



Portuguese Influence on the Culture of Western India: Architecture, Language, Religion, Food, and Cultural Identity

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Abstract- Portugal established itself in Western India in the early 16th century and that lasted over four centuries in places like Goa, Daman, Diu and some parts of the northern Konkan like Vasai and Mumbai with the result being long-lasting cultural changes that remains apparent in the regional identities. This paper will discuss the complex Portuguese impact on the culture of Western India in terms of an interdisciplinary approach with scholarships on architecture, language, religion, food habits, music, and social identity. The historical evidence, linguistics and related studies, archeology, and ethnographical as well as cultural history all contribute to the synthesis of the available literature in presenting the ways in which Portuguese colonialism operated as neither political domination nor simply as process of cultural exchange and creolization. Their results indicate that the Indo-Portuguese culture was not formed through force, but through the negotiated interactions, leading to the creation of the hybrid forms, including: the Indo-Portuguese domestic architecture, the Konkani language with Portuguese influence of lexical elements, the catholic rituals based on a local setting, the unique cuisine, and the creole musical styles such as the mando. The paper recommends that Portuguese cultural influence in Western India can be interpreted as a living, multifaceted heritage enshrined in ordinary life as opposed to being a colonial legacy. The study also adds to the wider discussions of cultural exchange in regions, hybridity and postcolonial identity formation in South Asia through coalescing regional case studies within Goa, Mumbai-Vasai and Daman-Diu.

Keywords- Portuguese India, Goa, Western India, cultural hybridity, Indo-Portuguese heritage, colonial encounters

I. Introduction

The Portuguese relations with Western India have a unique role in the history of European colonialism in South Asia concerning the long period, duration, and scope of these relations. When the Portuguese took Goa in 1510, they founded their first lasting Asian capital and which very soon became the administrative, religious, and cultural centre of the Estado da Índia. The Portuguese power was extended to Daman, Diu and strategically positioned settlements along the Konkan coast including Vasai (previously Bassein) of Goa. In contrast to the subsequent colonial powers, Portuguese activity in India brought together elements of maritime trade, missionary activity, permanent settlement, and cultural assimilation, the results of which were the formation of social structures, which at the same time are European, Indian, and Indian Ocean-directed (Pearson, 1987; Oxford Research Encyclopedia, 2020).



The Portuguese influence in Western India did not have a homogenous and consistent cultural effect. Although the introduction of new religious institutions, the new forms of architecture, the administrative structure, and new norms of law by the colonial power were also told, they did not necessarily enter the culture of the people local to the colonizers as passive consumers. Rather, the indigenous peoples were active to adapt, negotiate, resist and reform the Portuguese cultural forms in order to fit the social structure, ecological environment, and the religious sensibility in the local areas. Consequently, Indo-Portuguese culture would arise not in the form of cultural replacement and homogenization, but through the mechanisms of selective appropriation and creolization. The study of Hindu-Catholic experiences in Goa emphasizes how religious conversion, among other things, became internalized in pre-existing relationships across castes as well as the practices of rituality and kinship resulting in distinctively local modes of Catholicism (Henn, 2014; Xavier and Zupanov, 2015).

The aim of this paper is to critically analyze Portuguese influence on Western culture of the Indians in five expansive intersecting areas including architecture, language, religion, food, and expressive culture. The architectural research has shown that there were hybrid forms in churches, forts as well as domestic areas which saw the Portuguese design principles to touch on the native materials and climate adaptations and spatial rationales. Linguistic studies have shown that prolonged interaction between Portuguese and indigenous languages resulted in long term lexical effects in Konkani and the development of Portuguese-lexified creoles in other areas, including Diu, due to the long term social contact and not temporary colonial rule. The history of religion reveals examples of Catholicism developing in the process of conversation with the tradition of local beliefs and practices, forming unique traditions of devotions, festivals, and community identities. Cultural hybridity at the everyday life level is depicted in the history of food where Portuguese food, cooking methods, and festiva dishes got integrated into the local food systems; especially in Goa. Lastly, the creolized aesthetics, which combine Iberian and South Asian cultures across generations, include music, ritual performance, and expressive culture (i.e., the mando tradition).

