

# **Title: Jhalach Pahije – Arguing for Goa’s merger with Maharashtra (tentative)**

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## **Abstract**

Goa, a former Portuguese territory, was integrated with the Indian union in 1961 by an act of army accession. The political party that came to power in Goa in the first assembly election held in 1963 was the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP). MGP had its mass support from the lower caste Hindu communities, collectively referred to as the Bahujan Samaj. The chief agenda on which MGP consolidated a phenomenal mandate for itself was implementation of land reforms and merging Goa with the neighboring state of Maharashtra. MGP and its supporters argued that Marathi was the language of Goans and deployed the icon of Shivaji as a political symbol to garner affective support from the Hindu bahujan masses.

This paper will trace the emergence of a Marathi public sphere, chiefly enabled by the rise of print and Marathi theatre, in Portuguese Goa from the late nineteenth century. Situating political developments in early post-colonial Goa, this paper will argue that it was the rise of Marathi public sphere that created a basis for asserting Goa’s cultural continuities with Maharashtra. These assertions were distinctly marked by invoking Marathi as ‘the’ language of Goans and linking Goa with Maharashtra as a region with a shared Maratha past.

**Author's bio:** Kaustubh Naik has a MA in Performance Studies from the School of Culture and Creative Expressions, Ambedkar University Delhi. He is keenly interested in 20<sup>th</sup> century Goan history and the debates around caste, colonialism, and public spheres in Goa. He also writes a fortnightly column in *The Goan*, a Goa based English newspaper and is a part of the Al-Zulajj Collective, a group of researchers working on and from Goa.