

**CHRISTIAN GAWDA WOMEN,
CULTURE AND IMAGING GOA**

Thesis submitted to the Goa University
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**Doctor of Philosophy
in
Women's Studies**

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Research Guide
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CHAPTER SEVEN

IN CONCLUSION

Gawdaisation of Goa: Using Gawda Cultural Icons in the Imaging of Goa

Scholars who have discussed the culture of Goa have used the binary images of Goa *Dourada* (Golden Goa) (Alvares 2002:206; D’Souza 2008) and Goa *Indica* (Ifeka 1985; Newman 1988). The image of Goa *Dourada*, glorified by travellers as ‘the Rome of the East’, was marked by Portuguese culture and western civilization. The second perspective, namely that of Goa *Indica* coined by the British anthropologist Caroline Ifeka, emphasized India’s contribution to Goan identity. What this thesis has brought to light is a third perspective which is the ‘Gawdaisation of Goa’, where the identity of Goa is influenced by Gawda icons of dress, dance and song. We have discussed in the earlier Chapters how Gawda dress, dance and songs now represent Goan identity be it on a carnival float or an exhibit for the Serendipity Arts Festival, souvenirs for the International Film Festival, coffee-table books on Goa, calendars, festivals in educational institutions and public entertainment.

Rojek has argued that culture is a ‘ruling class possession’ and while the non-elite might also have their culture, the culture of the non-elite is considered to be ‘inferior’ (2007:6). Contrary to this position, this thesis points to the cultural icons of the Gawda community, a community that is mostly landless labourers, often treated and made to feel like they belong to the lowest strata of the society, which has become the culture of Goa. The Portuguese rule for almost 451 years tried to abolish Gawda cultural forms and prohibited different practices of the people relating to the social and cultural lives (Desouza 2000). Despite a repressive regime during the colonial rule in

Goa, the people of Goa and here, in this case, the Gawda community, irrespective of their religion have retained their cultural symbols, retained cultural forms namely dress, songs and dance which are now markers of Goan culture. Pereira argues that ‘the development of the tourism industry facilitated the establishment of folklore groups and traditional dances and music was objectified as genuine culture and a sign of the ‘Gauddes’ and Goa’s authenticity’ (Pereira 2014: 99). However, this thesis has shown that while the tourism industry and the need for the hard-selling of the culture of Goa may have given some impetus to the uses of Gawda icons, the critical role that Gawda dress, dance and songs play in the identity of Goa today cannot be denied.

Routledge (2000:2651) talking about Golden Goa says that ‘historically, official Goan culture has tended to be represented as that of the Catholic upper-caste elites, being symbolised by the state’s Portuguese architecture, and the food, dress, and leisured lifestyle of the elites’. Also, talking about the Goa *Dourado* image of Goa, Perez (2011:3) comments that ‘these representations turned out to cement individuals and groups in post-colonial Goa and ...the Indian government trying to make the most of the exoticism springing from Goa’s Portuguese past’. While we do not deny the role that the ‘exotic other’ image has played in Indian cinema for example, as this thesis has focussed on Gawda dress, dance and song, we can only stress on the Gawdaisation of Goa through the uses of Gawda icons in the imaging of Goa and Goan identity.

According to Newman (2019:41-42), it was the culture of upper-caste that is the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas which was idealized as ‘Goan Culture’ and that the culture of the majority of the population that is the lower-castes consisting of farmers, fishermen, toddy tappers, craftsmen, tenant cultivators and labourers was considered as folk culture. Yet this thesis on the ‘Gawdaisation of Goa’ has pointed to the fact that the culture of the marginalised, exploited, subordinated people, namely the Gawda community is influential in producing the identity, symbols and culture of Goa. Bourdieu

has cautioned personal perceptions and the influence of dominant ways of seeing the world by those possessing dominant power (Robbins 2007:143). This research has taken this caution warning seriously by focussing on the inclusion of the voices of the less dominant section even within the Gawda community, namely the perspective of women.

The Gawdaisation of Goa is a new theoretical perspective of looking at culture and contributes to filling the gap in knowledge, namely about the contribution of the Gawda community in framing the identity of Goa. This research will help the community in emancipating themselves and hopefully help the community to look at their culture with pride and not with shame. The concept of Gawdaisation we hope will ‘remove the cultural hierarchies that tend to divide social science practice into theoretical Brahmins and empirical Shudras’ which Gopal Guru commented while discussing *Egalitarianism and the Social Sciences in India*, in which he urged that Dalits need theory as an inner necessity (Guru 2012:27-28).

