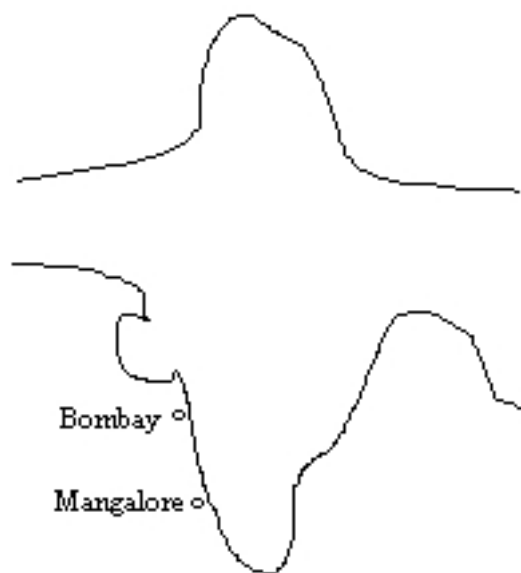


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At some time or other in one's life, walking down the memory lane, one begins to wonder about the roots of their existence but invariably is disappointed to find that the people who could have told them about these things have all departed from this earth! Some of us do not care about the past, but some do care. I spoke to my cousin **Agnes**, an extremely sensitive and loving person, who remembers every detail of her whole ninety-one years of her life. Cousin Agnes was born on 4th May 1910. Her father, Mr. Marian S. Pais had prepared the genealogy of our family, given a copy to her, She lent it to me, and I copied it on my computer. She told me incidents of the past, at various times, with vivid descriptions, as she has a very fertile memory, in spite of her old age. She is close to becoming ninety. My discoveries were extremely fascinating. The actual situations in such a foggy past would have had so many shades of colours, had they to be described as pictures. As none of my ancestors were in the habit of writing down their memoirs, we are left to our imagination.

Many have tried telling the story of their lives and those of their family. I attempt to tell you my story with the hope that it would give you an insight and appreciation of our roots and provide a clearer picture of events that have taken place in the past.



India, our Mother Land

India is often pictured in the form of a lady dressed in a saree, with her legs crossed at her

A Search of our Roots

Written by W.J.Pais

ankles. In this picture, Bombay [\[1\]](#) her Financial City appears to be dangling from her left hip, as if it is her bunch of keys. Goa strides along her thigh and Mangalore, like a small jewel decorates her left knee, as the Arabian Sea on its West Coast bathes it. In physical terms the distance between the two coastal towns is quite large. An 18 hours bus ride going southwards from Bombay takes you first to Goa.

Goa

Graphic: North Goa



Some four hundred and fifty years ago, the Portuguese had come to trade with India, with their great and famous explorer Vasco Da Gama. After showing their credentials at the Court of Akbar the Great, the Portuguese purchased Goa from the Nawab of Bijapur and made it their Eastern Head Quarters.

