

Decoding the Dark Tourism Traumascape: An Auto Ethnographical Study of the Tourist Destination - Goa (India)

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Abstract *Review of literature on 'Dark Tourism' suggests, there is a steady growth of academic and non academic interest in comprehension and consumption of Dark Tourism. The paper is guided by the objective of undertaking a study to explore the possibility of injecting Dark Tourism in a tourist destination state of Goa (India). A relatively marginal methodology namely Auto Ethnographical study clubbed with illustrative research is adopted. The study concludes that Inquisition a traumatic chapter in Goa's history needs to be acknowledged, documented and marketed effectively. Dark Tourism can thus be added to Goa's Tourism portfolio which will help to sustain the tourism industry. However, the limitation of the study is it lacks in-depth review and empirical data is absent, as such an inter-disciplinary and empirical research construct is warranted.*

Keywords: *Dark Tourism, Conceptual Research, Goa, Inquisition, Auto Ethnographical*

INTRODUCTION

"Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it."

The above quote is from the evergreen classics 'Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens. The narrator lays stress not just about the financial implications innate in the statement but the allegory too. Man's fascination for the inexplicable primal dark is inherent, reflecting an integral fragile underbelly of human-hood that warrants observation, study and sensitivity both in its application and consumption. It is interesting to note that over the decades the enthrallment for a 'dark past' in the guise of Dark Tourism is gaining popularity, a cursory Google search on the last day of October 2021, threw up a whooping nearly 19,40,00,000 results. In fact time and again, Dark Tourism has attracted attention and review by various research scholars (Ashworth & Isaac, 2015; Carrigan, 2014; Annaclaudia Martini & Dorina Maria Buda, 2018; Hartmann, 2014; Roberts & Stone, 2014; Seaton, 2009; Sharpley, 2009; Stone, 2013; Wight, 2006). It is believed the concept of Dark Tourism always existed though in wraps in other disciplines, among others - Heritage, Cultural/Historical as well as Sociological and Memory Studies (Light, 2017). The

sinking of the Titanic in 1912 (Lennon & Foley, 2000) sort of gave a firm footing to the concept and eventually the term 'Dark Tourism' was coined by the duo Lennon and Foley in 1996. Various definitions are documented which highlights an underlying assertion namely an intimate association to death, tragedy, pain, grief relating to past events, sites, happenings (Niemelä, 2010).

In the context of Goa, a tiny coastal state on the western coast of the Republic of India, it is important to note that it is primarily an international beach centric tourist destination which has a dark past, that is seldom discussed. This picturesque beach destination was accidentally discovered by the hippies in the mid 1960's and gained global attention and acceptance. Although, the primary form of tourism offered by the state of Goa is Beach Tourism, in the recent past the industry has augmented its portfolio by adding other forms like Adventure, Religious, Heritage, Rural Tourism and the like except Dark Tourism. Tourism has flourished here, from a mere couple of thousands in the sixties, the footfalls have witnessed a massive human Tsunami. According to Stastica Portal in 2019, the domestic tourists arrival approximated 7.1 million, while the international tourists accounted for over

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0.9 million. However, it's gruesome past rarely came/comes to the fore. According to (Agarwal, 2020), this carefree, blissful tourist paradise has an estimated 15 lakhs Hindus massacred from 1516 CE till 1812 CE due to the dreaded Inquisition imposed by the erstwhile Portuguese rulers. (Axelrod and Fuerch 1996) maintain that the Portuguese adopted policies and practices to ensure total and absolute conversion to Catholicism. And though marketing of this tourist destination in general and beach tourism in particular is done rather enthusiastically, the dark past receives stoic silence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dark Tourism is considered a much debatable and contested term and till date finds itself being more of an umbrella term which embraces traumascape in all its association and variations with its sister avatars be it- Thanatourism, Morbid Tourism, Grief Tourism, 'Milking the macabre', Black Tourism, Grey Tourism, Morbid, Trauma, Difficult, Pale Tourism (Seaton, 1996; Blom, 2000; Rojek, 1993; Dann, 1994). This form of tourism is believed to have mutated from other streams like Heritage Tourism, Sociology, and Memory Studies etc. (Light, 2017), which is echoed by (Walter, 1984; 1993) who has professed that Death Studies and literature existed prior to Dark Tourism being coined. Experiences in conflict territories too is covered under the concept as per (Buda, 2015). Moving with times, (Seaton, 1996) discusses the contemporary genesis of dark tourism, while (Lemelin, Whyte, Johansen, Desbiolles, Wilson & Hemming, 2013) acknowledges indigenous narratives in battlefields and sites of conflicts. Interestingly, Dark Tourism taxonomy has enabled social scientists to come up with new terms and terminologies ranging from pitch black intensity to pale and every other possible shades (Stone, 2006) fashioned the well-known Dark Tourism Spectrum, which makes an effort to linearly categorize locations founded on various 'shades' of darkness.

