

MUSIC AND POLITICAL DISSENT: AN ANALYSIS OF KONKANI KANTARAM

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Abstract

In the colourful cultural tapestry of Goa, Konkani Kantaram emerges as a powerful expression of resistance and identity. Conducting research on this traditional form of music allows an understanding of the profound role it plays in creating challenging expressions against the dominant. As it rushes along in both parallel and rugged ways, *Kantaram* has carried the echoes of Goan hopes, grievances and the resilient spirit of its people. A close look at the lyrics, narrations and insights from local experts brings to light how these creations function collectively as the mirror and megaphone of the socio-political consciousness of the Goan society. *Kantaram* seek to entertain and empower by raising the issues through collective voices. This paper seeks to understand the role of Konkani *Kantaram* in perceiving the idea of political resistance. It also tries to understand the idea of 'people' crafted through 'Kantaram' and whether this form of music represent democratic ideas or populist narrative.

Keywords: Konkani *Kantaram*, Resistance, Identity, Goa, Music, Politics.

Saranx

Göychea rongit ani sonskrutik chitrail'lea podd'deant (*tapestry*) Konknni kantaram, protikar (*resistance*) ani osmitai hanchi ek bollixtt obhiveokti (*expression*) mhonnun ugddapem zata. Songitachea hea poromporik prokaracher sonxodhon kelear bollkott (*dominant*) mon'xa add avhanatmok obhiveokti nirman korpak tachi kholayen bhumika somzonk mellta. Eksarkea (*parallel*) ani khoddboddit (*rugged*) oxea donui toramni dhanvta astanam kantaramni Göychea bhorvanxeache (*hope*), tokrariche (*grievances*) ani lokanchea louchikponnache poddsad fuddem vheleat. Thollavea togneanchea gitam, kotha ani ontordixttincher (*insights*) bariksannin nodor marlear kantaram Göychea somazachea somajik-rajki ontoskornacho arso ani megafon mhonn hio nirmitti somudayiponnan koxio vaurtat tem uzvaddak yeta.

Kantaram somudayik avaza vorvim vichear korpi monrizvonn dita ani soxoktikoronn (*empower*) korpak sodta. Rajki protikarachi kolpona zannun ghevpek Konknni kantaramchi bhumika somzon ghevpecho hea propotrant yotn kela. Toxench 'kantaram' vorvim toyar zal'li 'porza' hi kolpona ani songitacho ho prokar lokxai vichearanchem protinidhitv korta kai lokxayvadi kothonachem protinidhitv korta hem somzon ghevpecho yotn korta.

Biz utram: Konknni kantaram, protikar, osmitai, Göy, songit, rajkaronn

सारांश

गोंयच्या रंगीत आनी संस्कृतीक चित्रायल्ल्या पड्ड्यांत कोंकणी कांतारां, प्रतिकार आनी अस्मिताय हांची एक बळिश्ट अभिव्यक्ती म्हणून उगडापें जाता. संगिताच्या ह्या परंपरीक प्रकाराचेर संशोधन केल्यार बळकट मनशा आड आव्हानात्मक अभिव्यक्ती निर्माण करपाक ताची खोलायेन भुमिका समजूंक मेळटा. एकसारक्या खडबडीत अश्या दोनूय तरांनी धांवता आसताना कांतारांनी गोंयच्या भरवंशाचे, तक्रारीचे आनी लोकांच्या लवचिकपणाचे पडसाद फुडें व्हेल्यात. थळाव्या तज्ञांच्या गितां, कथा आनी अंतर्दृश्टिंचेर बारीकसाणीन नदर मारल्यार कांतारां गोंयच्या समाजाच्या समाजीक-राजकी अंतसकर्नाचो हारसो मेगाफोन म्हण ह्यो निर्मिती समुदायिपणान कश्यो वावुरतात तें उजवाडाक येता.

