. In contrast to the appearance of the global modern girl in the 1920s who could be recognised by her bobbed hair, painted lips and an elongated body and who challenged the traditional order by disregarding her role as mother and wife,⁹³ the new woman is just emerging. So, during this period, women were turned into symbols of beauty, modernity, and status. The female imagery was used to sell everything from cigarettes to soda pop. The imagery of a Indian woman who is sari-clad, head-covered and wearing Indian jewellery, is used to sell the famous Amrutanjan balm, marketed as the ‘best Indian...’ analgesic for pain, rheumatism and headaches.

Fig. 1.10 - Advertisement for an Indian pain balm.



AG, August 25, 1932, 4

The use of feminine imagery to sell products was almost a worldwide phenomenon. According to Nina Sylvester, ‘the use of images of women is directly related to the role of gender within the public sphere.’⁹⁴ The role of women in

⁹³ Natanaree Posrithong, ‘The Siamese “Modern Girl” and Women’s Consumer Culture, 1925–35’ in *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, vol. 34, No. 1, March 2019, pp. 110-148.

⁹⁴ N. Sylvester, ‘Before Cosmopolitan: The Girl in German Women’s Magazines in the 1920s’ in *Journalism Studies*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2007, pp. 550-554.

India was undergoing a change especially in the context of Civil Disobedience Movement (coinciding with Great Depression) against the colonial rule, which witnessed a large turnout of women protesters.⁹⁵ Moreover, women made their way into public life in 1920s, especially in Bombay, where a large Goan diaspora lived with significant consequences for consumption behaviour.⁹⁶ One can draw a picture of a Goan consumerist who is trying to be at home with the rapidly changing symbols of conspicuous consumption. In a way, Goans formed a community that is targeted and exploited by manufacturers to sell their varied products with varied impact.

Alcohol consumption, substance abuse and evolving value system

A reading of *Amchó Gão* reveals a marked indicator about the rise in consumerist behaviour in the Goan society, namely, substance abuse and particularly alcohol abuse. Numerous articles and poems reveal increased alcohol consumption among Goans and the society's ambivalence towards it. A writer, who initials just as J.S.F., in his two piece article figuratively articulates that alcohol consumption is so widespread that it's embedded in the blood stream of locals. Further, he claims that alcoholism and smoking has increased among the youngsters because of tacit approval from the elders, who ignorantly parade its digestive and gut health benefits. The youth also seem not to respect the elders much.⁹⁷ The following table gives details of the import of cigars and cigarettes in Goa. It is abundantly clear that Goa spent on an average a lakh rupees every year from 1928 to 1933 on cigars and cigarettes.

Import of cigars and cigarettes imported in Goa 1928-33

Year	Value in Rupees	Year	Value in Rupees
1928	55,821	1931	1,05,629
1929	1,01,103	1932	1,36,029
1930	91,396	1933	1,18,585

Table 1.3. *Anuário Estatística-Ano de 1932*, Nova Goa, Imprensa Nacional, 1932, 34-35

⁹⁵ Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India (1885-1947)*, New Delhi, Pearson Education India, 2014, pp. 245-52.

⁹⁶ Douglas E. Haynes, 'Creating the Consumerist?* Advertising, Capitalism, and the Middle Class in Urban Western India, 1914-40' in Douglas E. Haynes and others (ed.), op. cit.

⁹⁷ J.S.F., 'Ecam bau boininc lagun, amcho fuddar udiotao ibaddun' (To please brothers and sisters, we spoil our future) AG, August, 15, 1929, p. 4; August 22, 1929, p. 4.

However, the spending on cigars and cigarettes is just a fraction. The value, for instance, of tobacco imports are about five times more annually for the same period. Goa spends an astronomical figure of Rs. 29,36,064 on tobacco and tobacco products for the six years from 1929 to 1933.⁹⁸ This is besides the fact that Goa has large area under arecanut cultivation and chewing tobacco is not uncommon.

