

# Dynamics of a Working Democracy

## Representative Politics in a Goa Constituency

*Examining the micro politics of a single constituency, this study tries to explore the relationship between the empirical and the theoretical in a working democracy. By detailing the dynamics of electoral and party politics in the context of a constituency which suffers from a “development deficit”, the study examines the place of political leaders, party strategy, political ideology, political rhetoric, youth participation, voter loyalty, identity mobilisation, etc, in the democratic process. To engage with these issues of democracy-in-practice the study has chosen to look in detail at the case of political nomadism (defections) in the constituency and to see how both, the political institutions set up to regulate it and the political calculus of parties, have responded to such behaviour. By using an ethnographic approach and an attitudinal survey, the study raises questions related to representation, institutional regulation, and the tension between act and rule utilitarianism in a working democracy for the public discourse in India.*

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### I Introduction

Poinguinim is the 40th assembly constituency (AC) in the state of Goa. This AC was created in 1989 by dividing the Canacona AC into two: Canacona and Poinguinim. The AC has 21 polling stations (PS) and is divided into four panchayats: Poinguinim, Loliem,<sup>1</sup> Cotigao and Gaondongri. Since its creation, Poinguinim has witnessed six elections: four assembly elections and two by-elections. These two by-elections were held recently in the space of eight months, October 2004 and June 2005. Both the by-elections were caused when the sitting MLA Isidore Fernandes resigned from the legislature and re-contested each election on a different party platform.

Fernandes has been a prominent figure on the political landscape of Poinguinim. He has contested five of the six elections that have been held in Poinguinim and has won three consecutive elections each on different platforms: 1999 as an independent, 2002 as a Congress candidate and 2004 as a BJP candidate.<sup>2</sup> While such political nomadism is not atypical in Goa, we have chosen to study it because of three implications for democratic politics. The first is the role that institutions play in disciplining political behaviour. The 91st amendment to the Constitution sought to do just that. Hence the 2004 by-election should be seen as the first attempt in India, after this amendment was enacted, to bypass its spirit if not its letter. The second is to understand how the voters see such nomadism within the dynamic context of an electoral and party system. Explaining both Fernandes' wins and losses would help us do that. And the third is to examine the implications of such behaviour for representative democracy.

According to the 91st amendment, Fernandes' act of resignation from the party, on whose ticket he was elected to office, led to his disqualification as an MLA. He was thus required to re-contest the vacant seat, which he did, switching from the Congress to the BJP, and surprisingly defeating his Congress opponent, in a bipolar contest, by an impressive 21 per cent margin in the by-election of 2004. He tried repeating this feat eight months later by switching back to the Congress but this time he lost to his BJP rival by a margin of 8 per cent of the

vote in the 2005 by-election. We need to understand why Fernandes won and why he lost. Doing so will help us get a sense of the micro politics of a working democracy, the electoral and party dynamics and their implications for the representative structure of the democracy. This paper is based on two studies, an attitudinal survey and an ethnographic study, which were carried out under the aegis of Lokniti.<sup>3</sup> They were conducted in the constituency after the results of the 2004 by-elections (see the appendix for the survey and ethnography methodology).

### II Social Profile of Poinguinim

In what follows we shall present a brief social profile of the constituency. Poinguinim is located in the southernmost part of Goa and falls in the Canacona taluka. It is considered to be one of the least developed regions of Goa. Official statistics for Poinguinim were not available but Canacona's statistics show that the literacy rate in Canacona is 67.70 per cent (80.75 per cent males, 54.38 per cent females), the lowest in Goa.<sup>4</sup> The Poinguinim sample survey conducted by Lokniti showed that 16 per cent of the electorate of Poinguinim was illiterate. It is estimated from the electoral rolls that 79 per cent of the electorate are Hindus and 20 per cent are Christians.<sup>5</sup> The Lokniti survey also closely matches this religious composition (see the appendix). In terms of the scheduled tribes (STs), other backward classes (OBCs) and scheduled castes (SCs), the sample comprised 30 per cent STs, 12 per cent OBCs and 2 per cent SCs. The remaining Hindus comprise of brahmins (7 per cent) and other castes (29 per cent). The ST population consists predominantly of velips, gaonkars and kunbis/gawda<sup>6</sup> of whom the velips are the most numerous. The major OBC groups include the pagi (traditional fisherfolk) and naik communities. In terms of the electorate's age profile, 15 per cent are youth between the age group of 18 and 25 years, 32 per cent between 26 and 35 years, 23 per cent between 36 and 45 years, 14 per cent between 46 and 55 years and 16 per cent of the electorate between the age group of 55 years and above.

Of Poinguinim's four panchayats, Loliem has the largest electorate (35.6 per cent) followed by Poinguinim (31.3 per cent)

and Gaondongri (22.4 per cent) while Cotigao is the smallest panchayat (10.8 per cent).<sup>7</sup> Cotigao is also the least developed and most inaccessible panchayat. Gaondongri is marginally better developed than Cotigao, but much less so than Loliem and Poinguinim panchayats. Cotigao and Gaondongri have a large ST population comprising the velips and gaonkars whereas the pagi community is found largely in Poinguinim panchayat with some presence in Loliem. Most brahmins are located in Poinguinim and some live in Loliem. Most of the Christians are also located in these two panchayats.

One of the main problems faced by the people in Poinguinim is that of unemployment. Due to the lack of alternatives to agriculture-related employment, and the absence of industries, many youth are unemployed. Some of the youth, especially from Poinguinim and Loliem panchayats, migrate to countries in west Asia to seek employment as skilled or unskilled labour. There is no professional college in the constituency. There exists an Industrial Training Institute<sup>8</sup> in the neighbouring Canacona AC. To pursue higher education, the youth have to join institutions outside the taluka. Local transportation is another problem as the bus service, which is the only means of public transport, is infrequent. With the exception of the national highway, the internal roads are either badly maintained or non-existent. This is true especially of Cotigao and Gaondongri panchayats. Another major problem in Poinguinim has been the delay over the construction of a bridge over the Galjibag river, which flows between Galjibag (Poinguinim panchayat) and Maxem (Loliem panchayat). People usually cross the river using a small boat or use the Konkan railway bridge. Alternatively, they have to take a 10-12 km bus route via Poinguinim to get to the other side. Considering that the distance between Galjibag and Maxem is around five to ten minutes, these alternative routes are quite inconvenient. There is a similar problem regarding the construction of another bridge in Talpona in Poinguinim panchayat. The constituency does not have a hospital and people have to travel to Canacona or other towns in the state for treatment. There is a high incidence of renal failure among the people of Poinguinim and of Canacona taluka in general, making this absence of ready access to medical facilities a cause of anxiety.

Cotigao and Gaondongri are mountainous regions. Much of Cotigao is a wildlife sanctuary. The main source of livelihood in these two panchayats is the cultivation of vegetables and cash crops like cashew. In some of the villages in these panchayats, there exists the issue of rehabilitation of "kumeri" cultivators.<sup>9</sup> The villages of almost all the panchayats receive irregular water supply from the Public Works Department (PWD). It is important to understand these problems faced by the different sections of the people in Poinguinim because these are the key issues that are articulated during elections.