कांतारां समुदायीक आवाजा वरवीं विचार करपी मनरिजवण दिता आनी सशक्तिकरण करपाक सोदता. राजकी प्रतिकाराची कल्पना जाणून घेवपाक कोंकणी कांतारांची भुमिका समजन घेवपाचो ह्या प्रपत्रांत यत्न केला. तशेंच 'कांतारां वरवीं तयार जाल्ली 'पर्जा' ही कल्पना आनी संगिताचो हो प्रकार लोकशाय विचारांचें प्रतिनिधित्व करता काय लोकशायवादी कथनाचें प्रतिनिधित्व करता हें समजून घेवपाचो यत्न करता.

Introduction

Music is not just an entertainment but it also creates an avenue of nostalgia, expression, awareness and unification in situations such as that of a political struggle. Political Dissent means forming opposition and resistance to the figures of authority. In Goa, among the various modes through which the spirit of dissent manifests is in the form of this traditional singing style called Konkani *Kantaram*, flinging together cultural identity and political protest. Music has always been actualized as a means for sharing emotions, telling cultural stories and asking for collective action. Songs around the world have given and continue to give voice to the many who feel unheard and become symbols of cultural expression. Konkani *Kantaram* is of great importance in Goa and serves as the ultimate bridge towards resisting the preservation of the Goan language and culture while being the best medium of political resistance.

Konkani *Kantaram* emerged as a form of artistic expression deeply connected with the socio-political landscape of Goa particularly during the Portuguese colonial period. For nearly 450 years, Goa was under Portuguese rule which is a period marked by suppression of local culture and language. Therefore, *Kantaram* became a subtle yet powerful tool of resistance allowing Goans to express their grievances, aspirations and sense of identity.

Kantaram were often performed in public spaces, at village gatherings and during festive occasions thereby making them an accessible and widespread form of communication. The lyrics of *Kantaram* rich with metaphor and symbolism often critiqued colonial authorities, highlighted social injustices and called for unity and liberation. As the liberation movement gained momentum in the mid-20th century, *Kantaram* played a crucial role in galvanizing public support and spreading nationalist sentiment.

The emergence of *Kantaram* during Portuguese rule was not just a cultural response but a necessity for the Goan people. With colonial authorities attempting to suppress Konkani as a language in favour of Portuguese, the very essence of Goan identity was at stake. Through *Kantaram*, Goans resisted this cultural erasure and the songs became a repository of their struggles, victories and evolving sense of self. While other forms of resistance such as armed or political revolts were met with direct repression, music offered a more covert yet equally powerful method of rebellion. The songs subtly communicated ideas of freedom, equality and justice while evading direct censorship which was a common tactic employed by colonial rulers.

Even after Goa's liberation in 1961, *Kantaram* continued to evolve reflecting the changing political and social landscape. They addressed issues such as land rights, economic inequality, corruption, cultural preservation thereby maintaining their relevance as a form of political commentary. The ability of *Kantaram* to evolve alongside these issues is a testament to the fluidity and resilience of Goan culture. In this way, these songs became an evolving dialogue between the past and present, ensuring that the core issues affecting Goan society were not forgotten but constantly revisited.

By looking at the past history and contemporary influence of *Kantaram*, this study hopes to illustrate how music mirrors society and inspires change. It seeks to demonstrate the value of the local in shaping a large part of identity and subsequently strength against challenges. Therefore, *Kantaram* are more than songs of protest—they are immortal images of the strength and determination of the Goan people.

This study aims to explore the rich tradition of Konkani *Kantaram* focusing on their role as a form of political dissent. Through an analysis of the lyrics, historical context and their impact on Goan society, the research will shed light on how these songs have shaped and reflected the political consciousness of the Goan people.

Genealogy of *Kantaram* in Goa

Goan songs owe much to Goa's musical tradition, being a part and parcel of Konkani songs. Konkani is a language found throughout India's west coast and originates somewhat to the north of Goa before extending as far south as Kerala. The tradition of Konkani song is particularly well-represented musically in Goa, where it enjoys cultural standing.

The Konkani word “*Kantaram*” is directly translated to 'songs,' while the singular term is “*kantar*”, which means 'song.' Performing a *kantar* on stage generally involves one singer alone describing themes of love, current political events, eminent figures, celebrations or untimely tragedies. The spirit of a *kantar* is about imparting moral and ideological messages in the form of poetic statements composed in song. Another type of performance is the duet, in which two singers

either argue against each other on different sides of an issue, support a common message or take turns in a formal musical composition, with one leading and the other as the second voice.

