

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

January 2019



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

- The Mother

Year 9

Issue 10

The Resurgent India English monthly published and printed by Smt. Suman Sharma on behalf of The Resurgent India Trust Published at C/o J. N. Socketed Cement Pipes Pvt. Ltd., Village Bhamraula Post Bagwara, Kichha Road, Rudrapur (U.S Nagar)
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www.resurgentindia.org

Printed at : Priyanka Printing Press, Hotel Krish Building, Janta Inter College Road, Udham Nagar, Rudrapur, Uttarakhand

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 9

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

— The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: A REVOLUTION BEYOND HUMAN CONTROL

The last one year has seen a series of rapid developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI), along with reports of instances of the AI going out of control which have either been put under covers or dismissed for the fear of turning public opinion heavily against it. From the developments that have occurred over the last few months, it is evident that the major emerging field of AI is going to be in the field of military application as well as, increasingly, social and political control. Governments, all over the world, in collaboration with private companies, are leading the charge.

Unbeknown to the common man, the progression towards the AI is at a stage where it can no longer be reversed, making the world a much more dangerous place than ever and marking the beginning of a new era – a leap over industrial and IT revolutions and over the age of nuclear weapons in warfare. This will be unlike the previous phases of domestic and world affairs, where people were simply treated as large population groups and indiscriminating brute force underlined both hard and soft power.

The new era of AI dominance will amplify, several times, the intentions of selfishness and blind brutality of human nature, making it cold-blooded, minutely calculative and imbued with deadly precision. Unlike anything before it, it will likely combine psychoanalysis, analysis of emotions and behaviour of people, on a wide scale in a minute micro-targeted manner, perhaps turning us into mechanical servants of any future regime that controls technology.

The age of AI and its minute tampering with human

psychology is likely to compound the psychological problems already facing mankind. With the levels of progress already made in this field, a reversal will not happen. Rather, everything now hinges on who controls and uses these new technologies. Unless blind materialism and selfishness gives way to higher consciousness among humans, the AI may be deployed leading to utter disaster.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AI

Recent developments in the AI bear witness to the dangerous and high levels of advancement that we have already crossed in this field. In most of the cases, the AI technology has borne fruition and is already in use, while in others patents have been filed for even more intricate levels of technology.

These developments have occurred at a fast pace in several directions. The major fields include:

1. Development of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS);

2. Attempts by governments (such as, China) to develop a social credit system based on facial recognition technology viz. direct micro-regulation of citizens through psychoanalysis. Imaging technologies based on AI are also being deployed best by Israel and are being used for military applications;

3. Applications of the AI in fields like criminal and civil law, healthcare, manufacturing, finance and others. In manufacturing, AI use is pervasive. There was an incident in 2015 in a car manufacturing unit in Germany where a robot crushed the head of a factory worker who ventured inside the space where the robot was working. It was hushed up and branded an accident;

4. Deployment of the AI by technology companies in

tracking the preferences and behaviour of people, their complete profiling and movements, access to all their work and private records, and, imposing on them frivolous companionship of AI assistants for managing their homes and lives. Increasingly, these assistants would have all information about the users and can spy and send real-time information back to parent companies, store it for their own use or to be used by any party that controls AI.

5. As human labour-saving device in agricultural, industrial and service sectors.

Out of all these areas, the development of completely autonomous, AI-controlled weapons system seems to be proceeding the fastest and posing an immediate and devastating threat to mankind. It is occurring in two directions. On the one hand, nations are building AI technologies that they can steer and control to their advantage. On the other hand, there are cases where AI – by the virtue of the logic of machine learning and continuous automatic upgradation – can go out of control of humans. Of the second type is the particularly shocking news coming from Japan. Recently, in a video that went viral and generated debate, a UFO scientist and explorer, Linda Howe, while speaking at the ‘Conscious of Life Expo’ at Los Angeles in February 2018 relayed an incident – told to her by an ex-US marine who had been doing contract work for US intelligence agencies – that 29 scientists in a lab in Japan were killed by 4 AI robots in 2017.

The following is the full transcript of Ms. Howe’s narration of the incident:

“On Saturday August 26 2017, not very long ago, I received a phone call from a whistle blower in the Intel world I’ve known

for about a year and a half. He is an honorably discharged marine, but he continues to work on contracts with the CIA, NSA, DIA agencies. I always keep notebooks all over my house, my office, my car, everywhere so that I can write down a phone call that I can't record or that I'm not in my studio to record.

So I wrote this down almost word for word.

At a top robotics company in Japan this week four robots being developed for military applications killed 29 humans in the lab. And they did it by shooting what he called metal bullets. I didn't know there was any other kind.

The scariest part is that lab workers deactivated two of the robots, took apart the third, but the fourth began restoring itself and somehow connected to an orbiting satellite to download information about how it could rebuild itself even more strongly than before.

And this next sentence, this is a quote, I'm writing this down. I've been doing this for years.

This is serious shit Linda. But you're never going to hear about this in the news. The robotics company has too much to lose, and the government wants AI robot soldiers. Close quote."

After this incident was relayed by Ms. Howe at a public platform and she also clarified that even her Marine source received this information as a part of his contract work, immediate debate was generated. Pro-industry people are trying to see a conspiracy in this, but, in such a case, anything is possible. Nevertheless, it has generated a scare within the public.

It has raised questions about AI going out of control through programming errors or automatically upgrading its intelligence to the point where it starts taking its own decisions and violating

human authority. And AI is programmed to do precisely that – the new generation of weapon systems and humanoid robots (like Sophia) are programmed to continuously upgrade their intelligence from external sources and to think and act independently. Since this, indeed, is the basic logic, then why are incidents like the one in Japan not possible or why do they evoke so much surprise? The whole affair is just a preview of what the future may look like.

Such incidents – though not at a large scale – of robots killing humans have happened before. It happened at a car manufacturing company in Germany in 2015 and was explained away as an accident. Recently, an automated self-driving car killed a pedestrian in U.S. – an incident in which nothing could be done and one which was not treated as a crime.

Nations, scientists and companies have already invested in and brought about the next AI revolution – all such incidents, even if true, will be hushed up by governments and companies. Worse still, it may not be possible to hold anybody responsible for deaths by robots.

The reason why the supposed Japan incident is not difficult to believe is because a controversy was also generated in South Korea recently for developing “killer robots”. ***In 2018, AI researchers called for boycotting a South Korean university for partnering with the country’s biggest defence manufacturer in manufacturing automated weapons system and providing a push to the development of killer machines.*** Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) and its partner, defence manufacturer Hanwha Systems, are both well-known institutions in South Korea. Hanwha is one of South Korea’s largest weapons manufacturers and makes cluster munitions which are banned in 120 countries under an international treaty.

But South Korea, US, Russia and China, are not signatories to this convention (Haas 2018).

Nations are heavily involved in ramping up their military technology and changing the nature of warfare. It is especially US, China, Russia, South Korea and Israel that are leading the charge in innovation, while India, UAE and Saudi Arabia continue to be major consumers of new defence technologies. The new technologies in this area are being built on already existing technologies in fighter air missile systems and drones that countries currently use, where there are provisions for automatic selection of range and targets.

This will become even more complete ***with the targets of war being entirely put under the discretion and control of machines. The growth of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) means that human intervention in warfare will gradually completely disappear. So will human control over machines. These are completely autonomous AI systems that can select and kill their own targets on the battlefield. Various technologies are coming up that accelerate the development of LAWS. These machines will independently control warfare across cyberspace, geo-space and space (CGS), that is, across internet, land boundaries and outer space.***

Models exist in many forms. For example, South Korea's Dodaam Systems already manufactures a fully autonomous 'combat robot' which can detect targets up to 3 km away. Due to "self-imposed restrictions", right now only humans are allowed to guide its decision-making while preparing a lethal attack (Haas 2018). But in military warfare proper, fully autonomous weapons making their own decisions has already been decided as the way forward.