### III

#### Political Background of Poinguinim

Prior to its creation in 1989, Poinguinim was a part of the Canacona AC. Canacona was a Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP) constituency till the 1980s. The political mobilisation of the ST community is credited to the MGP and its candidate, Vasu Paik Gaonkar, a velip, who first won the assembly elections in 1977. In the 1980 assembly election, he was denied a MGP ticket and so he contested and won the election on a Congress ticket. The beginnings of the importance of candidates vis-à-vis political parties, in Poinguinim, can perhaps be seen here. After the creation of Poinguinim, Gaonkar contested and won Poinguinim's first assembly election in 1989 now as a Congress candidate, which

set the grounds for the subsequent divergence between a bahujan party (MGP) and a bahujan candidate. By 1999, the bahujan party's fortunes declined and it did not field any candidate in subsequent elections. This decline coincided with the rise of the BJP, which gained 30 per cent of the vote from 1999 to 2002 (Table 1).

From Table 1, we see two trends. The first is the rise of Isidore Fernandes who is able to grow from being an independent candidate, when he was denied a party ticket in 1994, to a candidate who has parties vying with each other to offer him a ticket in 2004-05. In this dialectic of candidate and party, what is it that explains the shift in the electoral calculus which makes the "winnability" of the candidate more important than even the party's ideology or self respect? The second is the collapse of the bahujan party and its replacement by a Hindutva party, i e, a transformation of the vote bank from bahujan to Hindutva. How is Hindutva able to transcend earlier cleavages of caste and status?

### IV

#### Poinguinim By-election

##### Background

On August 19, 2004, Fernandes tendered his resignation from the Goa legislative assembly to the speaker of the house, citing, as the main reason for his exit, his party's (Congress) "irresponsible leadership" in obstructing the government.<sup>10</sup> He seemed to suggest that the role of the opposition was to work with the government! At the time, the BJP was in power with Manohar Parrikar as chief minister. According to the provisions of the 91st amendment, Fernandes' resignation gave rise to a by-election. After 10 days of being "partyless", on August 30, Fernandes formally joined the BJP along with 21 members of the Poinguinim Congress block committee.<sup>11</sup> He praised Manohar Parrikar who he said promised him the development of his constituency.<sup>12</sup>

This was the first instance of "party-hopping" in India after the enactment of the 91st amendment in 2004. Party-hopping has been an endemic feature of Goa politics since 1989. During the 15 years after the enactment of the 52nd amendment in Goa, on an average, 18 legislators party-hopped through the duration of each assembly and there were 10 acts of group defection per assembly term.<sup>13</sup> Political instability in Goa has resulted in changes in government, with there being seven governments in the 1990-94 assembly. The 91st amendment was enacted to curb

**Table 1: Assembly Election Results in Poinguinim (1989-2005)**

Year	Candidate	Party	Vote Per Cent	Voter Turnout in Percentage
1989	Vasu Paik Gaonkar	INC	47.06	80.08
	Govind Acharya	MGP	46.11	
	—	INDs	6.39	
1994	Govind Acharya	MGP	43.59	82.73
	Vasu Paik Gaonkar	INC	32.82	
	Isidore Fernandes	IND	22.36	
1999	Isidore Fernandes	IND	45.40	76.47
	Govind Acharya	MGP	29.66	
	Vasu Paik Gaonkar	INC	20.70	
	Rajendra Pagi	BJP	4.60	
2002	Isidore Fernandes	INC	49.42	77.70
	Ramesh Tawadkar	BJP	33.05	
	Ulhas Naik	NCP	17.53	
2004*	Isidore Fernandes	BJP	60.91	77.80
	Govind Acharya	INC	39.09	
2005*	Ramesh Tawadkar	BJP	48.57	74.01
	Isidore Fernandes	INC	40.50	
	Leao Monterio	IND	10.93	

Note: \* Election was a by-election.

Source: The Election Commission of India, www.eci.gov.in

mass defections that were the unintended consequence of the 52nd amendment.<sup>14</sup> The two provisions of the 91st amendment to achieve this are: (i) limiting the size of the cabinet, thus restricting the possibility of defecting members being rewarded with cabinet berths and (ii) disqualifying from the legislature an individual or a group who has resigned from the original legislature party. Fernandes' resignation focuses attention on the effectiveness of the amendment to curb this menace of defections, on the relationship between its spirit and its form.

Fernandes' induction into the BJP 10 days after his resignation produced discord among BJP party workers in Poinguinim, especially those who had campaigned against him in the previous election.<sup>15</sup> Some other parties in the state, including the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Maharashtra Gomatank Party (MGP), United Goan Democratic Party (UGDP) and Lok Shakti decried Fernandes' move as political opportunism and pledged their support to the Congress in the by-election.<sup>16</sup> It is ironic that at this time both the UGDP and the MGP had an MLA each who supported the BJP government in the house.

Senior leaders from the Congress and its allies campaigned in Poinguinim. Taking the moral high ground they campaigned on the immorality of Fernandes' switch and on the BJP's encouragement of defections. They alleged that Fernandes had switched parties on account of money that he was guaranteed to receive to meet a personal debt.<sup>17</sup> Jagdish Govind Acharya, the 1994 Poinguinim MLA (Table 1) was selected as the Congress candidate to contest against Fernandes.<sup>18</sup> As a BJP candidate Fernandes now stressed the wonderful work the BJP had done for the development of Goa and that his membership of the ruling party (BJP) would facilitate the development of Poinguinim.<sup>19</sup>

The election was bitterly fought. There were allegations of intimidation and the use of money and other incentives levelled by both parties against each other.<sup>20</sup> The State Election Commission put in place stringent security measures to prevent incidents of poll violence or manipulation of voting preferences through the use of threats and monetary and other incentives.<sup>21</sup> The election results, which were announced on October 16, declared Isidore Fernandes the winner. He polled 6,963 (60.91 per cent) votes against Jagdish Acharya's 4,468 (39.09 per cent) votes. The verdict gave a clear mandate to Fernandes who won in 20 of the 21 polling stations in the AC. The constituency, which usually has a high voter turnout, witnessed a turnout of 77.80 per cent, which was on the lines of the turnout in the 1999 and 2002 elections.<sup>22</sup> Table 2 indicates the panchayat-wise vote share garnered by each party.

### Factors that Influenced the Verdict

The sample survey and the ethnographic study carried out by Lokniti have shown that the following factors were particularly decisive in ensuring Isidore Fernandes' victory in the 2004 by-elections despite his political nomadism.

**Campaign:** Isidore Fernandes began building up support for his party switch as early as two weeks before his resignation from the Congress Party. He held meetings at his residence and in other wards where he sought to "consult" his supporters and get endorsement for his view that his remaining within the Congress Party could not ensure the development of the constituency. A view emerged in the ethnographic study that Fernandes' consultations were not as extensive as portrayed since he approached only those who were considered to be his staunch supporters. He did not, for example, consult some of the traditional Christian Congress voters who were known to have helped him in his 2002 campaign and did not consider those supporters who opposed

his decision. These consultations/meetings helped him keep his support base intact. The campaign was very intensive. Around 88 per cent of the respondents in the sample survey reported that a candidate/canvasser/party worker came to ask for his/her vote. By all accounts this represents very high campaign coverage. It also brings to light the small size of Poinguinim (14,607 voters). Of the respondents who were approached by canvassers, 80 per cent stated that canvassers from both the parties approached them for their vote; around 12 per cent claimed that only BJP canvassers approached them whereas 4 per cent claimed that they were approached by only Congress canvassers (Table 3). When respondents who stated that they were approached by canvassers from both parties were asked which party approached them first, 40 per cent stated that it was the BJP who approached them first as compared to 29 per cent who stated that it was the Congress. The ethnographic study also supported the survey findings in this respect and revealed that the BJP campaign was more organised, more prominent, and much more eye-catching.<sup>23</sup>

Table 3 also shows how both parties made a concerted effort to campaign in Cotigao whereas in Gaondongri, the BJP went that extra yard in their campaign with 31 per cent of the respondents claiming that only the BJP had come to ask for their vote. In all four panchayats, the BJP was a more effective campaigner that reflects perhaps the growth of front organisations such as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). It also shows the authoritarian nature of the party where, despite the choice of candidate who the party workers had opposed, once he had been chosen the party workers went out to canvass for him despite their opposition to him. In response to the question, "When did you finally make up your mind about whom to vote for?", 55 per cent claimed that they made up their mind before the campaign started while only 22 per cent stated that they made up their mind during the campaign (Table 4). Of these 62 per cent made up their minds for the BJP in contrast to the 38 per cent for the Congress.

