

GOAN WOMEN'S E-BOOK ©

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CHAPTER 1 –GOAN WOMEN WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Floriano Lobo

Women have made their mark in world history through ancient India's Jansi ki Rani, Israel's Golda Mayer, Britain's Margaret Thatcher and modern India's Indira Gandhi. And we would not be doing justice if we do not mention present day prominent women such as Sri Lanka's President, Chandrika Kumaratunga and India's Congress leader Ms. Sonia Gandhi. And there are hundreds of women in the world at large, and in India today, who are making it their business to fight to protect their rights for equal participation in the day to day running of nations. And with the women really stepping out boldly into the man's domain, we witness today a whole lot of activism organized by women, to protect and defend their rights, privileges and demands for an equal share in the running of the country's affairs through the women's reservation Bill which unfortunately still suffers at the hands of men who are not yet prepared to relinquish or share the power with the women and who might consider that women might be having their own limitations. If that was true then we wouldn't have had women in the armed forces, police, politics and even as astronauts like the late Kalpana Chawla.

I take pride in this task of writing about the Goan women of substance, vigour and the will to fight for their rights, but I must admit that it is a difficult task indeed, not only because it is hard to identify such women in our midst, but also because one cannot overlook or omit any particular name for the fear that I will not be doing justice to them all.

We have Goan women as front runners in almost all of the vocational and professional skills, but my task as given to me is to identify those women who burn the adrenalin of activism in their bloodstream and try to bring to light the many deficiencies in the governance of our tiny State of Goa.

I would like to say a few words about these women who I admire for the work they are tirelessly engaged in. More names will be included subsequently as this e-book reference will be an ongoing process unlike anything in printed form.

There may be very few who have not heard of **Auda Viegas** of Margao, the President of *Bailancho Ekvott*. She is also the member of the Margao Municipal Council. It is very hard to find her at any one place as she seems to have endless energy to be at various places in the course of the day. And things that take her to places is not only to address women's issues, but even to assist women in distress like rape victims and beaten down housewives. Lately, she unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha South Goa seat. She has also contested for the seat in the Legislative Assembly on more than one occasion and it not likely that this seat will evade her for much too long. And by God we do need some such women in our august Legislative Assembly for a change. She has been the

recipient of numerous awards from social organizations, among them the *Goa Sudharop Fellowship Award* for her civic activism.

Adv. **Albertina Almeida** of *Bailancho Saad* does not need much introduction either. This lady from Taleigao has been active in women's issues.

Ms. **Ethel Lobo** of Margao is another *hot chilli*. She is also the member of the Margao Municipal Council as also an astute business woman. She is hell bent on exposing the levels of corruption in the municipality and there is no doubt that she will do it in good time. She, along with Auda Viegas is on the committee of the *Citizen's Action Group* which aims at bringing to an end the era of contractual services and their arbitrary extensions.

Ms. **Patricia Pinto**, of Panjim is the Corporator of the newly formed Panjim Municipal Corporation. She is also the General Secretary of the *Goa Environment Federation* as well as a member of the *People's Movement for Civic Action* (PMCA). She is a softly outspoken person who will achieve anything once her mind is set on it. A great deal of her efforts has gone in the beautification of Panjim City as well as maintaining the cleanliness drive with respect of eating houses in the capital city, specially after the outbreak of jaundice some time ago. She has traveled abroad on deputation to address environmental issues.

Adv. **Caroline Colasso** of Mapusa is another activist who is Founder President of yet another women's organization, *Bailamcho Manch*. Working side by side with two prominent people in Goa, one being her colleague in the Law firm Adv. Peter D'Souza (Jos Peter D'Souza) and her husband Mr. Roland Martins who heads the *Consumer Awareness Movement* and runs the prestigious *Goa Desc Resource Centre* at Mapusa of which the **Friday Balcao** is a successful people's interactive movement.

Ms. **Deepa Murkunde** is based in Margao. On the outside, she would seem to be a normal housewife helping her husband at the general store in the Margao Municipal Market. But her will to fight for her rights as an individual saw a tremendous avalanche in the deep rooted complacent bureaucracy when she took it on herself to single handedly improve the toilet facilities in the Margao Municipal Market. She preferred to spend a night in the local jail rather than go back to the dirty stinking public toilets of the Market. Thanks to her, the bureaucracy will think twice before slighting any woman and her legitimate demands again for fear that she might be another Deepa Murkunde in the making.

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**Floriano Lobo** is a former Merchant Navy Officer, a conscientious objector, who co-founded the *Goa Environmental Action Group* to tackle the loud music noise pollution in the State. Prior to that, his letter to the Justices of the Bombay High

Court regarding the non implementation of the Madhya Pradesh Loud Music Act, which the State of Goa has adopted was converted into a ***suo moto*** writ petition. The comparative quiet today in Goa as far as noise pollution through loud music is concerned is the fall out of that ***suo moto*** writ. He is involved in other social activities and is the recipient of the *Goa Sudharop Fellowship Award – 2002* for Environmental Justice.

## **CHAPTER 2 - INTERNATIONAL GOAN SPORTSWOMEN**

By Anil V. Madgavkar

There have been many Goan women who have won international honours representing India as well as other countries wherein Goans reside, but only a few women from Goa have earned this distinction. Their achievements have greater value because they often had to overcome poor organization, primitive infrastructure and other conditions not conducive to excellence in performance.

The honour of being the first woman from Goa to win international laurels goes to **Loretta D'Souza** from Moira. This diminutive but lion-hearted hockey goalkeeper put Goa on the All-India map by her sterling displays in the cage at numerous Women's Hockey Nationals in. It was practically Loretta verses the Rest of India as Goa won the National title. She went on to win a gold medal with the victorious Indian team at the Moscow Pre-Olympics in 1980. Presently, Loretta is a Superintendent of Customs at Marmagoa.

It was 11 long years before women from Goa represented India again. In 1991, **Monica Lobo** from Saligao, represented India at the 5<sup>th</sup> Asian Women's Softball Championships held at Jakarta, Indonesia. In 1995, Monica had the honour of captaining India at the 6<sup>th</sup> Asian Women's Softball Championships in Manila, Phillipines. Presently attached to the Sports Authority of Goa, she has also officiated as an Umpire at the 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Youth Softball Championships held at Chennai in 1997.

In 1991 also, at the age of 12 years, **Nisha Madgavkar** from Sangolda, became the first swimmer from Goa to represent India when she went to Singapore for the Asia Pacific Aquatic Championships. She also represented India at the Asia Pacific Aquatic Championships held at Pusan, South Korea in 1996 and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 1998. Nisha had earlier in 1988, when she was less than 9 years of age, swam across from Marmagoa Harbour to Dona Paula. The following year she became the youngest ever to complete a marathon swim of 36 kms. from Dharamtar to the Gateway of India, Mumbai in 11 hours, a record that stood for over 12 years! It was no surprise, therefore, when she swept all before her at the 1<sup>st</sup> Goa State Swimming Championships in 1989, winning 6 gold, 5 silver and 2 bronze medals. For the next 10 years, Nisha dominated the Goa swimming scene, winning almost all the events she entered. During this period, Nisha also held her own at the National Aquatic Championships as well as the National School Games, bringing laurels to Goa. She is presently the Secretary of the Goa Swimming Association.

In 1994, **Annika Madgavkar** from Sangolda and **Szewinska Gwen D'Mello** from Chorao, shared the honour of being the first divers from Goa to don India colours. And both came away from the Asia Pacific Aquatic Championships with Bronze medals!

Annika was just 14 when she won the 1M Spring Board Diving bronze medal, and thereafter, for the next four years, she was a regular in the India diving team, winning another Bronze in the 1M Spring Board at Pusan, South Korea in 1996. Although being a top class swimmer, Annika was more at home at Diving. She dominated the 1M and 3M Spring Board as well as the High Board and Platform Diving events, at the Goa State Diving Championships from 1992 to 1997. At the National level, she consistently came on top at the National Aquatic Championships and National School Games from 1991 to 1998, setting up several Meet Records in the process. Annika's switch from swimming to diving helped her acquire the body and the grace to later become a Supermodel in the fashion world (see *Icons of Beauty*).

Szewinska was hardly 12 years old when she won the bronze at the Asia Pacific Aquatic Championships in 1994 but she dominated the diving events at the National level for the next six years, winning a total of 9 gold, 13 silver and 7 bronze medals at the National Aquatic Championships and National School Games, competing all over India. She has just completed her graduation in Hotel Management and is looking forward to a successful career in the hospitality industry.

In 1996, **Ayesha Madgavkar** became the third grand daughter of Vijay Madgavkar, India's first Badminton Champion, to don India colours in aquatics. She got the 5<sup>th</sup> spot in the 1M Spring Board Diving at the Asia Pacific Aquatic Championships held at Pusan, South Korea. Thereafter, she represented India at the Championships in Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), 1997 and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 1998. Ayesha was one of the top three swimmers in Goa from 1990 to 1994 before she switched over to diving and became Goa's top diver. She was a regular participant at the National Aquatic Championships and National School Games from 1995 to 1997, winning almost all events she entered and frequently setting up new meet records.

In 2001, young **Sayuli Pai Raikar** crowned her stellar performances in diving at the State and National level by representing India at the Asian Aquatic Championships in Hong Kong and winning a Bronze medal in the 5M High Board Diving event. This won her the prestigious 2001 National Child Award for Exceptional Achievement, besides a flood of Felicitations and other Awards. Sayuli has participated regularly since 1997 in the National Aquatic Championships and National School Games, winning numerous medals for her diving prowess and she reached her zenith at the National Aquatics Championships in 2001, when she annexed three diving gold medals and the Individual Championship. A student at Rosary school, Dona Paula, Sayuli is the daughter of Dr. Vinaykumar Pai Raikar of *Raikar's Hospital*, Tonca-Caranzalem.

