

Tradition, Continuity & Change

Goan Society in Transition(s)

Edited by
Nina Caldeira

Tradition, Continuity & Change Goan Society in Transition(s)

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Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| 1. By way of Introduction <i>Nina Caldeira</i> | 01 |
| 2. Goa, Traditionally Modern. <i>Oscar Noronha</i> | 05 |
| 3. Tradition, Continuity And Change: A Case Study of The Dancing Umbrellas/Sotrios of Cuncolim. <i>Susheela Mendes</i> | 12 |
| 4. This and That: The Two Faces of Adoption in Goa. <i>Dr. Isabel Vaz</i> | 22 |
| 5. Narrating Tradition, Continuity and Change in a Catholic Wedding Ceremony. <i>Lourdes da Costa</i> | 37 |
| 6. Tradition And Modernity In the Historical Monuments: A Case Study of Chapels and its Revenue. <i>Xavier Martins</i> | 51 |
| 7. Routes and Roots: The Goan Diaspora's Frozen Frames. <i>Deepa. Prajith</i> | 56 |
| 8. A Silent Struggle towards Change: Contribution of Goan Colonial Women towards social and economic freedom in Estado da India: Reviewing the Colonial Periodical Press. <i>Brenda Coutinho</i> | 76 |
| 9. Festivals of Goa: Blending Tradition with Modernity to Foster Continuity. <i>Glenis Mendonca</i> | 82 |
| 10. Of mud, stone, tile and more: The re-making of the Casa Portuguesa in Goa. <i>Irene Silveira</i> | 90 |
| 11. The Goan Common Man looks Idhar-Udhar: Analysis of Uddhar Sawkar's editorial cartoons. <i>Natasha Gomes</i> | 102 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 12. Questioning Progressivism: The Activist Strain in Konkani Writing in Translation. <i>Nafisa Oliveira</i> | 129 |
| 13. Analysing the Reflections of Tradition and Modernityin the Goan society in Mario Miranda’s Cartoons. <i>Svetlana Fernandes</i> | 140 |
| Index | 149 |

The Goan Common Man looks Idhar-Udhar: Analysis of Uddhar Sawkar's editorial cartoons

Natasha Maria Gomes¹¹

An editorial cartoon can condense the metaphorical thousand words into a single potent picture. Being keen observers, cartoonists are in R. K. Laxman's words, "the court jesters of lore" whose sole aim is to use humour to represent the shortcomings of society and to provoke discussions about various concerns that are plaguing the common man. Cartoonists have the uncanny ability to portray the socio-political and cultural climate of the age in which they live, with their masterful strokes.

These pictorial representations have a far greater impact on the general population than words because they can instantly invoke feelings of happiness, sadness, anger etc. However, the analysis of editorial cartoons in Goan newspapers remains under-researched. This paper reflects on the evolution of editorial cartoons related to Goa in the Goan Press and attempts to scrutinise Uddhar Manohar Sawkar's pocket cartoons published in two Goan English newspapers: 'Gomantak Times' and 'Herald', in the last few decades. It chronicles the pulse of the Goan common man: his thoughts, musings, concerns, preoccupations and reflections as he transitions through time.

Introduction

Amidst the otherwise sombre headlines of the day, the editorial cartoons often stand out as strokes of reality with latent potential to make readers smile and chuckle. In her book titled 'Caricaturing Culture in India', Ritu Gairola Khanduri opines that newspaper cartoons are "a critical form of political journalism and a special

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category of news. The bundling of caricature, prose, topical content, and a dash of humour makes the cartoon a medium of news with a character all its own" (2). An editorial cartoon can transform the metaphorical thousand words into a single potent picture. Known also as Political cartoons, they are socio- political snapshots of particular moments in time. These cartoons represent an artist's opinionated vision of the world around him and at times they are the voice of conscience of a nation.

No topic is too banal. Graphic representations can cover a wide range of topics from politics to culture and sports and everything in between. Husain in his doctoral thesis notes, "A cartoon does not offer to solve a problem but it rather draws the public's attention to it, complicates it and creates an argument" (90).

Editorial cartoons have a long history. They were born out of a mutually advantageous partnership between cartoonists and publishers, at the end of the nineteenth century (Danjoux). The 1860's saw a proliferation of satirical journalism and caricatures in Europe namely France and England and this trend percolated even to the colonised world. History stands testimony to the fact that political and social cartoons have played a stellar role in shaping nations. In British India, socio-political cartoons became "powerful dimensions of illustrated journalism by the 1930's" (Raghavan, 167). The Indian vernacular avatars of the *Punch* magazine shaped the discourses of the time. Caricatures in the national and regional newspapers played a role in national awakening, advocated political and social reform.

Post 1947, in democratic India, Khanduri states, "newspaper cartoons became critical modes of public communication and politics. Since then, cartoons have offered daily doses of humour by questioning India's developmental agenda, democratic governance, and secular credentials"(2). Editorial cartoons by Sankar Pillai, the father of Indian cartooning, were a staple feature in the English daily, *The Hindustan Times* which was founded in 1924. Pillai is remembered for having sketched the Prime Ministerial career of his close friend, Jawaharlal Nehru after the latter's memorable statement, "Don't spare me, Shankar!" His collection of cartoons

pays homage to Nehru's statement. It also contains a quote by Nehru who believed that a true cartoonist was not just a maker of fun but one who had the ability to see the significance of an event and by a few masterful strokes impress it in others.