The BJP received a majority of votes from those who had made up their mind before the campaign started as well from those who made up their mind during the campaign. In terms of the effectiveness of the campaign, the BJP was ahead of the Congress on every parameter. During the campaign there were allegations,

**Table 2: Panchayat-wise Party Support in 2004**

	BJP	Congress	Victory Margin in Per Cent
Entire AC	6963	4468	21.82
Panchayat			
Cotigao	834	523	22.92
Gaondongri	1729	1091	22.62
Loliem	2105	1242	25.78
Poinguinim	2293	1609	17.52

Source: The Election Commission of India, www.eci.gov.in.

**Table 3: Party-wise Campaign Coverage  
(Per cent)**

	From Which Party Did the Canvasser Come to Ask for Your Vote?					Numbers	Missing Values
	Congress	BJP	Both	DK			
Entire AC	4	12	80	4	339	48	
Panchayat							
Cotigao	—	—	98	2	45	10	
Gaondongri	5	31	59	5	80	17	
Loliem	3	7	88	3	105	35	
Poinguinim	5	9	82	5	109	38	

Note: Question: From which party did the candidate, party worker or canvasser come to ask for your vote?

Missing values include those not covered by the campaign (48 cases).

Source: Poinguinim Election Study – 2004, weighted data set.

by both parties, that money was distributed and that party workers and voters were threatened. In the survey, people were asked: "In a constituency like Poinguinim it is easy for political parties to use unfair means to influence voters. Tell me, to what extent do you agree with this statement – fully agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or fully disagree?" In their responses, 57 per cent disagreed with the statement, 27 per cent agreed and 16 per cent said they did not know. Most of the respondents in the survey (above 97 per cent) also denied that they were offered any money or gifts during the campaign. The same number also denied that they were threatened. However, when they were asked to what extent they agreed that this election was won using money and gifts (Table 5), 51 per cent disagreed, 27 per cent agreed, and 22 per cent stated that they did not know. The panchayat-wise break-up of the responses to this statement shows that a majority of the people (54 per cent) in Cotigao panchayat agreed that the 2004 by-election was won by offering money or gifts. While a majority in the other panchayats disagreed with the statement, with Gaondongri disagreeing the most, it must be noted that between 28 and 29 per cent of the people in Loliem and Poinguinim also agreed with this assessment.

In the ethnographic study people were more forthcoming. During the course of the interviews, villagers revealed that both parties had distributed money to attract votes. Many people admitted to having accepted money and some even confessed that even though they had accepted money from either or both parties, they had voted for a candidate of their choice on election day. They remarked that both Isidore Fernandes and Churchill Alemao had advised the people to accept money from both parties but to vote for the BJP or the Congress respectively. Very few people mentioned that they had been threatened during the campaign. Some old people stated that they were warned that they would forfeit the Rs 500 per month that they received from the Dayanand Social Security Scheme<sup>24</sup> if they did not vote for the BJP, the government in power. However, both the survey and the ethnography showed that this was a rare occurrence. Only 3 per cent of the respondents stated that the election was unfair. These results are contrary to media commentaries that the election was won solely through the use of money and threats.

*Party factor:* In the survey, people were asked, "Is there any party you feel close to?" Sixty-five per cent answered in the negative, but of those who stated that they did feel close to a particular party, 51 per cent stated they felt close to the BJP and 44 per cent stated that they felt close to the Congress. When asked about the performance of the state government (led by the BJP) over the past four years, 70 per cent stated that they were either fully or somewhat satisfied with the performance of the state government. On being asked to make a comparison between the Congress and the BJP in terms of the party they believed was better for the development of Poinguinim, the responses were as follows: 59 per cent stated that the BJP was better, 11 per cent the Congress, and 20 per cent said that there was no difference (Table 6). From the above responses it can be noted that there is a favourable assessment of the BJP state government and a perception that the BJP would be better for the development of Poinguinim. Table 6 also reveals the extremely positive assessment of the BJP in Gaondongri – the same panchayat where the BJP went the extra yard in their campaign.

Table 7 looks at how those who opined on which party that would be better for Poinguinim's development actually voted. It is interesting to note from this table that 30 per cent of those who voted for the Congress in 2004 feel that the BJP would be better for the development of Poinguinim compared to 26 per cent of the Congress voters who feel that the Congress would be better.

Table 7 shows the consolidation of the BJP vote and the fluidity of the Congress vote and also the positive perception among Congress voters of the BJP's capacity to deliver development.<sup>25</sup> *Candidate factor:* Considering that Fernandes' switch from the Congress to the BJP was the major issue of contention in the election, 81 per cent of those interviewed knew that Isidore Fernandes was the last sitting MLA in Poinguinim and 71 per cent were able to correctly state that the reason for the by-election was because of Fernandes' switch from the Congress to the BJP. In comparative terms these percentages show a very high level of political information and awareness. Further, respondents were asked how justified was Fernandes' decision to leave the Congress party, join the BJP, and re-contest the election; 78 per cent stated that Fernandes was either fully or somewhat justified in doing so with 46 per cent feeling that this was for ideological reasons (a reasonable basis) while 16 per cent felt it was for money and 15 per cent said he was fed up with the Congress party. About 74 per cent of respondents said that Fernandes moving from the Congress to the BJP party would lead to the greater development of Poinguinim. Two possibilities can be drawn from these statistics: (i) that the development deficit is so significant that it is the primary concern of voters in Poinguinim, a concern which the voters feel Isidore Fernandes can effectively address, and (ii) that the BJP is the party best suited to meet this deficit. The positive attitude to the party, as a vehicle of development, seems

**Table 4: Decision to Vote**

When Did You Make Up Your Mind about Who to Vote for?	Per Cent	Voted for in 2004 (in Per Cent)		Numbers
		BJP	Congress	
Before the campaign started	55	59	41	155
During the campaign	22	62	38	61
A day or two before voting	9	60	40	25
On the day of polling	11	70	30	30
DK (don't know)	3	56	44	9

*Notes:* Questions: (1) When did you finally make up your mind about who to vote for? and (2) Who did you vote for?

Missing values include those who did not vote (107 cases).

*Source:* Poinguinim Election Study – 2004, weighted data set.

**Table 5: The Role of Money and Gifts in the Election**

	To What Extent Do You Agree That This Election Was Won Using Money and Gifts? (in Per Cent)					Numbers
	Fully Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Fully Agree	DK	
Entire AC	43	8	13	14	22	387
Panchayat						
Cotigao	29	14	25	29	4	49
Gaondongri	65	7	7	–	21	89
Loliem	32	8	13	16	31	122
Poinguinim	43	7	11	17	21	127

*Note:* Question: Tell me, to what extent you agree that this election was won using money and gifts?

*Source:* Poinguinim Election Study – 2004, weighted data set.

