

Goa's Urban Landscape: Does It Retain the Lusophone Identity?

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ABSTRACT Every region experiences layers of historical sequential events and demonstrates subsequent development. This then transforms into the heritage and earmark as identity. Goa, presently a State of the Indian Union, was ruled by the Portuguese for more than 450 years and this has left an impeccable socio-cultural imprint on the landscape and the local populace. Today, after 60 years of Goa's liberation it is prudent to assess the people's perception and review the Lusophone Identity. For this study, Margao, a prominent urban town has been chosen. The Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) method has been applied in this research, wherein reliance has been shown mainly on transect walk, time scaling, mapping, and semi-structured questionnaire-based survey. The study reveals that Lusophones' essence can be traced through tangible identities like the baroque style churches, heritage houses, and a few public and commercial institutions. The festivals and feasts still carry the tradition that commenced during the colonial regime. The study shows that the people staying in the old town have more concern towards the heritage than those staying in the suburbs. The locals agree that heritage helps in the creation of jobs, promotes the local products, and adds value to the image of the place. There have been voices and concerns to conserve the heritage and retain its cultural and historical identity.

INTRODUCTION

Spaces are all manifestations of urban (re) creativity. It is one of the key factors that allow modern towns and cities to react to changes, change to traditional approaches to governance, manage space and resources, integrate technological innovations, and rediscover their historical cultural heritage (Riffat et al. 2016). However, uncontrolled development and growth are endangering *the* sustainability of *cities* and *the* quality of *city* dwellings. This is also impacting heritage sites due to urban growth (Shusheng 2019). What is desired is careful integration and syncing of sustainable urban heritage conservation into local urban development structures (Udeaja et al. 2020). This requires a conscious action plan and execution by multiple disciplines including regional development, the economy, tourism, transportation, and infrastructure (Śćitaroci 2019). Looking at the various perspectives, there is an escalating acknowledgment and increasing consciousness to make the bygone historic landscape an integral part of cities (Fairclough 2008). This becomes more pertinent as the cultural landscape is fundamentally vibrant and can be looked beyond preservation, rather more so

to manage the change (Joks 2017). One way would be to review and assess the possibility of historic cities, create an organised plan for urban development and develop an explicit and distinctive image of the city (Luca 2019). The other way forward is to create an action plan that balances multi-facet layers of the urban landscape, heritage, and cultural tourism (Śćitaroci 2019).

In the context of heritage, the UNESCO Draft Medium Report (1988) defines heritage as, "...the entire corpus of material signs, either artistic or symbolic, handed on by the past to each culture", and goes on to note that "...the cultural heritage gives each particular place its recognisable features". It needs to be emphasised that cultural heritage is a means of showcasing lifestyle and the way of living as developed by the populace of a particular community that is passed on from generation to generation. This may include multiple aspects like customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions, and values that can be intangible or tangible (ICOMOS 2002). Further, Faulkner (1978) suggested two basic concepts that enable one to distinguish heritage, that is, heritage of objects and heritage of ideas. The former represents symbolic representation like monuments, while the latter

focus on ideas or messages enshrined on objects. It is prudent to view heritage within the cultural milieu by intertwining both the forms of heritage than viewing them independently. Therefore, in the context of urban heritage, the functionality of the city, port city or administrative city, gives a heritage to the city with its structure and cultural activities that evolve over some time. However, with development, the urban space gets transformed. When does this get represented? This is indicative of when the cultural setting demonstrates the diverse heritage of the city bringing together multiple communities and demonstrates wellness, happiness and a sense of belonging (Munasinghe 2000). This calls upon heritage awareness and the need of education that should be wide-ranging and varied, which enhances the management of heritage resources rather than merely looking at as routine educational practice. Like Faulkner, Munasinghe (2000) also restated that both tangible and intangible should be given due equal importance, as showcasing one aspect of heritage over the other could be problematic. This would also have varying implications for heritage management and education practices (Zazu 2011). Lastly, undoubtedly protecting the urban heritage is prime but needs the engagement of multiple stakeholders. Involvement of the local community and establishing the Public-Private Partnerships program could be one possible solution (Fitri et al. 2020; Oers and Pereira 2012).