7.1. What does it mean to be a Gawda?

In Section 1.3 of Chapter One we discussed the inclusion of tribes in the Scheduled list in 2003 and that Kunbi and Gawda communities have been listed as two distinct communities, however, in Chapter Three we have shown that community members themselves often refer to the communities as Kunbi-Gawda. The dance of the Kunbi-Gawda community has generally been referred to as the Kunbi dance as also the *dhentulli* is popularly referred to as the Kunbi saree.

‘*Tumi Gawdiya bhaxen bob kiteak martai*’ (Why are you shouting like Gawdas?). This expression is used in Goa by people from outside the Gawda community to mean you are talking rudely and loud, without being civil. This is commonly the way we are used to being treated or being talked about, as a

member of the Gawda community. The sad reality is that most Gawda people are so intimidated by people from outside the community that they never talk in a raised voice outside the community. ‘Behaving like a Gawdi’ is often used in Goa to mean someone who is behaving badly. Is it that the Gawda people do not talk properly? Do Gawda people behave poorly?

Stereotyped notions about the Gawdas are that they talk too loudly, do not dress up appropriately, have no manners, they eat too much and that they are uneducated. So the Gawda community has been stereotyped in a negative way. Negative stereotyped notions of the Gawdas have led to Gawdas holding inferior impressions of themselves and a low self-image. Some Gawda women themselves, when speaking about Gawda women in general, perceive them to be older women, shabbily dressed up, those who know about their old traditions, and those who wear the traditional dress *dhentulli*. These are the reactions of some women about whom they call Gawda women. Some Gawda women say that we are poor, and therefore we are Gawdas. We are Gawdas because we do not have an education, we dress differently from others, and we work at other people's home.

Here I would like to reveal the reality which I found out while I was interviewing a young college going student from the Gawda community. She said that when there are schemes for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes, students are called into the college office and are explained about the schemes. In that meeting, she said she was shocked to see a girl who was very fashionable in her attire yet belonging to the Scheduled Tribe community. Through this instance, I am also exposed to another important reality that Gawda people themselves have a notion that they have to maintain certain limits while dressing. This perspective of the Gawda people matches the perspective of the other people who are not Gawdas, who are very suspicious about the dressing of the Gawdas and openly show their discontentment over their modern dressing.

Further, when the Gawdas tries to mix up with people from outside the community, for example, at the church, the non-Gawdas feel ashamed of them

and do not mix easily. So here, we discuss three perspectives of looking at the Gawdas that is; 1) the perspective of the Gawdas identifying themselves, 2) the way the other people look at them, and 3) the way Gawda community looks at others from their own community.

This thesis has shown that the culture of the Gawda community, which is made to feel like it belongs to the lower strata of the Goan society, is the culture that is used to image Goa. At the grassroot level, these people are looked down upon by the other people, but when it comes to the identity of Goa, this community's dress, dance and songs are promoted as the Goan identity and culture. Symbols are part of the real world, and they function as effectively (that is material) in western societies as well as in exotic settings (Herzfeld 2008:143). The symbols of the Gawda community become very important in the Goan scenario for the formation of identity of Goa.

While speaking about feminism and cultural studies Balsamo (1991:56) states that 'feminism literary studies and feminist cultural studies are equally preoccupied with the discursive construction of identity and subjectivity, and what might be called the politics of representation' and this is true with the state of Goa where there is politics of representation and debates among authors as to which correct image of Goa that can be used to portray Goa to the world outside. At the local level, the Gawdas are seen as uncivilized, but when it comes to their dress, dance and songs, these are used as the identity of Goa. This is despite the controversy that exists even within the Gawda community about these icons of culture. The *dhentulli*, for example, which makes its way at the various festivals as a mark of identity of Goa, has been for many Gawda women a symbol of discrimination. Yet an undoubted reality is that the dress of the Gawda community is vital for the cultural heritage of Goa.

The symbols of the Gawda community act as the significant aspects of the Gaon culture and thus become the most important symbols of the Goan culture and identity. What is essential to be noted is that today, there is the Gawdaisation of Goa, which cannot be denied. As far as the songs of the

Gawdas are concerned, there are only few songs the community themselves brings to the limelight outside the community for public consumption. There are other songs like marriage songs that are personalized and preserved by the Gawdas.