**Anil V. Madgavkar** is the Secretary General of the Goa Olympic Association. A former several times Goa Badminton Champion, he was among the top three

windsurfers in India between 1978 to 1985 and represented India in the 1982 Asian Windsurfing Championships. Anil is a very active sports organizer who has been instrumental in reviving defunct sports bodies, including the Goa Swimming Association and the Goa Olympic association. His efforts can be measured by the performance of the swimmers, divers and others at the National and International levels. At present, he is also the Secretary of the Goa Rifle Association, Vice President of the Swimming Federation of India and Secretary of the Board Sailing Association of India.

## **CHAPTER 3 - ICONS OF BEAUTY**

By Wendell Rodricks

A few years ago, Goa was described as a place in the sun with pristine beaches, delicious cuisine and a relaxed fun time. Today the world of fashion has taken its place among the sand and surf. I recall how in 1993, when I returned to live in my ancestral Colvale, locals informed me that the last great excitement in fashion was Guida Sheikh from Santa Cruz – Panjim, who opened Madame Butterfly in 1979. Her business thrived for ten years. Along the way, she exposed Goa to fashion shows featuring glamour models of the 80's like Sangeeta Bijlani, Sharmila Roy, Nandini Sen, Kimi katkar and shyamolie Verma. Guida's favourite model, however, remained Goa's first supermodel, Audrey Casmiro from Mapusa. I met Audrey in Colvale when I was a teenager. The next time I saw this Goan beauty, she was in a famous advertisement, feeding the pigeons near the Gateway of India. She was the first Goan bred model to make it big in Mumbai.

Goa has had its fair share of beauties from the elegant Miss World, Rita Faria, whose ancestral village is Tivim, to Miss India 1993 and Miss Universe Runner-up, Namrata Shirodkar from Shiroda. Also from Tivim, the Bredmeyer sisters, who collectively left an impact at Miss India contests and did countless advertising campaigns. Indira Bredmeyer was Miss India 1975 and also Miss International Runner-up. Anna Bredmeyer was Miss India 1976 and also Miss Asia Pacific Runner-up. She had the longest inning ever as a model, beginning a career in the 70's and still does a few select ramps. Ulrika Bredmeyer was Miss India 1980. Earlier Marianne Rao from Salcette, made it three in a row for Goa when she won the Miss India title in 1977. She went on to be Miss Asia Pacific Runner-up. Most of these beauties of Goan or mixed Goan parentage live in the Goan diaspora.

In 1995, the very elegant Charmaine Shackleton from Porvorim, won the FEMINA Look of the Year contest. This towering beauty set the trend for aspiring young models in the state to try their luck on the ramp. After Charmaine's win, Hemant Trevedi helped discover local Goan models. From the first group of models, Annika Madgavkar from Sangolda, held the most promise. She had the height, the body and the attitude for ramp.

Then came the beautiful Walusha D'Souza from Calangute, who conquered many hearts. At every excuse, I was plugging Annika and Walusha to every choreographer in Mumbai and Delhi. Eventually, Walusha hit the big time after Miss India 2000. She won the Miss Ten title, the first for a Goan, and reached the finals. Walusha emerged victorious that year. She did Go Khatak campaign with a raging fever and got the PEPSI advertisement with Shah Rukh Khan. Later she won praise from every designer when the Fashion Design Council of India contracted her for the first India Fashion Week. Today, Walusha is among

the top ten models in the country. A large part of her success is her own doing. She has the ambition, the beauty, the grace and the charm factor, which she used to her benefit in the best way. If she gives Bollywood a shot despite marriage and a beautiful baby girl, Chanel, she will shine there as well and become a superstar.

The next Goan to make it nationally in modelling is the level headed Kadambari Kumar from Dona Paula. Despite winning a local Best Model competition, Kadambari was humble enough to join the audition line at the Cidade de Goa, a couple of years ago. There she caught the attention of fashion supremos, Hemant Trevedi and Prasad Bidappa. The next season, I suggested her name along with Melanie D'Mello from Margao for the Elite Supermodel contest. Marc Robinson and Nayanika Chatterjee trained these Goan beauties in Mumbai. Kadambari lost by a whisker but got noticed by Industry bigwigs, not to mention cine stars Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt, who were judging the contest. Later, Kadambari won the prestigious ELLE-Evian Covergirl contest beating established models to appear on the cover of ELLE. There is only one way to go for this dusky, charming girl. The sky is the limit and the stars are in her favour.

Other Goan supermodels are Angela Almeida from Arambol, Fleur Xavier from Socorro-Queelossim, Nina Manuel from Moira and Shonali Rosario from Verem-Saligao. A special mention should be made of the elegant long-limbed Anjali Phyllis Mendes from Bambolim who became the first-ever Indian model to walk the couture ramp in Paris. In an amazing career, she worked up the Pier Cardin corporate ladder with great success.

If models have made it to the national level, fashion designers are not far behind. Following Guida's pioneering efforts, there are many women designers emerging in the state but to gain recognition of any sort, they must prove themselves on the national level. At the moment, local designers are merely cloning the successful products of other designers. This is a normal phenomenon due to a lack of exposures. To succeed, one must look within and create a look that is unique and "Identifiable" in the country. When the style of a designer is established, it is only then that a respect level is attained.

I must commend the efforts of the young Archana Desai, Sonali Salkar, Suzette Advani and any other designer, who has the strength to put their money and time into this cut throat business, where reputations are made and broken based on your last collection. Those who survive on a national interest level are those who constantly experiment with their art and prove to the merciless press that they have the talent to sustain. Like the clothes, it is easy to become "old fashioned", "uninspiring" and "not happening anymore".

In a way, Ritu Nanda, the glamour fashion photographer from Ribandar, led the fashion revolution in Goa. She opened her lifestyle store CAMELOT, daring to sell at urban prices in an exclusive ambience. Not only did Camelot survive, it

flourished, and in a year gained the reputation of the best lifestyle store in India. A year later, I opened the Wendell Rodricks Couture Salon. We invested money to fly down the national press for the opening. The press discovered that apart from beaches, there was fashion, shopping and a bustling social life. I pushed the state in every magazine and national newspaper, while Ritu Nanda, with Prasad Bidappa, held fashionable evenings at Camelot. The results are there for all to see. Goa has become a shopping destination peopled with a vibrant fashion scene. This is my dream come true.

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Designer Wendell Rodricks is presently researching the history of Goan costume supported by a grant by the Fundacao Oriente and Salgaocar group.

## **CHAPTER 4 - GALAXY OF GOAN “STARLETS”**

Women have made their mark in every sphere of human endeavour and Goan women have not been far behind their international sisters. Deftly juggling their home and family responsibilities with their career requirements, they have successfully attained the pinnacle of achievement in their chosen field, all over the world. In the previous chapters, you have been introduced to many of them. Now meet many more who will fill your hearts with pride at their achievements. Undoubtedly, the three gifted daughters, and an equally gifted daughter-in-law, of the Rangel-Ribeiro family from Porvorim, Bardez, head the list.

Leonore Rangel-Ribeiro, the eldest daughter of Oscar and Pulqueria Rangel-Ribeiro, dedicated her life to the uplift of Goa. Although she dropped out of St. Xavier's College, Bombay, she later graduated from Regis College, in U.S.A. Greatly determined to right injustices perpetrated against women, while with the All-India Association for Moral & Social Hygiene, she organized the first Conference drawing attention to trafficking in women and young girls. She was the Founder-Director of the Centro de Bem-Estar Rural ( Centre for Rural Well-Being ) in Guirim, 1954 – 1961. During the Opinion Poll, she organized her peers to rally on behalf of Goan's identity. She was arrested along with her sister, Camila, and other prominent women while engaged in non-violent demonstration. The late Leonore Rangel-Ribeiro is well-known in Goa, and abroad, as the Founder-Director of ACDIL ( Academy for Community Development & International Living ), perhaps her greatest achievement. Not only has ACDIL trained hundreds of Anganwadi workers, but her school that now bears her name, has formed generations of youngsters. She was honoured by Regis College for her work and achievements.

Dr. Camila Rangel-Ribeiro da Costa, Leonore's sister, has been a human-itarian and a social activist. Graduating in Medicine from the Grant Medical College, Bombay, she worked in the rural areas of Saurashtra, in Zenana Hospital, Morvi State, where she conducted major abdominal surgical and gynae-cological operations. As Head of the Dept. of Venereology, Cama & Albless Hospital, Bombay, she worked to rescue and rehabilitate women who were abducted and forced into prostitution. She was the Founder and past President of the Associations of Social Health in Maharashtra and Goa, Founder-Chairperson of the State Social Welfare Advisory Board, Govt. of Goa, as well as Member of Advisory bodies to Police and Magistrates under S.I.T.A., in Maharashtra. As head of the Konkani Cultural Association, Bombay, she started Marital & Family Counselling bureaus, organized inter-school music contests, inter-club sports and sponsorship programs for poor students. She is Jt. Director of ACDIL and Chief Facilitator, Malaria Control Project, and the Integrated Rural Health Care Project in Goa's most backwards and remote villages.

Dr. Lyra Rangel-Ribeiro Srinivasan, the third daughter, is an internationally renowned specialist in non-formal education and community development. A

graduate of Bombay University, she got a doctorate from Harvard University, U.S.A. She was very active in the Nationalist Movement that led to India's Independence. Later served as Vice-Principal, Central Institute of Education, Delhi University, 1948-50, where she met and married Terence Srinivasan. Migrating to New York, she served in the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Development. In this capacity she sent on missions to Mexico, the Phillipines and many other countries. She earned world renown by devising SARAR, a system of helping people, particularly women, discover their own strengths and develop self-esteem, empowering them to find solutions to their own community problems. She has led SARAR workshops in Europe, North & South America, Africa and Asia, including Goa. This methodology is now used around the world.