Unmanned aerial, land and marine vehicles are reaching more and more advanced stages of development. There were recently two incidents – coming in space of two weeks of each other – of drone sightings forcing first the Gatwick airport and next the Heathrow airport in UK to cancel flights and shut down temporarily. Authorities were not able to trace where the drones came from, since it is next to impossible to trace the source of these unmanned aerial vehicles or drones as they are called. ***The incidents are just a small harbinger of the national security threats – percolating to the everyday civilian domain – that nations would be expected to confront. Maybe the drones came from terrorists or from enemy countries, since they can be useful spying objects, especially if fitted with cameras. Even worse, in an age of autonomous AI we are working towards, such small future drones may operate through independent decision-making by machines themselves.***

Whatever be the source, access to basic AI machines – like drones – is freely available even to a child. Neither the technology of developing it nor the prices are tough. A basic e-commerce website can offer a drone for a reasonable price. In India, various marriage ceremonies and other functions are using drones to get good pictures. They are being used for food delivery in some Indian cities. ***The extent of proliferation of drones is seen by data released during a government consultation in UK, where drones are being viewed as a serious problem. They have increased from 6 in 2014 to 93 in 2017 (Spero and Bond 2019). The government in UK is still struggling to control their sale through registration and regulation and by imposing no-fly zones around sensitive areas like airports.*** In the U.S., the proliferation is advancing at rapid speed with the help of the government, with active licenses being given out since 2012.

According to the U.S's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), as many as 30,000 drones could be flying in the U.S. by 2020, spanning both public and private entities.

Drones or unmanned aerial vehicles are fast reaching sophisticated capabilities in warfare and surveillance too. Drones used by governments to spy on their citizens can carry heat sensors and live video cameras. The level of sophistication is evident from the fact that highly advanced drones can be made to stay in the air for several hours at a time, ***can survey a whole city and can even zoom in and read what's written on a milk carton from 60,000 feet up in the air*** (Electronic Frontier Foundation 2019).

SURVEILLANCE APPLICATIONS

China is taking a lead in the surveillance revolution of AI. The 'sharp eyes' programme of the Chinese government is being used to develop a Social Credit System. ***Surveillance data on citizens will be collected from all cities and by 2020, the country will be able to rank their citizens in a social credit ladder based on the assessment of their behaviour and body language, including social norms and habits like how one crosses the street, whether one is dumping or burning waste, etc.*** China already has 176 million cameras installed in every block to watch its citizens round-the-clock. Repeat offenders will be tracked and can be under their guard.

While cameras on roads and public and private spaces will be used to register the gait, body language and faces of people, this data will be combined with further data that the government collects from people's bank accounts, social media accounts, hospital records, institutions, work places etc. ***The overall result will be used in ranking people in their level of trustworthiness***

as citizens, and according to Chinese government goal, lead to a more ‘honest society’. People who rank well may be rewarded, while those ranking poorly will be socially ostracized and shamed, including denying them travel, hotel stays etc. (Associated Press 2018).

The Chinese government also hopes to expand the ambit of its social credit programme to multiple uses – preventing corruption in government bureaucracy which goes out of hand often, preventing pollution of rivers and maintaining high food quality, cracking down on terrorists and violent dissenters and so forth. People are already praising the system as it has led to zero theft in a few village areas.

In a recent instance in April 2018, the prowess of the system was revealed when the police used the opportunity of a crowded concert to zero down on wanted criminals who happened to be attending the event at that time. Out of a massive crowds of up to 60,000 people attending a pop concert, the police could utilize the records of this system to catch a few criminals present, who were wanted for theft cases from few years ago (Associated Press 2018).

The system is particularly popular among Chinese villagers and people. Parents have utilized the system to find their missing children successfully. ***They shrugged off hyped up concerns about ‘privacy’ violation by government or of human rights abuse, since the system seems to have brought stability and transparency in the Chinese society. It has reduced crime, made justice more accurate and induced people to change their behaviour out of fear.***

Chinese government has been able to turn these surveillance applications of AI into a national asset, so far. The

new technologies have become a way for a nation to assert its position in international affairs as well as to ensure domestic stability and to prevent rogue acts by national enemies.

Yet another case of social application of surveillance AI technology is happening in the U.S., which has been riddled by the tragedy of mass shootings, especially in schools. As psychological problems of people are increasing, so are such cases. Now schools in the U.S. and Mexico have started partnering with security firms to apply real time, AI-based, facial recognition technology to prevent shootings. CCTVs have become passé and unable to cope up. The ballistics detection technology can spot shooters, while there is consideration for introducing automated security robots to patrol school hallways for protecting children.

The K5 robot developed by Silicon Valley's Knightscope is being considered. They can perform multiple functions, such as live streaming of videos, heat sensors, relaying information to connected phones and autonomous movements – they won't be armed in the school use. They will be enabled to detect intruders and send information to authorities (Fussell 2018).

Whether this will be able to deal with the menace of mass shootings is yet to be seen. The experiment is different from the Chinese case. In China, the AI software being used is stationary and human-controlled. In the US, motion-enabled, autonomous humanoid robots are expected to police the humans, and that is a dangerous turn. There is no guarantee that a moving, autonomous machine will not itself pick up a gun and commit a few shootings, especially if it malfunctions or goes rogue.

The difference between the two kinds of social experiments

in China and US is that ***while one country (China) is using the AI applications for its own purpose and is firmly in control of the technology as it places citizens better under the control of government, the other (U.S.) intends to deploy it to place humans under the control of robots.***

UNABATED COMMERCIALIZATION

The above cases of U.S and China shows that in commercially driven, ultra-utilitarian societies like U.S, the chances of misuse of the AI and of things going out of hand are higher. Developments in warfare and civilian and military surveillance have a clear commercial angle. Technology companies of U.S – like Google – are all set to rule the roost, data and information on people is the next biggest wealth and source of power. Western technology companies have the full backing of their governments, while Chinese companies are ostracized internationally and accused of intellectual property theft, the moment they look poised to overtake the West.

American companies are already heavily involved in helping the defence establishment of the U.S with the latest AI technologies. Last year, ‘Project Maven’ of Pentagon created a storm, as several Google employees resigned to protest against the company helping the Pentagon in a controversial military project based on machine learning. It involved using footages captured by drones in automatically classifying images, people and objects. While Google, under public and employee pressure, has pulled out of it, other big technology companies like Amazon and Microsoft continue to be a part of the project.

Besides the involvement of big technology companies in military applications of the AI, they are also fully exploiting the commercial angles. We are all familiar with the popular AI

software floated by Google and Amazon, known as Google Assistant and Alexa respectively. They are programmed to listen to and execute voice commands given to them. Like any AI, they upgrade their knowledge by being connected to the information available on the Internet. If a home has smart appliances, such as smart lights, door locks and such, then a person can simply command the machine to turn off the light or lock the door or simply play the music, tell a joke or narrate the news and the task will be executed. Alexa is not a humanoid, but simply a black box, yet follows all commands within a smart home setup and converses like a normal human being. ***Within a few months of the launch of Alexa, users of the software have narrated a series of freak experiences with the software. There were complains that Alexa would speak up unwarranted, say something suddenly when not asked, or just laugh out loud for no reason, make rude comments and berate people.***

In developed countries like Canada and U.S., where smart homes setup is pervasive, the domination of the AI in people's daily lives is happening faster. Incidents of children asking Alexa to help finish their homework are now commonplace. As if this were not enough, it has recently come to light that Google and Amazon had filed patent applications with the U.S government – as early as 2015 – competing over a technology wherein tiny smart speakers could be installed in our homes, which not only perform the conventional functions of playing music and other audio, but can become like a fly 'spy' in our lives (Vomiero 2018).

Their audio functions will be ***able to detect the emotional state of people of the house, recognize whether the person is child or adult and even judge when some 'mischief' is being done.*** For instance, Google, in its patent application has claimed that its tiny AI audio speaker can detect if a child is doing

something wrong or is in his parents' room or near a liquor cabinet and can accordingly send a warning to the parents and even to the child.

Likewise, Amazon, in its rival patent claims that its device could analyze people's daily conversations, sense what kind of products are being used in the home and accordingly send them targeted product advertisements. This device can come installed in a number of products, unbeknown to us, such as e-readers, tablets, smartphones and other daily use devices.