7.2. Limitations of the Study

This study of the Gawda community only was the study done among the Christian Gawda community. It did not cover all the Gawdas from Goa.

The ideas people hold dear to them from the beginning of their upbringing the so-called the learned culture is distorted by the notions of the other people's gaze which from time and time exerts pressure on the individual of a particular group to behave in a specific way which is seen superior to theirs. It is this external constraint over the individual, which makes one believe that there are superior and inferior cultures. The individual from a tribal community is made to think that their culture is inferior.

Over the years people who are made to believe that their culture is inferior, imbibe or internalize this concept of being inferior and try to move away from the customs, rituals and the behavior which are considered to be inferior. In this way, there is disintegration of culture and results in changes in a particular culture. So, although the process of socialization acts as a vital force to transmit the culture to the members of a specific cultural group. This process of socialization with the members of the other group then brings changes in the culture of one's own group.

In the Gawda culture, particularly a few aspects like dance and the dress, are essentialized as the markers of Gawda identity to promote Goa's tourism or for commercialization of the Gawda culture. Two types of commercialization. Firstly, Gawda people using their cultural aspects for the purpose of commercialization, and secondly, other people, meaning non-

tribals using the cultural forms of the Gawdas and using them for commercial purposes.

As a researcher when I went to the Department of Tourism to find out how they promoted tourism in Goa and asked them whether they have any brochures in which they promote Goa's tourism or portrayal of the *Gawda* culture, they said they used to print the images of the Kunbi dance, but now they do not have any record of those brochures. One staff who was dealing with the advertisements said that she had taken all the brochures at home and burnt them and now they do not have any records.

In defining what *Gawda* culture is, members of the *Gawda* community living in different areas of Salcete and in Quepem taluka have different perceptions about their culture. There are also different perceptions of what is *Gawda* culture for the non-*Gawdas* and different perceptions within the state of Goa on what is *Gawda* culture. Before defining the opinions of people about their culture, I would like to point out the two groups, that of essentialists and anti-essentialists, as stated by Narayan (1998:92). The group of essentialists see culture as they were naturally given, not changing entities that exist distinct and separate in the world. The other group called anti-essentialists argue that instead of seeing the centrality of values, practices, and traditions as given, they argue that there is a need to trace the historical and political processes by which these values are constructed and how they become the main components of a particular culture. When we look at the portrayal of the *Gawda* culture by the state, we can see that the dominant group, the minority decides about the essential cultural components of the marginal people to be portrayed to the outside world.

Culture has been defined in the social sciences in different ways. According to Upadhyay and Pandey (1993), some anthropologists regard culture to be subjective as it is followed and practiced by the people from their subjective perspective.

We have already discussed how studying culture by an outsider is always considered as a constraint as they study culture of the ‘other’ from the perspective of ethnocentrism. This runs a risk of producing a biased account of the culture which they are studying. In researching my own society this hurdle has not been faced.

One more critical concept which poses a threat to the study culture is cultural relativism. According to this any society’s culture has to be examined objectively and has to be understood concerning that society which is under the scope of the study, but for a researcher, it becomes challenging because what is happening, in reality, is one thing and when it is written and interpreted it becomes a cultural construct. When as an insider I experience culture it is different to my role as a researcher. When I write about the Gawda culture I run the risk of constructing culture. It does not mean that I am constructing the reality but I am constructing a meaning that can be understood by the outside community of what I have understood as an insider about culture. It reveals the field reality which is not constructed by me but which has articulated a meaning of a reality created and deep-rooted in the mind set of the individuals for whom this is cultural ‘reality’.

7.3. Self Reflexivity

As I began researching what role culture had in the lives of the people, I was confused at first as to how to go about approaching people and asking them what is meant by culture and the place of culture in their life. I begin to question myself too about culture. By reading various books on culture, the meaning of culture, as I have described above, the information given by different authors was in fact complicated. It was not easy understanding this concept - culture. But as I began reflecting on what culture meant to me as a person from a particular community who went on researching as an insider of the community things became clearer. This study for me is bringing to the

external world an insider-insight into the interiors. By interiors I mean internal aspects of the lives of the Gawda people, especially women.