Lea Vaz Rangel-Ribeiro, the daughter-in-law of Oscar and Pulqueria Rangel-Ribeiro, and wife of well-known writer and noted Goan author, Victor Rangel-Ribeiro, is an internationally known educator. Daughter of noted violinist Sebastian Vaz and Cecilia Vaz of Assagao, Bardez, Lea established herself as a concert pianist in her teens in Bombay before leaving for higher studies at Juillard, in New York. She concretized in that city and also broadcast regularly in the WNYC series of Young America Plays. Later, she became a teacher to meet US immigration requirements and joined the United Nations International School as a primary school teacher, in 1962. Within seven years she was the Principal of that august institution where she led and inspired her faculty for the next 32 years, helping make UNIS the leading International School before retiring in 2001. She was honoured by the UN School Parent's Association in 1997, by her alma mater, St. John's University, in 1999 and by UNIS on her retirement. Currently, she is on the Board of Directors, St. John's University School of Education and also the UN Child Care Center. She has two publications to her name, Time, Money Management and Wonderful World.

Maria Pia de Menezes Rodrigues has the honour of being the first woman and the first Goan Curator of Central Library, Panjim. Yet, the daughter of Francisco Antonio Rodrigues and Ana Cleta de Menezes Rodrigues, from Santa Cruz, Ilhas, came into the profession rather by chance than by choice. After graduating with a B.Sc. degree in 1967, jobs were hard to come by so she accepted an offer from Nirmala Institute of Education to work as a Librarian. During the three years there, she took a keen interest in library science and decided to make a career of it. She completed a certificate course conducted by Gomantak Granthalaya Sangh, through the Directorate of Libraries, Govt. of Maharashtra, in the first class. This won her an appointment as Asst. Librarian in the Central Library, Panjim. Being the only Goan holding this post in the Central Library, she was instrumental in setting up a special Rare Books and Local History section which comprised books, Govt. publications, journals and other published material pertaining to Goa, as well as works on Goa, by Goans and related to Goa and Indo-Portuguese history.

Maria Pia obtained a Bachelor in Library Science degree from SNDT University, Mumbai in 1979 and followed it up with a Masters degree in 1990, both with first class. In between, she was promoted to Senior Librarian at the Central Library in 1980, got a M.A degree in History from Bombay University in 1985. and in on the recommendation of the Goa Public Services Commission, she was appointed Curator of Central Library in 1998. Maria Pia has participated in a number of seminars and workshops at local, national and international levels and presented papers in the field of library science as well as Goan history. She participated in the seminar "Vasco da Gama and India" at Paris, France. Most of her research papers presented for the seminars have been published. She is a regular contributor to Goa Today and Botelim do Instituto Menezes Braganza and nothing gives her more pleasure than teaching library science right from certificate to Post Graduate levels.

Cecilia Nazareth e Souza, born in Saipem, Candolim, is an ardent lover of music and trained in classical music. She is also a noted poet and has written verse both on religious and moral issues. Magazines dedicated to the Christian cause like The Examiner and The Coastal Observer as well as the Navhind Times have published her poems. As a composer of music, she has composed delightful melodies to go with the lyrics penned by her husband, Prof. Frank D'Souza, whom she married in 1949. Frank

In the year 1979 they composed a song dedicated to the city of San Francisco entitled "O San Francisco". The song, which brings out the magic of San Francisco with its radiant skies, beautiful beaches and its priceless art, was presented to the office of Dianne Feinstein, the then Mayor of San Francisco. Cecilia's singing of the song live to the accompaniment of her guitar was much appreciated by all in the Mayor's office and is currently in the archives there. Cecilia's masterpiece, however, is the music set to the lyrics penned by her husband in the song, Golden Goa. The song was presented to His Excellency the then Governor of Goa, Daman and Diu, Lt. Col. Gill. The music of the song throbs at the heart and brings out a myriad of nostalgic emotions.

When His Holiness Pope John Paul visited India in 1986, Cecilia was commissioned by the Marian Seva Sangh to compose and set to music a song welcoming His Holiness. The song titled "May you live for a hundred years" was released and distributed in cassette form. Cecilia played and sang devotional songs on the "A" side of the cassette which has the famous Ave Maria (by Gounod) and the "B" side has a medley of delightful songs in English, Konkani, Portuguese, Italian and Spanish, which Cecilia sang to the accompaniment of different musical instruments played by her.

Most of her poems have for their theme the saints, religious prophecies, the struggle of life and the pain and sorrow which one goes through after having lost loved ones. Her poignant poems penned on various occasions and one every

Christmas have been acknowledged and appreciated by people all over the world. Year after year she has been receiving appreciation and acknowledgements for her work from the clergy, bishops and none other than His Holiness Pope John Paul II. Besides being a poet and a composer of music, Cecilia plays a number of musical instruments, which include the piano, the Spanish and Hawaiian guitar, the banjo, the violin and the harmonium. The Mahatma Education Society will shortly publish her book titled "Cecilian Collections".

Dr. Hazel D'Abreo Misquita is a leading pediatrician from Karachi, Pakistan. She graduated first in her MBBS class from the DOW Medical College in 1961 and was the first woman at DOW Medical College, Karachi to be awarded the prestigious Gold Medal for academic achievement, which she received from the hands of the then President of Pakistan Ayub Khan. Her brilliant academic record made her a role model for Pakistani women (Goan and non-Goan) at a time when women were generally considered to be intellectually inferior.

The daughter of the late Mr. Frank C. D'Abreo (Abreuvaddo, Saligao) and Lena D'Abreo (Aldona), Dr. Misquita finished her pediatric specialty at Great Ormond's Children's Hospital London and on her return to Karachi worked on some of the first WHO projects for women/children in Pakistan before starting her very successful private practice. She was a significant contributor in both in time and resources for an extensive period to the Mgsr. Lemmen's Center in Karachi, a pioneering institute for providing treatment to lepers at a time when minimal support services existed.

Eva Luis from Toronto in Canada, hails from Guirim in Bardez. Born in Zanzibar as Evarista Almeida, she just celebrated 50 years of marriage to Jerry Luis. Eva has made her life's work an exemplary blend of education, music, spiritual practice, and voluntary service. In Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, where she worked as a school teacher and principal for 17 years, she directed cross-cultural music and dance productions that raised funds for the new Goan Institute, the Goan School, and the Tanzanian Ministry of Education.

In Canada, Eva worked with the home-bound program of the Red Cross, visiting the sick and counseling the broken-hearted. She has served on a Parish Council, is a soloist (cantor), directed two church choirs, and led musical celebrations at events such as the 1984 Papal visit to Toronto. As a member of the Rosary Apostolate, Eva ministers to elementary school children.

Dr. Sandra De Sa Souza is an eminent otorhinolaryngologist of Mumbai, India. In 1988, she was hailed as the pioneer of Cochlear Implant surgery in India when she and Dr. Jack Pulec, a US surgeon, conducted several successful operations at the Jaslok Hospital, Mumbai. Thereafter, she has delivered lectures as well as presented many technical papers all over the world on her specialty. At the XIV World Congress of Otolaryngology, in Madrid Spain, in 1989, she gave a film and

poster presentation on her Indian experience with Cochlear Implants, which provided a new hope to the totally deaf.

Sandra comes from a family of rich medico-surgical tradition. Her grandfather, Dr. Herculano De Sa was a noted gynecologist in Mumbai, and so was her aunt, Dr. Juliet De Sa Souza. They founded the well known De Sa's Hospital in that city. Sandra's father, Dr. Joe De Sa, was a well known ENT specialist and her cousin is no other than the internationally known cancer specialist Dr. Luzito de Souza, of the Tata Memorial Hospital.

Born on 20th April, 1943, Sandra was a brilliant student throughout, always getting a first class, even at the M.B.B.S examinations. She got her M.S. (E.N.T) also with a first class in 1969 and stood first in Bombay University. With such an academic performance, she advanced rapidly in her profession. By the year 1991, she was the Head of the B.M.C.'s ENT Hospital in Mumbai. Today, she is the most famous of the Otorhinolaryngologists in India and is listed in the World's Who's Who of Women and the Limca Book of Records. She has several publications to her name, including Cochlear Implants and Recent Trends in Neuro-otology with Dr. Claus Claussen.

Shashikala Kakodkar is the first and, so far, the only Goan woman to be the Chief Minister of Goa, Daman & Diu. She is the daughter of the first Chief Minister of Goa, Daman & Diu, the late Dayanand B. Bhandodkar and born in Pednem, in 1935.

She graduated from Karnataka University and later got a M.A. from Bombay University. She was first elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1967 and again in 1972. In August, 1973 she became the Chief Minister on the death of her father. She held office till 1977 and again till 1979. Presently the President of the Maharashtra Gomantak Party, she has served on various Committees, Boards and Corporations as Chairperson and Member.

Carol Antao, is the first Goan lady HRD professional to hold the prestigious post of Manager – Human Resources, in Goa. Her family is originally from Cuncolim, in Salcette but she was born and brought up in the Republic of Zambia where her father was working as a banking professional. She completed her secondary school education at the International School of Lusaka before her family moved back to India in 1992. She later graduated with a B.A. degree, scoring the highest marks in Economics and securing the third rank overall. Carol went on to get a Postgraduate Diploma in Management from the Goa Institute of Management, in 1999, specializing in Human Resource Management and joined M/s D-Link India, one of Goa's most progressive computer networking company.

In 2001, she was appointed to a five member ISO 14001 Task force team of the company whose objective was to ensure that the Environmental Management System ( EMS ) followed by the company was certified by the company's exter-

nal auditors, M/s Underwriters' Laboratories. The EMS of the company was validated and the company is now an ISO 9000 and ISO 14001 Certified company. In October 2002, Carol was promoted to the post of Manager – Human Resources.

