

## **Setting the stage: *Aitihāsik Natak* and the Maharashtrawadi politics in 20<sup>th</sup> century Goa**

In 20<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese Goa, the Hindu *bahujan samaj*, a conglomeration of marginalised caste communities, claimed Maratha identity, based on the social aspects of Shivaji's polity and the concept of a warrior heritage. This paper traces the popularity of the historical plays based on Shivaji, performed by village collectives in temple spaces during annual fairs and ritual ceremonies throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Specifically, I examine their role in consolidating communitarian identities and shaping regional consciousness by analyzing the tremendous electoral success of the *Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Paksh*, a regional political party that, in post-colonial Goa, sought to merge Goa with Maharashtra.