As an insider, I agree I had more advantages of gaining knowledge about the community, but as a researcher researching the community sometimes made it difficult. The experiences shared by Nongri (2017: 327) ‘while my closeness to the field helped me in significant ways in collecting my data, it also often put me in a problematic situation’, was similar in my experience. On the one hand, as a community member I was accepted by the community but being a researcher researching the community, with the young, I was placed in a different zone of - knowledgeable knowing it all, that there is no requirement to gain any further insight as they assumed I was already bestowed with the privilege of expertise. Then, on the other hand, the seniors in the community would on occasion tell me who I should talk to and what I should do.

As a researcher, I thought in the beginning that being an insider there might be absolutely no issues in dealing with the complex issues of culture and identity as I too belong to the same community but to my surprise being an insider posed a lot of questions about why I was studying only culture and identity and that too taking into consideration chiefly the point of view of women.

7.4. Encounter with Culture in Reality

Usually understanding ambiguous cultural theories from texts is a difficult task. For me as a researcher, understanding the texts was much easier as compared to the understanding of the existence of culture in the field, particularly when reflecting on the text one finds that what happens in the field is entirely a different reality.

Although being an insider and that too a woman from the community, it could be an easier task in having a discussion about culture. It seems more comfortable, but when I ventured into this process of an understanding culture from the standpoint of women, there were various kinds of encounters and hurdles I faced. Firstly culture being a privilege of knowledge only stored with certain people of the community, and that is the so-called men.

Here when I encounter this reality that anything about culture is mostly the men privilege, and women are just mere representatives of that culture. When asked about the cultural aspects of life, women always pointed out to men as the narrators of the cultural aspects of the community. To this, there is one more reality which I encountered when man who belongs to the community and is being considered the knowledgeable person to tell about the culture said about culture that elderly women will be better able to explain the Gawda culture and when approached the elderly women as referred by this man they said that man has knowledge we have already narrated our culture to him. Both the former and the latter incidences happened in the community of the Gawdas but in two different places. So although the tribal culture is characterized as a homogeneous culture in the state of Goa the way people thought of narrating their culture differed.

In another case, when women were asked about their culture, they mentioned the names of the elderly women and said that those elderly women will be able to tell you what is Gawda culture. I remember one woman middle-aged took me to a woman who was very sick and almost bedridden and told me to ask her about Gawda culture. I felt sympathy for her that she is ill and to get the information I had to disturb her. The woman who took me to her loudly in her ears said one girl is come to ask you something tell her. She replied in her feeble voice, “*Bai jiva borem disna*” (I am not feeling well). In this case, although the woman belongs to the Gawda culture, she perceived culture as being something that is known by elderly women.

Gawda people hold many things as their cultural symbols. These symbols are in the form of material things. Sometimes the people are not using

those symbols or elements, but still, they identify themselves as close to those things, and it creates a sense of belongingness to the community. Most of the members of the community say that agricultural tools like sickle, *horem*, the kind of food they prepare or used to prepare like (*pez, ambhil, folantlem tor, karem nustem, pinagr*), dress, earthen pots, vessels, bamboo mats, the type of agricultural work, knowledge of medicinal plant, growing of vegetables, the *randhon, dhanthem* (hand mill), bamboo baskets known as *pidleo, handdo* in which they boil rice, *dholo, dhai, vatti, pett*, as their cultural symbols.

Among all the things described by the Gawdas as their symbols of culture, only a few things are essentialized as their cultural aspects and also portrayed as the culture of Goa. The cultural symbols which belong to the Gawda community and which are represented as the symbols of the community are dress, dance, and to some extent, the songs of the community. These symbols of the Gawdas are being portrayed as the cultural symbols of Goa, and they are packaged as the culture of Goa for the commercial purpose.

7.5. Shifting of Roles and Dilemmas about my identity

At the time of the fieldwork mainly for the dance performance, I had to shift my role from just an observer of the event to a participant observer. Desouza (2017:352) also makes a point saying that “ During some of the public meetings and programs organized by Bailancho Saad, I was only an observer, while at the other times I was a participant observer.” Here I want to bring in that sometimes when I went to observe the dance performance both onstage and on the floor. The former being the stage performance in the Christmas program at other places apart from their village and the latter being the performance which takes place one day before the wedding at night in their own village. For most of the parts of these performances I was just an observer observing the performance, but sometimes I was called by my respondents to dance along with them.