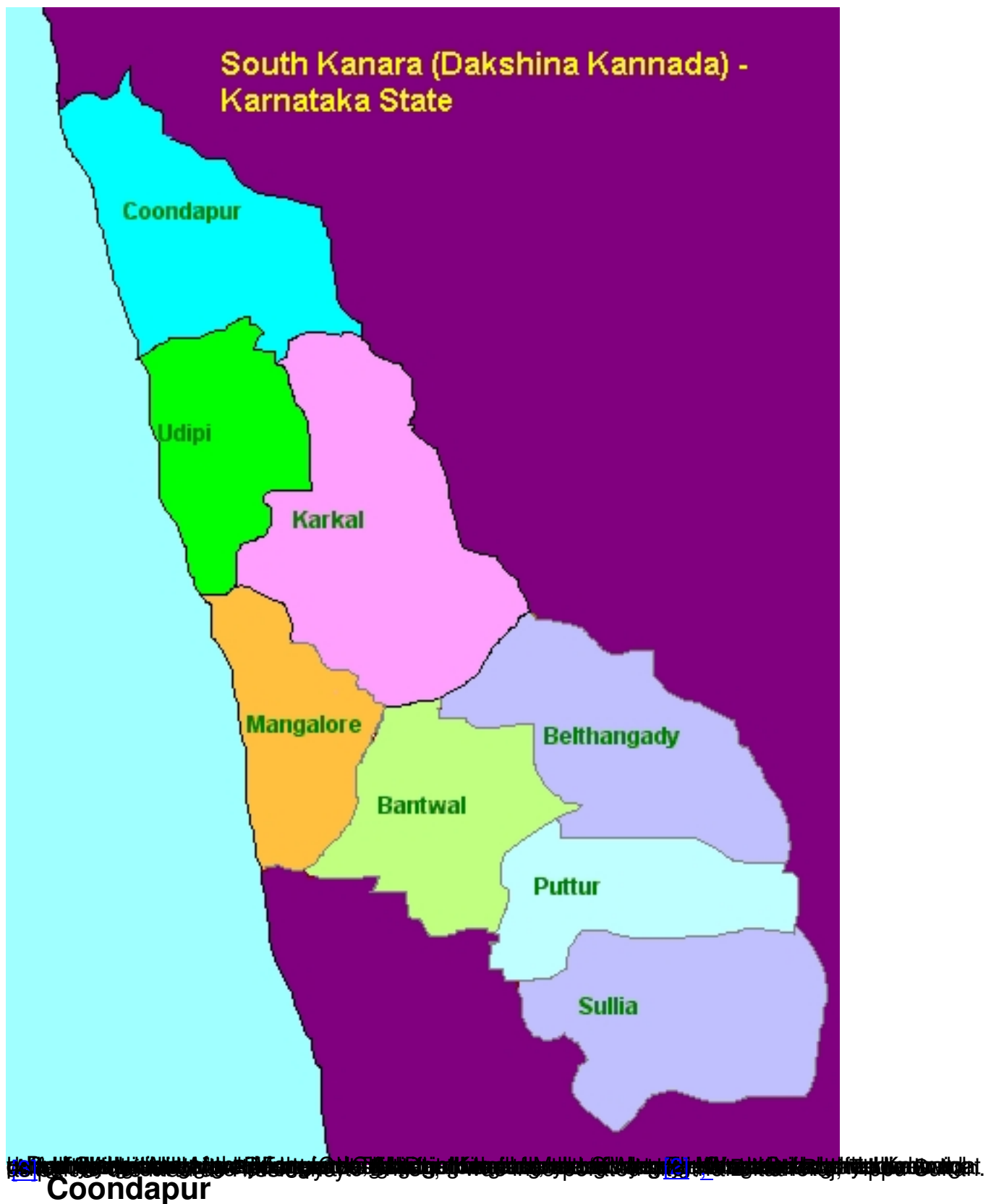
Panjim, the capital of Goa, was known as 'Ponjem' in olden days and many Konkani songs called Mandos celebrate the name. The Portuguese folk songs were called Fado, (pronounced 'faad' (and the Konkani name for songs, Pod might be a corruption of the Portuguese word.

As the trade developed, the Portuguese founded trading centers on the west coast, and among such centres was one at [Coondapur](#). Catholic missionaries came and settled in Coondapur, and the Portuguese built many churches, and their influence has lasted till today. Many of these Portuguese might have intermarried with local people, and that could be an indication, why many of the Catholics in the north are fair, with light eyes. Many Goans migrated to Coondapur, to work in this settlement. The boats, which used to sail on the coast, were called 'Patmars'. Perhaps the name might have had something to do with Bat' de Mar, meaning ship of the sea. In those days the sea-wind powered the boats with the help of sails.

On some such Patmar the Portuguese and the Goans might have sailed to South Kanara. My maternal great grandfather, Custodio (Kistu) Castelino owned three such Patmars, which went down on a fateful stormy night in a raging cyclone. He ended up in bankruptcy, as in those days there was no insurance cover for sailing vessels.

Mangalore

Graphic: South Kanara District



In the days of the Madras Presidency South Kanara, the 26th district was divided into six talukas [\[4\]](#) , and the northern

most one was named Coondapur where the Portuguese had a trading post. With its rivulets, backwater creeks, and villages full of coconut trees, this is regarded as a very beautiful part in South Kanara, Towns like Karwar, Belgaum to its north, were part of North Kanara.

Catholics of the western coast speak Konkani, in different dialects. In Maharashtra, Marati, the language spoken by the people, is very similar to Konkani, in Ratnagiri; the language turns to Konkani. Down to its south in Goa it takes the shape of the Goan dialect, and as we go further southwards to Karwar the shade of the language changes, and finally in South Kanara we get the Mangalorean dialect. Even in South Kanara, the nuances of the spoken language vary from village to village. Konkani does not have its own writing script. Ratnagiri area uses Devanagiri script. Goa used the Roman script under the Portuguese and in South Kanara the language was written in Kannada script.

Thus from Ratnagiri to Mangalore, the coast is called the Konkan Coast. The Railway, which runs along the coast, is also named after it: The Konkan Railway.