Research Question

Goa, a Portuguese colony for nearly 450 years (1510-1961), has a unique identity to the rest of India. The imprints of this long European colonial regime are visible in the monuments, urban landscape, cuisine, events, law and order, traditions, celebrations, and numerous other cultural attributes. Thus, this research focuses on the urban Lusophone identity in a selected urban town of Goa, namely, Margao. The research questions that are addressed are as follows:

- Does Margao, as an urban town signify Lusophone Identity?
- What is the self-image, the identity of the city, and how is this represented in contemporary times?
- How does Lusophone Identity influence the economy, tourism, bi-, and multilateral relations?

Thus, this research focuses on the physical identity rather than the social dimension or intangible heritage.

Objectives

The following objectives have been streamlined for the present research work.

1. To draw the timeline of the historical built environment during the Portuguese regime to create the heritage urban landscape of Margao.
2. Compare the perceptions of the locals, residing in the core and suburb, in the context of Lusophone heritage and identity.
3. To analyse the ramification of heritage in terms of identity and commercial branding.

METHODOLOGY

Based on the literature review, usually, research on urban heritage and identity addresses a broad perspective. Accordingly, the following research is multidisciplinary and blends qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative is more to collecting local histories, opinion building, and understanding it as a phenomenon. Quantitative is to gauge the perception of the local populace from a histo-cultural perspective.

Further, to achieve the objectives, both mixed method is used infusing primary and secondary data sources. However, the present study emphasises heavily first-hand information based on real-time data at the micro-level. Therefore, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) forms the basis of research, using surveys, in-depth interviews, field observations, and gathered opinions for the study region. The secondary data is in form of official reports and other relevant sources. This was coupled with an extensive literature review conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the research work.

As stated, PRA (Participatory Rapid Appraisal) forms the basis of primary data collection. Four methods have been applied in the present research. *Transect walk* has been used for describing and showing the location and understanding the historical, features, present landscape, and land uses. *Time scale mapping* is conducted to trace the history of Margao. It gives an overview of the history and social changes that have occurred over the time.

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather primary information from the local key community people, especially those who have been residents for a significant time (over 40 years), as organisers of the heritage walk in Margao. Both informal interviews and oral histories were involved during the fieldwork with the different people. Personal observations and semi-structured conversations rather than direct interviews provided insights into the town.

Surveys, as a well-structured questionnaire scrutinise this destination's socio-economic changes. Respondents who have lived sufficiently at the place of destination have been surveyed for this purpose. This is purely based on the opinions and perceptions of the local people. A random survey technique has been applied. The questions were purely close-ended (affirmative and negative). Out of a total of 277 respondents, (111 were from the core heritage area of Margao and 167 from the suburb area of Margao).

Finally, data from field notes, daily experiences and observations, and personal in-depth and casual interviews have been used to provide linkages to understand the emerging dimensions of cultural heritage and identity.

DISCUSSION

The following section is divided into three sections with respect to the historical backdrop that envisages the invasion of the Portuguese and establishment of Lusophone identity on the land of Goa, it then provides insight into the evolution of the Portuguese landscape in the town of Margao, and lastly, the development of Margao in the post-liberation era.

Historical Background: Basis of Lusophone Identity

Goa being under Portuguese rule for more than 450 years (1510-1961 AD) shows a tremendous imprint of colonial rule on the demographic, cultural and socio-economic life of Goans in terms of Latinisation, in contrast to the rest of India, which was under the British rule for nearly 150 years, and did not experience this type of influence on its masses (Sawant 2001).

The Portuguese Viceroy, Afonso de Albuquerque, conquered the island of Tiswadi in 1510 and

it was in 1543 that Salcete and Bardez came under Portuguese rule. The annexation of these coastal talukas is referred as "*Old Conquest talukas*". While the rest of the interior talukas were annexed much later (1763-1789). They are known as "*New Conquest talukas*". The conquest of Goa was followed by large-scale conversions (Robinson 1998). Thus, the effect of proselytisation and the influence of Portuguese culture in the Old Conquest is much older and of greater intensity than in the New Conquest region. For example, the Jesuit records of 1719-1821 show that ninety percent of the inhabitants were Christians and the rest non-Christians (Hindus 9.09% and 0.91% Muslims) of the State. Salcete taluka with Margao as the centre of Christianity boasted of the highest concentration of Catholics, that is, ninety-seven percent. These figures reached a peak in 1782, after which they showed a slight decline (Bauss 1997).