According to Nehru, these cartoons rendered a public service by pointing out the “weaknesses and foibles of those who display themselves on the public stage”, who are “apt to grow pompous”, and who could do with being brought “down a peg or two” (as quoted in Pillai). Rare was Nehru’s reaction to the cartoons and we can contrast it with the period of censorship during the Emergency that followed a few years later.

Cartoonists and caricaturists follow in the footsteps of the Italian polymath, Leonardo da Vinci and use images of well-known public figures, places and common symbols to convey a message. Being keen observers, cartoonists are in R K Laxman’s words, “the court jesters of lore” whose sole aim is to use humour to represent the foibles of society and to provoke discussions and debates about various concerns that are plaguing the common man (Introduction, vii). Laxman, the father of The Common Man and the recipient of the Padma Vibhushan, Government of India’s second highest civilian award and the Ramon Magsaysay Award for journalism pointed out,

“If things had worked the way our founding fathers had hoped, the cartoonist would long ago have become an extinct species. Fortunately for the cartoonist, both the rulers and the ruled unintentionally became champions of the cartoonist’s cause and ceaselessly provided grist for the mill” (Introduction, ix).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently acknowledged the importance of cartoonists like Laxman and stated that cartoonists are “closer to God” because of their ability to minutely observe the human race (Deshpande). Incidentally, this comes at a time when there is an on-going political “Cartoon War” between the ruling, right- wing *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) and extreme-right Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief and cartoonist Swararaj Shrikant Thackeray a.k.a. Raj Thackeray (Sutar). In addition,

FIRs are filed with increasing frequency against cartoonists with, as BJP spokesperson Shantaram opined, “sadistic minds” (Gopal; Saravanan; Sabrang India).

Many liberals and advocates of the Freedom of Expression staunchly believe that this is ‘No laughing matter’. Shashwat Gupta Ray, the current editor of the *Gomantak Times* categorically states, “No freedom that is given to us by the constitution is to be taken for granted. Neither it is absolute!” (Personal interview, 12:37-12:50). He believes that good cartoons need to convey a message in a subtle and satirical way. If he doesn't, it becomes a personal vendetta and propaganda. He goes on to add that when cartoonists take sweeping jabs at institutions like the parliament, the judiciary and the army, instead of the people who are running the institutions or the electorate who are responsible for electing the politicians, the general public loses faith in the bastions of democracy. As journalists, cartoonists need to take care that the people's faith in the temple's of governance do not crumble. When people lose faith, they will be anarchy! (Personal interview).

Caricaturists thus, walk a fine and dangerous line. Apart from the being targeted with censorship, punitive lawsuits, when their cartoons hit below the belt, many cartoonists come under physical attack for their work. Syrian cartoonist, Ali Ferzat's hands were broken in 2011. Goan author and former journalist Valmiki Faleiro draws attention to the fact that cartoonists are targeted as much as journalists and writers and many are killed because of their work (Email interview). The most famous examples are the Charlie Hebdo Massacre in 2015 and the Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy in 2005 that led to protests all over the world. Faleiro further emphasises that,

“It's not just because cartoonists have the ability to raise the ire of powerful people or create illustrations that others regard as pure blasphemy, but because the bottom line is that cartoons by their very nature are a powerful medium. It is their potential power to cause damage (or perceived damage) to those at the receiving end of cartoons” (Email interview).

Pictorial representations touch a visceral nerve and hence have a far greater impact on the general population than words. As witnessed even in the recent past, they can instantly invoke feelings of happiness, sadness, anger etc. In his famous tweet, cartoonist Mitesh Patel proclaimed, “A poster is more powerful than a thousand Godse.” (qtd. in Gopal)

In recent years, in the light of explosive global chain reactions to caricatures, there has been considerable analysis of editorial cartoons and their impact. In India, this trend it is gaining traction. Goa can boast of famous cartoonists like Padma Vibushan Mario João Carlos do Rosario de Brito Miranda popularly known as Mario Miranda, Alex Raphael Fernandes popularly known as Alexyz, Air Vice Marshal Giles Gomes, Angela Ferrão, Ben, Billy Joe Fernandes, Devyani, Dr. Subodh Kerkar, Smitha Bhandare Kamat and Uddhar Sawkar among others. However, the analysis of editorial cartoons in Goan newspapers remains under-researched.

A literature review into pocket cartoons published in Goan English newspapers demonstrates that to date there exists extremely little content analysis of these sketches and this study is hence a humble attempt to contribute to this field of research by highlighting the recurrent themes in Sawkar’s single panel pocket cartoons. This research (undertaken in 2019) combines archival data and interviews with prominent editors, journalists and cartoonists. Central library, Panjim which is a repository of pre and post liberation newspapers has been the main source of primary data.

This work reflects briefly on the evolution of editorial cartoons in the Goan Press and attempts to scrutinise Uddhar Manohar Sawkar’s editorial cartoons published in two Goan English daily newspapers: *Gomantak Times* and *Herald*, in the last few decades. Sawkar’s Goan Common Man first appeared in 1988. Due to the vast collection of cartoons, those cartoons that have appeared in a five yearly interval starting from 1988 to the 2018 have been considered for this research. In 1998 and 2003 no editorial cartoons were published by the cartoonist and hence the years under scrutiny are 1988, 1993, 2008, 2013 and 2018. Additionally, only those editorial cartoons containing the iconic common man are used for analysis.