THE NEW COLONIZATION

With AI getting mixed with utilitarian motive of unabated commercial greed and power, the result would be the concentration of power in the hands of a few corporates. Any new technological revolution is used to colonize and subjugate. And AI is the next step. Already, American global corporates like Google, Facebook and Twitter possess microscopic data about people, which they are using for commercial purposes. ***Already, a conflict is brewing as European and American corporates do not want any Asian company to enter the field and surpass them.***

With China completely banning the web applications of American corporates and developing similar applications of its own through its own big global companies like Huawei, the tension is visible. Huawei's top executive's arrest in Canada at the U.S's behest and the general threat being felt by Western countries at China's technological advancement, attests to these conflicts. Accusations of clear theft of Intellectual Property by China, and the intense competition in the fields of space, defence technology, commercial technology and others, powered by AI and quantum mechanics in which China is outstripping all, shows

that nations that ignore aspects of technological advancement will be left behind. History is taking a new turn.

India and China lost out during the 18th century and later. The Industrial revolution was the heart of British progress that enabled it to colonize these countries. A disunited and complacent India, with its reputation as a mine of gold and silver, high GDP and national wealth, and trade surplus with others, for so many centuries, was easily colonized by, among others, the superior technology of the British in weapons and marine defence, enabling them to impoverish India. The Indian regional kings busy fighting amongst themselves ignored what was happening in the world, making the country a battleground of struggle for supremacy between the British, the French, the Dutch and the Portuguese during the early 18th century before the British established themselves firmly.

India cannot afford to make the same mistakes again. Our complacency has always cost us. But even now, despite our progress in space and military technology, we are the world's biggest importer of such technology. Recent comments by India's Army Chief brought home this point when he emphasized that India needs to develop its capacities in AI and big data, spend more on new technology for defence and start looking at self-reliance – we import nearly 60% of our defence equipment and even our satellite-based surveillance capabilities are incomplete (Analytics India 2019).

Last year's global rankings in which India was listed as third in the world in terms of possessing 'AI skills' is well, but not enough (Livemint 2018). 'AI skills' pertain mainly to service sectors of the economy, like healthcare, education, finance, information technology and others, where employees develop their own AI 'skills'. While it shows that Indians have the

potential to make breakthroughs, this has little to do with India developing its own technology and manufacturing in AI. India continues to import and rely on the West.

Successive government promises of accelerating manufacturing of such technology in India have not been fulfilled satisfactorily so far, while the selfishness, greed and narrow interests characterizing the politics of pettiness in a democracy continue to hold us hostage. The insatiable Indian consumer is an object of competition between American and Chinese technological corporates like Amazon, Walmart, Alibaba etc., with Indian equivalent of such companies rarely in sight.

If by chance, a company like Reliance manages to make some progress in securing indigenous defence contracts, the politics of greed within politicians and media do not let such corporates live. Like France, we are hobbled by our obsession with illusions of democracy and freedom. ***Even as we battle to secure our own freedom, we are content to let the country live as a bonded hostage to our petty interests.***

What we ought to realize is that AI is here to stay and that the next step of national competition will be in this field of technology. ***While the dangerous consequences of AI represent the vital reaping of what humans have sown by ascribing an absolute reality to Science and its material inventions, one can neither shun Science nor adopt the utilitarian and power-driven attitude regarding its absoluteness that is pervasive today. Even China has not been able to balance this out, though its nationalism-driven technological progress has certainly insulated it, to some extent, from the commercial greed that is eating away at the Western civilization.***

However, above nationalism also is the spiritual

reconciliation between Science and human progress. The age of AI represents a stage in scientific advancement which is a precursor to a society whose inventions are rapidly going out of its own control. ***It is not just the issue of human slavery to material comforts guaranteed through scientific progress. Rather, it is a much more dangerous stage where we are in the danger of losing our own selves in pure material Science, giving it a vital monstrous form that supersedes basic human faith and workings of our consciousness and assumes a reality which we already seem helpless to control or reverse and too dependent to even think about doing so.*** Unless the dangerous form being assumed by Science is matched up by a complete transformation in our own consciousness and an abandonment of utilitarian greed of our systems, we are already standing at the brink of destruction.

As Sri Aurobindo has written, ***“At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for a stage has been reached in which human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of the external life has been raised up by man’s ever-active mind and life-will, a structure of an unmanageable hugeness and complexity, for the service of his mental, vital, physical claims and urges, a complex political, social, administrative, economic, cultural machinery, an organized collective means for his intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfaction. Man has created a system of civilization which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilize and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites.”***

(Sri Aurobindo 1944).

So far no nation has been able to grasp this dangerous turn we are taking. Even China with its spirit of nationalism and goodwill falls short. As do other nationalist and cultured Asian countries like Korea and Japan. ***For, to understand the limits of Science, to know where it exhausts itself and, most importantly, to know that the Divinity within man is eternal and cannot be subjugated to any scientific machinery, is a spiritual secret that no other country grasps. India alone has the means to realize this. Spiritual realization is a living reality here despite all the ills ailing our hobbled system and this reality has saved us throughout history and enabled us to always emerge and progress endlessly.*** The progress is often slow and ridden with frustrations, but our ancient civilization has never been worn out like the turn the West is taking.

The expansive spirit of India is able to embrace within itself whatever it has to take from the world, without friction. India has not been the birthplace of too many modern inventions and has rarely figured in the cut-throat competition of today. But, historically, despite five centuries of Muslim rule and two centuries of British rule, the foundations of our culture are intact and stronger than ever. ***India doesn't need to colonize materially, but its spiritual colonization and influence has been extremely powerful throughout the ages. And that is why India is not at odds with, or threatened by the extreme international competition over technologies that is characterizing international relations of present. India's extremely wide, expansive spirit and living of the Infinite as the basis of our culture, will rarely put it at odds with anything though temporary shocks have been there always.***

But the shackles of present forms of modern Parliamentary politics, the selfishness characterizing our national thinking and disregard for nationalism has not enabled us to take a lead and actively take charge of the new changes. Sanatana Dharma and the spiritual foundations of our culture have been the source of our survival, saving grace and continuous replenishment. But for India to lead the world, minimalism, complacency and taking itself for granted will not be enough. For such utilitarian selfishness to co-exist with the greatness of our culture is unacceptable. The deplorable nature of our politics and social and national divisions are hindrances that need to be thrown away, as is our active regard for false secular constructions imposed by alien cultures, otherwise we will always remain a nation that survives by its spiritual faith but whose material life is deplorably selfish and without any regard for national spirit. It's high time that the spirit of mere survival and the habit of not thinking is done away with.

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PORTUGUESE IN INDIA AND THE GOA INQUISITION – A FORGOTTEN CHAPTER OF THE BLOODY HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN COLONIZATION OF INDIA

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In order to view the history of the Portuguese in India in its true perspective, it is necessary to make a few preliminary observations about the maritime trade of India. Economic factors have often profoundly influenced the course of history and sometimes even revolutionized it. The foreign trade and maritime activities of India, during the thirteenth century A.D., suddenly changed the course of history, not only of India but of the whole world. The rise of the Arabs as a great maritime power in the ninth century A.D. was the first direct challenge to the supremacy of the Indians in the Arabian Sea. An authentic account of the rivalry between the two maritime powers is not available but the position in the fifteenth century A.D. may be summed up as follows:

1. Indian ships from Gujarat, Malabar and various ports on the eastern coast, brought spices and other costly goods from Malacca, then practically the sole entrepot for China and the Spice Islands. On the west, Indian ships carried on trade with Hormuz in the Persian Gulf and various ports on the coast of East Africa and pilgrim traffic to the Red Sea. The main centre of this trade was Gujarat, but Malabar and Konkan had also a large share in it in the fourteenth century A.D. as is proved by the detailed account given by Moroccan traveller Ibn Batutah.