How are the youth initiated to drinking alcohol? R.P. Wenkatesh, for instance, blames the elders for sending the youth to procure alcoholic drinks from the village taverns. A spike in alcohol consumption is not limited to adult men and youngsters but is also spread among the womenfolk too. This makes Wenkatesh to claim that alcohol consumption has increased among the wives of Goan emigrants to Bombay, perhaps, as a coping mechanism, due to the lonely and secluded lives in the absence of their husbands.⁹⁹ The deeply-embedded nature and cultural import of alcohol in the Goan society comes to the fore through a poem composed, ironically, to protest against the proposed curbs on the sale of alcohol. To quote a few lines from the poem:

No liquor, none will participate in elections
No liquor, none will sing mando
No liquor, traditions will cease¹⁰⁰

The poet goes on to list many more cultural and social mores associated with alcohol which would vanish if sale is curtailed.¹⁰¹ Further, Bounto Goencar citing a conversation he had with a tavern owner about the government regulations banning sale of alcohol to women and children and on the Sundays, states that rules are rather implemented in fits and starts and citizens don't take them seriously. On finding a lot of tipsy revellers even on Sundays, he speculates that they must have got ingenious ways to get alcohol bypassing the government regulations. *Goencar* articulates that the government claims of enforcing laws regulating the sale of alcohol rings hollow in the face of poor implementation, as he finds taverns open even at sunrise. Elaborating further, *Bounto Goencar* states that except in Portuguese Goa, no other place in adjoining British India serves alcohol at daybreak. He stresses that taverns have green signal from authorities to sell liquor at all times.¹⁰² To buttress his claim, Goencar states that as passengers embarks

⁹⁸ Anuário Estatística-Ano de 1932, Nova Goa, Imprensa Nacional, 1932, pp. 34-35.

⁹⁹ R. P. Wenkatesh, 'Gozal Mat Amchea Bebdicaechi' (Discussions on the evil of alcoholism) AG, November 20, 1930, p. 4; Sachin Moraes, 'The Goan Diaspora and the Left Behind Women in Goa' in *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 2016, vol. 6, Issue 3, pp. 51-67.

¹⁰⁰ Jarela, 'Mogall Chitt' (Loving letter), AG, November 6, 1930, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 2.

¹⁰² Bounto Goencar, 'Moji Viaj Goeam' AG, December 18, 1930, p. 2.

from the ship at the Panjim jetty during the early hours of the day, they find it difficult to get even a glass of drinking water, but unmistakably, taverns are open and ready to serve.¹⁰³ It is argued that the colonial state promoted alcohol consumption among the locals through its policies of omission and commission.

The increase in consumption of alcohol is substantiated by the import figures from 1910 onwards. In 1910, Goa imports foreign liquor and beer worth only Rs. 22,084 and Rs. 26,478, respectively. By 1930, the import figures of these two items almost double. And by late 1930s, it increases by another 30 percent.¹⁰⁴ Further, the extent of alcohol consumption can be gauged through the flood of articles decrying the ill effects of alcoholism at the individual and community level. Unbridled consumption of alcohol is taking its toll on the society. Writer J.S.F., would go as far as blaming alcoholism for destroying the youth and the vitality of the society.¹⁰⁵

Continuing from where we left in the earlier section from the orbit of consumerism, Andrade's views on wedding celebrations being responsible for increase in alcoholism are not un-contested though. I.G.F. counters the claim that wedding parties lead to alcoholism. He cites the example of Western countries like England, Germany and Spain where weddings, though celebrated in a grander way, have not led to increase in alcoholism.¹⁰⁶

Concerned citizens, including a group of doctors, propose forming a commission among other measures, to reduce consumption of alcohol citing that alcohol cause of destruction of the individual, the family and the society, and, responsible for trapping consumers into debt trap leading to their impoverishment.¹⁰⁷ An editorial criticises the decision of the authorities to allow the shops selling foreign liquor to remain open on Sundays, as even daily wage labourers make a beeline for it. This is in sync with the specific task of the ideology of the global capitalist system in the Third World that is to promote consumerism among people with no regard for their own ability to pay for what they are consuming. Aligned with the same idea, Sklair states that consumerism has nothing to do with satisfying people's biological needs, for people will seek to satisfy these needs without prompting from anyone else, but with creating what can be called induced wants and suggests that after

¹⁰³ 'Saxttichi Khobor' (Salcete news), AG, April 13, 1930, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Anuário Estatística-Ano de*, (Nova Goa: Imprensa Nacional, 1932), pp. 24-9.