A brief history of editorial cartoons in English daily newspapers in Goa

While the first printing press in India was set up in Portuguese Goa by the Jesuit missionaries in 1556, an Englishman in British India published the first newspaper *The Bengal Gazette*, a weekly journal in 1780 (Raghavan, 1). The first English daily in India appeared in 1819 (Raghavan, 11), two years before and 265 years after the first secular periodical *Gazeta de Goa* was published in Portuguese Goa. *O Heraldo* was the first Portuguese daily that saw the light of day in the beginning of 1900.

In Portuguese Goa, Goan historian Mishra pointed out that the colonial rulers had put in stringent measures to curb the freedom of the press for over a century. A censorship committee was set up and the government would recourse to various means to keep the editors and the journalists on a tight leash (Mishra, 193). Cartoons had a very restrictive role to play in such a censored environment and were used mainly as illustrations for advertisements as observed in the Portuguese newspaper *O Heraldo*.

Two months post-liberation in February 1963, the first English daily, *The Navhind Times* made its appearance. Owned by Dempo Industries Pvt. Ltd, it had complete monopoly for a while as other attempts to set up English papers folded. This paper published a cartoon strip called Mutt and Jeff by an American cartoonist for several years (Fisher). Goan historian and senior librarian of Central library, Panjim, Maria Lourdes Bravo da Costa Rodrigues recounted to this researcher that some locals used these cartoons to predict Matka scores in Goa (Interview). Over the years, *The Navhind Times* has re-published various cartoon strips and editorial cartoons that have appeared in prominent International papers. This local daily's non-controversial editorial style mirrors the types of cartoons. From time to time, the paper published cartoons by local artists, but they were always a light-hearted commentary of current affairs.

Fifteen years after *The Navhind Times* was setup in Panjim, in 1978 the *West Coast Times* was born in Margao. Like *The Navhind Times*, and *Goa Monitor* that entered circulation in 1972, *The West Coast Times* also featured cartoon strips by famous cartoonists. As

per this researcher's findings, *West Coast Times* was the first Goan English daily to include a regular editorial cartoon column by an Indian cartoonist. The editorial team comprised of members who served long years on national mastheads and they strived to produce a national-styled daily. As Valmiki Faleiro, former journalist who played a role in the genesis of some of the leading English newspapers in Goa, elaborates,

“A daily editorial pocket cartoon was an essential ingredient, as was the case with national mastheads like the *Times of India*, *Indian Express*, *Hindustan Times*, *Statesman* or *The Hindu*. At the time, Goa did not have even a handful of cartoonists like Dr. Subodh Kerkar, a student of the Goa Medical College who also did some social cartooning on the side. There was no professional political cartoonist as such in Goa, hence the *West Coast Times* editorial team had to look beyond the borders for someone who could produce pocket cartoons on a daily basis” (Email interview).

Telugu political cartoonist's Mohan Rele's column 'That's that' was included in the very first issue. In later issues, *The West Coast Times* also featured 'Uncle' by Goan cartoonist, Alexyz. Incidentally, though Mario Miranda is the most famous Goan cartoonist who began his cartooning career in 1953 at the *Times of India*, Alexyz has the honour of being the first Goan cartoonist to feature in a Goan English daily. Unfortunately the *West Coast Times* brief stint ended in 1981 and *The Navhind Times* regained its monopoly. However, the “*West Coast Times* aroused that latent interest in the Goan reader and set a trend for other newspapers, which would come to be published in Goa even in later years, to follow” (Faleiro).

Herald, the English avatar of the Portuguese *O Heraldo* surfaced in October 1983, 20 years after *The Navhind Times*. Under the stewardship of the editor, Rajan Narayan, the paper found its feet. A complete contrast to *The Navhind Times*, the *Herald* in those days, courted controversy, with its strong language, fiery editorials, stray thoughts and audacious caricatures. Alexyz showcased with uninhibited vigour the editorial pulse of the paper and expressed his perceptions of the changing political, social and economic

scene in free Goa (Alexyz, 1). His caricatures were also pictorial representation of the editor's stand on issues like the language controversy. Over the years, several cartoonists have sporadically left their imprints and opinions on the front page. Some notable editorial columns are 'Punchline' by Raj, 'Reflections' by Dr. Subodh Kerkar, 'Knock Out' and 'Idhar Uddhar' by Uddhar Manohar Sawkar.

The *Gomantak Times* came into existence in 1988 with the support from the House of Chowgules. Apart from the cartoon strips by internationally renowned cartoonist like Jerry Scott, Dave Graue, Crooks and Casal, this newspaper has carried editorial cartoons like Vishnu Purana, Wisecrack by Mahesh Divekar, Idhar-Uddhar by Uddhar Manohar Sawkar, Overheard by Alexyz, Flipside by Alok Nirantar and cartoons by Abu Abraham, Valentino Fernandes, Ben, R. K Laxman, Ajit Niman, Sudir Telang and Mario Miranda among others. Elston Xavier Soares, a journalist who worked at *Gomantak Times*, recounts that in 1993, the paper was pinned down by the Supreme court for one of its cartoons that suggested that a Supreme Court Judge was being bribed to adjourn a hearing in a case related to the disqualification of then Chief Minister, Ravi Naik (ch.13).