Urbanisation was mainly confined to the administrative towns of Panjim and the religious and commercial town of Margao. Both the towns belong to the Old Conquest. As per the data available for 1831, each of these towns with a population of 10,000 had a significant Catholic population (Bauss 1997). In 1818, the administrative capital was shifted from Old Goa to Panjim. The development of the city of Goa (Panjim) by the Portuguese was affected with great splendour, as is apparent in the baroque style structures and layout of the typical gridiron with roads, lanes, and squares. The town has been distinctly described as *EQuemvia Goa, Pesquisa de ver Libaó* (He who sees Goa, need not see Lisbon) (D'Souza 1977).

Margao: Historical Perspective

The Jesuits introduced Christianity in Margao in about 1564. In 1567, on the order of Archbishop Dom Gaspar de leao Periera, the famous Church of Holy Spirit was erected by destroying the Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Damodar, which was shifted to Zambaulim, a place 40 km away from Margao. The Church of the Holy Spirit was rebuilt in 1675 with ten altars, the main altar being dedicated to the Holy Spirit (Gune 1979). Thus, under the Portuguese regime, Margao was always in the limelight, as it was not only the core venue to propagate Christianity in South Goa but also its commercial eminence.

As a result, Margao was raised to the rank of a town by a Royal Decree of 3rd April 1778 and was demoted when the conversions were mellowed.

With the coming of the Portuguese and due to large-scale conversions, not only did Margao become a Catholic dominated town but also experienced significant socio-economic changes. The *patshalas* were replaced by *Parochial* schools and *Parish* schools, which mainly taught Christian doctrines, reading, writing, and Church music. The Jesuits were also instrumental in starting a college at Margao, which was later shifted to Rachol.

At the time of conversion, many of the Hindus fled to neighbouring talukas, which must have reduced the population of the town drastically. Moreover, Damodar, the village deity was shifted to Zambaulim in Sanguem taluka of Goa. When the zeal of conversion mellowed and the surroundings was more congenial, the deity was brought back to Margao in 1884. Presently, the Lord resides in *Damodar Sal* (*Sal* means hall).

The Portuguese did some noteworthy things on the social front. For example, the present general hospital was known as '*Hospicio Hospital*' is a very old institution that was founded by the late Fr. Antonio Joao de Miranda on December 31, 1867, and was run by a charitable trust '*Hospicio do Sagrado Corcarao do Mario*' in Margao. It was initially supposed to provide shelter to the poor people and orphans in Goa (Table 1). Further, after an agreement with the Western India Portuguese Railway Company Limited in 1882, the first portion of the railway between Savordem and Mormugao, passing through Margao was commissioned in 1887, and later it was connected to British India in 1888. Thus the town was catapulted to centre stage, attracting a large share of the goods transported by train. This indicates that the development of the town was confined to an area in the vicinity of the old market (Mercado Vasco da Gama), which included the Holy Spirit Church, part of Borda ward, Hospicio road and Comba (Faleiro 2015). After the commencement of railways, in early 1900 the town centre was shifted to its present location. The credit for this goes to the then president of the Camara Municipal, Jorge Barreto, who during his tenure foresaw the imminent development and expansion of the town. The town centre, which remains the same, is marked by a majestic municipal building, of the Spanish style of architecture, with an oval-shaped