Historically, *Kantaram* are an important part of Konkani *natya* (theatre), keeping the audience interested during scene changes, costume changes and stage adjustment changes. *Kantaram* avoids boredom and keeps the performance energetic. *Kantaram*, being a characteristic feature of tiatr, are written and sung by Kantorists, who pen and compose their words to music. *Kantaram* are usually written spontaneously to fit particular situations. One of the most important aspects of *Kantaram* is their political and social critique. The main intent of these songs is to bring to light political corruption and abuse of power. Written in a satirical but sometimes biting and harsh tone, these songs tend to border on personal critique at times. But they are a means of expressing the frustration of the common Goan and especially the Catholic community, who feel helpless against the people in power. The incisive political observations in these songs resonate intensely with listeners, provoking strong emotional reactions and affirming the authority of *Kantaram* as a voice of the people.

A Rhythmic Chronicle of Goa's Political Landscape:

Kantaram not just identify political and social problems but also act as a reflection on themselves, denouncing Goans for not standing by their religion and culture values. Most of the *kantaram* emphasize maintaining the position of being a good Goan as well as being a good Christian. Specifically, the opening *kantaram* preceding tiatr plays mostly emphasize on praising the konkani language while at the same time reprimanding the Goans for abandoning their mother tongue. These songs strongly campaign for the Indian Parliament in New Delhi to recognize Konkani as an official language, calling on people to be proud of their linguistic heritage.

One of the most unique and important types of Konkani political song is the political *podam*, which has been a major force in Goa, especially in Salcete where it originated. These *podams* record diverse political occurrences and movements, usually declaring fidelity or enthusiasm in support of various political parties. They also document important accomplishments of the Portuguese, both in Portugal and Goa, indicating the extensive political involvement of Goans. Goans, being hot-headed, passionate and volatile (unpredictable) political actors, have long utilized *podam* to declare their political sentiments.

Some examples of political *podam* include:

“Catholic partid tor sogtamló
Bobal quiteac re costamló
Deputad motintuló
Poveno khoxen vinchun cadló,

Doutor Minglu, natu re Loiolamló

Eleição corcheac nulo

Pacheco mucar sorló Coitado, lei to vissorló!”

“President corun Bragaco Ministr quetó Almeidaco Expulsar quetó adlea patchaco

Expulsar quetó adlea patchaco

Liberdade diuncheac rê povaco ”

This is a Konkani political satire and it is about political drama, elections and power struggles in Goa during the Portuguese regime. The song showcases the political intrigues, competing factions and leadership shifts in the midst of turbulent times. It shows how leaders get elevated and then toppled, how political parties divide and how the populace is just a spectator to the drama. The above *podam* satirizes the conflict in the Catholic political party. A deputy was removed ceremoniously as a ripened jackfruit is easily pulled out. Dr. Minglu, an individual with education and status quite possibly a lawyer or leader lost in the elections. Pacheco blocked or challenged him and he had to step back from his legal or political assertions. A person named Braga was made president and Almeida was made his minister. Together, they drove out a troublesome individual perhaps one who was creating unrest or corruption and in doing so, they were successful to give liberty or freedom to the people.

Of the different types of Konkani poetry, “Satire” is perhaps one of the most striking. Satire, as a genre is universal in nature, but in Goa, it has a particularly strong following. It goes hand in hand with its literary cousin's sarcasm and humour. Goans have an innate tendency to be quick-witted, to criticize and to mock, so satire becomes almost a reflex form of writing. Goan satire offers a window through which personal conduct and social mores are examined, frequently comparing different cultures, ranging from Europeans, Eurasians to Indians across various historical timelines.

The most celebrated dulpod, “*Farar Far Zatai Ranantu*”, is universally acclaimed as a masterpiece. It was written at a time when even a slight expression of sympathy for the Ranes and the Bhonsule would evoke ruthless repression at the hands of the Portuguese authorities in Goa.