The research is oriented to five central research questions: (1) the interaction of Portuguese architectural norms with local traditions of building; (2) the influence of language contact on the development of Konkani and regional creoles; (3) the evolution of Catholicism through the contacts with local religious practices; (4) the cultural transformation caused by the Portuguese influence on the cultures of coastal foods; and (5) the role of Portuguese musical perceptions and rituals and the identity in cultural hybridity. The answers to these questions are not only critical to the reconstruction of the cultural history of Western India, but also to a movement of the region into a larger discussion of colonial modernity, cultural hybridity, and postcolonial heritage, in which one sees the encounter colonial as a negotiation, locally situated, and of both ways.

II. Literature Review

Portuguese Colonialism and Cultural Interaction



First historiography of Portuguese colonial studies on India gave substantial attention to politics of conquest, oceanic voyage as well as missionary business usually projecting colonial authority unidirectional. In exploratory literature, the strategic value of the Estado da Índia controlling the Indian Ocean trade routes and establishing imperial power was underlined (Pearson, 1987). Missionary experiences including Jesuit ones were put in a context of civilizational project based on religious conversion and moral reform rather often excluding native agency (Zupanov, 2005). These strategies were more likely to support European archives and epistemologies, and they served to strengthen the idea of cultural imposition and not interaction.

This has since been considerably revised in more recent scholarship by preempting cultural negotiation, hybridity and local involvement. According to Henn (2014), Portuguese rule in Western India did not necessarily represent a strict colony, but it was the result of negotiation experiences between different societies and economies as well as rituals, which were informed by the local social organizations, commercial interests, and rituals. On the same note, Xavier (2022) emphasizes the fact that the colonial rule relied on cooperation with native elites, interpreters, and systems of knowledge and, thus, created neither entirely Portuguese nor not entirely indigenous outcomes.

One of the key conceptual interventions in this historiography is the idea of so-called Catholic Orientalism, which is suggested by Xavier and Županov (2015). This framework questions the idea that the knowledge of colonialism was being thrown down the throats of passive subjects. Rather, it theoreticises Portuguese knowledge production - especially, in theology, linguistics and ethnography - as something dialogic, and formed by a process of persistent interaction with the intellectual traditions of India. This viewpoint is essential in the interpretation of the manner in which cultural modes in Western India transformed by adapting to one another as opposed to being ruled by one another through dictatorship.

Architecture and Urban Space

Architecture has also become one of the important areas of studying the interaction between the Indo-Portuguese cultures. The work of Carita (2007) exploring Goa reveals how the Portuguese city regulations translated into architectural standards which incorporated the Iberian ideals of urban planning with local materials, weather, and workmanship. Colonial authorities did not copy European fashions wholesale but instead changed the forms of buildings to suit the climatic conditions based on the monsoon, the heat of the area, and the local skills of knowledge in constructions.

Studies of local architecture also show the extent to which such a hybridity goes in depth. Nisha and Jayasudha (2019) demonstrate that the residential areas integrated Iberian elements, including decorated facades, verandas, and tiles of azulejo, with the native space logic of the courtyard and gender structure of the home. These hybrid houses served as occupied places on which cultural identities were lived on and negotiated on a daily basis.

The historical study of architecture has been expanded by the study of other cities other than Goa like Mumbai and Vasai by urban historians. Losa Mendiratta (2011) records the influence of Portuguese fortifications, land tenure systems and ecclesiastical



complexes on the early urban morphology (which later impacted upon colonial and postcolonial development). The same Riding (2018) reveals that spatial interventions by Portuguese had had lasting impressions on urban centres along the coast especially in the form of churches, forts, and infrastructures to match the need of maritime defence. The military and religious architecture in the intangible heritage is further emphasized by the heritage documentation done by INTACH on Vasai Fort to show the remnants of the Portuguese presence on the Western India territory.