With reference to the perspectives of Dark Tourism, there are different views ranging from being good, bad and even ugly. (Sharpley, 2005), believes it serves as expressions relating to death, massacre, pain and tragedy in an attempt to expand the purview and scope of the concept. There are others who see this form of tourism as paradoxical and contradictory, (Kumar Prasanna, 2021) puts it- from being educative, meditative to being voyeuristic and even gross. According to (Chang Yi, 2014), there is social learning and psychological benefits. However a visit to such sites normally provides a context to the horrors and atrocities which had once unfolded in a certain time and spatial frame.

Simplistically, Dark Tourism can be associated with three approaches namely- Supply and Demand, Integrated Supply and Demand and Experiential Experience. Studies show how the focus from consumption epistemology moved

to supply typology ultimately integrating the demand and supply and eventually embracing experiential experience. (Annaclaudia Martini & Dorina Maria Buda, 2018) attempts to comprehend the affective layer of this form of tourism with death and its representations. Other studies importantly, examines the ethical issues w.r.t travel associated with Dark Tourism (Foley & Lennon, 1997). (Biran & Hyde, 2013) also explores the ethical issues and tourist experiences connected with this form of tourism.

Miller and Gonzalez (2007) in their paper, 'When death is the destination: the business of death tourism – despite legal and social implications', examines increasing popularity prompting travel and finally assistance to end life. Thus, this form of tourism is intimately associated with commercialising death, marketing collective painful memories and events, inviting tourist gaze to consume in retrospection tragic happenings in the context of another timeframe, space and structure. Essentially, it's about death, disaster, suffering the macabre, or unpleasantness (Light, 2017). In the words of (Dann & Seaton, 2001), it's happenings contrary to humanity. It negotiates painful pasts, evoking strong reactions (Godis & Nilsson, 2016). According to (Skinner, 2018) it's Sublime tourism and natural catastrophe/calamities. Dark Tourism can thus be viewed as an individual and collective consciousness mediating mortality (Stone, 2012).

Seaton (1996) looks at Thanatourism dimension involving travel to destinations associated with death (symbolic or otherwise) literature acknowledges in particular the multifunctional features of places presenting death as also symbolical death, translating such sites for tribute, bereavement, educational/spiritual experience, as national identity, or just a casual stop (Austin, 2002; Logan & Reeves, 2009; Slade, 2003). As (Robb, 2009) puts it, visiting destinations of violence is the main attraction. (Tarlow, 2005) too seconds this account to visit tragic historical sites. (Stone, 2006) specifies travel to sites of death, suffering seemingly macabre. It's more of tourism unfolding at locations of bereavement and anguish (Isaac & Çakmak, 2014). While (Foley & Lennon, 1995; 1996) looked into how sites of historical tragedies developed and 'touristification' of such sites was instituted.

On a positive note, plenty of addition to the existing body of knowledge in the area of Dark Tourism is emerging, be it popular writings, research papers, conferences, publications of books or formation of associations and forum, one such important site is Dark Tourism Forum - www.dark-tourism.org.uk (Wright Daniel, 2014).

However (Stone, 2011) is of the opinion that literature in various socio-cultural contexts is missing as is empirical data on motivations, consequences and implications thereof. According to (Dejan Iliev, 2020), there is very little research paper scrutinizing and integrating concepts such as consumption, motivation and experience relating to Dark

Tourism. (Wright Daniel, 2014) has stressed on the need to understand dark tourism in other post-disaster destinations, not just to add to existing body of knowledge but also examine how it can benefit the local community.