Cartoons have the potential to ruffle some powerful feathers and political cartoonists are well aware of the fact that they walk the tight rope. According to editor of the *Gomantak Times*, Shashwat Gupta Ray, a political cartoonist is a journalist who needs to be very sharp and aware of what is happening in the world (Personal interview). It's a tough job to say the least. While major mastheads in India may employ full-time staff cartoonists, local newspapers like those in Goa don't have such openings.

Sawkar points out that cartooning as a profession is also "an underpaid job" (Email interview). Another Goan cartoonist Angela Ferrão corroborates with this and adds that though social media provides a platform for cartoonists, it is difficult not only to get space in the newspapers but also to get the newspapers to recognise the importance of cartoons. According to journalist Frederick Noronha,

"In Goa, cartoons and cartoonists have got less than they deserved for most of the time. If you look at newspapers at various points of time ... there have been few papers

who have played up cartooning as much as they could have. Due to this, only a few have entered and stayed on in the field of cartooning in Goa”(Email interview).

Dismayed by the dwindling opportunities for cartoons in newspapers today, Alexyz opined that “Space is given to advertisements, and creativity is heavily restricted due to censorship” (qtd. in Ilavia). Ferrão also agrees that cartoons are censored and that “no one wants to affect the politicians, the powerful lobbyists and the state.” It is not surprising then that there are just a handful of home-bred cartoonists who paint about Goan issues.

Noronha further reasons that “India doesn’t use cartooning to its maximum potential. Perhaps this is due to the reverential attitude we have towards power, the lack of ability to laugh at ourselves, and the fact that we have too many sacred cows (pun unintended).” (Email interview).

The Goan behind the Goan Comman Man

Inspired by R.K Laxman, Mario Miranda and Ajit Ninan, some common features in Uddhar Manohar Sawkar’s work are his clean style, subtle sense of humour, unmistakable Goaness of his characters and situations which he depicts.

This self-taught artist’s first cartoon appeared in the Sunday Edition of *The Navhind Times* by an unexpected series of events. At that time, he was only 16 years. His father, an ardent fan, sent one of his cartoons to the editor without his knowledge. Seeing his cartoon about the Indian cricket team’s win in Sharjah in the newspaper kindled a flame in this commerce graduate from Goa (Sawkar, Bio). At that time, a few decades after liberation, there were still just a handful of cartoonists in Goa. It was also a time when Alexyz’s and Dr. Subodh Kerkar’s cartoons were a regular feature in the handful of Goan English newspapers and cartoonists had to wait patiently for a lucky break. The first editor of the ‘Gomantak Times’ gave Sawkar the opportunity to feature his work in the newspaper on the 21st of February 1988, a week after the newspaper was launched in Goa. Through the next several reams of paper, Sawkar’s work featured along with other cartoonists. The first column titled Idhar-

Uddhar appeared on the front page, three months later (see fig. 2) and from then on, it was a recurrent feature on page 1, till 1st April 1993. The Goan Common Man has had two other avatars in this early period with the 'Gomantak Times'.

In July of 1993, Sawkar's work appeared intermittently in the *Herald* under other pseudonyms 'NARAD', NARAD-Oddhar' and 'Oddhar' but his iconic common man was a constant figure in these single panel cartoons and in the column titled 'Knockout' till August of that year. After a gap of fifteen years, when Ashwin Tombat, a former editor of the 'Gomantak Times' joined *Herald* as an editor, the column 'Idhar-Uddhar' reappeared in the newspaper on 31st August 2008 and has remained a constant feature of the newspaper ever since.

Soares points out that Sawkar's sharp political cartoons are redolent with a sardonic sense of humour (Telephone interview). His cartoons conveyed a unique perspective of the Goans and stuck a nerve with the locals. What sets Sawkar apart from other cartoonists in Goa is the incredible fact that for over two decades he is based in Dubai and yet he still continues to capture the current happenings, the trials and tribulations of the common Goans with vivid detail. Herein lies the unique ability of this humble cartoonist who can skilfully translate what he hears and reads into a subtle piece of art.

In the earlier days, Sawkar's supportive father updated him with the political news. With the advancements of communication technology, it is easier now to keep abreast with the current affairs in Goa. The major Goan newspapers have an online presence in the last couple of years. The current news provides ample fodder for this cartoonist's creative mind. Sawkar confesses that "a cartoonist can flourish with ideas" given the current political scenario in the state and the daily woes of the Goans. Sawkar believes that cartooning is "90% idea and 10 % art"(Email Interview).

In terms of the number of cartoons published, in 2018, Sawkar has recorded a total of 238 cartoons, his current best. This again is no small feat given the fact that he has a full time job at the Emirates Airlines and works for nearly 14 hours a day. When asked about the secret to his stamina and his love for cartooning, he wrote

with conviction, “A cartoon a day keeps the doctor away!” (Email Interview). Soares believes that Sawkar’s cartoons stands as a testimony to his affection for Goa and his vast collection of pocket cartoons are truly a “labour of love!” (Telephone Interview).