Language and Creolization

Linguistics designates Western India to be a central location of Portuguese-lexified creoles; as a result of historical contacts that existed between European and Indian languages. As explained by Cardoso (2009, 2018) in his original work on Indo-Portuguese of Diu, this linguistic form takes a place among the large Indian Ocean creole networks, which is where common grammatical construction and share lexical borrowings as a result of trade, migration, and intermarriage. These creoles are used as the source of language to show continued interaction with culture and not superficial colonialism.

In addition to creoles, Portuguese borrowings in Konkani and especially in areas like religion, government, the foods, and the life of the household, gives testimony to cultural linguistic blend (Wherritt, 1989). The research papers in the Govapuri Journal (2012) also highlight the selective borrowings to the local linguistic systems and thereby the agency and continuity of cultures. These developments are placed in the context of global dynamics of creolization in the Oxford Research Encyclopedia (2021), which suggests that the zone of language contact under colonialism is the key to understanding cultural exchange processes as well as processes in power and identity formation.

Religion and Social Identity

Religion was one of the most radical, though opposed, spheres of the Portuguese influence in Western India. With the introduction of Catholicism, social arrangement, rites, and social identity especially at Goa were redefined. Henn (2014) points out that the interaction between Hindus and Catholics was more negotiated than displaced, and the converts usually preserved some of the aspects of the previously followed ritual life. Sail (2022) also brings to light the influence of indigenous ideas of purity and pollution on the experiences of conversion, which made it easier or harder to accept and reject Catholic norms.

Notably, conversion had no effect of obliterating caste hierarchies. As Xavier (2022) illustrates, the caste identities could often be reformed in the Catholic social systems to generate new form of hierarchies, which reflected the previous types of social differences. The research of East Indian Catholics in Mumbai shows similar mechanisms, with Portuguese religious pressure overlapping the identities of local caste, occupation and neighborhood (Faria, 2018). Sahapedia (n.d.), records the negotiating of hybrid identity these communities still indulge in via ritual, language, and collective memory, identifying the long-term social consequences of Portuguese religious encounters.



Everyday Culture, Food and Music.

The evidence of Indo-Portuguese hybridity can be found in everyday cultural practices which may be seen as some of the most concrete evidence of that practice. Food history, especially, brings to light the fact that the Portuguese ingredients, cooking methods, and the cuisines on festive occasions were imported into the traditions of locals. Fernandes (2022) follows the process by which vinegar, chilies, meat-based cuisine, and festive sweets were incorporated into the Goan cuisine and supports the view that the concept of foodways could be used as a living archive of colonial interaction. Research studies on the manufacture of feni also show how the practices utilized locally adjusted to colonial trade networks, taxation and control (Warwick University, 2009).

Cultural creolization can also be seen in the music and performance traditions. Having both Konkani words and Iberian forms, the mando is an expression of hybrid emotionality that emerged under the influence of the colonial social space (Kabir, 2021). As Mendes (2024) emphasizes, these forms keep developing and do not cease being places of intersection of historical memory, romance, and identity of a community. Food and music are used jointly to show how Portuguese influence was incorporated into the everyday world creating cultural forms that still conform to regional identity in Western India.

III. Methodology

In this work, the qualitative research design is based on the analysis of secondary data and belongs to the interdisciplinary research design based on the Portuguese influence on the culture of Western India. Since writing about the historical experience and cultural complexity of the topic, qualitative approach is the most appropriate, as it makes it possible to interpret the texts, material culture and symbolic practices in spite of the quantifiable variables used solely. The approach is based on correspondence of perceptions of history, architecture, linguistics, religious studies, and cultural anthropology, which make it possible to comprehend complex and lasting formations of cultures under the influence of Portuguese colonial encounters on territories of Goa, Daman, Diu, and northern Konkan coast in a complex and holistic manner. The study will use the synthesis of available research in different fields of knowledge to determine the patterns, continuity and change of Indo-Portuguese cultural practices over time.