**Table 6: Party and Development**

	Who Is Better for the Development of Poinguinim? (in Per Cent)				Numbers
	BJP	Congress	No difference	DK	
Entire AC	59	11	20	11	387
Panchayat					
Cotigao	22	27	47	4	49
Gaondongri	86	5	8	1	88
Loliem	48	9	30	13	122
Poinguinim	64	11	9	16	128

*Note:* Question: I will ask you to make a comparison between the Congress and the BJP. Tell me, for the development of Poinguinim which of these two is better?

*Source:* Poinguinim Election Study – 2004, weighted data set.

to be consolidating among all groups across all four panchayats, which later explains why Fernandes lost. It also highlights the organisational penetration of the constituency and so when a popular candidate and party are in tandem, it is a win-win situation for both. When they are opposed, however, the party triumphs over the candidate even one with an independent support base. It would perhaps only take a plebiscitary leader (in the Weberian sense of a charismatic leader) to over ride this rule.

The ethnographic study revealed that although Fernandes lives in Panaji,<sup>26</sup> he visits Poinguinim on weekends. In his absence, his local network of youth and middlemen in the constituency keep him in touch with the electorate. The ethnographic study also shows that people consider Fernandes to be extremely approachable. He is perceived to be a person who mingles with people of different communities and economic backgrounds with ease and portrays himself as one among them. He is known to lend money to people who are in need but never asks for it back. People also mentioned that he has carried out developmental works like providing electricity and water supply, fertilisers to farmers and building footbridges in remote places in the constituency. People revealed that he had helped some people get employment in the police, fire brigade and electricity departments. His assistance is also invaluable when it comes to getting people admitted, for medical treatment, to the Goa Medical College, the main public hospital in Goa located near Panaji. In contrast, Fernandes' competitor, Jagdish Acharya, was viewed as someone who has "returned to the world after renouncing it".<sup>27</sup> People criticised Acharya for not maintaining contact with his party workers, and his electorate, when he was in power in 1994. Others cited him as being very unapproachable and that "he talks to the people on the basis of their social status". In this election, it was cited that Acharya "came for the meetings as a guest and left as a guest".<sup>28</sup> Many of those we talked to remarked that the Congress received most of the votes because of Churchill Alemao's appeal. From Poinguinim the idea of a democratic leader as an intermediary through whom the people are able to get their ordinary entitlements from the state is given shape.

### Social Basis of the Verdict

It would be interesting now to get a sense of the social basis of the vote. Both men (65 per cent) and women (57 per cent) supported the BJP in 2004. The religion-wise break-up of the verdict (Table 8) shows that, by and large, people voted along religious lines with the Hindus preferring the BJP and the Christians preferring the Congress. The ethnographic study reveals that many Christians were wary of voting for the BJP, as they perceived the party as being communal (anti-Christian). When asked how they reached the conclusion that the BJP was communal, some stated that the Congress campaign highlighted the atrocities that BJP party workers were involved in: "BJP destroys churches, kills nuns, etc". During the campaign, the Congress also distributed leaflets at the Galjibag church that contained communal statements allegedly made by Praveen Togadia, of VHP.

However, on comparing the difference between the Christians who voted for either party with the difference between the Hindus who voted for either party, the survey results show that the difference among the Christians who voted for either party is much smaller (20 per cent) as compared to that of the Hindus (40 per cent). This shows a fracture, albeit an unequal one, of the Christian vote. A sizeable 40 per cent of the Christians voted for the BJP. In other words, the Christians were not united in voting for the Congress. This is perhaps because the BJP candidate was a Christian. It points to the interesting issue that although

identities are constructed along communal lines, subaltern sections of communities seek development goods very strongly and are sometimes willing to pursue these goods even in opposition to their community interests. Does getting these votes result in a secularisation of a communal party, i.e., it becomes more centrist, or does it suggest an emasculation of communal identities by the party of government that is able to play a politics of divide and rule because it has the states' resources at its command?

When Hindus and Christians were asked when they made up their minds about which party to vote for, a majority of respondents in both communities said that they had made up their minds before the campaign began. However, 56 per cent of the Christians claimed this to be true as compared to 39 per cent Hindus. Of the 56 per cent Christians who claimed they made up their mind before the campaign began, 46 per cent voted for the BJP. Fernandes, himself a Christian, prior to filing his nomination claimed that "his Catholic supporters had given him the green signal to join the BJP".<sup>29</sup> The ethnography revealed that Fernandes made efforts to gain the Christian votes by countering the Congress allegation that the BJP is a communal party. For example, when challenged about the communal nature of the BJP, he responded that if the people could mention any event or incident where the BJP insulted Christianity in Goa, he would not contest for the BJP. This strategy of asking the people for an opinion, asked rhetorically as did Mark Anthony, is often deployed by the new class of political leaders which allows them to ignore the larger ideological and historical issues involved and to convert everything into a kind of people's commonsense that then gets endorsed.

In the survey members of both communities were asked their most important consideration while voting. Hindus were divided between the candidate and the party whereas most Christians said that the candidate was most important. When looking at how Christians voted in the election (Table 9), it can be noted that a majority of Christians who voted for the BJP stated that they voted for the candidate. In other words, these Christians rationalised their vote as a vote for Isidore Fernandes. On interviewing the Christians, it was also felt that older and middle-aged Christians, who represented traditional Congress voters were more likely to have voted for the Congress party as compared to the younger Christians who voted for the candidate and formed a part of Fernandes' campaign.

When looking at how people voted across different age groups (Table 10), it is noticed that although the BJP gained from all the age groups, it gained most significantly in the age groups

**Table 7: Party-wise Perception on Development**

Voted for in 2004	Who Do You Think Is Better for the Development of Poinguinim?			Numbers	
	BJP	Congress	No Difference		Don't Know
Congress	30	26	26	18	110
BJP	71	6	16	7	170

Notes: Questions: (1) I will ask you to make a comparison between the Congress and the BJP. Tell me, for the development of Poinguinim which of these two is better? and (2) Whom did you vote for? Missing values include those who did not vote (107 cases).

Source: Poinguinim Election Study – 2004, weighted data set.

**Table 8: Voting by Religion**

Religion	Voted for in 2004 (in Per Cent)		Number
	Congress	BJP	
Hindus	30	70	193
Christians	60	40	85

Note: Missing values include those who did not vote (107 cases).

Source: Poinguinim Election Study – 2004, weighted data set.

18-25 years and 46 years and above. This can partly be attributed to the popular schemes that it initiated during its term in government like the Cyberage Students' Scheme and the Pre-employment Training Scheme<sup>30</sup> that benefits the youth and the Dayanand Social Security Scheme<sup>31</sup> that benefits the older age group. The strong support of the youth for the BJP can also be attributed to the work done by Ramesh Tawadkar, who has worked with the youth especially in Gaondongri and Cotigao panchayats and has set up a youth organisation called the Adarsh Yuva Sangh (Association of Ideal Youth), and also to the work of the RSS who have been nurturing the constituency. Members of the electorate between the ages of 26 and 45 years have voted for the Congress in 2004 in larger numbers against the generally pro-BJP/Fernandes tide. They represent a loyal voter base for the Congress probably set in their preferences over the years.

Table 11 shows that the BJP has been able to penetrate all caste groups with significant gains from the brahmins and the OBCs.