2. The Arabs exercised a strict monopoly in the trade from Malabar to the Red Sea. The eastern goods brought by Indian

ships to Malabar ports, together with the Indian pepper and cinnamon from Ceylon, were carried in Arab ships to Jidda and Ormuz. They also shared with Indian ships the carrying trade between Gujarat on the one hand and Red Sea, Persian Gulf and East Africa on the other. From Ormuz Indian wares found their way in smaller boats, more suited to the navigation, to Basra, where the trade routes divided; some caravans started for Trebizond^a and others for Aleppo and Damascus. On the shores of the Mediterranean the goods were purchased by Venetians^b and Genoese^c for distribution over Europe. Jidda played the same role in the Red Sea as Ormuz in the Persian Gulf. To the north of Jidda navigation was hampered by reefs and shoals and, therefore, goods were transferred to smaller boats that went to Suez. From Suez the merchandize crossed the desert to Cairo on camels, and thence went down the Nile to Alexandria.

The most important consequence of this state of things was that the Arabs were almost the sole purveyors of the eastern spices which were much prized in Europe. They controlled the entire trade between India and Europe except the small volume that passed over land route, either from the north-west of India or from the head of the Persian Gulf. But the Arabs also severed as mere intermediaries. The goods carried by them to the Mediterranean ports were taken over by the Italian merchants, mainly from Genoa and Venice, who distributed them

^aThe Empire of Trebizond or the Trapezuntine Empire was a monarchy that flourished during the 13th through 15th centuries, consisting of the far northeastern corner of Anatolia and the southern Crimea.

^bReferring to Italy.

^cGenoa is the capital of the Italian region of Liguria and the sixth-largest city in Italy.

throughout Europe. The cost of transmitting wares from India to Europe was very heavy, due to the large number of transshipments and high duties imposed by the various authorities through whose jurisdictions they had to pass. It has been calculated that when the wares from Calicut (in Malabar) reached Cairo, the ruler of the place, by various devices, exacted nearly one-third of their price as his own dues. In spite of heavy expenses the mercantile houses of Genoa and Venice reaped enormous profits, as the Indian goods fetched a very high price in European markets.

It could hardly be expected that the monopoly of Venice and Genoa in the profitable eastern trade would be looked upon with equanimity by the adventurous maritime nations like the Spanish and the Portuguese. The geographical discoveries by these two nations in course of the fifteenth century A.D. induced the Pope, Alexander VI, to regulate the enterprise into the unknown world by dividing it between them. He issued no less than four voyages for this purpose in A.D. 1493-94, by which the countries to the east of Europe were assigned to Portugal. By this time the Portuguese had not only explored the entire western coast of Africa but even proceeded beyond the Cape of Good Hope. The lure of capturing the eastern trade naturally turned their attention towards an all-sea-route to India. For this would enable them to import goods from that country at a much cheaper cost and, by one stroke, transfer to them the huge wealth hitherto flowing to Genoa and Venice. Thus, it was for this purpose that Vasco da Gama was commissioned to find out a direct sea-route to India from Portugal via Cape of Good Hope. On 8th July, A.D. 1497, Vasco da Gama left Lisbon with three vessels, of a tonnage varying from 60 to 150, on this perilous undertaking.

On 17th May, A.D. 1498, the inhabitants of the small village of Capucad, eight miles to the north of Calicut, saw the strange spectacle of three sailing vessels manned by white-skinned peoples unknown to them. The rural folk were amused, perhaps a little bewildered, but little did they dream that these were the harbingers of untold sufferings to them and to their country. These were the vessels which, under the leadership of Vasco da Gama, by mere accident, touched the land at a point lying within the Kingdom of the Zamorin (King) of Calicut.

The Zamorin, as usual, welcomed the strangers and provided all facilities to them in Calicut which was then an important centre of spice-trade. This alarmed the powerful Muslim traders of Calicut who, not unreasonably, concluded that once the Portuguese got a footing in Calicut, they would extend their activities to all other ports and thus bring irretrievable ruin upon the Muslim traders. They therefore sought by every means in their power to prejudice the mind of the Zamorin against the new-comers. One objection which they urged before the Zamorin's officers proved to be prophetic. The Portuguese, they argued, had not certainly undertaken this long and tedious journey from their distant home for mere purposes of trade, of which, being a wealthy nation, they had no need, but only to spy out the country with the view of returning and conquering it by force of arms and plundering it. When Vasco da Gama left India on 29th August, A.D. 1498, he had collected valuable information regarding trade and the route, and established friendly relations with the ruler and the Hindu population of Calicut.

The successful venture of Vasco da Gama induced the King of Portugal to send a larger fleet of 13 vessels under Pedro Alvarez Cabral on 9th March, A.D. 1500. Cabral had a series of

adventures on the way and reached Calicut with only six vessels on 13th September, A.D. 1500. The Zamorin cordially welcomed him and a treaty of peace and friendship was concluded between the two. On the basis of a report submitted by Cabral, the Portuguese King now entertained the ambitious project, not only to divert all Indian trade to Portugal by curbing the Arab ventures, but also to plant the Christian religion in India. With these ends in view he dispatched in A.D. 1502 a fleet of twenty ships under Vasco da Gama. As the first discoverer of the direct sea-route between Europe and India, Vasco da Gama occupies a unique place in the history of the modern world. But in his treatment of the Indians he may be described almost as a monster in the disguise of human form, a worthy competitor of Sultan Mahmud and Tamerlane, though on a much smaller scale. When his fleet reached Anjdiv, south of Goa, he committed a horrible cruelty described as follows by a European historian: *“A rich Muslim pilgrim vessel on its way to India from the Red Sea was intercepted by da Gama’s fleet which was plundered and sunk. There were many women and children on board but to these no mercy was shown and da Gama watched the horrors of the scene through a porthole, merciless and unmoved.”*

After halting at Cannanore (Kannur, Kerela) for a few days and renewing friendship with its King, da Gama proceeded to Calicut. The reputation of the Portuguese as a fighting power had reached so high that all the Indian and Arab ships had left the harbour. While still off Calicut, da Gama seized a fleet of two large ships and twenty-two smaller vessels which, laden with rice and had sailed from the Coromandel. After having plundered the ships, da Gama ordered his men to cut off the hands and ears and noses of all the crews. This done, their feet were tied together, and in order to prevent them from untying the cords

with their teeth, he ordered his men to strike them on their mouths with staves and knock their teeth down their throats. They were then put on board, to the number of about 800, heaped one on the top of the other, and covered with mats and dry leaves; the sails were then set for the shore and the vessel set on fire.

It has been truly observed that Vasco da Gama had no bowels of compassion and his lieutenants also followed on the footsteps of their Captain. For example, the friendly Raja of Cannanore complained to Vasco da Gama against some Muslim ships leaving his harbour without paying the harbour duties and the price of goods and one Portuguese Vincente Sodre was sent to help him. Sodre at once decided to sink all the ships but the Raja prevented this cruel deed. The Muslim owner of the ships, an inhabitant of Cairo, settled all pecuniary claims to the satisfaction of the Raja but as he was reported to have uttered some insulting words, Vincente Sodre had him tied to the mast and flogged with a rope's-end until he fainted. Having filled his mouth with dirt, and tied over it a piece of bacon, he sent him back to his ship with his hands tied behind him. Thus, the Indians had a foretaste of the barbarous and inhuman cruelties which characterized the Portuguese almost throughout the period of their dominance in India. Vasco da Gama established a factory at Cochin and erected a defensive wall at Cannanore. He then returned to Portugal, leaving Vincente Sodre with six vessels and a caravel to patrol the coast. In A.D. 1503 three Portuguese squadrons arrived in Cochin, one of them commanded by the famous Alfonso d' Albuquerque. It was on this occasion that the Portuguese built at Cochin their first fortress in India.

In A.D. 1505, the Portuguese King adopted a new policy. Instead of sending annual expedition and leaving a small garrison

to protect the factories, he decided to appoint a Viceroy who would reside in India for three years. The intention of the Portuguese to settle in India permanently, so clearly revealed by the establishment of a residential Viceroy and a standing fleet, as well as the construction of forts, alarmed the Muslim rulers of Bijapur, Gujarat and other smaller States. For this purpose the Portuguese King appointed Alfonso d' Albuquerque as the new Governor of Portuguese territories in India.