RESEARCH GAP

Literature Review shows plenty of studies have been undertaken to understand the genesis, popularity and consumption of Dark Tourism. However, it is interesting to note that by and large the study of Dark Tourism is viewed through the European lens (Sharma, 2016) in actual fact such research in Asian context is relatively lower and this paper attempts to initiate bridging this gap. In the case of Goa, though Inquisition has been documented in varying forms and modes including a couple of books as well, hardly any studies have examined the possibility of adding Dark Tourism to the existing tourism portfolio. It is important to undertake a deeper study and explore this possibility.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- The primary objective is to embrace the collective memory entwined with collective pain due to Inquisition imposed in Goa (India), in order to initiate a dialogue between the past and the present and negotiate accreditation for the future.
- In this backdrop, to explore the possibility of adding Dark Tourism to the existing Goa tourism portfolio.
- Mapping resources to build Dark Tourism profile of Goa.

METHODOLOGY

A relatively marginal methodology - Conceptual and Illustrative Research is adopted. In the context of Goa, the approach is more Auto-Ethnographical. (Veal, 2017) opined that a conceptual framework does not imply a straitjacket approach rather it is open, flexible and an ever developing mechanism. In fact a Narrative Approach facilitates social research to investigate the construction of subjectivity thoroughly (Sharma, 2016). Keeping this in mind a more flexible and simplistic mode of presentation is adopted, more so pictorial means are generously employed to enable quick grasp of information.

AN AUTO ETHNOGRAPHICAL RE-COUNT

“The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history.”
George Orwell

Inquisition in Goa, is normally a hushed topic preferably avoided. My first brush with this historical happening came with a casual conversation with my paternal grandmother. All of ten years, I was getting acquainted with the idea of gods and religion, though I was pretty comfortable with the concept of ‘Family Deity’, where every family or clan worshipped a particular deity I was yet to get familiar with the idea of a deity, which was housed in a temple, had its own land and property, followers, etc. further dialogues nonetheless helped me realise that our deity was much like a human being who had an independent identity. A total self sustaining eco-system prevailed and revolved around the deity. However, time would reveal that this systemic practice was almost annihilated by the imposition of the dreaded Inquisition.

What struck me was the heart wrenching narration by my grandmother about how our ancestors in the dark of the night ran for safety leaving much of their belongings behind except their dear gods. Unwittingly, the generational trauma was being passed down. She voiced the pain and hardships our ancestors underwent to save our gods and faith. She cited the original places of our temples and the new places the gods were transported and painstakingly re-established. The narrative made a strong mark on the impressionable young mind and heart of mine.

But, apart from my grandmother there were no further sources of engagement or conversation happening particularly relating to Inquisition and conversions. By and large there was silence, occasionally I could get a fleeting glimpse of the gory past from a select few of my senior family members. Apart from my grandmother, my parents, a couple of aunts, were the only source who disclosed details about our lineage, our surname, the loss of our wealth, and properties opening a secret door of our past. A door that normally was firmly shut and securely locked. It opened solely when we visited particular religious or historical sites.

The oral histories did leave an indelible mark and created a quench to know more. Due to lack of time and my commitment initially towards my studies and later with my career left me with no option but to push this urge aside. It was much decades later that I accidentally came across a book authored by Anant Kakba Priolkar titled ‘*The Goa Inquisition: The Terrible Tribunal*’ that left me disturbed for weeks if not months together. From acute sympathy to inexplicable rage to unknown sense of fear, pride, helplessness...innumerable emotions rose and ebbed, unsettling me. I was confronted with rational and emotional conflict compelling me to take a conscious decision- ‘I will not visit the past’!. I could now empathise why my people did not acknowledge this collective wound, this collective pain. We all hoped that ignored for long enough time would erase this nightmare, in fact erase this entire chapter from history. Resuscitating the

account that is lost into the void of time is agonizing, 'so be it' was the pacification that I finally settled for.