Table 1: Historical time lines: Markers of heritage

Category	Prominent Features
Heritage Monuments	Largo de Igreja or The Holy Spirit Church(1564)
	Camara Municipal de Salcete (Old Camara building)(1778)
	Municipality Building Town Hall (1905)
	District Court (formerly housed a jail) (1777)
Heritage Houses	Hospicio do Sagrado Coração de Maria (1867)
	Damodar Sal temple (1910)
	Calcada de Nossa Senhora de Piedade (Monte Hill Chapel)(1820)
	Administração das Comunidades de Salcete (1910)
	“House of Seven Gables” or “Sat Burzam Ghor” (1790)
Festivals and Celebrations	House of Rodrigues
	House of Miranda
	Vista de Avenida (Lourenco family)
	House of Bishop Rebelo
	House of Verlekar
Business Enterprises	House of Soares
	Indian National Trust for Art, Culture, and Heritage (INTACH) has identified several heritage houses in Margao.
Business Enterprises	Feast of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception
	Dindi (Hindu Festival) 1909 Carnival
Business Enterprises	Costas (Food Products) 1885
	Mercado de Afonso de Albuquerque (New Market,1910)
	Mercado Velho (old market)
	Tipografia Nacional (Printing Press) 1858

Source: Compiled from various sources

a. Faleiro Valmiki, (2015), b. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margao>, c. Gazetter of Goa, Daman and Diu(1979)

garden in the front (named after Jorge Barreto), and along the garden are the major governmental and non-governmental institutions like the municipal building, post office, police station, and bus stop. A new market was also built on modern lines in 1910. Thus, the town became the hub of great commercial activity. In the 1930s Margao became a centre of education, trade, commerce, and administration. Many educational institutes like Loyola High School, Presentation, Fatima Convent Model, and New Era high schools were established between 1920 and 1930.

To summarise, the historic structures of Margao built during the Portuguese period are the Hospicio (hospital), municipal building, *Saat Buruzan chem. Ghor* (House of Seven Gables) of

the Silvas at Borda, Holy Spirit Church Square lined with beautiful and impressive Portuguese style homes and also on the Abade Faria road. More signifying is the Latin style of architecture, with large windows and *verandas* (Pandit 2003). Other famous historic temples of Margao, though not a part of Portuguese imprints, are Hari Mandir and Vitthal Mandir known all over Goa for its Dindi festival and the Damodar *sal*.

Post-Liberation (1961 Onwards)

After the liberation of Goa from the Portuguese yoke in 1961, due to its commercial importance and centrality, Margao was made the headquarters of the South Goa district and the administrative centre of Salcete taluka. In the post-liberation period, from a mere 4.32 sq. km. in 1960, it had spatially expanded to presently almost 21 sq.km. The town experienced a new phase of urbanisation, which witnessed the large-scale intensification of commercial activities and changes in the land use pattern (Ferro and Sawant 2020a). The town has also been able to increase its trade by establishing its industrial estate in 1969, at San Jose De Areal.

In the initial decades of the post-liberation phase, the CBD (Central Business District) was still concentrated around the administrative institutes, in the city centre. The construction boomed in the 1990s and to provide space for new massive redevelopment schemes, a large area reorganised the layout of the commercial district. Many of the services and institutions alike, the bus terminus, market, sports complexes, which attract a large number of people, were shifted to the outlying

areas (Ferro and Sawant 2020b). Thus, Margao today witnesses the creation of new town nuclei, which are away from the town centre, resulting in less congestion and better mobility in the intra town area. Presently with a population of a lakh, Margao has been rightly referred to as the commercial capital of Goa. This development and metamorphosis have questioned the Lusophone Identity in the urban setup.

RESULTS

Lynch (1960) observed that historic cities are considered to play a significant role in enabling and enhancing place identity, memory and belonging. It also tends to create an urban identity for the rest of a city and the adjoining region. The historic past needs to be (re)traced with people's awareness, people's initiative, or interventions by the concerned authorities.

As discussed in earlier, Margao, as a historic town, became an icon of Christianity and Lusophone identity during the Portuguese regime. In the post liberation era, the town has experienced rapid urbanisation and therefore to gauge the Lusophone Identity, this research attempts retrace the historical identity. Accordingly, people's perception was considered as one of the means. The present research indicates that people living in the old town have a stronger relation to Lusophone identity than those living in the suburbs (Table 2).