Those who were interviewed in Cotigao and Gaondongri panchayats, where there is a significant presence of the ST community, stated that they preferred to vote for the BJP, as it was the BJP that had carried out developmental work in neighbouring Canacona constituency. Those affected by the *Kumeri* problem stated that Manohar Parrikar, the then chief minister heading the BJP government, had promised to legally transfer the ownership of the land to the titleholder. He had assured them that around 200 of the oldest files in the records would be handed over to their respective owners. He had also assured them that the remaining files would be scrutinised. The gain of the BJP across gender, age, religious community, and caste shows a consolidation of its vote base particularly in terms of ex-MGP supporters (largely OBC and ST) who have moved to Hindutva from bahujan. In the past, for the bahujan to share political space with brahmins would be unthinkable but Table 11 shows that the BJP has been able to bridge this divide in Poinguinim.

### A Mandate for Isidore Fernandes or the BJP?

Isidore Fernandes has previously won elections on three different platforms. In order to check whether the verdict in 2004 represented a mandate for Fernandes or for the BJP, the respondents were asked what their most important consideration was when voting. Almost half of the electorate (47 per cent) considered the candidate the most important and a slightly lesser number (42 per cent) considered the party the most important. This shows that the electorate is divided into those that support the party because of what it stands for, even if the party fields as its candidate the person they had opposed in the previous election, and those who support the candidate irrespective of the party platform on which/s/he stands. From this division, both party and candidate can be regarded as representing the voter.

From the ethnographic study we know that people see Isidore Fernandes as their link to state resources and an ally in times of need. With respect to the BJP we know that it has nurtured the constituency over the years and developed grassroots leadership building up a support base across groups and communities. This has been consolidated with its coming to power in the state. When Isidore Fernandes joined the BJP his votes, and the party votes, came together resulting in an overwhelming victory for the BJP. As a result his political nomadism was not an issue in 2004. In fact, Isidore Fernandes seems to have been rewarded for his political nomadism, which raises some interesting questions of political morality. If an elected representative party-hops between elections, is this behaviour to be condemned, commended or ignored? In what sense is party-hopping a question of political

morality in a representative democracy? Is it to be judged in terms of rule or act utilitarianism?<sup>32</sup> From another angle is such party-hopping, if it produces a competitive party system, justified since such a party system is good for representative democracy? And is it justified even when it destabilises the party system since it weakens party oligarchies that as a result have to be more compromising and accommodative? Is voter support the ultimate endorsement of party-hopping or is it to be balanced with system sustainability? These are some questions that need to be addressed in terms of the deepening process of a working democracy.

## V

### Poinguinim By-election

#### Background

On January 29, 2005, Isidore Fernandes and three other BJP MLAs resigned from the membership of the house, and from the BJP.<sup>33</sup> More resignations took place leading to the downfall of the BJP government and installation of a Congress government led by Pratapsingh Rane in the dead of night on February 2, 2005.<sup>34</sup> Although Fernandes stood disqualified under the provisions of the 91st Amendment Act, he was inducted, contrary to the amendment, into the Rane cabinet as a non-legislator and given the industries, trade and commerce portfolios, which he held till March 2005.<sup>35</sup> Fernandes rejoined the Congress on February 5, 2005, six months after he had resigned from the party.

**Table 9: Break-up of Vote According to Religion and Most Important Consideration**

Religion	Voted for in 2004	Most Important Consideration While Voting (in Per Cent)		Numbers
		Candidate Most Important	Party Most Important	
Hindus	Congress	55	35	52
	BJP	39	55	128
Christians	Congress	35	39	38
	BJP	66	23	31

*Notes:* Questions: (1) While voting what is the most important consideration for you, the candidate, the party, your religion, your caste or something else? And (2) Whom did you vote for?

Missing values include those who gave other reasons beside the reasons mentioned in the table (30 cases) and those who did not vote (107 cases).

*Source:* Poinguinim Election Study – 2004, weighted data set.

**Table 10: Age-wise Breakup of the Vote**

Age	Voted for in 2004 (in Per Cent)		Numbers
	Congress	BJP	
18-25 years	29	71	42
26-35 years	44	56	82
36-45 years	42	58	71
46-55 years	34	66	35
55 years and above	39	61	49

*Note:* Missing values include those who did not vote (107 cases).

*Source:* Poinguinim Election Study – 2004, weighted data set.

**Table 11: Caste/Community-wise Breakup of the Vote**

Caste/Community	Voted for in 2004 (in Per Cent)		Numbers
	Congress	BJP	
Brahmins	18	82	11
OBC	23	77	26
SC	50	50	4
ST	36	64	64
Christians	60	40	85
Caste not mentioned or ascertained	28	72	88

*Note:* Missing values include those who did not vote (107 cases).

*Source:* Poinguinim Election Study – 2004, weighted data set.

The Congress, the BJP and Fernandes engaged in political rhetoric to justify their stance. While Rane (then, leader of the opposition) had branded Fernandes a “turncoat” in 2004 for what he labelled a “scandalous act of defection”,<sup>36</sup> Fernandes’ switch back to the Congress in 2005 was deemed a “sacrifice” by the party’s top brass.<sup>37</sup> As for the BJP, while Fernandes’ defection was a step towards providing better development to Poinguinim, his defection in 2005 was termed a “betrayal”.<sup>38</sup> Thus, while it was decided that Isidore Fernandes would contest the by-election on the Congress ticket, the BJP decided to field Ramesh Tawadkar, the Poinguinim BJP mandal president and Fernandes’ opponent in 2002, keeping in mind the fact that he belonged to the gawdavelip community, which comprised 5,600 of the 14,870 voters. The entry of an independent candidate Leao Monteiro into the election fray added a new dimension to the contest. Monteiro stated that the people of Poinguinim were fed up with party-hopping and would surely vote him in. The campaign was bitterly fought by all sides. While former C M Parrikar played a prominent role in campaigning for the BJP, South Goa MP, Churchill Alemao was entrusted with the responsibility for the campaign on behalf of the Congress.

The BJP began its campaign against Fernandes long before the dates of the elections were announced. The focus was on Fernandes’ “betrayal” of the BJP and of the promises made to the electorate. The BJP alleged that the defecting MLAs, including Fernandes, were paid “four to five crore” each by the Congress to secure their defection.<sup>39</sup> Parrikar urged the voters to “reject selfish defectors” like Fernandes and vote for the BJP which, he emphasised, was the only party that could provide developmental works for the state.<sup>40</sup> The Congress started its campaign by pointing out alleged lapses and scams that the BJP government was involved in. Chief minister Rane alleged that the applications accepted for the Pre-Employment Training Scheme (begun by former chief minister Parrikar) were in excess of the vacancies available, thereby fooling the educated youth in Goa into believing that they would be given government jobs when there were none to be given. It was also alleged that the scheme provided employment to the BJP-RSS cadre in the vacancies that did exist.<sup>41</sup> During the campaign, Fernandes, contrary to the praises he had heaped on Parrikar during the by-election campaign in 2004<sup>42</sup> stated that the “dictatorship” of Parrikar was responsible for his resignation from the BJP in 2005. He said that after he had joined the BJP, “...chief minister Manohar Parrikar started giving me step-motherly treatment and even tried to put me into trouble. In the process I could not fulfil the promises made to my voters and I decided to topple the BJP government...” by “sacrificing” my post to do so.<sup>43</sup> He stressed that the main point of difference between the Congress and the BJP was the secular ideology of the former, which sought to promote harmony in the state.<sup>44</sup> This turnaround from his affirmation of the BJP’s secular credentials in 2004<sup>45</sup> cynically illustrates the nature of political rhetoric.