¹⁰⁵ J.S.F., 'Ecam bau boininc lagun, Amcho fuddar udoitao ibaddun', AG, August 15, 1929, p. 4; August 22, 1929, p. 4; Luis de Menezes, 'Ghirst ani Dhurbol' (The Rich and the poor), AG, January 14, 1929, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ I.G.F., 'Cazaram ani Dancam' (Weddings and dances), AG, October 17, 1929, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 1; D. Ferns, 'Soreacho Efiet' (Alcohol's effect), AG, September 26, 1929, p. 2; J.S.F., 'Ecam bau boininc lagun, Amcho fuddar udoitao ibaddun', AG, August 15, 1929, p. 4; August 22, 1929, p. 4; 'Soro nam corunk' (To do away with alcohol), AG, August 28, 1930, p. 5.

people's biological needs have been satisfied there is an almost limitless variety of wants that can be induced.¹⁰⁸ *Amchó Gão* is host to a debate about measures for alcohol reduction between A. Cardozo and Agostinho Pereira, with the latter suggesting that time is ripe to create awareness among the general public on the harmful health effects of alcohol.¹⁰⁹ The increased alcohol consumption, finds its way in the Konkani *dulpods*, which says that even the beggars in Goa, pawn off the little rice they get as alms, to buy a peg or two.¹¹⁰

The issue of alcohol consumption needs to be seen from the larger project of the *Estado Novo*, that is, division of labour within the Portuguese colonies, according to which Goa and other colonies in Asia and Africa were to produce cheap raw materials and agricultural produce for the Portuguese and international markets and be a ready-made market for what the Metropolitan produces.¹¹¹ In this case, Goa serves as a ready-made market for Portuguese wines. In the larger scheme of things, it can be argued that the colonial government is actively promoting alcohol consumption, as can be seen through a proposal for lowering taxes on imports from Portugal from where most of the alcohol is imported, and making exception to shops selling foreign alcohol to remain open even on Sundays.¹¹² This blends perfectly with the assertion that modern colonialism did more than just extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered. It, rather restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there is a flow of human and natural resources between colonised and colonial countries. In whichever direction human beings and materials travelled, the profits always flow back to the 'mother country,' in the face of unbridled consumptive behaviour.¹¹³

Mimicking Goans? Suits, frocks, live bands...

Consumerism encompasses all facets of life including the fashion. The 'mimicking' Goan consumerist tried to imitate the dressing habits of the colonizers

¹⁰⁸ Sklair, L., *Sociology of the Global System*, London, Harvester Wheat sheaf, 1991, pp. 131-32.

¹⁰⁹ Agostinho Pereira, 'Gauncho Soro' (Goan liquor), AG, September 18, 1930, p. 3; A. Cardozo, 'Chalti Khobor' (Stray news), AG, August 21, 1930, pp. 2-3.

¹¹⁰ José Pereira and others, *Undir Mhojea Mama, Folk songs of Goa - An Anthology of Dulpods*, Panjim, Broadway & Saligao, Goa 1556, 2011, pp. 37-38. *Dulpod* is a popular genre of Goa sung after the *Mando*. *Dulpod* describe the everyday life particularly of the Goan Catholic community.

¹¹¹ I. Brown, (ed.), *The Economies of Asia and Africa in the Interwar Depression*, London, Routledge, 1989, pp. 170-202.

¹¹² 'Cholti Khobor', AG, February 6, 1930, p. 5.

¹¹³ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, Second edition, London, Routledge, 2005, pp. 22-23.

and the social elites. In a letter-to-the-editor, Francisco Da Silva claims that if a rich *batcar* (landlord) buys a suit of cashmere cloth, the common man also buys the same thing. In 1930s, cashmere cloth came to be associated with the exotic oriental luxury and became a fad in the first half of the twentieth century.¹¹⁴ Silva articulates that even persons at the bottom of the economic ladder try to mimic the westerners.¹¹⁵ Further, Dany writes that commoners try to imitate the dressing style of the doctors and lawyers. A competing mentality to outdo one's neighbour in lavish spending and living is slowly seeping in among the Goans. This makes Dany to express that folks spent most of their hard earned income to mimic the latest fashions.¹¹⁶ Winston M. de from Navelim village claims that young boys and girls in Goa are busily engrossed in imitating latest fashion trends current in London and Paris.¹¹⁷ This behaviour can be seen from a larger debate that consumerism as a way of life falling prey much more obviously to 'commodity fetishism', and that consumer addicts do 'find their soul' in the purchase, consumption and use of commodities and are integrated into capitalist society through commodities and consumption.¹¹⁸ A similar line of thinking is likewise enunciated by Orlando da Costa in *O Signo Da Ira*, wherein he highlights the desire of the lower castes namely tenants and agricultural labourers to imitate the clothing styles of the *batcars* (landlords).¹¹⁹ The hold of conspicuous consumption on the society can be gauged by Francisco Da Almeida's assertion in the article '*Amcho Estad*' (The state of our affairs) that it has resulted in our destruction and bad times.¹²⁰