Winifred D'Cunha was a rare, benevolent educationist in the Emirate of Dubai's educational scene. Originally from Sangolda, in Bardez, she grew up in Mombasa, Kenya, where her parents, late Mr. and Mrs. Calisto D'Cunha were based. Wini, as she was popularly known, was the youngest of three children. Pamela, the eldest, was a Nurse in Kenya, and her brother Dr. Angelo D'Cunha is an FRCS from Edinburgh and still practices in Kenya. In fact, he was on many an occasion requested to treat the then President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta.

Wini completed her graduation and teachers training in Pune. She also did her Paiano training there which came in very handy for her eventual fore into running a school. Wini later returned from Kenya and married her college mate, Basil D'Cunha, in 1970. After a few years in Bombay and Goa, where her husband was Personnel Manager of Zuari Agro Chemicals, they decided to try their fortunes in the Middle East. It was there that Wini decided that instead of just being a Teacher why not become a businesswoman and set up a School there. She was prompted to do this as in the very first school she worked as a Head Mistress she found that the owners knew very little about teaching and yet had gone into the education business more for the money than education per se. Being a purist she decided that while indeed there was money in education there was also need to bring in a holistic pattern of education which was conspicuous by its absence at the time.

The Nursery School began in a very small way in 1981. Naturally, having just gone to the Gulf, money was scarce especially when venturing into business. But with the help of her local partner and a well positioned Goan friend in the Bank, she managed to raise adequate capital to begin in a small Villa with three bedrooms serving as Classrooms.

The school was named Al Diyafah Nursery School (meaning Hospitality in Arabic). This name, incidentally, was chosen by her Arabic business Partner, Mr. Ebrahim Abdullah, as he felt that Education was all about teaching Hospitality, especially to the young ones. Wini had decided that her niche in the School Map in Dubai would be to cater to quality but at fees that were affordable. This was a stroke of genius, because the fees in those days were pretty steep — more like the big Airlines with all the frills and she like Freddy Laker with the no frills version.

For Asian families, this was a dream come true and with Wini's winsome smile and her warm welcome each morning at the School gate, with each child's name on her finger tips, there was no dearth of admissions. This soon created a need for expansion and she soon rented a three Villa compound to take in more

students. But, alas, even this proved small and so in 1991, she moved to a new place, a Mini palace ( rich Arabs built these huge places to live (15 rooms) but found that they would be better off if they rented it to Schools etc. The School strength soon exceeded 500 children and once again an expansion was required. Fortunately the land adjoining was vacant and when the Landlord was approached he agreed to build premises for the expansion of the school.

However, tragedy struck in early 1995, when the Doctors detected intestinal cancer. She fought a gallant fight but the disease got the better of her three years later. Her family decided to continue with the School in her memory and, today, it has a purpose built building, running a full fledged High School with over a 1000 students, following the IGCSE Cambridge Program. Her daughter, Michelle Menezes, though a trained Vet, decided that she would run the School and is doing that in the typical confidence and aplomb of her Mother. For more details of the School check the website: [Diyafah.com](http://Diyafah.com)

Wini was approached by young Goans in Dubai to sponsor a Seven-a-side Football team, which she willingly did and called it the Guirim Sports Club, in honour of her husband's village in Goa. She continued her sponsorship for many years and to-day, there is a Wini Memorial Football trophy for an All India tournament in Dubai.

Palmira Coutinho is Goa's first women photographer and the only Indian camera professional, male or female, to grace world-renowned lensman, David Bailey's latest book, David Bailey Locations: The 1970's Archives. The ace cameraman has featured the lone photograph he took of her in 1974 on the cover of his formidable publication, released last November. This unique achievement earned her a slot on BBC's TV channel!

Originally from Santo Estevam, Ilhas, Palmira took over the running of Hollywood Studio in Panjim, on the death of her husband, in 1964. This intrepid lady took the difficult task of managing the studio, outdoor photo shoots and bringing up seven children in her stride, winning the esteem of her clientele and the admiration of her peers. Now retired, she has nostalgic memories of the great events in Goa's history that she had been privileged to record for posterity, especially the visits of John Paul II and Blessed Mother Teresa to this state.

## **CHAPTER 5 - WOMEN IN GOA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE**

By Lambert Mascarenhas

The numbers are immaterial; the dedication, approximation to the conceptualized humiliation of an intelligent Indian people ( all those who were in Goa's Freedom Movement, men and women, considered themselves Indians not Portuguese) by a foreign power, and action thereby to vacate it, is.

The involvement of Goans in the freedom movement must be categorized as active and passive. There were many, many in the passive, silent slot, both in Goa and in Bombay, which was a second home for Goans, with thousands and thousands of them working in the then British India, or using Bombay as a base to their employment as crew of both passenger and cargo ships, and of their founding therein of that beneficial and commendable institution known as kudd, a residential club – each Goan village having one or even two kudds – where many working in Bombay resided in and where any person arriving from Goa would find a ready place to park. It is the collective voice of this organized group of Goans residing in these kudds condemning the continued domination of Goa by Portugal and their demand for Portugal's immediate peaceful departure that somehow shook and deflated Lisbon's flaunting of wide support of Bombay Goans to Portugal's presence in Goa.

The female ferment articulated by processions, pheries, satyagrahas and other forms of protests and opposition had its birth, I presume, with the spontaneous, bold outburst of the teenager, Vatsala Kirtani, at the memorable meeting in Margao on June 18, 1946, rightly considered as the beginning of the end for Portuguese rule in Goa. When Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia was prevented from addressing the meeting and arrested, it was Miss Kirtani who had courageously come forward to deliver a speech, only to be promptly arrested and carried to the Margao Police Station. Her shouts of 'Jai Hind' intrigued the Portuguese Comandante, Julio Figueiredo, who asked her what it meant. Her significant reply was, "Jai Hind means 'Long Live India' which gives me the spirit to fight fearlessly for India and for my freedom, in the same manner as 'Viva Salazar' emboldens the Portuguese". Vatsala's arrest prompted some forty women present to march to the Police Station demanding her release, or their arrest as well. Embarrassed, the Police Officers offered to release Vatsala but the girl refused to leave the Police Station, thus compelling Comandante Figueiredo to bodily lift and throw her out!

Based as I was in Bombay at the time and thus unable to attend the Lohia meeting in Margao, Vatsala Kirtani's challenge to the Portuguese by a courageous, physical action, so far unseen and experienced, filled my heart and the hearts of Goan nationalists in Bombay with admiration for her and also emboldened us to fight for the cause with dedication and determination.

Regrettably, I did not have the honour to meet Vatsala as I was an 'exile' in Bombay for eleven years and when I returned to Goa soon after Liberation, I was informed that she was in Bombay, teaching Hindi in a school there. Incidentally, I had met Comandante Julio Figueiredo when I was arrested in Margao and detained in the police lock-up there in May, 1949 and he had recorded my declaration in his cabin on the articles I had written and were published in the

then Bombay weekly, MARCH. And thereafter he had taken me to Panjim in a taxi to be detained there, treating me with courtesy and cordiality during the journey, and in our talk therein I felt he was anti-Salazar and sympathetic to our cause for freedom. From this, I feel today, that he must have lifted our young heroine at the Margao Police Station that day, with gentleness.

Vatsala's heroics notwithstanding, the honour of being the first Goan woman freedom fighter goes to the outstanding anti-Portuguese female in Goa in those days, Berta de Menezes Braganza, daughter of the formidable Luis de Menezes Braganza and niece of another formidable freedom fighter, Tristao Braganza Cunha. After the 18th June stir in Margao, she and her uncle, T.B. Cunha, projected themselves as combatants on the bustling political scene, with the latter being arrested and deported. Actually, Berta and her sister, Beatriz, were Indian nationalists right from their young days, wearing saris not frocks as most Christian girls did. It is in this apparel that I first saw them as a lad on a visit to Chandor, their native village. On my father's instructions I had also attended their father's, the great Luis de Menezes Braganza's, funeral in Chandor.

But my friendship with Berta was when I met her in exile with her husband, Antonio Furtado, in Belgaum, where she had organized anti-Portugal movement in that city and was the leader of a small group of active freedom fighters. But my closeness to her was when she would come to Bombay or remain there to edit FREE GOA, a fortnightly established by T.B. Cunha and published from Bombay. It is from Bombay that she performed her notable roles. But prior to this, as a spinster, she had joined the Indian National Congress in 1929, was a member, along with her sister, Beatriz, of the Goa Youth League in the thirties, which could be considered as the first expression of anti-Portugal feelings in Bombay.

Berta was prominent in the Goa Freedom Movement in Bombay in the fifties. She was a member of the Goa Political Convention, the Indian Association of Afro-Asian Solidarity and the All-India Peace Council. As a member of the National Campaign Committee delegation from Bombay led by Aruna Asaaf Ali, which went to Delhi in December, 1960 to meet Prime Minister Nehru and other Indian leaders, to demand Military Action to oust Portugal from India, Berta had also another Goan woman in the delegation, Irene Heredia, besides Fr. H.O. Mascarenhas, President of the Goa Political Convention and this writer. Thereafter, Berta de Menezes Braganza, in 1961, toured many parts of India to project the oppression in Goa and to ask the people of these states to demand from Nehru and the Government of India, action to liberate Goa.