The capture of the strategically located Fort Nanuz by Dipu Rane is celebrated in a version of the dulpod *Farar Far*:

“Velha Ranantum,

Nanuz Khotantum,

Pakle Martai Ranneakun,

Rane Martai Pakleankun,”

The *Abkari* Act of 1878 was a treaty between the Portuguese and the British that immensely led to

fall of Goa's traditional economic system. In return for a mere four hundred thousand rupees, the Portuguese were required to harmonize their customs with British Indian customs; embrace the British Indian monetary system (rupees-annas-pice) rather than the historical Xerafim-Tanga-Rubo; grant the British a monopoly over the production of salt and abandon control over the liquor extracted from the toddy palm.

Consequently, many toddy tappers (*render*) were arrested and British patrols made it a point to search the countryside in order to catch violators.

A symbolic expression of the downfall of traditional Goa was the government-led destruction of monuments of the old imperial metropolis in Velha Goa, during 1820 to 1875.

The mass resentment of the Abkari Act and its ruinous economic impact on Goa is expressed in at least four existing mandos, which voice resistance to this treaty:

- *Trato Feringuen Kelo* (A treaty has been signed by the foreigners)
- *Soglea Sonvsarak Khobor* (Everybody knows)
- *Chintunleari Kalliz Fafsota* (Even the thought of it upsets us)
- *Chintlem Na Re Konnem* (Nobody thought about it)

The “Bloody Elections” of 21st September 1890 in Margao occurred in the 19th century, an era characterized by the constitutional monarchy, elections and revolts. The second half of the century witnessed the stormy advent of the constitutional monarchy in Portugal and its empire, which continued up to the establishment of the Portuguese Republic in 1910. In Goa, the period introduced electoral procedures, modernization in transport and communication, extensive destruction of churches and monasteries, periodic Rane revolts, military mutinies and constant threats of British conquest. Although elections were brought in as a move towards modernization, they were frequently manipulated by the ruling authorities. Governments consistently forced the electorate to vote for officially supported candidates, guaranteeing their dominance. Elections in Goa were seldom calm, but none were as bloody and contentious as those conducted on September 21, 1890.

Then Salcete contained a population of almost one lakh and some 2,000 voters. The elections were not on universal adult franchise; rather the voters were taxpayers who paid at least 320 '*reis fortes*'. Governor Vasco Guedes de Carvalho Menezes (1889-91), taking advantage of the intense rivalry between the '*Ultramarino*' and the '*Indiano*' factions, chose to manipulate the elections to ensure his official candidate for deputado to the Lisbon Parliament won.

The elections, subsequently referred to as “*Eleição Sangrenta de Setembro 21, 1890*,” started

ahead of time, with authorities marking ballot papers secretly in the municipal building. Believing it was being rigged, *Indiano* leaders and their constituents attacked the building and burst open its doors. Governor Carvalho Menezes, however was prepared and had anticipated opposition thereby taking security measures.

A 150-300 armed force of Mulatto soldiers had been sent out from Panjim by boat, landing in Rachol prior to marching into Margao. Marching from the barracks (present South Goa Police HQ) down Abade Faria Road to the sound of bugles, *Indiano* leaders urged voters to withdraw towards the Holy Spirit Parochial House for protection. The troops, led by military officers Raimundo de Assa Castelo Branco and Claudio Correa Mendes, encircled the municipality, blocking any means of escape. The Taluka Administrator, Lt. Col. Luis Caneiro de Souza e Faro, then gave a ruthless command to fire. The troops opened fire indiscriminately, shooting at anyone they came across. Dozens of others were wounded in the vicious attack.

This tragic “mini Jallianwallah Bagh Massacre”, (Rodrigues, 2009) 29 years prior to the notorious Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar, created outrage and resentment wave. The event brought even international attention, with Reuters in Bombay covering the tragedy. The sorrow and outrage at what happened on September 21, 1890, were expressed in music, and a number of mandos were written to keep alive the memory of that black day. Carmo do Azavedo, a late historian, on the centenary of the massacre, analyzed four variations of these mandos, each of which reflected the agony and injustice suffered by the people.

One of the versions of the mando is:

“Abrilache satra veri

Partidcho chefe mukar sorlo

Setembrache ekvisaveri

Kamaranchem foddlem deru

“Setembrache ekvissaveri, dukh vignam aileam re saxttiri”

“Cornetti vazun soldad re aile

Povac marle faru

Rogtanche zalle vallo

Niti nam re Goeantum/Justis nam re Saxttintum”

Inocentichea ragtantum/Vasco Guedin kelam eleisanvum”

These are some of the very significant lines of these compositions.