The residents are indeed proud of the history and legacy of Margao but also agree that it is not understood as the forms of heritage that would give Lusophone Identity. This is both applicable to the populace of the core and

Table 2: People's perception: searching for Lusophone identity

Questions	Core		Suburb	
	Affirmative	Negative	Affirmative	Negative
1 Are you proud of the history of Margao?	98.20	1.80	50.90	49.10
2 Do you think heritage sites are well understood?	27.03	72.97	32.12	67.88
3 Do you think the heritage can be enhanced?	96.40	3.60	52.12	47.88
4 Is the Archaeological Survey of India is doing enough to maintain this heritage?	41.44	58.56	33.93	66.07
5 Do you feel that the heritage sites should be maintained to gain Margao the importance as a historic town?	94.59	5.41	58.78	41.22
6 Are locals culturally active?	90.09	9.91	61.21	38.79
7 Do you think people have a sense of cultural heritage?	24.32	75.68	17.03	82.97
8 Is there a cultural transformation in Margao?	63.96	36.04	87.27	12.73

Source: Survey, 2018

suburbs of the town. The majority of them do agree that heritage sites should be maintained to provide impetus enabling Margao as a historic settlement, showcasing tangible and intangible heritage. The Archaeological Survey of India could also help in the maintenance of historical monuments. *Many feel that the municipality has to be proactive to maintain the heritage structures. The construction and Tiatr, local dramatic performance, took away the tourism aspect* (Almeida 2017).

Though people are culturally active but more so with events like Dindi and carnival. As one of the respondents stated, “*Feasts Damodar Saal, Narkasur competition and Dindi have no Portuguese influence, and they stand for how the people have retained their identity despite the Portuguese rule and restrictions.*” In 2013, under the banner of the ‘Save Margao heritage movement’, heritage lovers from across South Goa submitted a memorandum to the government that the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) building, popularly known as Camara Building, to be declared a heritage site and would support the preservation and restoration of heritage structures across Margao (TOI 2013).

Presently, how do people look at Margao? Does Margao hold Lusophone Identity? Nearly half of the respondents (nearly 44%) felt that Margao is a multi-functional town. It is a combination of commercial, heritage, administrative, and tourist destination. Only fifteen percent of the respondents identify Margao as a heritage town mainly because of the presence of Portuguese structured houses, Holy Spirit church, Camara building (old Municipal building), whereas 1/7th of them feel Margao is a commercial town, which is the reason Margao is known as the commercial capital of Goa. Rest feel either it is a tourist town or an administrative town. This is indicative that Lusophone identity is associated with tangible heritage. With urbanisation, the Lusophone identity is overshadowed with development and multi-functionality of the town. This has been voiced on several platforms. The development plans for Margao in the Old city area will lose it hundred years of history and lose its unique character (Narayan 2019).

Margao town displays Portuguese heritage, mainly by its rich unique architecture. It is vogue to have Portuguese-sounding names, giving an exotic feel to the name and the establishment. This

is also indicative of affiliation to the erstwhile Portuguese regime. The tourism industry also latches to which looks more trendy and attracts more tourists, like Comida De Goa, Casa Penguin De Geloada, Casa de Saude and Mercado Velho (Goyal 2017). Thus, heritage contributes to the local community by creating jobs, increases spending by tourists on local businesses, supporting local shops and services, increases demand for local activities and amenities, supports museums and heritage sites, creating a market for local crafts and produce, helps maintain local traditions and identity, gives unique identity as a tourist destination, supports local festivals and events, and attracts investment into the area.

Table 3: Contribution of heritage to the local community: Perception

<i>Local communities</i>	<i>Yes*</i>	<i>No*</i>
Creating jobs	82%	18%
Increases spending on local business	52%	48%
Supporting local shops and service	85%	15%
Increases demand local activities and amenities	85%	15%
Supports museums and heritage sites	87%	13%
Creates a market for local crafts and produce	94%	5%
Helps maintain local traditions and identity	91%	9%
Gives a unique identity as a tourist destination	91%	9%
Supports local festivals and events	91%	9%
Attracts investment into the area	85%	15%

Source: Local Survey Questionnaire, 2018 (*figures are rounded)

The affirmative responses have been on a higher scale except the increased spending in local business, indicating that there are larger investments in locals in small business but do not see corporate investments (Table 3). Local products like the cashew, local alcoholic drink called *feni* and Goan wines are in great demand that support local business. The feast of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, Carnival and *Tiatr*-local drama, enables the locals to maintain the tradition. The long-standing pre-colonial and colonial history gives a unique identity to the Margao. It could be understood that tangible and intangible heritage of the bygone era provides identity and brand, which attracts more tourists. This promotes investment and helps the economy of the town.