Apart from Vatsala Kirtani, the other women in the freedom movement in Goa, really active and arrested by the Portuguese Goa government and sentenced to imprisonment were: Shashikala Hodarkar from Ponda, a member of the Nationalist Congress (Goa), for offering satyagraha in Margao in 1955. She later married a very active freedom fighter, Anastasio Almeida from Velim; Maria Calista Araujo from Siolim, who was twice arrested in 1947 for distributing nationalist literature in Goa and imprisoned in Reis Magos jail but released under general amnesty in 1951. She was again arrested for the same nationalist activity and for crossing into India to attend political meetings in Belgaum. This courageous girl was sentenced to 14 years RI; A teacher by profession, Mitra Kakodkar from Kakoda, Quepem, was very active in rousing women and girls in Siolim, where she was teaching and creating political awareness all around. Arrested in 1955, she was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment and on being released, she founded many Marathi schools in different villages; A nurse by profession, Shanta Hede from Shiroda was a dynamic underground worker, spreading the message of freedom. She would cross the frontiers of Goa to attend political meetings in Belgaum and supply information on arrests in Goa to the activists across the border. She was arrested, beaten severely by the Portuguese Police to extract information on persons involved in the freedom movement and sentenced to 12 years RI; Wife of freedom fighter Manohar Prabhu Desai, Shoba Desai from Zambaulim worked mostly at the Majali border area, inspiring people in Karwar, Karnataka, to demand freedom for Goa. On returning to Goa clandestinely to visit her family, she was arrested and detained for 6 months; A teacher, born in Painguinim, Suryakanti Anant Fal Desai offered satyagraha in Margao in February, 1955, was arrested and sentenced to three years imprisonment.

It being impossible, due to limited space, to provide in detail the freedom role played by many girls and women in Goa, I shall mention the following in brief: Sudhatai Mahadev Joshi from Priol in Ponda, was elected President of National Congress (Goa) in 1955. For organizing Satyagraha Conference of NCG in Mapusa, she was arrested, beaten up and later sentenced to 10 years imprisonment; Jeevan Shankar Karapurkar from Shiroda participated in the protest procession after Dr. Lohia's arrest. She was arrested and jailed; Kumudini Damodar Kavlekar offered satyagraha in Mapusa in 1955, was arrested twice and sentenced to 8 years imprisonment; Shalini Vishwanath Loliencar was arrested and sentenced to 8 years imprisonment for offering satyagraha in Mapusa in the same year; A teacher by profession, Vilasini Damodar Mahale from Loliem in Canacona, was sentenced to 4 years of imprisonment for offering satyagraha in Margao in 1955; Born in Mombasa, Kenya, Celina Olga Moniz proudly held aloft the Indian tricolour as her canoe majestically glided across the Mandovi River one morning. For this and for securing financial assistance from Kenya Goans for the freedom struggle, she was arrested and severely beaten up; Born at Durbhat in Ponda, Lilavati Dattaram Naik was arrested and detain for several months for helping freedom fighters and for offering satyagraha in 1955;

Born in Mapusa, Mogabai Naik was arrested and sentenced to 2 years imprisonment for providing food and shelter to the freedom fighters; Rajani Suryakant Naik from Verem and her husband were underground workers supplying food and shelter to freedom fighters. Fearing their imminent arrest, they escaped to Banda and later Belgaum to carry on their activities there; For offering satyagraha in Margao in 1955, Laxmi Balkrishna Painguinkar, a teacher by profession, was arrested and sentenced to 6 years imprisonment; Shubada Divkar, born in Mapusa and married to Sharad Patil, was arrested in 1955 and persecuted in jail for her activities protesting Portuguese rule in Goa; A social worker and poetess, famous for religious discourses, Ashatai Phadke was arrested and beaten up for offering satyagraha at the Shirgaon Zatra; Prema Narendra Purav, nee Tendulkar, born at Khodyem -Pissurlem in Satari, was a carrier of explosives to freedom fighters. Once at Tambdi Surla she was ambushed, shot at and injured but saved by a mining truck driver. Later, when arrested, she was subjected to extreme torture in jail; Sharada Padmakar Savaikar, a teacher, was arrested in connection with the

slaying of a police officer, beaten up and tortured in the police lock-up. Later sentenced to 2 years imprisonment; Lalita Madhav Velingkar, nee Kantak, was arrested for leading a protest procession, holding aloft an Indian tricolour, after the arrest of Dr. Lohia in Margao, in 1946; Anandi Dattaram Desai, born in Pausulem in Canacona, was arrested for participating in underground nationalist activities of feeding the freedom fighters.

Given the violence of the Portuguese Police in Goa in those days, expressed by beatings and torture after arrest, the action of women in Goa in the Goan freedom struggle must be marked not only as boldness but fearlessness as well, for which they deserve admiration and respect. It seems these women freedom fighters considered foreign rule and presence as an affront not so much to Goa but to themselves individually, so emotionally vibrant was their response and action.

As for women in the Freedom Movement in Bombay, apart from Berta de Menezes Braganza mentioned earlier, there are quite many, mostly passive but the prominent and very active ones were Laura D'Souza, Libia Lobo Sardesai, who was the first Goan woman lawyer, Beatriz de Menezes Braganza and Irene Heredia.

Laura was voluble, pushing, dramatic, always argumentative at meetings held by joint political parties to devise any action. Realizing the need of the support of many Goans working in East Africa, especially Kenya, she accompanied Prof. Lucio Rodrigues, both leaders of an organization they had formed, 'Goa Ashram', to Nairobi to meet Goans as well as African leaders. At their invitation, Tom Mboya, the then General Secretary of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) arrived in Bombay in September, 1961 to address Goans in Bombay before proceeding to Delhi to meet Prime Minister Nehru. Laura came

to Goa shortly before Liberation and was arrested, imprisoned, abused and subjected to indignities. After Liberation she was appointed to the Consultative Committee of the Lt. Governor and elected Secretary of the Goa Pradesh Congress Committee.

Based and educated in Bombay, Libia Lobo obtained degrees in Arts and Law (the first woman from Goa to do so) from Bombay University. She was a member of the Goa Youth League and its Secretary in 1949-50. But her notable contribution to the freedom struggle was when, with Waman Balkrishna Sardesai and Nicolau Menezes, they operated an underground Radio Station known as Voice of Freedom, first from Castle Rock and later from near Belgaum. She was the main broadcaster in English and Konkani and the other two in Portuguese, urging the people of Goa to oust the Portuguese from Goa. Libia later married Waman Sardesai.

Beatriz de Menezes Braganza was the youth leader, organizing processions in Bombay as a member of the Goa Youth League and later the National Congress (Goa). A brilliant scientist, obtaining M.Sc and Ph.D degrees, her association in later years with the Tata Memorial Hospital as a researcher did not leave her much time for political work but she never lost a chance to put forward Goa's case at international scientific conventions she attended.

Irene Heredia was the wife of J.N.Heredia, one of the founders of the Goa Liberation Council, who resigned as Honorary Consul of Brazil, to associate himself with the Goa Freedom Movement. Irene was a member of the National Campaign Committee that went to Delhi in 1960 to meet Prime Minister Nehru and also the spirit behind the telegram dispatched to the Indian PM in 1961 urging immediate action against the Portuguese in Goa, which was signed by important women in Bombay, such as Dr. Juliet de Sa, Dr. Kamal Singbal, Dr. Lila Alvares, Margaret Sequeira, Maneck Velingkar, Dr. Margaret D'Cunha, Mangala Ranade, Berta and Beatriz de Menezes Braganza, Dagmar Lynn, Gulab Patekar and others. Among the prominent Goan women in Bombay espousing the cause of Goa's freedom was also Aida Mendes Rodrigues, associated with the Goan Tribune, a fortnightly devoted to the freedom of Goa, and mother of General Sunith Rodrigues, who rose to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army.

Lambert Mascarenhas hails from Colva in Salcette and is a professional journalist, now retired. A well known freedom fighter, he was the Editor of the Bombay based Goan Tribune during Goa's freedom struggle. The first Editor of the Navhind Times, he was the Founder Editor of Goa Today, the magazine that brought Goa to Goans all over the world. He is the author of the classic novel Sorrowing Lies My Land, now in its fourth print, In the Womb of Saudade, a collection of Short Stories, and a play, The Greater Tragedy.

## **CHAPTER 6 - GOAN WOMEN HISTORIANS**

By Dr. Vitor Délio Jacinto de Mendonça

### **FÁTIMA DA SILVA GRACIAS**

Fátima da Silva Gracias is a Lecturer in the Department of History, Dhempe College, Panjim – Goa. She has M.A. and Ph. D. degrees in History. She is the author of three books - *Health & Hygiene in Colonial Goa 1510-1961* (published in 1994), *Kaleidoscope of Women in Goa 1510-1961* (1996) and *Beyond The Self, Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Goa* (2000). She has also contributed research papers on areas of health, women, social institutions and culture in publications and research seminars in India, Portugal, France, Germany and Brazil.

### **PRATIMA PRABHAKAR KAMAT**

Pratima Prabhakar Kamat is Reader in the Department of History, Goa University. She has been teaching at the University for the last 15 years. After receiving an education in different parts of India and also abroad, she completed her doctorate in History from the University of Bombay. She was Head, Department of History, Goa University (1999-2002) and served as Teacher-In-Charge, Centre for Women's Studies, Goa University. She is recognized as a Ph.D. guide in History at Goa University. Her field of specialisation is Indo-Portuguese History. She is the author of the book - *Farar Far (Crossfire): Local Resistance to Colonial Hegemony in Goa 1510-1912* (published in 1999). Pratima Kamat has participated in and presented research papers at a number of national and international conferences on Indo-Portuguese History and has published extensively in journals and books in India and abroad. She is the recipient of several academic awards and research scholarships. She is a member of a number of professional associations and social organisations

### **CELSA PINTO**

Celsa Pinto is an Education Administrator, Government of Goa. She was born in Karachi, Pakistan, where she did most of her schooling, preparing for the Senior Cambridge Examination. She was awarded the M.A. degree by the University of Bombay and holds a doctorate in Indo-Portuguese Trade History from Goa University. Apart from research papers published in reputed journals, she is the author of three books - *Trade and Finance in Portuguese India: a study of the Portuguese Country Trade, 1770-1840* (published in 1994), *Goa: Images and Perceptions, Studies in Goan History* (1996), *A Commercial Resurgence, 1770 - 1830, Situating Indo-Portuguese Trade History* (2003). She has published

several research papers and has participated in national and international History conferences and seminars.