Further, the mimicking behaviour is seeped into other cultural arenas such as weddings and dances. In his three piece article, Lengin red flags imitation of European dances and styles.¹²¹ A similar stand is taken by Sebastiao Carvalho when he censures the imitation of the elites in wedding ceremonies by having live

¹¹⁴ For the historical irony concerning contemporary Western rhetoric about product copyrights, see the review of the 1998-1999 Paris exhibition 'Cachemires parisiens a l'cole de l'Asie, 1810-1880' in *FMR* 95, December 1998/January 1999, p. 13. For more information, read Michelle Maskiell, 'Consuming Kashmir: Shawls and Empires, 1500-2000' in *Journal of World History*, Spring, 2002, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 27-65.

¹¹⁵ Francisco da Almeida, '*Amcho Estad*' (Our state), AG, July 11, 1929, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ Dany, '*Amchim Cazaram ani amchim nespam*', AG, October 3, 1929, p. 2.

¹¹⁷ Winston M. de Navelim, '*Mog Corcho Mogachea Tempar...*' (Love at the right time...), AG, November 3, 1932, p. 2.

¹¹⁸ Douglas Kellner, 'Critical Theory, Commodities and the Consumer Society' in *Theory and Culture Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1983, p. 5.

¹¹⁹ Orlando Costa, *O Signo da Ira*, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

¹²⁰ Francisco da Almeida, AG, July 11, 1929, p. 2.

¹²¹ Lengin, '*Amchim Cazaram*' (Our weddings), AG, August 8, 1929, p. 4; August 15, 1929, p. 2; August 22, 1929, p. 2.

bands, western dance and expensive clothes.¹²² The imitation of western style of dressing results into a debate as Wester and M.M. argue whether native women should wear *vistid* (the western frocks) or stick with the traditional *capodd* (cotton-sari). Wester favours *capodd* and claims native women are well versed with Paris, the mecca of fashion. According to him, consumerist ethos has taken such deep roots that native women consider a dress worn once, not socially appropriate for wearing on next occasion.¹²³ Thus, rational notions of consumer choice cannot explain the most obvious characteristic of modern consumerism that is 'the preference for new wants and, in particular, their rapid and seemingly endless creation.'¹²⁴ Considering the gap between Goa's level of development and its style of consumption, we can interpret it as an empty imitation.

The periodical's leaning towards the old world is reflected in an article by Peter Sequeira who enunciates that modernisation is spoiling the new generation. He admonishes fellow Goans for adopting mere trappings of modernity.¹²⁵ As the Great Depression sets in, one can whiff a strand of individualism in the new motto taking roots in the community, namely, '*hanv mhaka, dev somestank*' (I for myself, god for everyone).¹²⁶ Is consumerism having a stranglehold of Goan society by the late 1920s or would it face resistance?

Questioning unbridled consumerism

In 1930s, the Great Depression has a catastrophic effect on the prospects of Goan emigrants in British India and beyond Indian shores. The collateral damage of the Great Depression was the flooding of Europeans to Africa in search of better prospects. As a result, Goans have to compete with Europeans for jobs in many African colonies.¹²⁷ To compound their miseries, the strong anti-colonial political movement in British India in the form of civil disobedience batters the recession-hit economy, even further. Goa, being a contiguous part of the Indian sub-continent and geographically linked to British India, feels the cascading effect of the Indian National Movement. Gandhi's and Congress' clarion call for Civil Disobedience Movement directly or indirectly, reflects on different rubrics of the Goan society.

¹²² Sebastiao Carvalho, 'Amchim Cazaram', AG, May 30, 1929, p. 2.

¹²³ Wester, 'Amcheam ostoreanchem nessoup and Sr. M. M-achemboroup', AG, November 20, 1930, p. 4; Wester, 'Vistid ani tachim modam jinsavar cortat amche moriadaddicho vibad' (Western dress and our morals), AG, January 29, 1931, p. 2.