The different avatars of the Goan Common Man.

The iconic Goan Common Man appeared as a recurrent face in the columns sketched by Sawkar and has graced the pages of the Goan press for several decades.

The first identifiable figure appeared on 23rd February 1988 with a prominent nose, and moustache, wearing a government usher’s outfit: a turban, sash, Nehru-pants and black shoes (see fig.2). Incidentally, this is also one of the very few times that the figure spoke. In following months, he was more of a silent observer of society. He also wore a different garb and was sometimes seen as politician’s personal guard, wearing a uniform and a hat (see fig. 3) and often carrying a *lathi* or a weapon (see fig. 4 and 5). At times, he also appeared as a bystander in plain clothes (see fig. 6), in a striped short sleeved shirt (see fig. 7) and sometimes even in a *banyan* – a typical sleeveless undershirt. (see fig. 8).

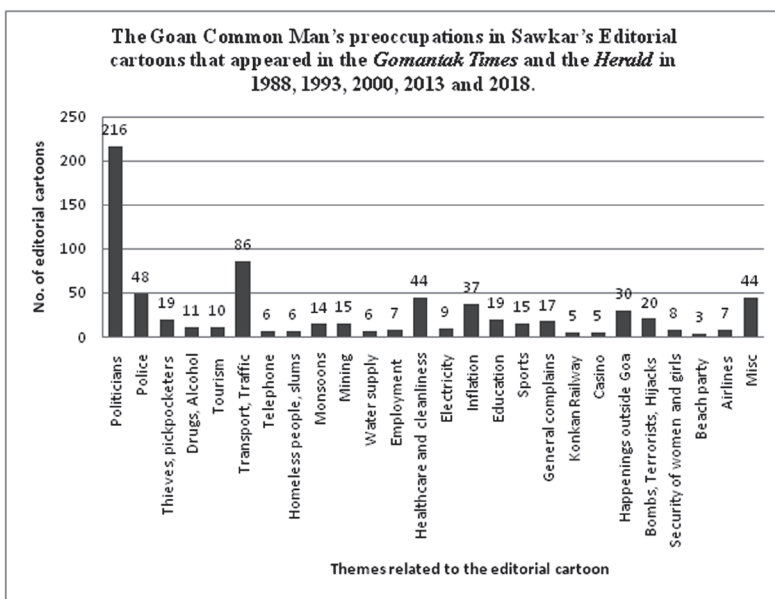
The Goan Common Man’s facial features changed marginally with time. After February 1989, he wore thick dark glasses and had a thinner moustache (see fig. 9). Bald and bi-spectacled, Sawkar’s common man today hasn’t changed his style for over three decades. He still dons a stripped, short-sleeved, un-tucked shirt and long dark trousers paired with lace-up shoes (see fig. 10, 11, 12, 13). In recent years, readers have seen this common *goenkar* transition out of his life in black and white and into more colourful avatar, literally and figuratively (see fig. 14). Ostensibly, a mute observer of society, he is befuddled and often perplexed spectator of the events that unfurl around him. He can be likened to Laxman’s Common Man, who has survived all sort of domestic crises for the last couple of decades.

Through the eyes of the Goan Common Man: Recurrent themes across the years.

In February 1988, the Common Man made his first appearance

in the *Gomantak Times*. Out of the Sawkar's 155 cartoons that year, 110 cartoons contain his signature Common Man. Five years later, in 1993, our *Goenkar* had a presence in the *Gomantak Times* till the 3rd of April followed by a cameo in the *Herald* in the month of July and August. After a gap of about a decade and a half he reappeared in the *Herald* only by the end of August 2008 and has continued to watch the world go by in the *Herald* ever since. In 2008, out of 107 cartoons, 99 featured the common man. In 2013, the common man appeared in 172 out of the 178 cartoons and in 2018, he was present in all 238 cartoons. As we follow our Goan Common Man through time, certain themes surface in the 707 pocket cartoons (see table 1).

Table 1: The Goan Common Man's preoccupations in Sawkar's Editorial cartoons that appeared in the *Gomantak Times* and the *Herald* in 1988, 1993, 2000, 2013 and 2018.



Source: Gomantak Times, Panjim Goa 1988, 1993; Herald, Panjim Goa 1993, 2008 and 2018.

Politicians and Police

Sawkar takes potshots at the politicians and the police. He points out their inadequacies and their weaknesses. The immorality of our *Neta's* taking bribes (22 August 1993), or bribing other officials (22

February 1993), their lofty electoral promises, the absurdity of these politicians going on fast and even staging walk-outs featured way back in the 1990's. Some of these sketches can easily be a snapshot of our present times. Politicians are shown as having close ties to the Mafia (9 January 2013) and having a criminal record. Before the 2013 elections, it was noted that several politicians had even registered their births with the Portuguese authorities, one step in the process of obtaining Portuguese citizenship. In one editorial cartoon, a member of the Party Head Quarters looks at the application of a prospective candidate who has been denied Portuguese citizenship several times because of his criminal record and predicts that he would have a bright political career (13 January 2013).

The artist very cleverly uses sports metaphors to highlight aspects in politics (6 October 1988; 8 August 1993, 2018). He sketches the tug-of-war between the politicians who are vying for power, their back stabbing nature (Sawkar, 3 July 1993), their party hopping tendencies along with their antiques as they govern the state and the country.