**MARIA DE LOURDES BRAVO DA COSTA RODRIGUES**

Maria de Lourdes Bravo da Costa Rodrigues has a M.A. in History and a degree in Library Science. She is a Senior Librarian at the State Central Library in Panaji. She has devoted much of her time to research work specializing in Indo-Portuguese History. She has participated in several national and international conferences. Local newspapers - the Navhind Times, Herald, Gomantak Times and magazine Goa Today - and academic journals have often published her well-researched articles. She is the author of the book - *Tasty Morsels: Goan Food Ingredients & Preparation* (published 2000).

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Dr. Vitor Délio Jacinto de Mendonça (b. 1958) is Director , Xavier Centre of Historical Research, Alto Porvorim, Goa. After completing his schooling in Beira (Mozambique), he entered the Society of Jesus in Goa in 1979. He did his M.A. in Portuguese Literature, M.A. in History and Ph.D. in History.

CHAPTER 7 - GOAN WOMEN LEGAL LUMINARIES

Adv. Antonio J. B. Lobo, BSc., LL.M.,

The legal profession in Goa has very deep roots. The first High Court in Goa was established at Old Goa much prior to the advent of the British in India. It was, therefore, natural that Goans would so enthusiastically embrace the profession and become legal luminaries in their own right, despite the fact that there were no schools at that time in Goa.

Cunha Gonsalves is a prime example of what a Goan legal mind is capable of, after proper training. He wrote a 15 volume commentary on the Portuguese Civil Code, as well as a two-volume treatise on the Portuguese Commercial Code, each volume consisting of over 500 pages, upon which, we in the legal profession, still rely on for our arguments in cases concerning the personal laws enacted during the Portuguese regime and which are still in force in Goa.

The legal profession, in Goa, had always been a male bastion until Ms. **Libia Lobo** became the first Goan lady to breach it in 1955. She hails from Ararim in Socorro, Bardez and is the daughter of late Peter Xavier Lobo. She was active in the Goa Freedom Movement and later married the late Vaman Balcrisna Naique Prataprao Sardessai, a fellow freedom fighter. They together set up and operated Goa's famous underground radio station, " The Voice of Freedom ", from Belgaum, until the Liberation of Goa. In 1962, she was appointed the Director of Tourism, Govt. of Goa. She served until 1968 then quit to set up her law practice. Her successful law practice spanned 26 years until she joined her husband in Angola, when he was posted as India's Ambassador to that nation in 1994.

During the last ten years of her legal career, Mrs. Libia Lobo Sardessai immersed herself into various social activities in Goa and proudly carried Goa's flag all over the world, representing India in various international forums. In 1983 she started the Consumer Guidance Society (Goa) and was a member of the Indian delegation to the World Peace Conference at Prague, Czechoslovakia. In 1985, she represented India at the U.N. Decade Conference in Nairobi, Kenya and the following year she was the Founder President of the Home Science College, Panjim, started under the aegis of the All India Women's Conference, of which she was the President. In 1973 she was the founder and promoter of the Women's Co-operative Bank and was its Chairperson for the next ten years. She served on various committees and councils, both at the State and Central level, and even lectured on Constitutional Law for a year. In 1974 – 75, she was a member of the Modav Das Committee on Urban Banks, constituted by the Reserve Bank of India, to scrutinize the bye-laws and working of Urban Co-op. banks.

After Ms. Libia Lobo's trail-blazing achievement and the setting up of law colleges in Goa, many Goan women have eagerly taken to the profession. In fact, presently, the local law colleges have more women on the rolls than men! It is no surprise, therefore, that today many Goan women are occupying positions of Judges and Public Prosecutors, besides those successfully practicing the legal profession.

The honour of being the first Goan lady judge goes to Ms. **Bimba Kashinath Thali**. Daughter of Dr. Datta Lawande, originally from Agassaim, in Ilhas, but presently residing at Cuncolim, Salcette, she graduated in Science before training as a lawyer. She started her legal practice in 1979 and was selected as Assistant Public Prosecutor in 1984. She became the first Goan woman to be appointed as a judge when she was selected as Civil Judge Junior Division in 1990. Within five years she was promoted to Civil Judge Senior Division and in 2002 she was elevated to Additional District Judge. Married to Adv. Kashinath Thali, she has a son and is presently posted at Panjim.

To Ms. **Anuja Prabhu Dessai** goes the credit of being the first Goan lady to be appointed Additional District Judge. She is the daughter of Yeshwant and Nisha Prabhu Dessai and originally from Colombi in Chandor, Salcette. She started her legal practice in 1986 and was selected as Civil Judge Junior Division in 1991. Promoted to Civil Judge Senior Division in 1995, she was promoted to Additional District Judge in 1998. A brilliant legal mind, she has topped the list of selected candidates on every occasion. Married to Adv. Frazer Rebello, she is presently posted in Margao.

Ms. **Nutan D. Sardessai** is another Science graduate who has taken to the legal profession. Armed with an LL.M from the University of Poona, she started her legal practice in 1983. She was appointed Civil Judge Junior Division in 1991 and within five years elevated to Civil Judge Senior Division. In 1998 she was appointed Additional District Judge. She is the daughter of late Dattaram Sardessai and hails from Margao, Salcette.

There are other very successful Goan ladies in the legal profession, prominent among them being Ms. **Anarkali Agni, Subhalaximi Naik, Albertina Almeida** of *Bailancho Saad* and **Caroline Collasso** of *Bailancho Manch*.

Adv. Antonio J. B. Lobo, BSc., LL.M., is a prominent lawyer in Goa and President of the North Goa District Advocates Association. Recently he achieved the hereto unthinkable by becoming the first Goan to be elected to the Bar Council of Maharashtra and Goa. Besides his busy practice, he is actively involved in social struggles such as the Ramponkar movement, as well as against sand extraction, deforestation and unemployment. Founder Vice President of the Goa Environmental Action Group, which has been struggling against sound pollution,

he has also participated with Sr. Advocate Manohar Usgaokar in the translation of Family Laws from the Portuguese language to English.

CHAPTER 8 - GOAN MARATHI STAGE ARTISTES AND SINGERS

By Nitin Korgaonkar
(Translated from Marathi by *Sahrdaya*)

Women artistes have contributed immensely in the field of Goan Art and Culture, and have done Goans proud by their achievements. Some are still in the limelight, while many others have faded out of our memories. Our effort here is to pay homage to most of them who have left a mark on the stage but now unknown to the younger genre of performing artistes.

One rare style of vocal tradition is the *Bhendi Bazaar Gharana*, to which **Anjanibai Malpekar** belonged. Born in the small village of Malpe in Pernem in 1883, Anjanibai was the first Indian artiste to be granted the Fellowship of the Sangeet Natak Akademi and was felicitated at the hands of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1958.

A musician and writer, **Heerabai Pednekar**, was born on November 22, 1885 and learnt vocal music with Bhaskarbuwa Bakhle, Parshuram Pant and Faiyyaz Khan. She was also a poetess and a dramatist who had learned Sanskrit. Her books, *Jayendrath* and *Sangeet Damini* were well accepted in literary circles.

Hailing from Keri village in Ponda, **Kesarbai Kerkar**, was born in 1893 and gained the tutelage of Alladiyan Khansaheb. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore awarded her the title of *Surashree* and she was also awarded *Padmabhushan* in 1953.

Mogubai Kurdikar was born on July 15, 1904 at Kurdi and also trained under Khansaheb Alladiyan Khan. She is also a recipient of *Padmabhushan* and has trained a lot of students, among them being Kamal Tambe, Waman Deshpande, Padma Talwalkar and of course her daughter, Kishori Amonkar.

After conquering the music circle in Goa and Kolhapur, **Menkabai Shirodkar** created her own fan following on reaching Bombay (Mumbai) and associating with *HMV*. She received her traditional style of singing lessons from Bhurjee Khan.

Kesarbai Bandodkar began her primary lessons from Ramkrishna Buwa Vaze and elder sister Girija Kelekar, at her birth place, Bandiwade. After shifting to Bombay (Mumbai), she was trained and guided by Amanat Ali Khan. She was also associated with M.G. Rangnekar's theatre group, *Natya Niketan*.

The small village of Bandiwade in Goa has gifted the world of performing art five pearls, namely **Girjabai Kelekar**, Kesarbai Bandodkar, Jyotsna Bhole, Mangala Ranade and Lalita Khandeparkar. These five sisters have really done

tiny Bandiwade proud. Girija was a student of Vilayat Hussain Khan and was also an accomplished Radio artiste.

The village of Loliem in Canacona gave birth to **Anjanibai Loliengar** in a family of singers. Her elder brothers, Haribhan and Yashwantrao Ghangrekar, trained Anjanibai in the Gwalior tradition and later she got admission in *International Music of Calcutta* at the age of 21. Anjanibai was also trained by Anwar Hussein Khan.

Jyotsna Bhole has been closely associated with the Marathi music and drama tradition. She was trained by stalwarts like Khadim Hussein Khan, Dhamman Khan, Inayat Khan and Bashir Khan. She later developed her own style of singing by mixing the classical and light vocal traditions. She also starred in theatre productions of *Natya Manwantar* and *Natya Niketan*.

Kishori Amonkar is a name that has been associated with the traditional classical style of Jaipur and Atrauli, and also with poignant in-depth rendition of each *Raga* in an individual style. Kishori had trained under her mother, Mogubai Kurdikar, and received the *Padmabhushan*.