What has been done? Some efforts are made but needs intensification. Heritage city walk initiated “Soul Travelling”, a tourist agency that specialises in off beat tourism and conducts heritage walks in the core part of Margao with the focus on making cities lively and bringing the heritage perspective. According to them, it *creates a unique blend of Indo Portuguese culture, (re) defines Goa as just not sun, sand and sea, but a place of cultural importance, bringing awareness to conserve the heritage(though difficult if it is privately owned) and building communities that take pride and retrace history.* Very recently, efforts are noticed on bringing about an awareness of this ‘identity’ by a group of residents.

The Goa government does a bit like the serendipity festival and carnival. The carnival celebration attracts tourism and also gives the identity as the only state in India to still have the erstwhile Portuguese culture.

The Centre for Portuguese Language and Culture (CPLC) at Margao provides support and encouragement in the learning of the Portuguese language and developing a deeper understanding of Portuguese culture. The centre offers Portuguese language classes from European level I to V and also organises film shows, exhibitions, and workshops.

CONCLUSION

The present research undertaken reflects that Margao, an important town of Goa, was under the Portuguese regime for nearly 450 years. This has left an impeccable socio-cultural imprint on the urban landscape and the local populace. The historic monuments as tangible products are visible and give a Lusophone identity to the town. The local populace opined that they are proud of their heritage but need to protect the monuments.

The general impression is that promoting heritage tourism in Margao will enable employability, promotion of local crafts, and attract investments and allied activities. There are certain efforts made to revive the identity through heritage walks, festivals and representation by certain groups. However, in the post-liberation era, as a process of urbanisation and ever-growing urban landscape coupled with commercial development, population growth and spatial expansion have transformed the town. The meta-

morphosis from a religious-socio-cultural town to a commercial hub, has posed the challenge to synergise the past with the present.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For a better understanding of the social, economic and morphological characteristics of Margao town, its historical phases of development need to be identified. Margao, though essentially a creation of Portuguese entrepreneurship in Goa, it represents a very interesting case of the synthesis of two cultures, one indigenous and the other occidental. To keep this identity, the following are the suggestions:

- a) Goa is a tourism destination, and beach tourism is significantly popular and there have to be efforts to promote alternative tourism. Along with eco-tourism, heritage tourism would be a good and acceptable option. Panjim, the state capital, and Margao has a rich cultural heritage and therefore the promotion of heritage walks, heritage events, and cultural events (Shigmo Utsav, carnival, etc.) would enable not only income generation but also preserve the heritage. This will require trained manpower and institutional organisation either by the respective municipality or by the Department of Tourism.
- b) With the passage of time and increasing urbanisation, the rich historic legacy of the town will fade and subsequently diminish. Therefore it could be prudent to have an exhibition, museum or gallery of the historic timelines of Margao. This will instil a sense of pride amongst the people of the town and also bring about awareness of heritage conservation and identity. Needless to say, it will also promote heritage tourism.
- c) Many of the structures that are in a blemished state requires attention for repairs and maintenance. The challenges are multiple, from the rising cost of maintenance to restoration by individuals. One way would be to convert them into art galleries, museums or heritage hotels.
- d) Development nexus heritage and Lusophone identity are one of the challenges the urbanisation process undergoes unless there is no proper strategy to conserve and

highlight the same. There is no “Old City” and “New City” demarcation, which then assures a “Conservation or Preservation Zone”. It would be prudent to take concrete measures to demarcate the heritage zone and restrict development that would hamper the heritage of the town.

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