At present, Manohar Parrikar's illness and absence appears with increased frequency and his ability to govern the state is called into question. Everyone wants to meet the ailing CM and BJP is searching for a good leader to fill his shoes (16 October 2018). When party members hold up placards asking the CM to step down, the doctor ironically says that his patient requires rest and hence cannot step down (11 October 2018).

The police force is often portrayed in an unfavourable light. On several occasions, men in khaki are shown as having huge pockets or an additional hand for the purpose of collecting bribes (8 December 2008; 3 January 2013; 13 October 2013). While being hand-in-glove with the politicians and other crooks, the police are portrayed as being incapable of doing their job to the fullest as they are literally 'on their toes' (14 June 2013; 2 July 2013; 31st December 2013). They turn a blind eye to wrongdoings or are the perpetrators of crimes themselves (8 September 2008; 11 October 2008; 24 November 2018), and use those in custody as targets (29 December 2018).

There have been times when Sawkar also points out that the police men are overburdened (28 September 2013) and are underpaid (24 March 1993). When the police are understaffed, crime flourishes. When the cops are away the thieves are at play as seen on more than one occasion (21 February 2013).

Food, water and rising costs of basic commodities

Increasing prices of basic commodities and the shortage of staples have left the Goans on tenterhooks in the last few decades. The quantity of staples that one received from the ration shop were so meager that it could fit into one's pockets (1 October 1988). When the rupee declines in value, the price of commodities increases (3 July 2013). The cost of vegetables, fish, bread and fuel have constantly risen over the years for various reasons (12 November 1988, see fig. 9, 7 November 1988, 27 July 2013, 5 December 2018), that the common man would need to take a loan to pay for it (9 September 1993, see fig. 14) or he would have to purchase it in instalments (25 April 2013). The cost of onions made many homemakers weep in 2013 and one homemaker quipped that onions rings could even replace gold rings at weddings as they were becoming unaffordable (12 December 2013).

2013 was a disastrous year when it came to our consumption of foods. The entry tax led to the rise in prices of staples and there were also many instances of students falling ill after consuming Mid-day meals (1, 4, 17, 21, 29 July 2013). So much so, that a possible solution would be to convert ICU into a casualty ward for the classroom.

In 2018, the fish-loving Goans have had to deal with fish preserved in formalin (3, 4 October 2018) much to their chagrin.

Goa has also witnessed seasonal dry spells and flash floods. Taps have gone dry in the last few years (8 December 2013, 22 September 2018) and the common Goan has had to sometimes even live with muddy water, (18 July 2013) if not acute water shortage. Due to the acute water shortage, sometimes taking a bath was also out of the question (2 Jan 2013).

There were times, in Goa, when the common man received

astronomically high electricity and water bills (26 July 1988, 2 August 1988, 5 August 2013) and needed medical aid to nurse him back to health after the rude shock.

In addition, over the years, there has also been a hike in bus rates (4 October 2008) and the price of fuel (26 September 2018).

Commuting in Goa.

Sawkar sketched about the transportation woes in Goa in the *Gomantak Times* way back in the 80's. The roads have been obstacle courses with cattle, (12 December 1988), wide gapping potholes that could cause serious injuries to pedestrians and riders (6 September 2008).

The roads don't always have a well demarcated zebra crossing. On being asked what a zebra crossing looks like by a student who is trying to cross an overcrowded street with potholes, the RTO officer confesses that the roads haven't changed since he joined the traffic department (22 July 2013). A foreigner stranded on the side of the road, asks the clueless common man for the zebra crossing so that he could cross the road (27 September 2013).

The authorities do make an effort to rectify the issue of bad roads. But every time a road is tarred, it is only in a short time that it is dug up again: either by the PWD for underlying the sewage pipeline (14 July 2013) or for the routine check up of the underground pipelines (24 September 2013). If it isn't the PWD themselves, then the roads are being dug for other reasons. A man falls into pothole dug for telephone lines (20 February 1993). Even the PWD minister has fallen into one of the potholes (17 February 2013). These trenches are so wide and deep that they could be seen on the physical map of the world (13 August 1993).

During the monsoons, with the seasonal rise in the water table levels and the clogging of the drains, the traffic woes exacerbate.

The large and deep potholes accumulate water and can easily be mistaken by school children for a pool (2 August 1993). Officials debate if it is more cost efficient to repair the potholes or convert them into diving pools for the lusofonia games (25 July 2013). In order to ensure the quality of the seemingly non-existent roads,

it was proposed that the roads would be named after the contractors (12 September 2018).

Dubbed as death traps, driving or riding on these roads can be fatal. Every year the RTO celebrate Road Safety week. It is clear that our Road safety is really weak (4 January 2013; 9 January 1993). With all the rash driving, we would require an over-bridge for pedestrians (22 January 1993). The conditions of our roads have marginally improved over the years but in recent times, with the construction on the mega-bridge, commuters might feel that they are transported back in time (27 September 1988, 18 December 2013; 7 September 2018; 26 November 2018, 7 September 2018, 26 November 2018).