Analysis of secondary data should be used specifically in this study due the more than four centuries of Portuguese presence in Western India that created a rich source of archives, academic interpretations, and documentation about the heritage. Instead of generating original data, the paper reflects and critically assesses the examination of authoritative scholarly resources in order to make up a unifying narrative of cultural influence. This methodology is consistent with the traditional view of historical and cultural studies, in which the development of the theory depends on the reinterpretation and comparison synthesis of existing material (Pearson, 1987; Henn, 2014).

Data Sources

The information used in the present research will be collected based on different types of secondary sources to have breadth, depth and credibility among scholars. To begin with, the peer-reviewed journals articles are a fundamental source of data. Among these works, there are books in history, architecture, linguistics and cultural studies that study



certain areas of Portuguese influence, like Indo-Portuguese architecture, encountering with other languages and religions, and expressive culture. Peer-reviewed articles can include theoretically knowledgeable yet methodologically robust analytic descriptions that are fundamental to academic synthesis (Carita, 2007; Cardoso, 2018; Kabir, 2021).

Second, the scholarly monographs serve to put the Portuguese colonialism into context of other historical and theoretical processes. Primary sources on Portuguese India, mission, and production of colonial knowledge can provide a long-term view of the cultural change and continuity (Pearson, 1987; desenosko, 2005; Xavier, 2022). These monographs are specifically useful in following the development of the institutions and the change of the theory that influenced the cultural interaction in Western India.

Third, important additional data source is comprised of doctoral dissertations and theses. The works of this sort may be rather detailed case studies, archival research, and regional analysis not always present in the journal articles. To explore, the dissertation on Goan food history or Indo-Portuguese print culture is good to give tasteful empirical indication that enhances the interdisciplinary scope of the study (Fernandes, 2022; Pendse, 2013).

Fourth, the material and institutional aspects of Portuguese cultural influence are analyzed based on the heritage documentation that is created by groups like UNESCO and INTACH. The catalogues of the Churches and Convents of Goa include professional descriptions of the architectural heritage and its international importance and the architectural surveys of the sites like Vasai Fort conducted by INTACH allow analyzing built environment in Indo-Portuguese style in the region more authoritatively. These sources are on the edge of scholarly and practical stages of conservation practices with much emphasis on the interpretation and preservation of colonial history and heritage in the contemporary times.

Lastly, access to policy documents, historical records and digitised research publications is available in government and academic repositories, such as national cultural portal and university archives. Such repositories facilitate the triangulation of material and strengthen the validity of its interpretations, being based on the recognized sources by the government (Ministry of Culture, Government of India, n.d.).

Analytical Framework

There are three theoretical frameworks which help guide the analysis based on the cultural hybridity theory, postcolonial historiography and creolization frameworks in both linguistics and cultural studies. Both of these interpretations together are able to inspire a complex understanding of dictation of Portugal influence as a process that is negotiated and dynamic.

The cultural hybridity theory will offer the theoretical perspective through which the Indo-Portuguese culture came into being through the interaction and not through the unilateral imposition. Hybridity insists on the generation of novel cultures as a result of contact, translation, and adaption with defiant binary terms of colonizer and colonized. It is a specifically useful framework to consider architecture, food, and even expressive



culture, in which Portuguese and local in it are literally woven together (Henn, 2014; Kandolkar, 2020).

The critical usage of the study on the colonial accounts is informed by postcolonial historiography. Instead of focusing on Portuguese rule as being a singular or deterministic entity, the postcolonial approach anticipates indigenous agency, resistance and negotiation. This view gives the study a chance to reconsider religious conversion, language change, and social organization as reflected by local circumstances and power relations, instead of arbitrary domination taking place (Xavier and Županov, 2015; Xavier, 2022).