Afonso d' Albuquerque, the Portuguese governor of India, from 4th November A.D. 1509 to September A.D. 1515 built up a great territorial power in India. He was convinced that it was beneath the dignity of Portugal to have factories which existed only under the power of the native rulers. His struggle was against the combined forces of the Muslim world. His efforts were directed towards the conquest of Goa, Malacca, Aden, and Ormuz^a which he considered essential for his purpose. The plan of Albuquerque formed strategically a complete whole and consisted of three series of operations: (a) the control of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea; (b) the establishment of the headquarters of the Portuguese power at a central port on the west coast of India and (c) the destruction of Malay trade in the Malay Peninsula and the Far East.

The first achievement of Albuquerque was the conquest of Goa which belonged, to the Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur. On 4th March, A.D. 1510, he occupied the defenseless city which offered little resistance, though he was forced to abandon it in the face

^aThe Kingdom of Ormuz was a 10th to 17th century A.D. kingdom located within the Persian Gulf and extending as far as the Strait of Hormuz. The Kingdom was established by Arab princes in the 10th century who in 1262 came under the suzerainty of Persia, before becoming a client state of the Portuguese Empire.

of an attack by Sultan Yusuf Adil Khan but Albuquerque again stormed the city in November, A.D. 1510, strengthened its fortifications and thence till A.D. 1961 Goa remained the Portuguese headquarters in India. As Goa stood midway between the ports of Malabar and those of Gujarat and dominated the entire coast from the Gulf of Cambay to Cape Comorin, the conquest of Goa put the seal on the Portuguese naval supremacy along the south-west coast and involved territorial rule in India.

The conquest of Malacca in A.D. 1511 was the next great achievement of Albuquerque. It was situated favorably on the Malaya shore, in the middle point of the Straits between Sumatra and the mainland and its inhabitants included Muslim Malays and large bodies of foreign merchants – Chinese, Javanese, Gujaratis, Bengalis, Burmese from Pegu and Chittagong, Ceylonese cinnamon-dealers and even Japanese. Albuquerque captured the place after several days of bombardment and street fighting. He then opened direct relations with the kingdom of Siam^a and dispatched ships to explore the Moluccas (Indonesia) and other Spice Islands.

The Portuguese monopoly of the Indian Ocean remained unbroken till A.D. 1595, fifteen years after the fatal union of Portugal and Spain. Philip II of Spain neglected Portuguese dominions in India and involved Portugal in his costly and disastrous European wars. Ceylon first rebelled against the Portuguese in A.D. 1580. In A.D. 1595 the first Dutch fleet rounded the Cape of Good Hope in defiance of the Portuguese. By A.D. 1602 the Dutch had deprived Portugal of the hold over the Straits of Sunda^b and of the route to the Moluccas (Indonesia)

^aPresent day Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and Myanmar.

^bThe Sunda Strait is the strait between the Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra.

and of the Spice Islands. In A.D. 1603 they blockaded Goa itself and soon after they made themselves masters of Java. The Dutch expelled the Portuguese altogether from Ceylon in the years A.D. 1638 to A.D. 1658. In A.D. 1641 they captured the great port of Malacca and in A.D. 1652 got possession of the Cape of Good Hope as well.

The English were also not far behind. In A.D. 1611 an English squadron under Admiral Middleton defeated the Portuguese fleet off Bombay. Four years later came their great victory over the Portuguese in Surat. In A.D. 1616 they entered into direct commercial relations with the Zamorin (King) of Calicut and two years later they began to trade in the Persian Gulf. In A.D. 1622 they had captured Ormuz and established a factory at Gombroon (Iran). Bombay was given to Britain in A.D. 1661 as part of the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza's dowry to Charles II of England. Most of the western coastal areas were lost to the Marathas by A.D. 1700 and later these areas were taken over by the British government. Thus, there were Portuguese footprints all over the western coasts of the Indian peninsula, though Goa became the capital of Portuguese from A.D. 1530 onward until the annexation of Goa and its merger with the Indian Union in 1961.

II. THE FAMOUS GOA INQUISITION – A.D. 1560 – A.D. 1812

The manpower of Portugal was too small to maintain a far-flung Empire and was further thinned by disease, ravages and the demoralization brought about by the inter-marriage of the Portuguese settlers with Africans and Indians. But their religious fanaticism knew no bounds. Even before the time of Governor Albuquerque (A.D. 1509-1515), priests and monks had flocked

in large number to Portuguese India. In A.D. 1538, Goa was made the seat of a Bishop, in A.D. 1557 it was raised to the dignity of an Archbishop and other Bishop seats were created at Cochin and Malacca. The priests displayed great devotion to their duty and did much to spread education. They established at Goa, in A.D. 1560, the hated inquisition which burnt or punished in other cruel way, unbelievers, relapsed converts and all who were dangerous to the faith in the eyes of the priests. They did not give freedom even to the ancient Syrian Christians of the Malabar Coast. The Portuguese zeal for conversion was redoubled after their union with Spain in A.D. 1580. The Synod of Diamper^a (Udayampura) in A.D. 1599 tried to suppress completely the Syrian Christianity of Malabar. The chief results of this intolerant policy were a practical denial of justice to all non-Christians and the total annihilation of non-Christian population from Goa and other Portuguese towns.

The Portuguese Indian Church was organized under the guidance of St. Francis Xavier, the Apostle of the Indies, who came to Goa with the Jesuits in A.D. 1542. To St. Xavier is due the conversion of the Paravars, the fishermen tribe who lived on the Coromandel Coast between Cape Comorin and Adam's Bridge, as well as the Mukkuvas, the fishermen of the Malabar coast. St. Xavier also travelled to Malacca and Japan for this purpose. Before his death in A.D. 1552, he is said to have converted hundreds of thousands of men, who belonged mainly to the lowest classes of the population.

^aThe Synod of Diamper, held at Udayamperoor (Kerela) was a council that laid down rules and regulations for the ancient Saint Thomas Christians of the Malabar Coast formally uniting them with the Catholic Church. This led to the creation of the Eastern Catholic Syro-Malabar Church.

A. Background

In A.D. 1469, Ferdinand and Isabella were married thereby uniting the Iberian kingdoms (Spain and Portugal) of Aragon and Castile into Spain. In A.D. 1492, they expelled the Jews, many of whom then moved to other parts of Europe. Within five years, the anti-Judaism and the inquisition ideas were adopted in Portugal. Instead of another expulsion, the King of Portugal ordered the forced conversion of the Jews in A.D. 1497 and these were called New Christians or Crypto Jews. He stipulated that the validity of their conversions would not be investigated for two decades. In A.D. 1506 in Lisbon, there was a massacre of several hundred newly converted Jews or New Christians, instigated by the preaching of two Spanish Dominicans.^a Some persecuted Jews fled Portugal for the New World in the Americas while others went to Asia as traders, settling in India.

These ideas and the practice of Inquisition on behalf of the Holy Office of Catholic Church was spread by the Jesuits and colonial administrators of Portugal to Portuguese colonies such as India. The Goa Inquisition institution enforced by the Portuguese Christians was not unusual, as similar institutions operated in South American colonies during the same centuries such as the Lima Inquisition and the Brasil Inquisition under the Lisbon tribunal. Like the Goan inquisition, these parallel tribunals accused and arrested suspects, deployed torture, extracted forced confessions, convicted and issued punishments for secretly practicing religious beliefs different than Christianity.

In 1535, in the wake of Protestantism movement in Europe

^aThe Order of Preachers, also known as the Dominican Order, is a Catholic religious order founded by the Spanish priest Dominic of Caleruega in France on 22nd December A.D. 1216.

that challenged the authority of the Pope and the Catholic institutions, the Pope Paul III (1534–1549) provided the ecclesiastical foundations for the Inquisition. He formed the Congregation of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, staffing it with cardinals and providing it with resources and the organizational structure to inaugurate the Inquisition of the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope demanded that the Inquisition office defend the integrity of the faith, examine false doctrines and errors, forbid heresy against Catholic Christianity.