Locals blatantly disregard traffic rules. In one of the cartoons, a school child points out that the traffic police were dancing the Bharatnatyam in the centre of the road, much to the oblivion of the drivers and riders (1 September 1988). Riders complain that it is highly impractical to wear helmets with their spiky hair style (2 December 1988; 14 February 2013). The number of vehicles on Goan roads have exploded and traffic police sitting on a bench near the pavement watching the congestion, lament that there is no place for them to stand at the junction to control the traffic and that they should be provided with a remote control (4 March 2013).

The cartoonist also offers us the pavement dwellers eye view from time to time. The pavements have been used for various purposes other than for what they have been intended: makeshift kiosks (16 July 1988) and makeshift dwellings by the homeless, and parking spaces (29 June 1988, 9 December 1988). With the number of vehicles on Goan roads increasing exponentially by the year, finding parking spots in the city was and still is a harrowing task. As aptly portrayed in some of the editorial cartoons, people park anywhere in desperation as a contractor grumbles while putting the sign of a children's park. Even before completing the sign, people went ahead and parked as they assumed that the place would be reserved for parking (31 January 2013). Some would rather leave their vehicle in the traffic jam for hours, free of charge than pay 30 rupees an hour for parking (8 February 2013). The situation

has worsened and the officials have started vehicle planning just like family planning (18 April 2013). Today when you buy a car, sales representatives also advise you to buy a plot for parking (1 December 2018).

The ferries and the local buses were depicted as been overcrowded, overflowing, and busting at the seams (5 July 1988, 22 June 1988, 19 October 1988, 7 December 1988). There are seats reserved for women, but they would require squeezing through the overcrowded bus to get to that seat (10 March 2013).

In uberless Goa, taxi woes plague the locals and tourists alike in 2018. Apart from the lack of reasonable taxi fares, the Goan common man is stressed out with the soaring airfare rates to and from Goa.

Healthcare and cleanliness

The two major government-run hospitals: Hospicio in Margao and Goa Medical College (GMC) in Bambolim have featured in the editorial columns for all the wrong reasons: The lack of surgeons at Hospicio (14 March 2013), unhygienic food at the GMC (2 April 2013), overcrowded morgue, lack of staff and malfunctioning freezers at GMC in 2018.

Apart from infestation of rats in hotels (2 July 1988) Goa battles against fevers that are spread by mosquitos. Amidst the Oza commission inquiry into the Konkan railway alignment controversy, in 1993, the railway trains that ply along the routes were filled with animals and mosquitoes (8 July 1993). Sawkar hilariously shows a lady commenting about a man who looks like he is practicing Bharatnatyam but in fact he was killing mosquitoes as a precautionary measure against dengue (11 November 2013).

Cleanliness of our beaches and the disposal of garbage are a few other issues that the state is grappling with (11 March 1993; 27 October 2008; 22, 26 November 2008).

Education, Employment and Economic activity

The artist believes that students today are overburdened with a colossal bag and extra classes. In one cartoon, a mother hands a tiffin to her son and reminds him that after school hours, he needs to

head out for coaching classes and only if he gets the time, he could have his lunch (18 June 2013).

Over the years the competition to perform has risen. Thanks to the 'No Fail Education Policy' the number of students in the high school has also increased. Ironically, the packed classrooms can be likened to the local bus (31 May 2013).

When the state gears up for the state exams, we've seen representations of the same in the columns. In one column, just before an exam, a student complained that the desk was not clean enough for him to write his notes (29 March 1993).

Along with the hike in the price of basic commodities, there has also been a hike in the fees of colleges. A beggar says that he has no issue with sending his son to IIT. He sold his car, property and house to pay for the fees (11 January 2013)

After successfully getting an education, the next stage in life is to get gainfully employed. It was important at a point in time to register oneself at the Employment Exchange as early as possible (11 November 1988), if you wanted to work in the service sector. But one could also set up a business. While Makta gambling is banned in the state, there has been a proliferation of off-shore Casinos (3 June 2013). To run it officially, some hope to convert their business from Matka to Casino (14 Aug 2013). It is believed that most of the well-paying jobs in these Casinos are reserved for Non-Goans. locals can apply only for the position of driver, cleaner, sweeper, waiter, steward, bouncer or helper (6 October 2013)

Tourism is an important part of Goa's economy. A lot of illegal activities go on unchecked on the beaches, even as the authorities try to put measures in place (16 February 2013). In order to get a job on the beach knowledge of Konkani and English is not enough, you would need to speak Russian (5 March 2013).

Issues related to the Mining industry also have agitated the sons and daughters of the soil. In one cartoon, two unemployed people lament about their fate. One is jobless because of the mining ban and the other because of the Matka ban (6 March 2013). A total of 14 cartoons centred on mining and related issues. 11 of these cartoons were published in 2018.

Security issues: Bombs, Terrorist, women's safety.

In 1993 and in 2008, the country was reeling under several terrorist attacks, bomb scares and riots. The Common man helped the readers find the humour even under this dark shroud of fear. UAE sent non-threatening lemons instead of Memons brothers. (22 March 1993). University of Karachi put up a poster for their BA in Terrorism (4 December 2008). Since everyone was on terror alert, even Santa wasn't spared in 2008 and he was allowed only one bag by the security personel on guard. Living in unused pipelines seemed to be safer than staying in 5 star hotels in Mumbai (17 March 1993) .