Language contact and expressive traditions are analyzed in terms of creolization frameworks of linguistics and cultural studies. When it comes to the linguistics of creolization, the creoles whose lexicon is Portuguese, like the Diu region, or loan words, particularly Portuguese ones, into Konkani, can be understood by creolization. Creolization, applied in a much broader sense, is a cultural process which explains the existence of hybrid music and rituals, and the identities that emerged after years of continuous interaction (Cardoso, 2009; Jayasuriya, 2017).

Through these analytical categories, the study transcends the descriptive explanations of the Portuguese influence to provide an interpretive synthesis, which gives more emphasis to process, negotiation and continuity. The methodological conglomerate of multiple sources of data and interdisciplinary theories allows characterizing the influence of the Portuguese colonial experience namely on the Western Indian cultural landscape and still has in the present day.

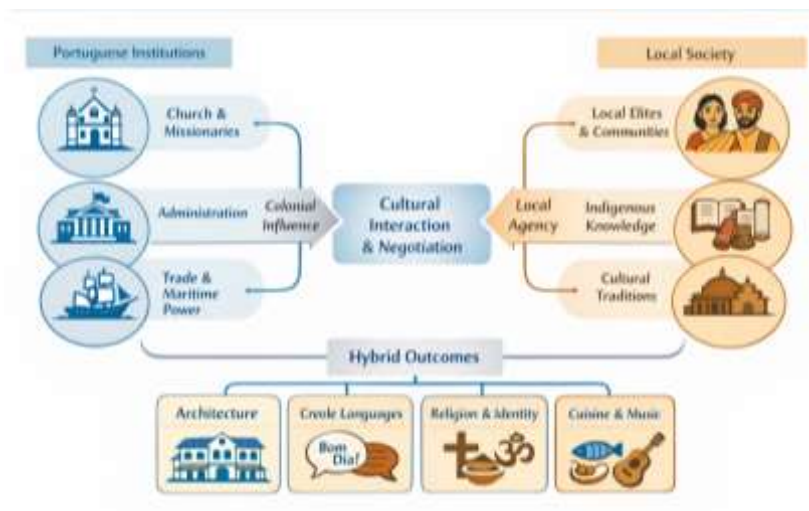


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Portuguese Cultural Influence in Western India

IV. Results



The review of the literature across disciplines indicates that, as a collective phenomenon, there are five overall findings that interdisciplinarily combined resulted in the constructions of enduring and localized cultures as well as hybrid models, as opposed to the fleeting and remnant effects of colonialism. Throughout architecture, language, religion, food, and expressive culture the traces always lead to processes of adaptation and negotiation over a long period which are inculcated in the day-to-day life.

Architectural Hybridity

Indo-Portuguese architecture is more of a lasting synthesis and not a transitional or derivative stage. Research of domestic houses, churches, forts and civic buildings in Goa, Vasai, Daman and Diu demonstrates architectural forms that are mashed-up with Iberian aesthetics, local materials, spatial logic and local climate. In early Goa, architectural standards were codified in municipal laws and incorporated Portuguese urban ideals though they had a way of allowing the local methods of construction and climate (Carita, 2007).

This blend is best depicted in the domestic architecture. Elements like ornamental facade, verandah, stucco job, and tiled roofs coexist with a courtyard, laterite stone walls, and ventilation which aligns with the tropical climate (Nisha and Jayasudha, 2019). The same can be said of religious buildings, especially churches and conventions, which combine European baroque features with local traditions of craft and place, and create truly universal and local objects at the same time (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d.). The continuation of these architectural elements in modern landscapes means that Indo-Portuguese architecture cannot be considered an only remnant of colonial culture but rather the architectural style that is still alive today.