All local offices including the Goa Inquisition were supervised by the Holy Office set up by the Pope. It worked with the colonial powers that accepted the religious authority of the Pope to enforce the Capital Laws of the Catholic Church. The Grand Inquisitor was named by the Pope from the royal family of a colonial power but often selected by the King. According to the Capital Laws of this ecclesiastical authority, any man or woman who worshipped any spirit or deities was to be put to death.

“It was in A.D. 1538 that General Ignatius de Loyola in Rome, upon the request of the King of Portugal, sent missionaries to the orient. To answer the call, Francis Xavier, later known as Saint Xavier, went to Goa in A.D. 1540. Though he started his preaching projects on his own, he also later laid the foundations for the Inquisition in Goa, similar to that of Spain and Portugal, where he had experience in persecuting thousands of Jews and Muslims.

Saint Francis Xavier worked feverishly to convert as many Hindus to Christianity as possible, and baptized as many natives as he could, and exploited the impressionability of children as much as possible. He once wrote in a letter to the Society of Jesus, *‘Following the baptisms, the new Christians return to their*

homes and come back with their wives and families to be in turn also prepared for baptism. After all have been baptized, I order that everywhere the temples of the false gods be pulled down and idols broken. I know not how to describe in words the joy I feel before the spectacle of pulling down and destroying the idols by the very people who formerly worshipped them.' He went on to say that even children '*... show an ardent love for the Divine law, and an extraordinary zeal for learning our holy religion and imparting it to others. Their hatred for idolatry is marvelous. They get into feuds with the heathens about it, and whenever their own parents practice it, they reproach them and come off to tell me at once. Whenever I hear of any act of idolatrous worship, I go to the place with a large band of these children, who very soon load the devil with a greater amount of insult and abuse their parents, relations, and acquaintances. The children run at the idols, dash them down, break them to pieces, spit on them, trample on them, kick them about, and heap on them every possible outrage.'*¹

This is how the great Saint Xavier taught the children to behave toward their own heritage. He did this in Quilon (Kerala) and this was after the Hindu King of Quilon had respectfully received him and benevolently given him a large grant of land and other resources so he could build churches for his religion. What a way to pay back the respect and liberality the King had shown him. This was but an example of Saint Francis Xavier's violent form of evangelism. All this proselytizing by Xavier was but to further the Portuguese imperialistic designs, since he was under the protection of the Portuguese King who wanted to expand in power and influence in the region. What better way to do that than to first expand the religion and Western values through the area, which would then make it easier to expand

the kingdom.

Though Saint Francis Xavier has been given much respect in India, with many schools named after him, his real intention of coming to India was to uproot Hinduism and put an end to the ancient Vedic culture and he used whatever means he could to do that. Francis Xavier, who was made a saint by the Church for his activities, boasted of having destroyed “hundreds of Hindu temples” by himself, and “miraculously” converted people by the thousands. But how miraculous this was can be seen in the following descriptions:

M. D. David, author of *‘Western Colonialism in Asia and Christianity’*, writes: “...A particularly grave abuse was practiced in Goa in the form of ‘mass baptism’ and what went before it. The practice was begun by the Jesuits and was initiated by the Franciscans^a also. The Jesuits staged an annual mass baptism on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul (25th January, A.D. 33-36), and in order to secure as many neophytes as possible, a few days before the ceremony the Jesuits would go through the streets of the Hindu quarter in pairs, accompanied by their Negro slaves, whom they would urge to seize the Hindus. When the blacks caught up a fugitive, they would smear his lips with a piece of beef, making him an ‘untouchable’ among his people. Conversion to Christianity was then his only option.”²

Others found conversion politically useful, like the fishermen of Tamil Nadu who sold their souls to Christian priests in exchange for the protection of the Portuguese army against their Muslim neighbors. However, the deal was not completely voluntary. Those fishermen who refused to convert were

^a The Franciscans are a group of related mendicant religious orders within the Catholic Church, founded in A.D. 1209 by Saint Francis of Assisi (Italy).

attacked on the Malabar Coast by the Portuguese navy. Entire fishing boats were set ablaze, as their women and children helplessly watched from the shores. Those fishermen who jumped into the water to save their lives, were either bayoneted or shot dead.

“To fuel hatred of the newly converted Christians against the Hindus, the Portuguese would spread many false stories. One referred to Thomas the apostle, who was said to have landed in India in 52 A.D. at Cranganore on the Malabar coast and established the first church later known as the Syrian Church. In 68 A.D., St. Thomas was allegedly martyred near modern day Chennai (Madras) and a large cathedral there now is said to house a basement crypt containing the relics of St. Thomas. However, there is controversy with evidence that St. Thomas never went there. Also, in the cathedral of St. Thomas at Chennai (San Thome Cathedral Basilica) there is a painting that shows Thomas praying while he is being stabbed to death with a lance by a Ramanuja Vaishnava Brahmana wearing Vishnu tilak (forehead mark). It is interesting to remember that the Shree Vaishnavas and their tilak did not come into history until the 11th century, almost 1000 years later. Therefore, this shows the deceitfulness in their stories and conversion tactics. There was little if any conversions based on the purity of their teachings, but they instead had to rely on spreading lies and treachery, and even savagery to make converts to their religion, as we will soon see.”³

At least from A.D. 1542 onwards the Portuguese destroyed all the Hindu temples in the area, over 300 of them and stopped all Hindu worship and even the popular traditions that were not directly connected with the religion. From the studies by Dr. K. V. Paliwal, President of the Hindu Writers’ Forum in New Delhi,

as presented in his book, *Atrocities on Hindus by Christian Missionaries in Goa*, many of the churches that were built in Goa were constructed on top of the remains of Hindu temples that were destroyed by the Portuguese.

B. Introduction of the Goa Inquisition in India and the Persecution of the Hindus Under it

“The Inquisition made its way to India under the Portuguese Jesuit, St. Francis Xavier in 1545. The first demand for the establishment of the Inquisition in Goa was made by St. Francis Xavier. In a letter addressed from Amboina (Moluccas) to D. Joao III, King of Portugal, on May 16, 1545, he wrote: ‘The second necessity for the Christians is that your majesty establish the Holy Inquisition, because there are many who live according to the Jewish law, and according to the Mohammedan sect, without fear of God or shame of the world. And since there are many who are spread all over the fortresses, there is the need of the Holy Inquisition, and of many preachers. Your majesty should provide such necessary things for your loyal and faithful subjects in India.’”⁴

It was in A.D. 1560 that the King of Portugal sent the first inquisitors to India after the request of the followers of Francis Xavier. This was the start of the compassionate and merciful Goan Inquisition that tortured and killed many thousands of Indians who merely followed the traditions of their culture. This was the real change in the presence of the Portuguese when, being intolerant in religion, they introduced the Inquisition with all its horrors. The inquisition was not only directed at Hindus, but also in their rough handling of Syrian Christians of Malabar to secure their submission to the Catholic faith.

Cardinal Henrique of Portugal sent Aleixo Díaz Falcão as

the first inquisitor. He established the first tribunal which became the most pitiless force of persecution in Portuguese colonial Empire. The Goa Inquisition office was housed in the former palace of Sultan Adil Shah. The inquisitor's first act was to forbid any open practice of the Hindu faith on the death of a person. Other restrictions imposed by the Goa Inquisition included:

(a) Hindus were forbidden from occupying any public office and only a Christian could hold such an office.

(b) Hindus were forbidden from producing any Christian devotional objects or symbols.

(c) Hindu children whose father had died were required to be handed over to the Jesuits for conversion to Christianity. This began under a A.D. 1559 royal order from Portugal, where after Hindu children alleged to be orphan were seized by Society of Jesus and converted to Christianity. This law was enforced on children even if mother was still alive, in some cases even if the father was alive. The parental property was also seized when the Hindu child was seized. In some cases it is stated that the Portuguese authorities extorted money for the return of the orphans.