The promises made to the electorate were common to all parties: solving the problem of the kumeri cultivators, providing better infrastructure such as water supply, educational facilities, roads, and electricity to the villages, the setting up of an industrial estate to help reduce the unemployment rate, and the construction of the Talpona-Galjibag bridge.<sup>46</sup> Both parties also promised monetary support to the unemployed youth.<sup>47</sup> The Congress and the BJP both believed that they would win the by-election. Ramesh Tawadkar listed his strengths to be the BJP party organisation, the development “legacy” of the BJP government in Goa, and the community factor, which he believed to be on his side in this election.<sup>48</sup> The Congress hopes were boosted by the zilla panchayat elections that were held in March 2005, in

which candidates backed by Isidore Fernandes and former Congress MLA Sanjay Bandekar defeated BJP nominees in Poinguinim and Khola segments.<sup>49</sup> The turnout of the by-elections was 74 per cent, four per cent less than the turnout in the 2002 and 2004 elections. Ramesh Tawadkar won the election by 8 per cent of the vote over Isidore Fernandes who received 40.5 per cent to Tawadkar’s 48.57 per cent. Leao Monteiro, the independent candidate played spoiler, receiving 10.93 per cent of the vote.

### *An Unexpected Loss*

Fernandes who had been elected to the legislature thrice in successive elections, each time with an increasing margin, lost to Ramesh Tawadkar. This was a surprise especially since in the five by-elections that were held simultaneously in Goa, the BJP was defeated in four. The BJP’s actions in the assembly, in the period after the resignations were considered reprehensible by various commentators, and this perhaps contributed to their defeat.<sup>50</sup> Their victory in Poinguinim therefore needs to be explained. The 2005 election provides the perfect occasion for us to examine the following: (i) the consolidation of the party base, (ii) the power of the vote to reward or punish a representative, (iii) the capacity of the candidate to carry his/her vote bank with him/her to any party.<sup>51</sup>

*Consolidation of the party base:* This election has revealed that the BJP has strengthened its vote base in Poinguinim. Apart from securing 50 per cent of the vote, the BJP has recorded a rise in the vote share in each polling station especially when compared to its performance in 2002. The BJP has doubled its vote share in Cotigao panchayat and has increased its vote share by 20 per cent or more in four other polling stations. It has recorded a rise of 16 per cent from its performance in 2002. The BJP has succeeded in combining the *Hindutva* and *Bahujan* vote in the AC and in consolidating the OBC vote. This is particularly seen in polling stations that went with Fernandes in 2002, due to a split of the OBC vote between Ramesh Tawadkar of the BJP who belongs to the ST community and Ulhas Naik of the NCP who belongs to the OBC community. These polling stations were won by the BJP in 2005. The BJP has also managed to secure a sizeable section of the ST vote. This is clearly seen in the voting patterns of nine polling stations that have a large ST population (11 per cent of the electorate). Of these the BJP has won in eight.

The increase in the BJP vote base was because of its strong organisational structure that enabled it to run a well-orchestrated campaign in Poinguinim. The BJP workers are mainly at the level of the 21 polling stations in the constituency. The BJP won also because of its pro-development image. The introduction of the pre-employment guarantee scheme, which promises government jobs to the educated youth, also increased its influence. Parrikar’s claim that he had taken steps to clear about 200 cases of *kumeri* cultivators also yielded dividends as also the claim to implement the Ambedkar Awas Yojana, a social security scheme that gives the domiciled homeless 100 square metre plots at subsidised rates.<sup>52</sup>

*Reduction of the Congress and Fernandes’ Vote Base:* There is a swing of votes away from the Congress towards the BJP in conjunction with a simultaneous consolidation of the ST and OBC vote by the BJP. This is seen in the voting pattern of certain polling stations that voted for the Congress in 1999 and 2002 but for the BJP in 2004 and 2005 (Cotigao and Gaondongri panchayats comprising mainly of scheduled tribes). The Congress has continued to rely on individuals (Vasu Paik Goankar in the early 1990s and Isidore Fernandes since then) to keep the party afloat in Poinguinim as it has in other constituencies in Goa. The absence of a structured party organisation has hurt its ability to mobilise

workers and voters to rally behind it in times of need. While Isidore Fernandes won 20 of the 21 polling stations and all the four panchayats in the 2004 by-elections, he managed to win in only six polling stations and in none of the panchayats in the 2005 elections. He has registered a loss of 8 per cent of the vote as compared to his performance in 2002 and has received lesser votes in each polling station in 2005 than the votes he received in the 2002 elections. This decrease in Fernandes' vote-share could be attributed to a consolidation of the BJP vote and to a decline in his vote-base, a decline perhaps because of a "punishment" for his frequent changes of party affiliations.

*Isidore Fernandes as the "Burkean" Representative:* Despite this, Fernandes continued to retain a sizeable share of the vote. He secured less than 40 per cent of the vote in seven of the 21 polling stations and in no polling station did he receive less than 20 per cent of the vote. There are two possible ways to interpret this. One is to focus on the decline in his votes and to see it as a punishment for his opportunism in party hopping between the two parties twice within eight months. In most democracies such party hopping would be considered unacceptable and even the statement of reasons in the 52nd amendment regards such behaviour as a "malaise" of democracy. The second way is to look at his stable vote which remains at over 20 per cent in all the five elections he has contested where he moves from independent, to Congress, to BJP, and back to Congress. In this nomadism he takes his vote with him and seems to enjoy a loyal following. Is he here conforming to the Burkean position of the representative who "knows better" who, in his person, represents the interest of the constituency since he decides what is best for them, or does Fernandes represent his voters in some symbolic sense as a subaltern hero, is he a bridge between them and the faceless state? How else can one explain this consistently high voter loyalty that seems unaffected by his comings and goings between parties? In fact if one factors in the 10 per cent votes taken by the independent candidate, who got Fernandes' Christian votes, and the 4 per cent decline in turnout, Fernandes may even have won the election.

## Conclusion

The details in the preceding pages should be read not just as a description of the dynamics of party and electoral dynamics in a single constituency but also as a case study from which can be derived multiple issues related to the working and deepening of a representative democracy. While the constituency is of course located in the state of Goa, and in that sense its politics is bound by the limitations of its context, this study has the ambition of using details to address larger issues of democracy. In fact, if one reads the minutiae with a theoretical mind, one finds that the use by this study of the methodological instruments of survey and ethnography have, in combination, given us a rich variety of empirical material with which to engage. Three levels of issues, of relevance to the democratic discourse, can be derived from these details.

The first is at the constituency level where the political profile of Poinquinim constituency has been elaborated. This is necessary for us to explain why Fernandes, as a political nomad, won and why he lost in the two by-elections of 2004 and 2005. From these explanations we get a sense of: (i) the loyal voter base that Fernandes commands and which remains unaffected by his political nomadism; (ii) the organisational penetration of the constituency by the BJP and its affiliates, which gives it a substantial base of political workers who campaign for it irrespective of whether they agree or not with the decisions of the party with respect to its candidate, in contrast to the Congress which relies on political leaders rather than on party organisation; (iii) the pragmatic

politics of both parties, Congress and BJP, for whom "winnability" is the primary objective even over-riding the issue of ideological affinity and political morality which get unabashedly compromised on the altar of political expediency; (iv) the success of the BJP in converting what was a bahujan vote base into a Hindutva one, and thereby consolidating the Hindu vote across every social category especially that of caste; (v) the split in the Christian vote, a part of which shifts to the BJP regarded as an anti-minority party, because it seeks development that, it believes, the BJP can best provide and for which it is willing to even risk its community interests, and (vi) the cynical use of political language to justify political nomadism where Fernandes, in the space of eight months, can, when he leaves the party, be accused of "treachery", and when he rejoins some months later he is warmly welcomed for his "sacrifice". From this account we get the sense that there are many Poinquinims in India.