Although I danced and learned a few steps from them as a member of the community participating in the performance, I reflect on myself as being from the community, but at the same time, it gave me a feeling that being from the community I am not like them in terms of performance because I come from a community of Gawdas where there was no performance. So although I belong to the community, I could not relate myself as a member of the community while performing. I could not dance the way my respondents could dance. In this sense, as a member of the community I had a sense of belongingness to the community, but at the same time whenever I was involved as a participant-observer in the performances, I was in a way detached from the performance as I did not as a member of the community performed the dance before.

I also had this dilemma of insider and outsider although I was an insider to the community I was researching, but at the same time somewhere I felt that I belong to the community, but in terms of the heterogeneity of the tribes I felt that I belonged to the other *Gawda* community which was different from the communities I was researching of course in terms of geographical distance and also in terms of the views of the people about their culture. Collins (1990:xi) uses the concept of an outsider- within. This concept refers to the experiences of being part of the community but, at the same time, set apart because of the personal attribute.

While doing this study I always felt reading the works which were done by the people who were not belonging to the community and there was not much available literature on the community written by members from the own community. In this case, all the works which are in the central discourse are the works not from the community members. This has always given a view from a different perspective.

Writing a Ph.D. in English was very difficult for me as my first language is Konkani, and that too, I am comfortable writing in Romi script. Tribes have been studied by researchers from the outsiders' perspective. They as outsiders lacked the insights which I had access to as an insider and the

member of the community studying one's own society as Chaudhury states that 'every culture is unique for its members and it should be looked into or studied from the insider's perspective' (Chaudhury 2015:158).

Studying one's own society has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is because you are from the community, an insider who will get valuable insights but there are also disadvantages associated with studying one's own society for example although I belong to the Gawda community being educated sometimes puts me in the position where my respondents place me in a higher position as being knowing everything about the culture. Another important thing which I need to make a mention to is about my identity of being Gawda women from the community. Some men make me think that you are a woman, and you should be dealing with household work and not studying culture, which is the domain of men. In the community itself, it is the women who are the carriers of their culture from one generation to another, but always it is seen that the so-called men know more about culture.

Although there are disadvantages attached to studying one's own society, there is a need to minimize the disadvantages as suggested by Srinivas in his essay 'Some Thoughts on the study of One's Own Society'. 'It is evident, however, that a sociologist engaged in the study of his own society enjoys advantages as well as disadvantages, and pedagogically it is very important to ensure that the disadvantages are minimized while the advantages are retained'(Srinivas, 2009:161).

Although my study was on the Gawda women, and my respondents were women who show me sometimes as one among them at one time and sometimes placed me in a different zone as not being one among them and educated on one hand and on the other hand men who were an interference in the interviews when women told me something they interrupted them and said "*Ago ug rav, texem nhu tem*" (please keep quiet, your answer is wrong) and they stayed entirely silent. This in turn, leads me to state that although women have so many views and opinions about their culture, men always show their power, and this is because of the patriarchal system and also because they

have an attitude that they know much more than women. In some cases, the silence of women is to the extent that they have imbibed in themselves that they do not know anything. According to them, men know more than them. These power relations, which work at grassroots level distort knowledge and at the same time does not give space to the voices of the women.

Culture cannot be detached from humans, as Archer (1989:72-73) states, “In other words ‘culture’ should never be detached from human ‘agency’. It is neither a floating property which becomes possessed through internalization nor is it a property created by one group which then possesses others through incorporation.”

As stated by Srinivas (2009:165) that by conducting fieldwork in an alien or a different segment of one’s own society, a researcher is in a better position to study his own society. This is a plus point for me as I was working as a field research assistant for the Archives and the Research Center for Ethnomusicology; I had worked among the *Gawda* community not only in my village but also in other parts of Goa, to record the songs, transcribe and translate them. I had also done recordings of the *Mando*, which is an elite form of entertainment. So this makes me in a better position to study my own *Gawda* community.

7.6. Self Reflexivity on being a *Gawda* woman through Poems

As said by Abbott and Wallace (1990: 211) that it is essential to reveal one’s experiences and feelings, and also we should accept the validity of our own experiences as women. Taking this point into consideration while discussing self-reflexivity, there is a strong need to make a mention of my poems, which were released on youtube in the course of my Ph.D. work. It is my expression of being a *Gawda* woman and my sense of coming out of this discrimination, which I went through. Following are my poems that explain

my reflexivity of being a Gawda woman, and writing and narrating these poems gives me a sense of relief.