The light vocal tradition involving Thumri, Kajari Hori, Dadra, Chaiti and Zhula has been the favourite style of **Shobha Gurtu**, who was trained by Bhurjee Khan, Natthan Khan and Dhamman Khan.

Lata Mangeshkar and **Asha Bhonsle** are two sisters who have established their name worldwide as Hindi movie playback singers but two more, **Usha** and **Meena** can hold their own in the music field. All daughters of the great Master Dinanath Mangeshkar, Lata is the eldest of the singing sisters and received *Bharat Ratna* in 2001. Asha was born in 1933 and is second only to her elder sister as a singer. Younger sister Usha is also a painter and trained under Achrekar. Meena, born in 1929, took classical training and has also composed music.

Surangabai Parvatkar was the daughter of Champabai, who performed in *Manohar Stree Sangeet Mandali*. She was trained in singing and dance and on going to Bombay (Mumbai), she began to give live performances at Gwalior and Surat, as well as acted in films.

Meenakshi Shirodkar, who was known as the first glamour girl of Indian cinema, was born at Pernem as Ratan Pednekar and later trained in singing under Khadim Hussain Khan at Bombay (Mumbai). She also acted in many plays with Gopinath Sawkar.

Jayashree was born in 1922 at Korgaon in Pernem and the daughter of Tukaram Kamulkar. After being trained under Gaman Khan in vocal singing, she

began acting in Marathi and Gujrati plays. She was later invited to act in Prabhat company's films and finally became Jayashree Shantaram on marriage to V. Shantaram.

Alkatai Velingkar, who was born as Yowana Parvatkar to Surangabai Parvatkar, has been actively involved in the Theatre circles of Goa and West Maharashtra. She was awarded the Goa State Cultural Award, *Ranga Puraskar* and many more awards.

Shubhalakshmi Mandrekar belongs to Nanoda but later settled in Bombay (Mumbai), where she was trained in *Kathak*, the classical dance style.

She performed in many films as a dancer and later trained young students for about 30 years in Goa for which she was awarded the Goa State Cultural Award.

Sudha Karmarkar is the daughter of Taty Amonkar, who was associated with the *Sahitya Sangh* in Mumbai. He trained both his daughters, Sudha and Lalita, in singing as well as dance with Guru Parvatikumar. Sudha also studied at the *Indian Akademi of Dramatic Arts*. She later began the Children's theatre unit of the *Sahitya Sangh* and is active in this sphere since.

Lalita Joglekar was a performer who was active from the age of 19 until 60. She was born to Gopalrao Shinkre and was initiated into theatre at Mumbai with the *Prabhakar Natak Mandali*. She worked under Master Dattaram and Nanasaheb Fatak.

Lalan Sarang was born at Painguinim in Canacona and has been actively involved in meaningful theatre at Mumbai. She attained fame through ***Sukharam Binder, Baby, Kamla, Suryast*** and many other TV serials.

Lalita Kenkre, wife of Damu Kenkre, hails from Chicalim village in Bardez. She took acting classes with Parshwanath Altekar and performed in Musicals, as well as Marathi and Gujrati films.

Ashalata is a known face in Marathi and Hindi films as well as Serials. She was associated with *The Goa Hindu Association* and performed in the lead for many musicals as well as social plays.

Manorama Wagle was the daughter of Dr. Telang and entered the theatre field through the ladies wing of *The Goa Hindu Association*. She also received vocal training from B.R. Deodhar, Govindrao Verlekar and Pt. Jaganath Buwa Purohit.

Indumati Painginkar is the daughter-in-law of the Painginkars from Canacona and was introduced to Marathi theatre through *The Goa Hindu Association*. She began her acting career on stage and also in Marathi, Gujrati,

Hindi and Bhojpuri films. She gained popularity with *Jai Santoshi Ma* and has also written columns on beauty for *Popular Prakashan*.

Nalini Borkar (Kavlekar) was active on the Marathi and Gujrati Stage, as well as films. She gained recognition as a sensitive actress. Daughter of Jaysree from Borim, who was also a stage artiste, Nalini's depiction of *Rukmini* in the play, **Saubhadra**, was matchless. She received acting lessons from Bhalji Pendharkar, for whom she also performed in films.

Varsha Usgaonkar, an actress from Panjim, was very actively involved with the theatre movement in Goa and shone in the state drama competitions. She was trained at Aurangabad before entering the professional field in Mumbai. She also acted in Konkani, Marathi and Hindi films, apart from TV serials.

There are many such women artistes who have been produced and nurtured in Goa. Many of them, like **Saroj Velingkar** from Veling, **Mangala**

Ranade from Bandiwade, **Shalini Narvekar**, **Anjanibai Kalangutkar** from Nanoda, **Kishori Haldankar** from Khandola and **Shashikala Nageshkar** from Khandepar, have contributed to the Art field and done Goa proud. And who has not heard of Goa's latest nightingale, **Hema Sardesai**? She has spread Goa's name to all corners of the globe.

The roll of honour is endless and the soil of Goa keeps on spreading its cultural fragrance through its accomplished daughters.

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Nitin Korgaonkar is an accomplished Tabla player and teaching the Tabla at the Goa College of Music. He is also a freelance journalist, contributing regularly to leading Marathi papers like **Gomantak**. He is associated with cultural institutions in Goa and reviews Indian Classical Music and Art at Festivals.

Sahrdaya is associated with the Goan Music and Drama field both as a performer and stage designer. He reviews and regularly contributes to the local English dailies.

CHAPTER 9 - GOAN WOMEN... (IN) FINE PRINT

By Frederick Noronha

I got my first job in the media after being interviewed by a woman journalist. My wife is a journalist. And, now, as the gray hairs show up in my beard, women are proving to be among the youngsters whom one tries to mentor in the gloriously uncertain yet exciting world of the media.

Increasingly, over recent years, women journalists have been called upon to serve in the Fourth Estate. Times have changed dramatically. Earlier, the situation was such that managements frowned upon employing women. Today, a Goa still woefully lacking in late-evening public transport still can be choosy about "letting" women work in fields like reporting or desk-based work which involves shifts. Nonetheless, women have more than made their dent in the media, even if they're still to get their fair share in the leadership positions of the Fourth Estate.

By-lines like those of the determined **Devika Sequeira** (Bureau Chief, *Deccan Herald* and formerly News Editor of *Goa Today*, besides holding diverse slots in the *Herald*, and earlier the *Indian Express* magazine in Mumbai) have shaped the media over the past two decades. Magazine teams of papers like *Navhind* and *Herald* (and *Gomantak Times* in the past too) have had a strong contingent of women staff shaping ideas and issues. Newspapers like the *Herald* have women play an important role in their reporting team too.

In the list of accredited correspondents -- the officially defined sanctum sanctorum of journalistic acceptability -- women too feature in the list, though still in dispro-portionate numbers. Those included in the list, in order of listing, are **Jyoti Dhond** (reporter, *Gomantak Times*), **Suhasini Prabhugaonkar** (nee **Sunita Dhempe**, reporter, *Gomantak*), **Julian D'Costa** (reporter, *Herald*), **Pamela D'Mello** (special correspondent, *The Asian Age*), and **Devika Sequeira Shetty**.

Many moons ago, when we were somewhere at the early end of our careers and took ourselves much less seriously, many of us younger journalists were part of what we half-jokingly called the 'juvenile gang'. Journalists like **Vidya Heble** (then with the *Gomantak Times*, now in Singapore), **Armenia Fernandes** (*Navhind Times*, and later in the Gulf), and **Sunita Dhempe** (then a prolific writer for the lone Konkani daily *Sunaparant*) were among our close colleagues. They were part of the teams which took up the work of re-orienting the Goa Union of Journalists, into a body that took up more actively both professional and trade union issues in the interest of its members. Seems like ages back, but many did learn much from each other in those times, including over occasional shared meals at the eating house of 'Anandasharam' in the lanes close to Panjim's General Post Office.

Pushpa Iyengar, the *Times of India* successor to our mentor Debashish Munshi, was another woman colleague who worked in Goa. She was then just back from a couple of scholarships, in France and Germany. On one occasion, Pushpa, Armenia and myself went along to interview Dominic D'Souza, Goa's first local HIV/AIDS patient. To my mind, then as now, it was no coincidence that while our male colleagues were reluctant to leave the cozy confines of political reporting at the Secretariat, it was the women in the field that ventured to talk to what was then a rarity, even something to be feared – a real-life HIV/AIDS patient. Pushpa subsequently won an in-house award from the Times for her report on this subject. Proof that a gender perspective can, and does, make a difference.

Earlier to this, Devika Sequeira was a determining influence on us still-in-college young journalist, as we learnt the first tricks of the trade around 1983. She was already an experienced ex-*Indian Express* reporter, and showed both determination and perseverance in 'getting the story' during a stint as assistant editor/ /chief reporter at the *Herald*, which, unfortunately, did not last long. Devika's day would begin around 10 or 11 am with a stint at reporting, a late-evening return to office, which was then followed with making the magazine pages with the limited skills that the fledging paper then had. Being the perfectionist she was, this would go on till 1 or 2 am. We trainees of course weren't of much help; the best we could do was to get out of the way, or, later on, help with the occasional lift back.

In the early years at the *Herald*, the doughty duo of **Cheryl D'Souza** and **Anna Mendes** also made their mark in their all-too-short stint in journalism. Cheryl went on to deal with antique and quality furniture in Salcete. But, in the few months they were there, the women in the team had already carved out a niche for themselves in the world of journalism. Devika made her mark with reporting on the Velim multiple murder case, and the mystery over the Xavier statue smuggling. Her coverage over the Commonwealth Retreat in Goa and other issues also shook up the placid let's-share-our-news bonhomie that then ruled the chummy media in the state.