(d) Hindu women who converted to Christianity could inherit all of the property of their parents.

(e) Hindu clerks in all village councils were replaced with Christians.

(f) In legal proceedings, Hindus were unacceptable as witnesses, only statements from Christian witnesses were admissible.^a

^a1. For more details see: Teotonio R. De Souza (2016). *The Portuguese in Goa*, Published by Grupo Lusofona. pp. 28-29.

2. Lauren Benton (2002). *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 120–121.

According to Indo-Portuguese historian Teotonio R. de Souza, the original requests targeted the “Moors” (Muslims), New Christian and the Hindus, and it made Goa a persecution hell operated by Catholic Portuguese.^a Violations of the rules laid down by the inquisition resulted in various forms of punishment such as fines, public flogging, banishment to Mozambique, imprisonment, execution, burning at stakes or burning in effigy under the orders of the Christian Portuguese prosecutors at the auto-da-fé. The arrests were arbitrary, witnesses were granted anonymity, the property of the accused was immediately confiscated, torture was deployed to extract confessions, recanting of confession was considered evidence of dishonest character, and an oath of silence of the trial process was required of those released with penalties of re-arrest if they spoke to anyone about their experiences.

The inquisition forced Hindus to flee Goa in large numbers from Goa to the surrounding regions that were not in the control of the Jesuits and Portuguese India. So much harassment was felt by the Hindus that they abandoned the city in large numbers, refusing to stay in a place where they had no freedom, and were liable to be imprisoned, tortured, or put to death for worshiping according to their ancient tradition. The Hindus of Goa were shocked to see that the God of Christianity was crueller than the God of Islam, or the dictates of Mohammad. Thus, deserting Goa for the lands of the Muslims seemed a brighter future, though they had received nothing but trouble from the Muslims.

The Hindus responded to the destruction of their temples by recovering the images from the ruins of their older temples and using them to build new temples just outside the borders

^aTeotonio R. De Souza (1994). Discoveries, Missionary Expansion, and Asian Cultures. Concept publishers. pp. 79-82.

of the Portuguese controlled territories. In some cases where the Portuguese built churches on the spot the destroyed temples were, Hindus started annual processions that carry their gods and goddesses linking their newer temples to the site where the churches stand, after Portuguese colonial era ended.

Exact data on the nature and number of Hindu temples destroyed by the Christian missionaries and Portuguese government are unavailable. Some 160 temples were razed to the ground on the Goa island by A.D. 1566. Between A.D. 1566 and A.D. 1567, a campaign by Franciscan missionaries destroyed another 300 Hindu temples in Bardez (North Goa). In Salcete (South Goa), approximately another 300 Hindu temples were destroyed by the Christian officials of the Inquisition. Numerous Hindu temples were destroyed elsewhere at Assolna (South Goa) and Cuncolim (South Goa) by Portuguese authorities. An A.D. 1569 royal letter in Portuguese archives records that all Hindu temples in its colonies in India have been burnt and razed to the ground.^a

Hindus were the primary target for persecution and punishment for their faith by the Catholic prosecutors of the Goan Inquisition. About 74% of those sentenced were charged with crypto-Hinduism,^b while others targeted were non-Hindus such as 1.5% sentenced for being Crypto-Muslims, 1.5% for obstructing the operations of the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Most records of the nearly 250 years of Inquisition trials were burnt by the Portuguese after the Inquisition was banned. Those

^aAndrew Spicer (2016). *Parish Churches in the Early Modern World*. Taylor & Francis. pp. 309–311.

^bCrypto-Hinduism is the secret adherence to Hinduism while publicly professing to be of another faith; practitioners are referred to as 'crypto-Hindus'.

that have survived, such as those between 1782-1800 period state that people continued to be executed, burnt in effigy and the victims were predominantly the Hindus. A larger proportion of those arrested, tried and sentenced during the Goa Inquisition, states António José Saraiva, came from the lowest social strata. The trial records suggest that the victims were not exclusively Hindus, but included members of other religions found in India as well as some Europeans.^a

The Portuguese inquisitor Fr. Diogo da Borba and his advisor Vicar General Miguel Vaz followed the missionary goals entrusted to Portugal to convert the Hindus. In cooperation of the Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries, the Portuguese administration in Goa and military power were deployed to destroy the cultural and institutional roots of Hindus and other Indian religions. For example, Viceroy and Captain General António de Noronha and later Captain General Constantino de Sa de Noronha systematically destroyed Hindu and Buddhist temples in Portuguese possessions and during attempted new conquests on the Indian subcontinent.

New laws promulgated between A.D. 1566 and A.D. 1576 prohibited Hindus from repairing any damaged temples or constructing new ones. Non-Hindus in Goa were encouraged to identify and report anyone who owned images of god or goddess to the Inquisition authorities. Those accused were searched and if any evidence was found, they were arrested and they lost their property. Half of the seized property went as reward to the accusers, the other half to the church. A Florentine merchant Filippo Sassetti, who was in India from A.D. 1578 to A.D. 1588, wrote, *“The fathers of the Church forbade the Hindus under terrible penalties the use of their own sacred books, and*

^aAntónio José Saraiva (2001). *The Marrano Factory: The Portuguese Inquisition and Its New Christians 1536-1765*. Brill Academic. pp. 352–357.

prevented them from all exercise of their religion. They destroyed their temples, and so harassed and interfered with the people that they abandoned the city in large numbers, refusing to remain any longer in a place where they had no liberty, and were liable to imprisonment, torture and death if they worshipped after their own fashion the gods of their fathers.”

Various repressive measures were also adopted to suppress the knowledge of Vedic Dharma and the Culture of the Hindus and to exterminate the indigenous literature in Marathi, Konkani, or any local dialect. Special officers known as *Qualificadores* were appointed to examine the books published by the Hindus before they were printed, and care was taken to see that they contained nothing against the Catholic Faith. A list of prohibited Hindu books was maintained. According to the Holy Inquisition Manual, it was a crime to possess and read the prohibited books. All Sanskrit and Marathi books, whatever may be their subject matter, were seized and burnt on the suspicion that they might deal with what they called idolatry.

In June A.D. 1684, an order was issued for dealing toughly with anyone who still spoke the local Konkani language. It was compulsory to speak Portuguese only. All symbols of non-Christian sects were destroyed and all books in the local languages were burnt. The Archbishop living in India said in a lecture that, *‘The post of Inquiry Commission in Goa is regarded as holy.’* “Also the Indian ladies who opposed or resisted the sexual advances of the assistants of the commission were put behind bars and then forcibly used by them to satisfy their carnal desires. Then they were burnt alive as opponents or heretics of the established tenets of the Catholic Church. So harsh and notorious was the inquisition in Goa that the word of its brutality and horrors reached Lisbon, but nothing was done to stop its increasing barbarity. Those who were fortunate got away with being banished from the Portuguese territory. The less fortunate had their property seized and

auctioned, the money used for furthering the conversion processes of the Church. And the least fortunate were brutalized and killed, or forced into slave labour in the galleys of the ships that transported loot from India to the Portuguese coffers.

The Goan inquisition is regarded as the most violent ever executed by the Portuguese Catholic Church. It was basically a holocaust inflicted on the Indian people. The inquisition consisted of a tribunal, headed by a judge sent from Portugal, along with two assistants or henchmen. The judge was answerable to no one but to Lisbon, and handed down judgments in whatever way he saw fit. The inquisition was conducted in a palace called the "Big House." This had been refitted to accommodate 200 cells for prisoners and instruments of torture were put there to inflict all kinds of pain on non-Christians, particularly Hindus. All interrogations were conducted behind closed doors, but the screams of agony of the men, women, and children could be heard from the streets, even in the middle of the night, as they would be brutally flogged, beaten, burned, or even slowly dismembered in front of their relatives.

Prisoners were brought in after witnesses had reported on them of crimes they had purportedly committed, often times with the witness implicating innocent people while under the threat of torture, or to save their own lives. These so-called crimes were often some kind of blasphemy against Christianity, or impiety, idolatry, necromancy and witchcraft, or anything against Christianity. For these "crimes" they would often be burnt alive at the stake, but only after much torture. If they confessed to their crimes, they were shown Christian mercy by being killed first by strangulation, and then burnt after death. These torture sessions were also efficiently watched by Christian priests.