Poem 1***Hanv Mhonnem Vo tuvem kelem Mhonnem? - Am I dumb, or
you have made me dumb?***

By Mozinha Fernandes

Kitea bhita uloi gho

Konnak uloun dikoi tgho

Kantar mhunnpa konna zalear stager

Kitea ghelem gho?

Uloumch ani aye kitem?

Tuim kele mhak monne

Sangoch ani aye kitem?

Tughe tuim hor kelem

Mhunta mhaka uloi

Tuka zai tem uloi

Punn ulolear hanvem

Tuka dischem nam borem

Tuka dischem na mhunn borem

Hanv ug ravlear borem

Hanv ug ravlear borem

Hanv ug ravlear borem

Mhunnon hanv zal mhonnem

Vo tuk hanv uloilo disnam borem

Mhunn tuvem kelem mhaka Monnen?

Why you are afraid to speak?

Whom you are showing your attitude

If you do not know to sing

Why you went on stage

What should I talk?

You made me dumb

What should I say?

You did what was convenient to you

Telling me to speak

Whatever I want to speak

But if I speak

You will not like

Because you will not like what I speak

It's better for me to keep quite

Thinking that it's better if I don't speak

I became dumb

Or it's because you don't like me to speak

You made me dumb?

Poem 2

Discrimination

By Mozinha Fernandes

Jivit mhojem ek fulla sarkem

Dhukoun mhaka tumi bhavoilem

Kelem mhaka tumchea hatachem bhavlem

Tumkam zai toxem mhaka poi nachoilem

Hoi mhaka tumi bhavoilem

Hoi mhaka tumi rodoilem

Discrimination hoi discrimination

Zata poi tem discrimination

Anik sonsunk zaina tem discrimination

Tuka zai toxem tum korta

Punn mhaka kiteak adaita

Somazant mhaka fullum di

Tumchem bhaxen mhaka jivu di

Hoi mhaka fullum di

Hoi mhaka jieum di

Discrimination hoi discrimination

Zata poi tem discrimination

Anik sonsunk zaina tem discrimination

Naka mhaka tem discrimination

Jivench astana marpi discrimination

Mhaka naka, hoi mhaka naka tem discrimination

Discrimination hoi discrimination

Zata poi tem discrimination

Anik sonsunk zaina tem discrimination

This, my life, is like a flower

Under your pain how it withers!

In your hands I'm just a doll

As per your whims, you make me dance.

Oh yes, you make me wither,

Oh yes, you make me weep.

Discrimination, yes, discrimination,

What is happening is discrimination.

No more can I suffer this discrimination.

You do as you please,

But why, then, stop me?

Let me flower!

Let me live, just like you!

Yes, let me blossom,

Let me live.

Discrimination, yes, discrimination,

What happens is discrimination.

No more can I suffer this discrimination.

No, I don't want this discrimination!

It kills me with every breath, this discrimination,

It's not for me, this discrimination

Discrimination, this discrimination!

What happens is discrimination,
No more can I suffer this discrimination.

Poem 3

Hanv Koichem - Where am I from?

By Mozinha Fernandes

Hanv Koichem

Ago Bai Are baba

Konnak sang naka hanv

Mhunn Gawdiyachem

Lok hanstolo sangot zalear

Hanv mhunn hea castachem

Hench hanvem uloupachem ani aikopachem

Sang gho sang re

Anik hanvem ketem korpachem?

Ghora bospachem

Xetan vochpachem?

Kai xekpachem

Ghora bhoslear bekar

Xetan ghelear vepar

Ani xiklear?

Xikun kitem zatlem

Ho vichar

Teacher zalear boro zatlo fuddar

Hem mhunnop soglleanchem

Pun tuka distam gho, tuka distam re

Xikpann asa mhunn fuddar

Xiklear lok mhunnta tuvem anik kiteak xikpachem

Baravi korun jobak lagpachem

Teacher zalear lokanchem prasn sabra

Koslem kam, koi, kitem, konnak xikoitam

Hench kai hanvem sangpachem

Sangun sangun ailo bejar

Koslo kai ho somaz

Kitem ghai mhozo fuddar

Sodun dhi fuddarachem

Atam jivit mhojem koslem

Dukhachem vo sukhachem

Hem khub motvachem

Xiklear hanv bekar

Xikna zalear bttem ani naal

Anik hanvem kitem sangpachem

Hanv hea somazachem

VO hanv koichem

Where am I from?