Since there was no reliable way of predicting future terror attacks, we could laugh at the mock drill (20 December 2008) or that the intelligence agency resort to using the services of an astrologer and his clairvoyant parrot (25 February 2013).

Goans were on some of the ships that were hijacked by the Somali pirates in the Indian Ocean and two editorial cartoons in 2008 were dedicated to this.

Crimes against women have risen in our country (14 January 2013) and the newspapers are filled with reports of assaults and sexual harassment that even an editor would find it difficult to fit in other news items (21 January 2013). And as a result, in order to feel safe even to go to the market, women in Delhi would require 'z security cover' that is reserved for the politicians (10 January 2013). After another case of rape, a concerned father asks Parrikar if instead of the 'ladli laxmi Scheme' where women are given money for wedding expenditure, if there is any chance that his daughter could get a bodyguard under the scheme (2 May 2013). To prevent sexual harassment in school, a mother tries to convince her girl child that the school had changed their school uniform into one that resembles the costume of an astronaut (15 January 2013).

Phones lines

Goa cannot seem to resolve issues of phone connections, particularly government run BSNL connections. There seemed to be no logic to the increasing number of phone digits (23 August 1993). The common man has faced problems of cross-connection (26 July

1993), and on the brighter side, the telephone lines also supplied water during the monsoons (31st July 1993). In December 2008, while the country was terror-struck, a police man relaxed in his chair, oblivious as they don't receive any bomb hoax calls because their phones are always out of order. Ten years later, BSNL has the same reputation. A bank was being burgled and the thief was about to cut the telephone cable, but the bank employee pointed out that there was no point in cutting the wire as the BSNL connection was always out of order (28 November, 2018).

Conclusion

Editorial cartoons have the potential to be powerful dimensions of illustrated journalism. For the past 30 years, Sawkar recorded the real life struggle, thoughts, musings, concerns and preoccupations of the Goans through his common man and in the process, he engages readers with humour. Pictorial representations such as these are snapshots of the Goan society and they are redolent with certain recurrent issues than plague the Goans: from corruption to transport woes and issues related to mining and tourism.

According to Soares, "Not many cartoonists in Goa have had an impact on the political scenario in Goa as much as Uddhar" (Telephone interview). Faleiro adds that Sawkar is the best political cartoonist Goa has ever produced. (Telephone interview). These editorial cartoons heighten the understanding of the problems of contemporary living and by delving into our collective past we can see the trajectory of our Goan society. Sawkar has chronicled the life of the common Goan for the past three decades, which is no mean feat. This current research (upto 2018), however, is limited to only a few of Swakar's pocket cartoons that were featured in two English dailies. More in- depth focus needs to be given to Sawkar's political cartoons as well as the cumulative impact of editorial cartoons in English and the vernacular Goan Press. This lacuna needs to be speedily remedied with detailed analysis. After all, cartoons and caricatures are potent weapons, and cartoonists are watchdogs in a democratic society. Our cartoonists deserve to be given their due worth which they have been deprived of.

Micheal Cavanaugh, American writer and cartoonist of the Washington Post, highlights a worrisome trend in another democracy on a different continent. Many Pulitzer award-winning, full-time staff cartoonists in the United States are pink-slipped either because of their incendiary cartoons or because of layoffs in the sector. The way we consume news has changed in the digital era and cartoonists many a times find themselves at the short end of the financial stick. Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist, Steve Benson, further sounded the alarm bells, “Cartoonists are canaries in the coal mine — and we draw darned good canaries. This is a foreshadowing of more to come” (qtd. in Cavanaugh).

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Illustrations



Fig.1 : Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar.The Gomantak Times. 28 May 1988. Panjim, Goa. p 1.Print.



Fig. 3 : Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar.The Gomantak Times. 15 Jul. 1988. Panjim, Goa. p 1. Print.



Fig. 2 : Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar.The Gomantak Times. 23 Feb. 1988. Panjim, Goa. p 1. Print.



Fig. 4 : Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar.The Gomantak Times.23 Jul. 1988. Panjim, Goa. p 1. Print.



Fig. 5: Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar. The Gomantak Times. 22 Oct. 1988. Panjim, Goa. p 1. Print.



Fig. 7: Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar. The Gomantak Times. 27 Oct. 1988. Panjim, Goa. p 1. Print.



Fig. 6: Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar. The Gomantak Times. 31 Oct. 1988. Panjim, Goa. p 1. Print.



Fig. 8: Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar. The Gomantak Times. 12 Nov. 1988. Panjim, Goa. p 1. Print.



Fig. 9: Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar. The Gomantak Times, 27 Feb. 1989. Panjim, Goa. p 1. Print.



Fig.10: Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar. The Gomantak Times, 29 Jan. 1993. Panjim, Goa. p 1. Print.



Fig. 11: Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar. Herald, 25. Jul. 1993. Panjim, Goa. Vol. 93, No. 202, p 1. Print.



Fig.12: Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar. Herald, 30 Sep. 2008. Panjim, Goa. p 1. Print.



Fig. 13: Uddhar. Idhar-Uddhar.Herald. 9 Sep. 2013. Panjim, Goa. p 1. Print.2013



Fig 14.Sawkar, Manohar U. Idhar-udhar. Herald. 14 January 2018. p 1.Panjim, Digital image.