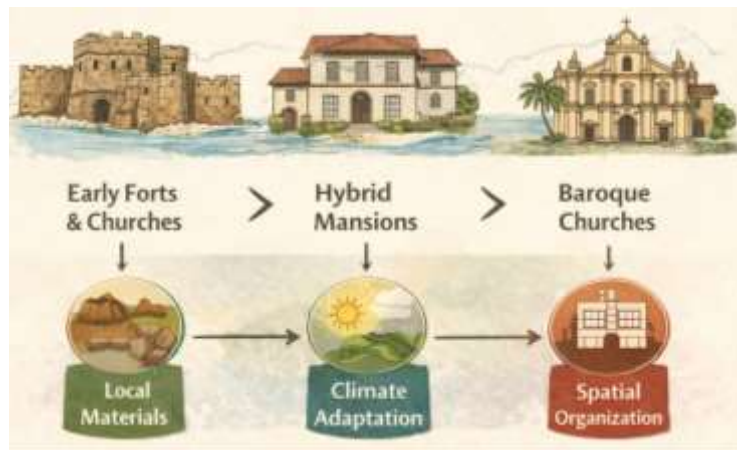


Figure 2. Evolution of Indo-Portuguese Architecture in Western India

Table 1. Key Features of Indo-Portuguese Architecture in Western India



Feature	Portuguese Origin	Local Adaptation
Façades	Decorative plasterwork	Climatic ventilation
Layout	Linear plans	Courtyards
Materials	Lime mortar	Laterite stone

Linguistic Influence

The second important observation is about the long-term linguistic influence of Portuguese on the Western Indian languages. One of the most apparent areas of Portuguese lexical influence is in Konkani and lexical mixture languages spoken in Portuguese-speaking areas such as Diu. In the field of linguistics, it has been shown that the Portuguese loanwords are clustered in areas that are directly related to the protracted duration of contact between colony and colony such as religion (church offices, rituals), food and domestic life, administration, and material culture (Wherritt, 1989; Govapuri Journal, 2012).

However, in addition to loanwords, the appearance of Indo-Portuguese creoles indicates long-standing social contact, incest and society formation, and not the temporary colonialism. The structural characteristics of the Diu creole, according to the detailed description, have been influenced by the Portuguese vocabulary and the grammatical system of the South-Asian languages, thus highlighting creolization as a cultural product in constant movement (Cardoso, 2009, 2018). These means of language are living trace of historical contact, which enable them to keep recollection of the Indo-Portuguese social worlds even after the termination of the political dominance.

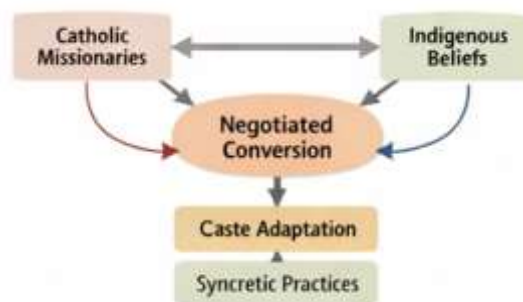


Figure 3. Linguistic Contact and Creolization Processes

Domain	Examples of Loanwords	Cultural Significance
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Religion	igreja, missa	Catholic institutions
Food	pão, vinagre	Culinary exchange
Administration	mesa, escola	Colonial governance

Table 2. Portuguese Loanwords in Konkani by Functional Domain

Religious Transformation

The third big finding is the religious change whereby Catholicism in Western India was adapted as a localized religious system as opposed to direct importation of Iberian Christianity. Although the Portuguese colonial power encouraged Catholic institutions and missionary work, conversion and religious practices were mediated by the local social frameworks and ideas of rituals, as well as family and kinship ties. Research on Goa shows that the Catholic communities still maintained some caste-like differences, modified local symbolism of rituals, and incorporated the local practices in Christian practice (Henn, 2014; Xavier, 2022).

Studies of conversion indicate that native conceptions of purity, pollution, and social status had a significant influence on shaping religious living, with religious practices yielding socially embedded kinds of Catholicism, instead of being doctrine-based and uniform (Sail, 2022). Other East Indian Catholic communities, such as the Mumbai region, are also characterized by similar core processes whereby Portuguese religious influence overlapped with the occupational identity, as well as village structure (Faria, 2018). The results of this research emphasize the idea that negotiated and plural is the way of religious change in Western India as it is more about accommodation than change.