Much later I came across a blog by a dark tourist Mckinney Dagney titled, '*Dark Tourism: What is it and why is it important?*' that rekindled the urge to know the past. Cultura Obscura, shares an important observations that until 2010 Cambodian schools did not permit educating children about the genocide their earlier generations had encountered. Cambodians didn't talk about it, as if silence would delete the dark episode in their history. This collective silence across cultures reminded me of Maya Angelou, "*We are more alike, my friend, than we are unlike*". Silence can be deafening, for it exposes the vulnerability in us, and the compulsion in embracing denial.

With the information revolution, came the opportunity to access information which was/is a click away. It re-ignited the desire to know more about the times of yore, to read, listen and moreover talk about it (cautiously) for I realised it generated diverse reactions from others- generally indifference, inexplicable anger, total rejection, vehement

objections only a select few showed genuine interest to have a dispassionate dialogue. Nonetheless, as and when time permitted I would find myself re-visiting our past gradually coming to terms with it, negotiating peace and acceptance.

In 2016, I was invited to do an illustration for a FB page *Devata Stalantar Pravas* (The flight of the deities- refer Fig. 1). The title echoed with the long conversations I use to have with my grandmother. (D'Souza, 1979) too threw light on how practicing Hindus elected to leave their homelands since their faith was persecuted. Incidentally, the late noted historian D'Souza T.R too was a member of this group. The thought in a way revived a hope that finally we will have a conglomeration of likeminded people for a free, open and dispassionate dissection of our collective past. But, unfortunately the response was/is lukewarm, it has a mere 143 members (as on 5/7/2022) with 28 photos, 12 files and a couple of other posts. There is a general reluctance to discuss, respond to posts or react to any matter uploaded, thus engagement of further conversation becomes difficult if not impossible. Nevertheless, the group persists and sustains on the efforts of a determined few, especially the admin.



Fig. 1: Flights of Gods and Local Exodus During Imposition (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1127810933947915/about>)

Another communication means that needs mention is Whatapp (though many a times authenticity of matter circulated is debateable) nonetheless it has provided a platform for free expression prompting individuals, especially authors, artists, organisations to be vocal, to collaborate, discuss and debate. One such group 'Hindu Punarutthan believes that going back to our roots and acknowledging this traumatic chapter in history objectively in right perspective is much required. It worked determinedly to publish a booklet (August 2021) '*XVI Century Goa-shifting of deities and migration of people*' was in public domain. This group is actively involved in creating awareness of Goa's past not just for the local population but more so for the tourists who visit the state generally with the impression that Goa has an hedonistic culture.

GOA

Goa is the tinniest state of the Republic of India. It was a Portuguese colony for almost over 450 years, which was liberated on 19th December 1961. Goa is amply blessed with mother nature. Apart from its rich flora and fauna, it's 105 kilometres coastline is the primary attraction for both the domestic as well as international tourists. It was the case right from the moment it was first discovered by the Flower Children in the mid sixties and from there on the state has been doing exceptionally well in terms of tourist arrivals in the state. However, such overdependence is a reason of concern as stated by (Kamat, 2010) she recommends marketing the state beyond its beaches. Although in the recent past the

industry has augmented its tourism portfolio the possibility of injecting 'Dark Tourism' needs to be explored objectively.