What verifies this history is the recorded orders issued by a succession of Portuguese Viceroys and Governors, as well as the

prosecutors of that time, which give details of the horrors committed in the name of Jesus Christ. Some of the tortures included having your arms tied behind your back and being strung up by your wrists. You would hang there for hours, only to be suddenly dropped down near the floor, which would quickly pull your arms back to dislocate them out of the joints. There was also the water torture in which you are forced to lay across an iron bar and ingest water without stopping, causing the iron bar to break one's vertebrae and cause vomiting and asphyxia. Sometimes in that condition the stomach would be beaten with sticks so badly when filled with water, the stomach itself would burst. All these were done until the victim confessed. Then they would be taken to their cell to suffer until it was time for their execution. Other instruments included a metallic glove in which the hand would be roasted over a fire, and other tools for breaking one's legs and shins, disemboweling a person on the rack, sharp knives for cutting the ears off of one's head, or instruments that would tear a woman's breast from her body, and so on. All such being the ways to taste the mercy of Christianity and feel remorse for not having converted."⁵

Also, the famous writer of the 19th century, Alexandre Herculano, wrote in his book, "*Fragment About the Inquisition*", how no one was excused from the tortures of the Inquisition: "*...The terrors inflicted on pregnant women made them abort... Neither the beauty nor decorousness of the flower of youth, nor the old age, so worthy of compassion in a woman, exempted the weaker sex from the brutal ferocity of the supposed defenders of the religion... There were days when seven or eight were submitted to torture. These scenes were reserved for the inquisitors after dinner. It was a post-prandial entertainment. Many a time during those acts, the inquisitors compared notes in the appreciation of the beauty of the human form. While the unlucky damsel twisted*

in the intolerable pains of torture, or fainted in the intensity of the agony, one inquisitor applauded the angelic touches of her face, another the brightness of her eyes, another, the voluptuous contours of her breast, another the shape of her hands. In this conjuncture, men of blood transformed themselves into real artists!”⁶

“During the torture the only words to be addressed to the accused were ‘Tell the truth.’ The notary faithfully recorded all that passed, even to the shrieks of the victim, his despairing ejaculations and his piteous appeals for mercy or to be put to death, nor would it be easy to conceive anything more fitted to excite the deepest compassion than these cold-blooded matter of fact reports. The Inquisition at different times and places made use of a variety of other forms of torture also. Referring to the forms of torture used by the Inquisition, E T Whittington, writes as follows: ‘As to the torture itself, it combined all that the ferocity of savages and the ingenuity of civilized man had till then invented. Besides the ordinary rack, thumb-screws, and leg crushers or Spanish boots, there were spiked wheels over which the victims were drawn with weights on their feet; boiling oil was poured over their legs, burning sulphur dropped on their bodies, and lighted candles held beneath their armpits.’”⁷

“Uruguay-based Alfredo de Mello, a Goan born historian, in his *Memoirs of Goa* (2003) writes how in a span of 252 years, the inquisition held sway in Goa ‘with a power that Stalin and other tyrants would have liked to hold.’ Referring to the dreaded Goan Inquisition de Mello calls it ‘the worst of the existing inquisitions in the Catholic orb of the five parts of the world’. De Mello also cites from the memoirs of Judges Magalhães and Louisada (1859), who described what they witnessed, ‘...The inquisition, this tribunal of fire, thrown on the surface of the globe for the scourge of humanity, this horrible institution which will eternally cover with shame its

authors, fixed its brutal domicile in the fertile plains of the Hindustan. On seeing the monster everyone fled and disappeared, Mughals, Arabs, Persians, Armenians and Jews. The Indians, i.e., Hindus even more tolerant and pacific, were astounded to see the God of Christianity more cruel than that of Mohammed, [and] deserted the territory of the Portuguese ...In this fashion, the fields and cities became deserted as are today Diu and Goa.’”⁸

Paul William Roberts, in his book *the Empire of the Soul, Some Journeys in India*, writes about the methods of the Portuguese Inquisition: “Children were flogged and slowly dismembered in front of their parents whose eyelids had been sliced off to make sure they missed nothing. Extremities were amputated carefully, so that a person could remain conscious even when all that remained was a torso and a head... Those subjected to other diabolical tortures could also be counted in the thousands and the abominations continued until a brief respite in 1774... The evil resumed, continuing, almost incredibly, until June 16, 1812. At that point, British pressure put an end to terror (with the presence of British troops stationed in Goa.”⁹

It was the British who put pressure to end the terror of the Inquisition and the British troops in Goa enforced it. The palace of the Grand Inquisitor, called the “Big House,” was demolished and no trace of it remains today, which might remind someone of the inquisition and the tortures that went on inside, which had originally been requested by “Saint” Francis Xavier.

The alarm caused by news of the Goan inquisition reached Lisbon, where the Archbishop of Evora at the Cathedral church in Lisbon said in his oration in June of A.D. 1897: “The Inquisition was an infamous tribunal at all places. But the infamy never reached greater depths, nor was more vile, more black, and more completely determined by mundane interests than at the Tribunal of Goa, by irony called the Holy Office. Here the inquisitors went

to the length of imprisoning in its jails women who resisted their advances, and after having satisfied their bestial instincts there, ordering that they be burnt as heretics.”¹⁰

Joao Felix Pereira, the 19th century historian writes, “The inquisition of Goa, distinguished itself on account of the greater rigors than those of the tribunals of the metropolis; thousands of victims died at the stake in flames; and when these bloody executions brought fears of a seditious movement, the viceroys and governors, who did not enjoy the power of force openly, employed the dagger of the assassins and poison.”¹¹

Dr. Trasta Breganka Kunha, a Catholic citizen of Goa, had written: “In spite of all the mutilations and concealment of history, it remains an undoubted fact that religious conversion of Goans is due to methods of force by the Portuguese to establish their rule. As a result of this violence the character of our people was destroyed. The propagation of Christian sect in Goa came about not by religious preaching but through methods of violence and pressure. If any evidence is needed for this fact, we can obtain it through law books, orders and reports of the local rulers of that time and also from the most dependable documents of the Christian sect.”¹²

From all this we can plainly see that the Goan Inquisition by the Portuguese Catholic Church was nothing less than a sustained war against Hindus and the Vedic culture itself. Nonetheless, they could not see the demise of Vedic Dharma. Presently, there may be few references in modern or school history books to the violent and treacherous ways that the Catholics used in their attempt to destroy and triumph over the Vedic tradition of India, and though this silence is maintained by secular historians, the history of it still exists for us all to remember, and to honour the lives of all those men, women, and children who, under the threat of torture and death, refused to give up their culture. Just as the Jews say in regard to their own holocaust, this chapter of Indian history should

not be forgotten in order to make sure that it never happens again, and so we do not forget the value of the Vedic traditions and Dharmic culture that adds to the profound history of India and the high caliber of character of its people. Looking back at the history of the church, the Vatican has apologized for the agony inflicted on Galileo, who was right all along. Thus, we can access that it is time that the Vatican also convey its apology for the Goan Inquisition. In fact, should they not give some reparation for all of the damage they did and the horrors they inflicted on so many people? Nobody knows exactly how many citizens were killed or tortured by the Portuguese in the name of Christ, but it would be likely to run into hundreds of thousands.

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“The world knows three kinds of revolution. The material has strong results, the moral and intellectual are infinitely larger in their scope and richer in their fruits, but the spiritual are the great sowings. ...

The changes we see in the world today are intellectual, moral, physical in their ideal and intention: the spiritual revolution waits for its hour and throws up meanwhile its waves here and there. Until it comes the sense of the others cannot be understood and till then all interpretation of present happening and forecast of man’s future are vain things. For its nature, power, event are that which will determine the next cycle of our humanity.”

– Sri Aurobindo

(Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 13: pp.210-11)