¹²⁴ Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1987, p. 41.

¹²⁵ Peter Sequeira, 'Civilização moderna' (Modern civilization), AG, February 27, 1930, p. 3.

¹²⁶ F. Fernandes, 'Amcho gaum ani amcho bes', August 1, 1929, p. 2.

¹²⁷ 'Cati ani Zati', AG, September 25, 1930, p. 1.

The political churning accelerates the process of drying up of jobs for Goan emigrants as protests shut businesses and trade.¹²⁸ Hence, British India and Bombay in particular suffers economic shocks in quick succession. This forces many Goans out of the workforce as there are no jobs available. Those who manage to hang on to their jobs have to be content with lesser salaries.¹²⁹ The ripple effect of Goans joining the army of the unemployed shows with incomes shrinking drastically among emigrants. Many emigrants return to their villages in Goa with empty pockets.¹³⁰ Roughly, it is estimated that more than 15,000 Goans are left jobless abroad.¹³¹

In the backdrop of uncertainty and fear in British India, editorials and articles aroused the critical consciousness of the Goan community, urging them to give up their consumerist ways, be pragmatic with their finances and to live frugally within their means. An editorial proclaims that time has come for families to spend half of their budgets, by literally asking them to reduce their expenditure. A Goan spending 30 rupees a month is requested to bring it down to 15 rupees a month.¹³² Further, another editorial makes a heartfelt appeal to the community to give up their superfluous ways like taking loans to buy silk saris.¹³³ A clarion call is made asking Goans not to waste ancestral wealth to observe meaningless traditions.¹³⁴ Moreover, the example of dhoti-clad Mahatma Gandhi is held as a standard for the community to follow.¹³⁵ Interesting, advertisements about a *swadeshi* store (made in India) store in Panjim began to appear on the pages of AG. The sellers advertised a number of 'made in India' products like clothes, chandeliers, towels, etc.¹³⁶ It may be argued that *Amchó Gão* has an ambivalent attitude towards the nationalist independence movement. On one hand, it carried pictures of Mahatma Gandhi and other national leaders on the front page giving a brief description of their nationalist struggle, while on the other hand, a column 'Khorbor Bomboichi' (News from Bombay) would bombard the readers with gloom prospects for Goan emigrants, in case, the British were driven out of India.¹³⁷

Concluding remarks

¹²⁸ 'Goenchi Picavol' (Production in Goa), AG, June 12, 1930, p. 1.

¹²⁹ 'Bomboichi Chitt' (Letter from Bombay), AG, October 2, 1930, p. 4.

¹³⁰ 'Cal ani Aiz' (Yesterday and today), AG, September 4, 1930, p. 4; Laguim Pauta, (Time is near), AG, May 7, 1931, p. 1.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

¹³² 'Chint Munxea' (Think man), AG, September 11, 1930, p. 1.

¹³³ 'Vel Paulo', AG, August 28, 1930, p. 1.

¹³⁴ 'Chint Munxea', AG, September 11, 1930, p. 1.

¹³⁵ 'Dandol ani Acant', AG, May 15, 1930, p. 1.

¹³⁶ 'Novem Loz', AG, March 12, 1931, p. 4.

¹³⁷ 'Khorbor Bomboichi', AG, June 12, 1930, p. 1; April 16, 1931, p. 1.

Thus, it is argued that in early twentieth century Goa, there is a social context in which a particular set of goods are available to certain groups like elites who use them for self-representation. Later, in the first half of twentieth century, Goans are exposed to a wide variety of goods both as emigrants in a number of cities. The locals spent the remittances they receive from their relatives to have access to a wide variety of products. Manufacturers and sellers of goods harness the power of vernacular language periodicals, namely, *Amchó Gão* to reach out to the masses. It can be said that the founders of the periodicals subscribe to the capitalist agenda through their publications and draw the natives and emigrant into the orbit of consumerism. Migration and imports also helped to popularise this new found values among the people. Over a period of time, the consumerist values spread into social spheres and consumerism begins to seep in among the general populace. The rural consumption, at least, seems to have been driven by some combination of the desire to be incorporated into local elite society and the need to mark status distinctions within the village. Thus, consumerism became deeply embedded in inter-connected inequalities and distortions among the populace.