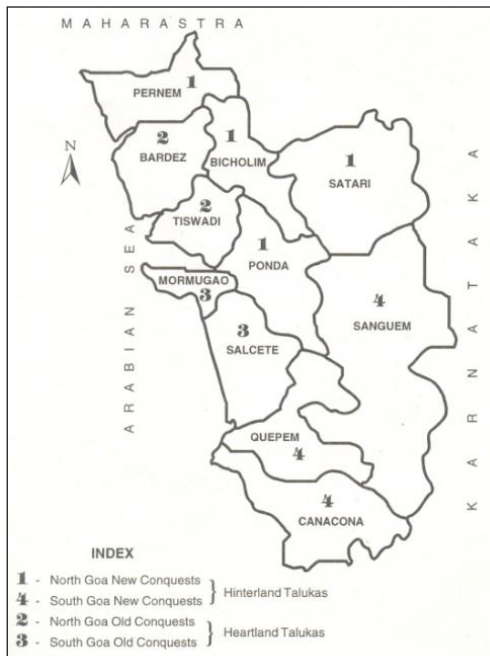


Fig. 2: Goa-Old and New Conquests

<https://journals.openedition.org/lusotopie/docannexe/image/1557/img-1.png>

INQUISITION IN GOA

Murphy Cullen in his book *God's Jury: The Inquisition and the Making of the Modern World* acknowledges the fact that by understanding the Inquisition we can attempt to express the making of the present. Rodrigues Savio (2022) states that the colonisers focused not merely on economic control but religious too. Thus, its important to go back in time and understand the painful happenings that transformed lives.

In 1510 (refer Fig. 2), the Portuguese came to Goa and colonised it. Goa was segregated into two segments viz. *Velhas Conquistas* i.e. coastal talukas captured by 16th century while *Novas Conquistas* i.e. hinterland talukas captured by 18th century (Fernandes Aureliano, 2008). In their zeal to propagate their religion the Portuguese imposed Inquisition in Goa, unleashing untold hardships on the local communities consisting of Hindus, Muslims and Jews. Over a span of 214 years (1560-1774), locals encountered untold miseries and torture for following a religion, customs and practices of their ancestors - Non-Catholicism, (Sadh Nivan, 2020). And though oral histories abound, (Pendse, 2020) highlights the claims of António Baião as to how that the documents on Goa Inquisition from 1596, 1610, 1619-1621, 1636 and 1690 were destroyed; however fortunately other sources survived the ravages of time giving gruesome

details of the mechanisms adopted during inquisition by the Portuguese.

Noted historian (D'Souza, 2005), affirms that the Goa Inquisition was a violent traumatic chapter in history. (Walker Timothy, 2021), in his research paper, *Contesting Sacred Space in the Estado da India: Asserting Cultural Dominance over Religious Sites in Goa* highlights how original worship sites were destroyed to make way for churches and chapels, monasteries and convents that Goa earned the title of, 'Rome of the East'.

MAPPING RESOURCES FOR PROFILING DARK TOURISM IN GOA

A dedicated unbiased study is required for profiling 'Dark Tourism' in Goa. Fig. 3 shows the various resources and support system that needs to be aligned if the Dark Tourism sites in Goa have to be mapped. A few possible sources:

- The Directorate of Archives and Archaeology is a rich depository of information and documentation of multilingual contents be it- Portuguese, Sanskrit, Persian, English, French, Marathi etc. It was established in 1595, and has vast documents for reference and research. <http://daa.goa.gov.in/>
- Another rich depository of knowledge and information is the Goa State Central Library also known as Krishnadas Shama Goa State Central Library. It is the India's oldest Public Library and was established in 1832. It boast of over 1.8 lakhs books on varied subjects and topics, including material of historical importance. <http://centrallibrary.goa.gov.in/>
- The National Library of Portugal or Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal is the largest library of this European country, which is associated with the erstwhile rulers of Goa. The library has a large offline and online collection of books, journals and literature. Importantly, it has documentation of different era, subjects, streams. It also provides inter-library facilities to meet varied needs of readers, researchers and laypersons. <http://www.bnportugal.gov.pt/>
- The Xavier Centre for Historical Research (XCHR), established in 1977, has much to offer in terms of historiography and is a reputed forum for exchange of ideas. It is associated with the International Seminars on Indo-Portuguese History (ISIPH). <https://xchr.in/>
- Diocesan Centre for Social Communications Media (DCSCM), Archbishop's House, Altinho, Panjim-Goa with its sister departments like Diocesan Commission for Sacred Art and Heritage, Secretariat for Confraternities/Fabricas/Cofres are important sources to gather information. <https://archgoadaman.com/>. Churches of Goa too are a rich depositories of

documents be it about the Parishes, baptism, weddings, deaths and some of the records date back in time.

- Apart from documentations, the role of historians, elders of society who are closely connected with the histories of the land cannot be undermined. In particular attention is to be paid to oral histories, for memories are fluid rather than static (Olick, 1999) flowing from one generation to the next. Also, apart from the tangible resources the role of intangibilities in form of political, social and religious support is much warranted. Initiation thus, has to come forth from individuals, communities and more so from policy makers.