Ago bai, Arre baba

Don't tell anyone that I

Am a *Gawda*

People laugh when they are told

I belong to Gawda Community

Yes-No, Keep Quiet, Sit-Stand

This is all I say and hear

Tell me bai, tell me baba

What else am I to do?

Sit at home?

Go to the fields?

Or should I learn something?

When I sit at home, I am useless

When in the fields, I am useful

But when I study?

What's the use of learning?

This thought!

If I become a teacher, my future will be good

This is what everyone says

But can you see bai, can you see baba

In learning is there a future for me?

If I study people ask me how much more will you learn?

Finished twelfth, now get a job

I've become a teacher and the questions are many...

What work do you do, where, who do you teach?

This have I to say

I'm supposed to answer only these questions

Answering these I'm frustrated

What society is this?

What lies for me ahead?

Oh, forget the future!

How is my life now?

Sad or happy?

This is of utmost importance

After my studies, I sit idly

Empty as a dried coconut

What more can I say?

Am I from this society?

Where am I from?

Poem 4

Jivit - Life

By MozinhaFernandes

Tujem tuka mhojem mhaka

Itlo dharun zaum naka

Tujem tuka mhojem mhaka

Mhojem vatter evum naka

Tujem tuka mhojem mhaka

Mhozo sumar korinaka

Tujem tuka mhojem mhaka

Mhozo xirap gheum naka

Tujem tuka mhojem mhaka

Portun sangtam tuka

Tujem tuka mhojem mhaka

Mhozo rag vadoinaka

Tujem tuka mhojem mhaka

Hoch upkar kor mhaka

Your life for you, and my life for me

So rude, be not

Your life for you, and my life for me

In my way, please come not

Your life for you, and my life for me

Size me up, you do not
Your life for you, and my life for me
My curse, you take not
Your life for you, and my life for me
Again I tell you
Your life for you, and my life for me
My rage, increase not
Your life for you, and my life for me
This favour, for me you do

Poem 5

Mhojech Savli Hanv - My Shadow is me

By Mozinha Fernandes

Savli povun mhoji

Tum poise davnaka

Havu-ia monis re

Hem tum visornaka

Mhuj rupachi mhoji savli

Hanv kitkonn pois korum

Disa uzvadan na zata

Ratchea para toddeach uzvaddan

Mhaka mellpak yeta

And kallea kit kalkant tim lipun ravtam

Mhaji savlli polloun tum pois dhanvtam

Punn mhaji savli mhaka chitkun ravta

Tim mhaka apnaita

Mhaka veng marun ravtam

Disachim tim mhaka disti podna

Punn kednam vottachea bharan mhaka tim distam

Ani ratikodde tim nach zata

Punn mhojim savlim mhajim phat sodina

Ani hanv tika sodna

Kiteak mhajich savli hanv

Seeing my shadow

You don't run away

I am a human being

Don't forget this

Like me is my shadow

How can I avoid it?

In day light it disappears

At night even in some light

It comes to meet me

And in dark it hides

Seeing my shadow you run away

But my shadow is attached to me

My shadow accepts me

It hugs me

In a day light I can't see it

But sometimes with the rays of the sun I can see it

Then at night it disappears

My shadow doesn't leave me

And I don't let it go

Because my shadow is me

Poem 6

Hanv paus zaunk xektam? - Can I become the rain?

By Mozinha Fernandes

Paus yeta

Sogollo lok dhanvta

Paus varem vaddol

Apna barbor hadtam

Paus ani varem ogondd

Pausa mhottam tembem

Mhoj angar

Pod pod podtat

Hanv tenk adounk xekna

Pausa apli xokti sogleank dakhoita

Ani pausa xokoti konnachean

Addaunk zaina

Pausak polloun

Mhojea monnant ek vichar yeta

Kednam tori hanv paus zaunk xektam

The rain arrives

Everybody runs!

The rain brings

With it a big wind

The wind and rain are so strong
Fat drops of rain
Fall, fall, fall on my body
I cannot stop them!
The rain shows its strength to everyone
No one can stop the mighty rain
Looking at the rains
A thought slips into my mind . . .
Can I ever become rain?