The best-known mando of this incident are as follows:

- *Setembrache ekvissaveru (September 21)*
- *Camrachim foddlem daru (The door of the municipality was broken)*
- *Deddxen soldad addle (150 soldiers were brought)*
- *Morgouvan Ponje korun taru (By boat from Panjim to Margao)*
- *Mis zanzvchea vellaru (At the time of Mass)*
- *Rogtacheo zaleo zori (There were springs of blood)*
- *Pad' Lucas alment mari (Fr. Lucas sprinkled holy water)*
- *Otmem salvar kori (Saving souls) (Rodrigues, 2009)*

Framework: Political & Protest Songs – A Continuum of Dissent

Political songs are those songs that talk about power. They talk about quality criticism. "Political song" is an appropriate term for "*Kantaram*". It is much more than a protest song. Protest song is time-sensitive i.e. these songs are written in reaction to certain happenings, issues etc. Such songs have been written to address pressing social or political problems like wars, civil rights, movements and so on. Whereas *Kantaram* is beyond time. In one of the songs analyzed, it talks about the leadership of Dr. Jack Sequeira. Therefore, *Kantaram* or political songs tells us about our history and also provides us a guide to the present leaders, activists, etc. *Kantaram* is all about everyday politics. Political songs are songs that communicate different political messages, ideologies and themes about the government, society, justice or issues of activism. Political songs are meant either to acknowledge for or criticize political systems, educate about certain social issues, mobilize people for political action and also unite people for a change in society. Political songs are not directly termed in history, but the historic perspective of political songs invariably involves public resentment against authority, shaping of public opinion and the influence of that public resentment has had on political discourse across various genres such as Mando, Dulpod, Deknni etc. in that of Goa.

A protest song can be defined as a song which speaks about a certain movement of protest and a social change and is thereby part of the wider category of topical songs. Protest songs have a defined purpose; they are to be protests against something. They call for justice or against war, discrimination or government policy. The American civil rights movement brought forth songs like "We Shall Overcome" to protest racial segregation. An anti-apartheid example from South Africa is "Bring Him Back Home" by Hugh Masekela which demanded Nelson Mandela's release.

Protest songs have existed ever since humans began to resist oppression. From slavery in the 1800s through anti-war rock in the 1960s, they have played a role in nearly every major social movement. Therefore, the main difference between the two is that, "All protest songs are political songs but not all political songs are protest songs." This is because a political song could be neutral or even

pro-government. However, every protest song will challenge something.

Political singers are artists who create and perform songs centred around politics. The content in their songs supports or criticizes governments, reflects social issues, inspires change and unifies people for one cause. Their compositions cannot be included in the category of other songs or compositions. It is their lyrics and voice that become the weapon to create awareness and public opinion. They mix art with politics in order to express political ideas, whether in favour of or against the system. Bob Dylan from the USA is known for his songs like "Blowing in the Wind" that raises questions about war and civil rights.

Kantorists are basically singers but specifically, in political music or songs, they are singers who make use of their art for activism. *Kantorists* most probably risk their careers, freedoms, or lives for singing and telling the truth through their music. These singers aren't anti-government. Political dissent doesn't always mean that they criticize. *Kantorists* are not against politicians, activists etc. They have been pragmatic wherein they criticize and appreciate at the same time. They highlight progress or good leadership when it exists. *Kantorists* are not opposition or from the opposition. Instead, they are different from opposition.

Artists specially use "quality criticism" as a tool for meaningful commentary. A "criticism" generally means exposing all those flaws and errors or problems concerning an issue such as politics, governance or society with an approach that can be harsh, emotionally charged or personal. On the contrary, a "quality criticism" is more refined and has a sense of responsibility. Not only does it point out the evils, but it also gives due credit to anything that is considered good. Thus, it ensures that the criticism is directed against decisions taken by certain leaders and not their families or private lives.