At the second level are issues that relate to the working of democracy in India. Although the processes identified are India-specific they also apply to other countries in the global south. Four issues in particular are of considerable interest: (i) The case study alerts us to the role that a plebiscitary leader plays in a working democracy. While the emergence of such a leader is often regarded as a transitional phenomenon when organisations are in decline, the study shows that this is not so, moreover even where the party system is strong, a plebiscitary leader is able to retain a significant voter base and take it along with him when he moves between parties. The study also shows that in a situation of conflict, between the interests of a plebiscitary leader and that of a political party, the latter wins because organisations are more effective than leaders in delivering outcomes. Although this is a point that has become part of our commonsense it still needs to be made since parties such as the Congress, unlike the BJP, have not invested in building up party organisations at the constituency level. (ii) The study also highlights the fact that, in remote constituencies, across all groups, the "development deficit" constitutes the primary driver of politics. Development is seen as that process that creates opportunities for people's well being and hence any agent who is seen as having a better chance of reducing this deficit, bringing development, even one who by the prevailing discourse is ostensibly not a friend, is supported, as was the case of the BJP securing the Christian vote in the 2004 elections. (iii) We can also derive from the case study the commitment of the voter to democracy on which they rely to achieve the futures they seek. (iv) And finally, the study draws attention to the moral attitude of the voter towards political nomadism, which are different from those in the west, where such nomadism would be considered unacceptable. The voter seems to be guided by a pragmatism of the "it does not matter if a cat is black or white as long as it catches mice" variety and so the leader's nomadism is assessed in terms of whether it will facilitate development goals or not and depending on this assessment, is rewarded or punished.

The third level at which we can engage is at the normative level. Political nomadism is an inconvenient fact for theories of representation. How then is it to be assessed? There are two interesting issues that need a more sustained discussion. The first is with respect to the tenets of representative democracy. The dominant discourse on democracy sees political nomadism as violative of the implicit contract between the voter and the representative, where the representative undertakes to represent the interests of the voter and, by implication, does so by remaining within the party on which s/he originally contested the elections. On closer inspection, however, the argument is not so straightforward. It has two facets. If we look at it in terms of the mandate theory of representation, which sees the representative as only



doing what the voter has mandated him/her to do and not use his/her discretion, then such nomadism is unacceptable. The many constitutional and legislative changes in India are, in fact, driven by the mandate theory of representation. It is also the dominant perspective in the global debate where party hopping is frowned upon.<sup>53</sup> However, if we see political nomadism in terms of the independence theory of representation, where the representative acts (i) as the represented would have acted, (ii) for their sake, (iii) in accord with their wishes, desire or opinions, and (iv) in pursuit of their welfare, needs or interest,<sup>54</sup> then the constitutional changes made in India can be read as violative of the tenets of representative democracy since they reduce the arena within which the representative can use his/her discretion about is good for the represented. The jury is hence out on whether political nomadism is contrary to the tenets of representative democracy. The second issue on which additional discussion is called for is with respect to evaluating political nomadism in terms of the arguments between act and rule utilitarianism. In the former case nomadism is justified since it results in better outcomes (of development of the constituency) for the voter in the particular electoral constituency. In the latter case it is unjustified since it undermines the electoral and political system, by undermining the sanctity of rules by which representatives are chosen. This has negative consequences for the whole polity. How then does one adjudicate between what is desirable at the constituency level but undesirable at the system level? Should the latter always trump the former? These are issues that need to be addressed as we seek to re-design our representative institutions so that they can better respond to the challenges of a working democracy. ■■■

## Appendix

### *Methodology of the 2004 Poinguinim By-election Study*

In order to understand the 2004 Poinguinim by-election, Lokniti conducted a study in the constituency. The study involved two components: an attitudinal survey and an ethnographic study. *The Survey:* The sample survey was carried out between December 10 and 31, 2004 and involved administering a questionnaire to a sample of respondents. The respondents were selected from each of the 21 polling stations in Poinguinim, in proportion to their share of the electorate. The sample was drawn using the electoral rolls and a total of 386 interviews were conducted. As shown in the Appendix Table, the sample was found to be fairly representative of the electorate of Poinguinim in terms of its gender and religious composition.

*Ethnographic Study:* The ethnographic study was carried out by Sushma Pawar under the guidance of Alito Sequeira. As the objective of the study was to understand the reasons for Fernandes' victory, the methodology involved talking to a cross section of people in the constituency. A set of questions were asked in an unstructured manner taking into consideration the locality of the people, their support of a particular candidate, their role in the election, their manner of speaking and incidents narrated by them. In the course of the study, the investigator met voters of both the parties – Congress and BJP. She also met panchas, sarpanchas, ex-sarpanchas, an ex-MLA, teachers, housewives, shopkeepers, motorcycle pilots, temple and church priests, youth, and people belonging to other groups. The investigator covered the villages of Loliem, Shellim, Maxem, Galjibag, Gaondongrim, Cotigao, Sadolxem, and Painginim as these were the main places where the 21 polling stations of Poinguinim are located. The people were interviewed randomly with the exception of the ex-MLA, sarpanchas, panchas, and some teachers with whom an

appointment was made prior to the meeting. Notes were taken during the course of the interviews and these were later structured but without making any significant changes to the content of the interviews. The investigator supplemented these notes with her observations and comments.

**Appendix Table: Comparison of Electorate and Sample along Gender and Religion**  
(In per cent)

		Electorate*	Sample
Gender	Male	53.1	51
	Female	46.9	49
Religion	Hindu	79.3	78.6
	Christian	20.2	21.4

Source: Estimated from electoral rolls obtained from the Election Commission of India, www.eci.gov.in

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## Notes

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- 1 Also known as Loliem-Pollem panchayat
- 2 The Indian National Congress (popularly known as the Congress Party) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are the two major political parties in Goa competing against each other to form the government.
- 3 Lokniti – Institute for Comparative Democracy, CSDS, Delhi.
- 4 Goa's literacy rate is 82.32 per cent (Census of India, 2001, p 3).
- 5 Christians, with reference to Poinguinim, means Roman Catholics.
- 6 Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Orders (Second Amendment) Bill 2002.
- 7 Electoral rolls provided by the State Election Commission of Goa in 2004.
- 8 The institute provides vocational training in trades and crafts and the participants are awarded a diploma.
- 9 Kumeri cultivation is a traditional farming practice in Goa and it corresponds to the slash-and-burn or shifting cultivation practised in forest areas in other parts of India. A majority of the cultivators belong to the ST community. The pressure on the land exerted by a burgeoning population has led government authorities to deem this practice environmentally harmful. The bans enforced on this form of cultivation have not been accompanied by efforts at rehabilitation of the cultivators affected. After the first ban issued by the Goa government, some forest land had been allotted to the cultivators on an ad hoc basis. The second ban and the lack of rehabilitation sparked off a violent agitation by the cultivators. The disputed land was confiscated by the forest department, which planted cashew on this land of its own accord. These cashew farms were meant to generate alternative employment to the farmers. However, this promise remained unfulfilled as the cashew farms deteriorated within a few years due to poor management. After the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 came into force, all kumeri cultivation was banned. In 1993-94, promises made by the state forest minister to settle the issue came to naught. The former cultivators began to forcibly clear these lands of the cashew plantations and were met with stiff resistance from the forest department. The cashew lands have now been transferred to the Forest Development Corporation but the returns are dismal. The solution that the cultivators have been

