

THE COLONIAL PERIODICAL PRESS IN THE INDIAN AND PACIFIC OCEAN REGIONS

Edited by Sandra Ataíde Lobo, Jessica Falconi, Remy Dias and D.A. Smith



Chapter

The Catholic Press Within the Politics of Democratization of Goan Catholicism

The Confrarias Polemics at the Newspaper Vauraddeancho Ixtt (1933–1951) 1

By Denis Evereth Fernandes@

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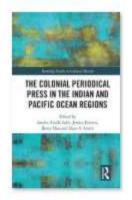
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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses caste-polemics amongst Goan Catholics as drawn in local Catholic periodicals, namely Vauraddeancholxtt. The aim is to approach a social turn in caste and press polemics along the first half of the twentieth century. A turn propelled by the social and ideological impact of migration to British India and other areas ushered in a mini revolution in the social order of Goan villages. Expanding the frontiers of Catholicism required 'egalitarian church' to compromise and accept local customs and traditions like the hierarchical Indian caste system. Brahmin-Chardo rivalry for dominance reflected in monopoly of posts and privileges whether ecclesiastical, civil, etc. ensured a subservient status to the vast majority of subalterns categorized as Sudras. Sudras were considered as chattels and their subalternity reflected in Catholic brotherhoods (Confrarias) as they break the shackles of feudalized local economy to make a living in British India. As the subalterns demanded their rightful place in Confrarias, the Church is forced to act. Gradually these brotherhoods are symbolically restructured (not without bloodshed) to give space, voice and social standing to Sudras. In the process, laying the foundation for a just and open Goan Catholic society based on merit rather than birth.