Melanie Sequeira was another journalist who one worked with. She started off life in the *Herald* as a steno, till she modestly let it out that she had already published books! She proved to be a good magazine editor, specially of the children's segment -- a task she obviously had the experience and eagerness for. At least one of the then young boys she encouraged to write has graduated into being a magazine editor himself!

Sharmila Kamat was another journalist colleague, who subsequently opted for a career in lecturing. **Ethel Da Costa** was someone I first met sometime in the late-eighties as a quiet young girl, and who shaped up into an effective magazine editor at the *Herald*, before moving on to *Femina* and the *Times of India* Group more recently. Ethel incidentally started off with a bang, as her first story in the *Gomantak Times* -- or was it the *Weekender*? -- saw the police getting infuriated enough to attempt to sabotage the circulation of that newspaper.

Bevinda Colaco, possibly one of those behind coining the 'Bollywood' label, has covered considerable ground as magazine editor at the *Weekender*. **Swapna Sardesai** was also one of the initial (or early?) team that launched the *Weekender*, and subsequently moved on to fields like advertising.

My subsequent sojourn as a outstation correspondent -- first for *Deccan Herald* (1987-1994) and then as a freelancer primarily working for media outside Goa -- together with a cluttered memory makes one immensely guilty of overlooking other names in the field. Lack of sufficient interaction with the non-reporting Marathi and Konkani journalists also adds to this burden of guilt. But, the fact is that there are and have been quite a few good if not great women journalists who deserve appreciation for the work they've done inspite of the odds.

Women have served diverse media, including radio and TV, cable TV (**Shami Prabhu's** role has already been noticed and commented on in publications like *Goa Today*). Currently, *Herald's* magazine editor is **Suruchi Kapoor**, while **Rajeshree Navelkar** (nee **Iyer**), **Melba Antao-Mergulhao**, **Inacia Rodrigues**, and others are part of the women-dependent magazines team. Reporters at the same paper include **Julian Da Costa**, **Sharon Sequeira** and **Bindiya Chari**. They've been doing a good job, as indicated by their many by-lined stories on subjects which male colleagues often overlook. At the time of writing, two interns who are showing determination in following the story during their mid-career training are **Arati Das** and **Bovina Arunan**.

Women need the space to live up to their potential. But as they keep proving themselves with greater confidence, they're going to claim a fairer share, based on merit alone.

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## CHAPTER 10 - GOAN WOMEN LAW-ENFORCERS

By Alex Rasquinha

Although lady constables have been in the Goa Police Force earlier, the first lady police officer made an entrance only in 1974, when **Anita Rodrigues** from Mercas joined the Goa Police Force as a Police Sub-Inspector. To her also goes the honour of being the first Goan lady Deputy Superintendent of Police. She has worked at Panjim Police station and various other posts at Police Headquarters very successfully. Her exceptional work has won her many awards including prestigious National awards. Anita is an outstanding sportswoman and has won many medals for Goa and India, at National and International Veterans Athletic Meets (see Sportspersons). She has also played hockey and football for Goa at the National level regularly. She is presently In-charge of Goa Police Headquarters, Panjim.

Another senior lady police officer is Police Inspector **Rina Torcato** from Velim, Salcette. Until recently she was the In-charge of the Panjim Town Police Station. She is the first Goan lady Police Officer to hold this hereto male dominated posting. In her career, she has handled many cases very successfully and has won many awards including the prestigious National and State awards. At present, she heads the Vigilance Cell at Police Headquarters, Panjim.

Police Inspector **Maria D'Souza Monseratte**, who hails from Raia in Salcette, is one more top Goan lady police officer. Joining the Goa Police Force as a Lady Police Sub-Inspector, she underwent training at the Police Academy, Nasik (Maharashtra) and other places before working at many positions at Police Headquarters. She has also won many awards for her good work. Presently, she is In-charge of Traffic Education Cell, Police Headquarters, Panjim.

Completing a triangle of Goan lady Police Inspectors is **Sunita Sawant** from Sanquelim, in Bicholim taluka of North Goa. Elevated to this coveted post in 2001 she is presently the In-Charge of Agassaim Police Station.

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Alex Rasquinha has recently retired as South Goa District Supdt. of Police, Goa Police Force. Hailing from Ucassaim in Bardez, he was among the first batch of Goa Police Officers in 1964 and during his service was known as Goa's Super-cop. An upright officer who had to often bear the wrath of politicians, he was credited with the maximum cases detected among all officers of the Goa Police Force.

CHAPTER 11 – SOME GOAN WOMEN IN PORTUGAL

By Constantino Hermanns Xavier

These are just some examples of Goan women who are actively engaged into the promotion of Goan culture. They could also be engaged into some other non-governmental, ecological or cultural activity. But I've chosen these three examples because it's probably interesting for Goan women to discover that the question of Goa's identity is not only posed in Goa. These women have excelled because through one way or the other they were capable of offering their personal skills to the benefit of a general cause – in this case the Goan community.

HELENA SERUCA QUADROS, born in Inambane (Mozambique) in 1946. Her father was Goan and her mother Portuguese. She was born and bred in Portugal. She is a documentalist and also in charge of administrative affairs in Casa de Goa. She spent some time in Goa when she was 5 years old and has grown closer to her Goan background after taking the job at Casa de Goa. She is the visible link between Casa de Goa and its associates, and specially 2nd and 3rd generation Goans whom she supports in all the initiatives carried out in Casa de Goa. She has made a huge effort to learn Konkani and is now doing so in devanagri script.



During a conversation with her, she remembers her first impressions of Goa. It was her first and only time she visited Goa and she keeps her memories fresh: "*What most impressed me were the colours*", she says with a smile. Wandering deeper, she remembers how the maids would give her the spicy curry (caril) secretly, because her aunty didn't like so give her spicy food: "*There was one curry for the owners, with a soft taste, and one more spicy one for the employees*".

Though it's over 50 years she hasn't been to Goa, working at the Casa de Goa premises has made her rediscover those links to Goa. Underlining the importance of keeping our roots alive and serve the others in our community, Helena thinks people should "*look more to what unites us than what separates us. Goans are well integrated in Portugal, but it's a pity our community insists in having disputes and fights*".

Helena Quadros used to work as a documentalist at a library from the Lisbon Municipality. By luck, one day, she was called to help organizing a function held at her library. Coincidence: it was a meeting by the Casa de Goa members, preparing their new premises. Someone was needed for the new documentation centre, and immediately Helena proposed herself. Now she spends her days at the Casa de Goa, helping out wherever she can and always encouraging younger Goans to participate and give new life to the community.

“I’m planning to visit Goa next year. I know it’ll be very different after 50 years” she admits. But, we know she has an advantage so many other and younger Goans don’t have: With a timid smile she confesses that she reads daily Joel d’Souzas’ GoaNet Newsclippings...

MARIA VIRGÍNIA BRÁS GOMES was born in Goa in March 1951. A English Special graduate of Bombay University. She has been living in Lisbon, since 1973. Currently she’s the Head of Department for Social Research and International Relations of the General Directorate for Solidarity and Social Security of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. She promotes Goan culture in Portugal as a Member of the Managing Committee of Casa de Goa (Culture) and of Casa de Goa's music group Ekvât, with particular responsibility for the group of 2nd generation Goans who make up the dance group.



Maria Virgínia (as she’s commonly known) visits frequently Goa to be with family and friends. She’s also in close touch with Goa and Goan communities of the diaspora, especially through the Internet. Though she’s the only woman of the Managing Committee of Casa de Goa, Maria Virgínia has always that energy that makes the difference. She is comfortable with everyone and has always a solution for those problems some Goans like to see, though there aren’t any.

She’s worried about the future of the Goan community in Portugal and her engagement in calling more young people to the Ekvât group testifies her concern: *“I am very proud of my Goan heritage and I wish my children to be equally proud of the fact that besides the Portuguese way of life in which they were born and bred, they have another culture to sustain them through their lives.”*

But it’s important to pass the message to the younger ones. Many young Goans in Portugal have never been to Goa, or they do not feel attracted by the small talk and gossips of the older ones. In her words: *“Obviously, one cannot love and cherish what one does not know. Hence the extreme importance of all our Associations in keeping our cultural identity alive and in helping our children to promote cultural values that they recognize as their own and that they are able to adapt and renew in new settings and environments.”*

While talking about Goan women in Portugal, and trying to give an example, we cannot forget the **NEW GENERATION OF YOUNG GOAN WOMEN** who are now actively engaged into the activities of promoting their identity, or their parents’ identity, depending on the point of view. As a young Goan I’ve been into contact with several of these “young ladies” who confirm the following tendency: While first generation of Goans (and immigrants in general) tend to leave beside all identity issues and their cultural baggage brought from their origins, second

and third generation Goans are then actively engaged into rediscovering their roots and their origins. This process of revitalization is confirmed in Portugal, within the Goan community.

We have the cases of **SOFIA MONTEIRO** and her sister **ROSÁRIO MONTEIRO**, and of **VILMA GRACIAS**. All of them are part of the Goan music and dances group SURYÁ. Though they have a typical life as young Portuguese, they are always ready to talk about Goa and to be with other Goans. While I would be sometimes ashamed of dancing to Goan music in front of an audience of more than 500 people (like during Goa Day in Lisbon) Sofia, Rosário, Vilma and so many other young Goan women are excellent dancers and singers, you would say they are professional. And why? Because they do it with passion and interest. I will never forget how Sofia and the others – when I



first met them - received me: with a smile and an invitation to go out dancing at night. From them I learned that it's not difficult at all to conceal two identities at the same time. And Sofia and other young Goan women are an example for being capable to show to other girls that they shouldn't hide or be ashamed of their origins, but that they should explore and keep them alive.

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