Figure 4. Religious Transformation under Portuguese Rule

Aspect	Iberian Model	Localized Indo-Portuguese Form
Ritual	Latin liturgy	Vernacular prayers



Social Order	Parish-based	Caste-influenced communities
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Table 3. Forms of Catholic Practice in Western India

Culinary Syncretism

The fourth observation concerns the issue of culinary syncretism in which Portuguese impact is entirely absorbed in local culinary traditions, especially in Goa. The study of food history shows that Portuguese products, taming methods, and celebratory food cultures were introduced into local foods structures, making their local food traditions more unique and not just duplicate the European food (Fernandes, 2022). Such adaptations of the colonies to the local resources and preferences can be illustrated by the use of vinegar, pork, fermented products, and distillation of spirits; the latter is the most famous example of colonial influence one could see in producing feni (Warwick University, 2009).

Notably, culinary hybridity exists in the sphere of the daily practice and everyday life of ritual such as cooking at home, participating in religious festivals, and celebratory events by communities. According to the recent works, food serves as the carrier of cultural memory, which maintains the Indo-Portuguese identity through generations without political colonial institutions (Sukthankar, 2025). Culinary cultures are therefore one of the most personal and long term arenas of Portuguese culture in Western India.

Category	Portuguese Contribution	Local Integration
Ingredients	Vinegar, pork	Coconut, spices
Techniques	Fermentation	Regional cooking styles

Table 4. Portuguese Influences on Goan Cuisine

Culture Identity Formation.

The fifth significant discovery has to do with cultural identity formation which exists especially in music, festivals and expressive practices. The mando is an example of long-term creolization, and it involved Iberian melodies and poetic models mixed with local languages, themes, and settings (Kabir, 2021; Mendes, 2024). These traditions are not fixed survivals but dynamic cultural forms which nevertheless keep on shaping the community identity.

Indo-Portuguese identities, which cannot be seen in self-categorization as either European or Indian, are further manifested in the festivals, dressing, and daily social practices. Rather, they are historically stratified and locally mediated and the result of centuries of interaction on a religious, linguistic, and cultural level. It has always been illustrated in the literature that Indo-Portuguese culture in Western India is a living, self-affirming and self-sufficient entity of culture, not the remnant of colonialist impact (Henn, 2014; Xavier and Županov, 2015).

Combined, these five discoveries bring out the idea that Portuguese influence in Western India can be effectively thought of as a process of cultural hybridity and



continuity, which is entrenched in material spaces and patterns, language, religious life, food habits, and identity.

Cultural Form	Hybrid Features	Contemporary Presence
Music	Iberian melodies + Konkani lyrics	Festivals, performances
Festivals	Catholic calendar + local customs	Community identity

Table 5. Cultural Expressions of Indo-Portuguese Identity

V. Discussion

The results of the research question the linear and unidirectional approaches to the issue of the influence of colonial cultures by pre-empting reciprocity, adaptation and local agency in the formation of Indo-Portuguese culture in Western India. Instead of acting as an extractive or purely administrative colonialist, Portuguese influence was experienced through long-term settlement, intermarriage, missionary institutions, and continued interaction with the societies of the host country and generated cultural forms that are difficult to sort into opposing categories like colonizer/colonized or European/Indian. This trend is particularly pronounced in such areas of Goa, Vasai, Daman, and Diu where the impact of Portuguese influence had stood through centuries and not decades.

Among the highest outcomes of the findings is the fact that the hybridity in culture in Western India has not been a by-product of the colonial fall, but rather a structural quality of the Portuguese rule itself. In other words, architectural hybridity, such as that, was not only the creation of transitional moments, but it was institutionalized with the help of municipal rules, ecclesiastical patronage, and domestic practice (Carita, 2007). In a similar manner, linguistic creolisation and lexical borrowing indicate long-term social intimacy such as in mixed households and communality and not elites or elite services only (Cardoso, 2009; Wherritt, 1989). Such trends help to emphasize that the Portuguese influence was inscribed in the social reproduction of the life.