The main argument here is, are only *Kantorists* fearless in their critiques? Artists or political singers may be vocal but journalists, writers, scholars, filmmakers, religious and community leaders' hands might be tied. Therefore, these *Kantorists* have more freedom than the others. The government does not actively support political singers. Despite the risk and lack of government backing, political songs remain a vital tool for exposing corruption and injustice.

This study uses the framework of political pragmatism to understand the political composition of *Kantaram* and *Kantorists*. Political pragmatism is a mode of thought which understands politics from the point of view of what works best in real situations rather than adhering to fixed ideas or beliefs. It is about being flexible, practical and adjusting to rapidly changing situations to achieve real results. Thinkers such as John Dewey and William James believed that actions should be judged by the outcomes, and not judged by ideals or consequences. This makes a good political thought where situations change and sometimes sticking to hard-wall beliefs hinders the very solutions we seek. Instead, pragmatism gives people a mechanism to examine what is possible and workable at the moment.

Political singers use music to address social and political issues but their protests can be different. They change their lyrics depending on the situation. This is a pragmatic method that helps to remain relevant, avoid censorship, produce quality criticism and reach out to more audience. Goan composers have very skillfully composed Mando, Deknni, and Dulpod during the Portuguese rule with hidden meanings against the Portuguese authorities in order not to get arrested. These Goan artists were trying to avoid punishment by employing humour and indirect criticism instead of outright rebellion. Political singers or Kantorists, known for their songs with strong political messages, use social media to reach every corner of the world. This means that Kantorists do not fight directly at times but choose the smart and pragmatic way to make themselves heard. They might change their words, use symbolism and opt for different platforms to make their point come across. Therefore, political pragmatism helps them survive and remain relevant.

Methodology

For the research, a qualitative research approach is employed because the focus is on understanding opinions, meanings and themes. Since political songs are messages, have social impact, etc., this method helps dig deeper into what these songs really convey. Secondly, a thematic review of interviews is done to pick out common themes, code them and structure them according to my objectives. Thirdly, qualitative content analysis of lyrics is also been conducted. This method helps to decode the messages in the songs.

My formula is

$$A + E^2 = \text{Argument} + (\text{Evidence} \times \text{Explanation})$$

So while analyzing a song, a format is followed which is as follows.

- a) **Argument:** pick out the argument, i.e., what issue is the song highlighting.
- b) **Evidence:** specific lines from the song that support the argument.
- c) **Explanation:** how does this line prove the argument and what does it reveal.

This structured method has kept the analysis clear, logical and easy to follow. Instead of just saying the song talks about injustice, it can be proved with actual lyrics and with an explanation of their meaning.

This study examines how *Kantaram* evolved through time as a form of dissent, particularly between 2010 to 2024. The objective is to decode the meaning of the lyrics of selected *Kantaram*, their importance to political dissent and to gain insight into how these songs impact political opinions and political movements across Goa. Song lyrics are the centre of research, where it looks

into primary messages and themes. Other recordings are also looked at in order to realize how *Kantaram* have shaped political ideology through the years.

Music has been an effective means of protesting, conveying ideas and uniting people around a cause. Everywhere songs have helped people in standing up against injustices. Political Dissent means forming opposition and resistance to the figures of authority. In Goa, among the various modes through which the spirit of dissent manifests is in the form of this traditional singing style called Konkani *Kantaram*, flinging together cultural identity and political protest. Music has always been actualized as a means for sharing emotions, telling cultural stories and asking for collective action. Songs around the world have given and continue to give voice to the many who feel unheard and become symbols of cultural expression. Konkani *Kantaram* is of great importance in Goa and serves as the ultimate bridge towards resisting the preservation of the Goan language and culture while being the best medium of political resistance. In Goa, *Kantaram* has been instrumental in raising political questions and conveying people's sentiments. Whether it was under Portuguese domination or in the current political scenario, *Kantaram* has been employed to challenge authority, condemn corruption and bring to light social and political issues. Through the study of song lyrics and historical context, these songs reflect Goa's changing political landscape. Under Portuguese rule, Goans utilized music as a means of articulating their discontent creatively. As a result of the risks involved in direct criticism, songs frequently employed coded messages and humour to criticize government policies.

