

## **Re: Insiders and Outsiders**

**By Rajan P. Parrikar**

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To Goanet -

Contrary to what Comrade Gadgil imagines, the Goan Identity is neither difficult nor elusive to apprehend. We Goans know it when we see it. The Goan Identity doesn't have to be defined or justified. It just is, like most other recognizable Identities. An unschooled villager from Chandel will know instinctively what differentiates Goan from non-Goan (ways, habits, mores) without even a single spoken word of Konkani. Why, even someone from Dodamarg just outside Goa's borders will tell you he's "Goan," for he is culturally part of the Goan fabric, geographical boundaries notwithstanding. Likewise, the peasant from Hissar will never mistake a Goan for a Jat.

All communities around the world have a sense of themselves. Defining parameters of Identity include, but are not limited to, language, religious practices, culture, behavioral traits, sexual preference, history, geography, specialized training in a field of knowledge - and all these constituents go down the maw with common shared experiences to emerge as a recognizable distinct Identity product.

In abstraction, the Identity phenomenon exhibits a fractal-like pattern. That is to say, regardless of the granularity chosen for viewing, the picture retains its essential features. You may upsize or downsize your focus area, yet you will be able to smoke out distinct, meaningful Identities that have a sufficiently large theatre of expression. That some of these Identities may overlap is beside the point (no culture, community, country is an

island, to cite a truism). Let us clarify the foregoing with an example.

Consider the Goan Identity as a starting point. We may zoom down into this parent Identity and within it locate islets of constituent Identities threaded to it: the Goan Hindu Identity, the Goan Catholic Identity, and so on. We further break down the Goan Hindu Identity into, say, the Bamon Identity, the Daivadnyas, the Gomant Maratha Samaj Identity, etc. You can slice it in directions other than caste or religion. For instance, within the Goan Identity you could tease out the Sashtikaar Identity, the Bardezkaar Identity, etc. Still more Identities may be extracted from these sub-Identities.

[Aside: even at an atomic level one may posit Identities - they are called the physical Elements, which in turn combine in various ways to give compounds i.e. more Identities. Why, even quarks, the ultimate building blocks of matter, come with flavours and colours.]

Now turn the other way. The Goan Identity is a subset of the Indian Identity, which in turn is a subset of the Oriental Identity, which itself is a subset of the larger Asian Identity, which is a subset of the greater Identity of the comity of all nations bound by certain laws etc. The mother of all Identities, subsuming all these clusters, is associated with us humans as a species. You can take this unification further, but you get the idea.

The point of this exercise is the following: this Insider-Outsider business is perfectly natural. And - when you talk about Insiders and Outsiders, context HAS to be specified. Otherwise you get Garbage In, Garbage Out.

Humans have an inherent tendency to form physical, mental, & emotional bonds leading to characteristic clusters. It is facile, when you specify the context, to immediately recognize Insiders from Outsiders. If you are sensible, you know at once whether you are an Insider or an Outsider in any given situation. Ask the Bengalis - they are experts at who is, and who is not, a Bengali.

I have lived in America for almost 20 years, acquired an advanced degree there, seen a great deal of the country, interacted, socialized, and lived with Americans over a period of several years, even internalized some of their habits. I know more about America's history, geography, geology etc. than most Americans, and may have a better intellectual appreciation of elements of Americana than several Americans themselves. But so far as the American Identity is concerned, I will never be mistaken for an Insider by any American (the colour of my skin is not a factor in that determination, for the same would apply to a white Croatian). Why, I myself do not want to be considered an Insider. That is because ***I am not*** an Insider there. I enjoy all the constitutional rights the American citizen enjoys, I participate in some of their festivals, national events etc, and the American acknowledges that fact. But he and I both know that I am not an Insider in their framework. That is a privilege accorded those who have grown up as Insiders within that ecosystem.

Another example of a different nature - several Americans have now learnt to play Indian Classical Music, and a handful has attained a fair degree of proficiency. But I would never mistake them to be Insiders in this tradition. The reach and the nuance attending someone born into this musical tradition is absent in the Outsider. It takes immersion into the ecosystem (not

available yet outside India) and iterations spread over a generation or two at the least to acquire the instinct and insight granted the Insider of comparable ability and training.

You cannot selectively pick out an outlying data point and make whatever case it is that you want to make, like Gadgil's example of Keni. Keni simply used induction (most of us would) when he guessed - again, justifiably - the Sikh to be a non-Goan. There is a good chance that the child of a Goan who has not lived much in Goa, but who has been brought up by parents steeped in Goemkarponn, will exhibit Goan characteristics to a degree greater than a sardar who has lived in Goa within the confines of his Altinho villa, Cidade de Goa, and Sharmaji-Guptaji circle of friends, 30 years domicile in Goa notwithstanding.

Usually this boring Insider-Outsider chatter only agitates carpetbaggers desperate to be considered Insiders. Goa being a highly desirable place to live is now claimed by some *bhaile* as their own, and to pull this off, they have to first tell **you**, the Goan, that **you** don't have any distinguishing features that would prevent **them** from being considered Niz Goemkars. This takes some nerve, for we Goans are accommodating to a fault, to our own detriment, even now when we are faced with the prospect of a demographic wipeout. On the scale of regional chauvinism found in the rest of India, Goans stand no chance against champions such as the Bongs, Tamils, Maharashtrians, Kannadigas, Punjabis etc.

But it is the Marxists who have developed the most grotesque tactics to peddle their snake oil. First off, they will tell the Insiders that they don't exist, that it is all a mirage. At various times the Indian Marxists have claimed that India doesn't exist, that it is a creation of the British, that Hinduism doesn't exist

(while in the same breath tom-toming the evils of the caste system in Hinduism), this doesn't exist, that doesn't exist - anything they don't like, they want to wish it away! The shtick involves citing "studies" by an inconsequential white man or woman. This leads right away to a severe rubbishing of their behinds.

Time for Take 2. "Goans," he says, "you exist, of course, but you are ethnically no different from a Kannadiga so you have no unique Identity, and if you have one, it is not well-defined, and even if it is, it is not significant enough yak yak yak." By now his behind is so well cured that you are wearing it for a hat.

Time for Take 3, a.k.a. the cyanide pill gambit. "Goans," says Dr. Marxist, "please deny your Identity, commit mass cultural suicide, then we will all live together in peace." At this point, his misery is so great that you begin to feel for the fellow.

But hold on - there is one Identity the Comrade has no problems at all pandering to, acknowledging & certifying as genuine: namely, the Muslim Identity (the *Ummah*). Historically, this has proven itself to be the most violent & destructive of Identities, but strangely the Comrade hasn't noticed. The Muslim Identity explicitly not only excludes me, the Hindu, by labeling me a *kaffir*, it also wants to dispatch me into eternal sleep unless I sign up to the One and Only True Book. They have been practicing this for over 1000 years but somehow this mullah-designed Insider-Outsider filtering system seems not to have crossed the Comrade's line of view.

In sum, there is only one thing to do with 2-pesos trash-talking Marxists - laugh them out of town.

Warm regards,  
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**Rajan P. Parrikar**

Panjim, Goa

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<http://www.parrikar.org>