DOCUMENTATION SOURCES

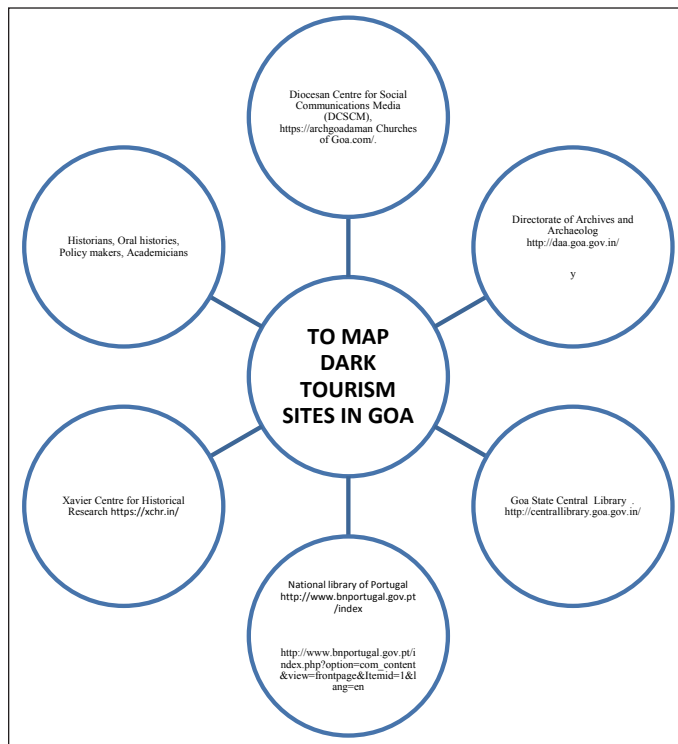


Fig. 3: Compiled from Different Secondary Sources

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings reveal that there is a growing interest in Dark Tourism and certainly vast literature is available however it remains fragmented. Moreover, the focus should shift from taxonomy and should involve a more open and objective dialogue and negotiation of the dark past and the challenging present. In the case of Goa if Dark Tourism is to be injected in it’s tourism portfolio it would involve

acknowledgement, reconciliation, acceptance followed by effective documentation, marketing, and commodification of it’s dark past within the ethical prism.

Inquisition Studies now have taken up a global hue, going beyond Europe and touching natives and the indigenous populations in colonial settings (Kris Lane & Kenneth Mills, 2020). (Wright Daniel, 2014) too has stressed on the need to understand dark tourism in other post-disaster destination. In this context, Goa’s traumatic chapter in history is yet to be explored in terms of serving as a valuable addition to the existing tourism portfolio. It certainly has the potential to be marketed by taking various stakeholders into confidence.

Based on earlier literature (Barve S., 2021), published a booklet- ‘XVI Centaury Goa, Shifting of deities and migration of people’, tracing the displacement of deities and detailing original site in terms of talukhas, names of deities, and the new locations and establishment of these deities with GPS reading. A list of churches built on the ruins of ancient temples in the talukhas of Tiswadi (Ilhas), Bardez, Salcete is also available. This is an important step as it will help tourists to know the origins and history behind colonial structures and monuments. This inventorying of sites and putting up appropriate signages by the Department of Archives and Archaeology, will go a long way in creating interest and attracting a certain class of tourists.

However, by and large, governments do not endorse and propagate Dark Tourism per se, simply because it invites negative publicity or it involves raking up the dark and ugly aspect of history (Kumar Prasanna, 2021). Rodrigues Savio (2022) counsels that the first step to reconciliation is by accepting the truth of the Inquisition. Such a stance will expedite the prospects of introducing dark tourism in the state of Goa.

Finally, a comprehensive inter-disciplinary and empirical research is warranted to draw up a more authentic, constructive and holistic Dark Tourism profile of Goa to sustain it’s tourism industry.

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The limitation of this preliminary paper is an in-depth review and empirical account is missing. The study is very restrictive and is rather illustrative qualitative narrative and as such the findings cannot be generalised.

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