Even after Goa gained independence from Portuguese rule, *Kantaram* remained a means for Goans to voice their opinions. These songs have evolved over the years to address new political realities with themes revolving around government corruption, bad governance and social issues. Political satire became an integral part with singers openly criticizing politicians and bringing awareness to significant issues such as elections, environmental issues and cultural identity.

There are three significant themes that continuously reappear in *Kantaram*.

1. Resistance

Most of the songs depicts social injustice and brings serious concern and urge for change. Some of the *kantaram* generally highlights the social issues.

2. Identity

Kantaram also speak about what being Goan entails especially with migration, cultural transformation and the loss of local traditions. Most of these songs stress the significance of the Konkani language and the Goan heritage.

3. Nationalism

Kantaram over the years, have touched on Goa's political status, ranging from the struggle against Portuguese dominance to arguments on Goa's status in India today. Some praise Goan pride while others condemn political moves that impact Goans.

Conclusion

This research has attempted to show that *Kantaram* is not a mere traditional performance but rather an evolving and dynamic instrument of political expression in the land of Goa. In fact, with the advancement of technology and changes in platforms, these songs have managed to maintain their space in the limelight mainly because they speak about the day-to-day reality, problems and aspirations of Goan populace. Studying the lyrics, stage and voice of contemporary kantarists revealed that *Kantaram* is being used by present-day artists to denounce corruption, bad governance, environmental degradation, unemployment, migration and the loss of identity. It is an art form that works like some sharp mirror exposing the agenda of the political reality and Goan life while bearing the cynicism, wit and hope from the people themselves.

It is interesting to note that unlike many formal political speeches, such songs manage to combine sarcasm with severity and emotion with resistance, making them more appealing. They invoke imagery familiar to the systems and everyday experiences of the common man and mingled all memories that keep them grounded. This form of art has a history ingrained from the times of ages, yet, it holds great power until the present day not as an afterthought but as a living art form that breathes and evolves with time. It is a protest in musical poetry, politics that are spread through rhythms.

Though this paper deals with Konkani *Kantaram* as political dissent in Goa, it has also laid out numerous new avenues for future research that can assist scholars, artists and political analysts to research the subject further in new directions. These areas of future research can extend the work carried out in this dissertation and push it into new, deeper areas. A valuable field of study for the future would be a comparative analysis of political songs written in various regional languages of India, e.g. Marathi, Malayalam, Bengali or Tamil. Like Konkani *Kantaram*, there could be equally powerful messages of resistance, identity and political struggle in other regional music forms. Comparing those to Konkani *Kantaram* would be able to tell us more about how culture and politics meet in other regions of India and how local music serves as a political voice for the masses.

The other area could be an in-depth study on the position of women in *Kantaram*, both as artists and subjects of the lyrics. This dissertation has generally considered *Kantaram* but it has been noticed that a majority of the well-known *Kantaram* singers are males. It is possible for a future researcher to investigate why this is so, how women engage in political singing and how gender

seems in the themes of political songs. This would contribute to knowledge on gender-based participation and representation in the study of political music in Goa. There is also scope to study how *Kantaram* is archived and conserved. Currently, a large number of traditional songs are not written down or recorded. They are transmitted orally or are held in private archives. Future studies could include making a digital archive or an actual documentation project wherein these songs are gathered, kept and opened up for the public to access. This can assist in safeguarding Goa's political and cultural history in terms of music.

Konkani *Kantaram* is not just a form of local music. It is a living, breathing expression of the Goan people which involves their joys, sorrows, anger, demands and hopes. Through this research, it has become clear that these songs do much more than entertain. They speak truth to power; they question the system and they unite people in a shared feeling of resistance. Whether sung at a political rally or hummed at home, the words carry weight. This dissertation has taken steps toward documenting, analysing and celebrating the power of *Kantaram*. It has shown that music, especially when rooted in one's culture and language can become a powerful tool for political communication and social change. People remember song that spreads by word of mouth through years.

In the end, this research hopes to inspire more studies in this area. It also hopes to give respect to all those who use their voice not just to sing but to speak truth and bring change. As long as there are problems in society and as long as there are people with courage, *Kantaram* will continue to sing being loud, clear and fearless.

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