The results further indicate that Portugal-imposed religious change cannot be perceived to have been an accomplishment of religious Christianization. Catholicism in Western India emerged as local religion, influenced by the social inequalities, types of rituals, and kinship relationships of the local people. Conversion studies reveal that the antiquity of the caste, purity, and social obligation, specifically precolonial, persisted into the organization of Catholic community to create a type of religious life that was both Christian and of local origin (Henn, 2014; Xavier, 2022). The negotiated religious terrain makes the older accounts of conversion tell of it as either forced upon, or total cultural discontinuity and rupture.

One of the most significant insights that have borne out of the discussion is the difference between Portuguese and British colonial cultural legacy. Because of the perspective of bureaucratic rule, extractive political economy, and cultural distance cultural difference, which was often the case in the British colonialism, Portuguese



influence remained deep in domestic, ritual, and affective spheres, like the eating habits, family values and customs, festivals, music. This difference can be used to understand why cultural forms of Indo-Portuguese cultures have shown tremendous persistence even without the political governance. Cooking customs, e.g., are not only still being used as the ordinary practice at the everyday level but also serve as the means of passing the cultural memory on the generational level (Fernandes, 2022; Sukthankar, 2025). Similarly, musical and performative cultures, such as the mando, are still alive manifestations of creolized identity, and they are not museum artifacts (Kabir, 2021).

The discussion also indicates the significance of the Indian Ocean approaches to comprehending Portuguese cultural influence. Located on the coast of Western India made it to be a part of the transoceanic trade routes between Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. The Indo-Portuguese culture therefore was not only due to the bilateral European-Indian interactions but much more extensive to the people, ideas and material culture circulations across the world of Indian Ocean (Pearson, 1987; Jayasuriya, 2017). The identification of this oceanic aspect helps to avoid the dimension of Indo-Portuguese culture being reduced to a thin colonial dichotomy, as well as placing it in the context of the world creolization and mobility.

All in all, the discussion shows that the Portuguese influence in Western India is to be understood as long term cultural process which is negotiating, adapting, and continuous. This interpretation is consistent with the development of the indigenous agency focus of the modern postcolonial historiography that opposes the simplistic approaches of cultural domination and loss (Xavier and Zupanov, 2015).

VI. Conclusion

The Portuguese impact on the culture of Western India is one of the most stable and complicated situations of cultural hybridity in South Asia. Indo-Portuguese cultures depicted through architecture, language, religion, food and expressive culture describe cultural world negotiation dynamics as opposed to domination, assimilation and erasure as a result of colonial encounters. The synthesis of evidence developed in the paper indicates that the Portuguese cultural impact did become ingrained in the social life of the region, creating hybrid types, which are still utilized in determining identities and practices even when the real colonialism had ceased.

The authors indicate that Indo-Portuguese buildings are still at the heart of the regional aesthetics, the traces of linguistic expressions have been puzzling in shaping the vernacular language, Catholicism developed as a regional religious order, food preserves the cultural memory, and the music and festivals maintain the creolized identities. The combination of the findings provides weight to the idea that Indo-Portuguese culture does not expose itself as a leftover colonial trace, but rather it is a dynamic cultural entity based on the historically mediated encounters and localized agency.

This paper can be plotted in the more general debates about the idea of colonial modernity and cultural hybridity, and postcolonial heritage through an interdisciplinary approach. It shows that Western India provides a useful example of reconsidering



colonial cultural processes that do not follow strict models of domination and resistance. Rather, the area serves as the example of how the sustained interaction, settlement, and social closeness may give rise to simultaneously global and local culture.

The future directions of the study should include comparative regional analysis on Latin Portuguese regions of South Asia and the Indian Ocean world as a way of further defining the Indo-Portuguese culture in the transoceanic networks. Higher focus on oral histories, ethnographic fieldwork and material cultural analysis would also contribute to a better understanding of how or how Indo-Portuguese legacy gets lived, remembered and revisited in modern India. These are important in learning about the historical meaning of Portuguese influence but also its continued influence in Western India in the present.

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