- proposing is that the cashew lands be divided amongst them but this is difficult as records of the land as well of the cultivators entitled to this land are not in order [Alvares: 125, and the ethnographic study].
- 10 *Herald*, August 21, 2004.
  - 11 *Herald* and *Navhind Times*, August 31, 2004.
  - 12 *Gomantak Times*, August 31, 2004.
  - 13 DeSouza 2004: Table II.
  - 14 The Constitution (52nd Amendment) Act 1985 deemed as a defection if an MLA resigned from the party on whose ticket he was elected to the legislature or if he voted contrary to the wishes of the party. An MLA would not be subject to this provision if (i) he were a member of a group of MLAs who constituted one-third of a party in the legislature and who split from the original party and are given recognition by the speaker as members of a separate party in the legislature; (ii) he were a member of a group of MLAs who constituted two-thirds of a party in the legislature and who merge their group with another political party and this is so recognised by the Speaker. (The Constitution (Amendment) Acts) These two provisions were often blatantly violated by MLAs and MPs alike.
  - 15 BJP Poinguinim unit chief Ramesh Tawadkar and BJP North Goa MP Sripad Naik were absent at the ceremony welcoming Isidore Fernandes into the BJP. CM Parrikar admitted there could be resentment among some BJP workers. Subsequently, BJP Poinguinim Block member Mohandas Loliencar along with six other BJP supporters and all members of panchayats, and former BJP Poinguinim candidate Rajan Dharmu Pagi resigned from primary membership of the party on the grounds that the BJP was embracing defectors. (*Navhind Times*, August 31, September 16, 23 and October 12, 2004; *Herald*, August 31 and October 12, 2004.)
  - 16 *Navhind Times*, September 10 and 15, 2004.
  - 17 Congress MLA Jitendra Deshpurabhu claimed that Fernandes was in debt (Rs 38 lakh) and had declined an offer from the Congress MLAs to contribute to the paying off of this debt (*Herald*, August 20, 2004).
  - 18 The Congress had shortlisted two probable candidates to contest the Poinguinim by-election, Jagdish Govind Acharya whose previous party membership included MGP, Congress (1994), Goa Rajiv Congress, MGP (1991) and Congress and Sanjay Bandekar whose previous party membership included MGP (1998), Congress, BJP (2002) and Congress. (*Herald*, September 11, 2004).
  - 19 *Herald*, September 20 and 22, 2004; *Navhind Times*, September 21, 2004.
  - 20 There were three charges levelled by the contesting parties against each other: (i) Intimidation through threats and violence: Congress state chief Luizinho Faleiro alleged that BJP supporters had assaulted and damaged the vehicles of two Congress office-bearers in Poinguinim. On the day of the elections, the Congress alleged that the BJP were misusing the police and government machinery. The BJP alleged that two Indian Police Service officers unleashed "terror tactics" which prevented many BJP voters from exercising their franchise. (ii) Use of money power: Faleiro claimed that the BJP distributed money and sports goods. Wilfred de Souza (NCP) levelled charges that mobile phones, scooters, etc, were being distributed by the BJP and that the EC was turning a blind eye. (iii) Violation of the EC Code of Conduct: The NCP wrote to the Election Commission alleging that chief minister Manohar Parrikar had violated election code by giving an assurance of 12 per cent reservation for STs when inaugurating the Scheduled Tribes Corporation. Rajendra Arlekar (president of the Goa BJP Unit) accused the union minister Oscar Fernandes of violating the EC code of conduct by providing MPLAD schemes during the by-election campaign (*Navhind Times*, September 17 and 23, October 12, 14 and 19, 2004; *Herald*, September 4, October 5, 8 and 9, 2004).
  - 21 Seventy-five personnel were deployed at the 21 polling booths: three personnel per polling booth and four at sensitive booths. South Goa superintendent of police and other top police officers also camped in the constituency. Several companies of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were said to have arrived and patrolling the constituency (*Navhind Times*, September 31, 2004 and *Herald*, August 28 and October 11, 2004).
  - 22 The voter turnout in 1999 and 2002 was 76.47 per cent and 77.70 per cent respectively.
  - 23 Bearing in mind the religious composition of Poinguinim, the parties tried to appeal to both Hindus and Christians; the BJP held meetings near the Hindu temples and Christian churches. The Congress utilised the services of Churchill Alemao to campaign with the Christian voters and let Jagdish Acharya, the Poinguinim Congress candidate, canvass with Hindu voters.
  - 24 The Dayanand Social Security Scheme (DSSS) is a welfare measure that provides benefits to senior citizens aged 60 and above, the disabled, single women and widows. The benefits include a pension of Rs 500 per month with a 5 per cent increase every year ([www.goainformation.org](http://www.goainformation.org)).
  - 25 The reasons they have cited for choosing the BJP have included the following: the beneficial schemes launched by the BJP government, satisfaction with the development work carried out by the BJP in neighbouring Canacona and the rest of the state and the hope that the BJP would make a serious effort to solve their problems.
  - 26 Panaji is the capital of Goa and about 60 kilometres away from Poinguinim.
  - 27 Acharya re-entered politics after a 10-year gap.
  - 28 A local idiom which means that Acharya acted like a stranger with his constituents during the campaign.
  - 29 *Herald*, September 22, 2004.
  - 30 The Goa Cyberage Students' Scheme, launched in 2001-02, provides a multimedia computer to all XIth standard science and vocational students admitted to schools receiving grants from the government and in government-run higher secondary schools. The scheme has since been extended to include students of higher classes as well. Under the Pre-Employment Training Scheme, unemployed youth are trained, selected and absorbed in government service ([www.goainformation.org](http://www.goainformation.org)).
  - 31 See note 25.
  - 32 See Sen and Williams 1983.
  - 33 *Navhind Times*, January 28 and 30, 2005.
  - 34 *Ibid*, February 3, 2005.
  - 35 President's rule was declared in Goa on March 4, 2005.
  - 36 *Navhind Times*, August 20, 2004.
  - 37 Goa Pradesh Congress Committee president, Luizinho Faleiro declared that all those MLAs who had "sacrificed" their seats to bring down the BJP government would be rewarded with tickets to fight the resultant by-elections. CM Rane and the Congress Goa desk in-charge, Margaret Alva also reiterated this (*Navhind Times*, March 27, 2005; *Herald*, May 3 and 5, 2005).
  - 38 *Navhind Times*, February 9 and May 23, 2005; *Gomantak Times*, May 30, 2005.
  - 39 *Navhind Times*, February 6, 2005.
  - 40 *Navhind Times*, February 9 and May 23, 2005; *Gomantak Times*, May 30, 2005.
  - 41 *Herald*, February 23 and April 21, 2005.
  - 42 *Gomantak Times*, August 31, 2004.
  - 43 *Ibid*, May 30, 2005.
  - 44 *Herald*, May 12, 2005 and *Gomantak Times*, May 30, 2005.
  - 45 Reported in the ethnography.
  - 46 *Herald*, May 14, 18 and 27, 2005; *Gomantak Times*, May 30, 2005.
  - 47 *Herald*, April 25, 2005, *Navhind Times*, May 23, 2005.
  - 48 *Navhind Times*, May 2005
  - 49 *Herald*, March 16, 2005.
  - 50 DeSouza 2005a.
  - 51 The Poinguinim case provides us scope to explore the independence theory of representation. See DeSouza 2005b.
  - 52 The scheme was launched on October 20, 2004 and the application process for the issue of plots was completed before the downfall of the Parrikar government.
  - 53 DeSouza 2005b.
  - 54 Pitkin 1967.

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