Beyond the workhouse: regulating vagrancy in India

By Julia Wardaugh

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Introduction

Globally, there are an estimated one billion people who are homeless or living in inadequate shelter, a staggering one in six of the world's population (Glasser, 1994). To the Western imagination, India is more or less synonymous with poverty, despite recent social and economic changes. Speaking historically, Arnold observes that 'India appeared to permit levels of poverty … that in Britain would have been unimaginable … India was beyond the workhouse' (Arnold, 2008:121). British India was 'beyond the workhouse' simply because of the scale of poverty and indigence: no system of institutional provision could possibly absorb the numbers concerned. By contrast, Portuguese Goa was 'beyond the workhouse' for quite different reasons. The Portuguese colonizers had no tradition of workhouse provision for the poor, and both at home and in its colonies preferred to use the institutions of the Catholic Church to provide for (and to control) the needy. As we shall see in the case-study of Goa, homeless and migrant populations today are still influenced by colonial traditions and discourses.

The 2001 Census estimated that there were 78 million homeless people in India, more than the total population of many European countries (Zaidi, 2005). Of course, official Census data will tend to under-estimate the scale of homelessness, given its often hidden and stigmatised nature. There are extensive debates on the

definitions of homelessness: the broadest definition would include all those without permanent and secure accommodation. This definition would include rough sleepers, hostel residents, pavement-dwellers and residents of slum and squatter settlements. Contrary to popular perception of the homeless person as a loner with no fixed abode and no family, many homeless people reside in fixed locations (for example in hostels), live with their families (for example as pavement-dwellers), and develop a sense of community, for example in slum settlements (Tipple and Speak, 2009).

However, popular perceptions are echoed in centuries of legal and social regulation of homelessness, and the dominant view (and consequent fear) is of the rootless and itinerant wanderer. Here we are concerned with official and public responses to homelessness, the impulse to control, to demonize and to criminalize the placeless person (Amster, 2008; Carlen, 1996; Hermer and Mosher, 2002; Mitchell, 2003). The older term 'vagrancy' is used in the title for two reasons. One is that reference is made to legislation designed to control homeless people, and activities associated with homelessness such as begging, and much of this legislation refers to vagrancy. The second is that 'vagrancy' captures the precise aspect of homelessness which so dominates both legal and public discourse. That is, the vagrant is the wanderer, the person with no fixed place of settlement.

The nature of British Raj vagrancy legislation in India is explored first. Then we assess the legacy of colonial vagrancy legislation (referring both to Portuguese and British influences), and its application within the post-colonial context. The distinctively Portuguese approach to poverty and homelessness in its colony of Goa is considered, noting the Church (rather than State) responses to these phenomena.

While Portugal ruled Goa for around 450 years, British India held influence on the borders of the State. In particular, it was the migrants to Goa who formed the majority of the homeless population, and these groups originated in British-controlled territories (principally the former Bombay Presidency area, which includes large parts of present-day Maharashtra and Karnataka). Finally, a case-study of contemporary Goa considers the regulation of migrant incomers to the State. Goa is in many ways atypical of Indian states, for reasons discussed later. However, it is chosen because it is the place where 'new India' and 'old India' meet, because it is a place of high levels of in-migration (and consequent 'vagrancy'), and because it allows for an exploration of rural forms of homelessness, a question largely (and surprisingly) overlooked in this predominantly rural nation.

Criminalizing vagrancy in India

> The Banjara are: 'a mixed race of roving traders forming one of what used to be called the "criminal and wandering tribes of India"' (Fraser, 1992:26).
>
> 'The Lambani are highwaymen, kidnappers of children, coiners of false money and thugs' (Rushby, 2002:172).
>
> 'The Lambani of the Carnatic [includes part of present-day Karnataka] are perhaps the most troublesome of the class inhabiting this [Bombay] Presidency' (Kennedy, 1907:6).

The name Banjara may be defined as forest-dweller or wanderer in a jungle. Sometimes the definition extends to 'enemies of the forest', in that they are believed to rob people passing through the forest, or to destroy the forest environment (Deogaonkar and Deogaonkar, 1992). The Lambani (or Lamani) belong to the general category of Banjara, and have been defined as a criminal or wandering tribe, or more recently as migrants or migrant workers.

Indian Criminal Tribes legislation was inspired by British legal regulation of vagrancy, both at home and in its colonies. The general British approach to poverty and homelessness in India was to allow the population to rely on traditional forms of almsgiving and self-help, except in cases of widespread famine (Arnold, 2008). Their concern was not primarily with homelessness *per se*, but with the perceived troublesome elements: specifically the wandering or placeless population. Formal poor relief – for example in the form of workhouse provision – was established under the Vagrancy Acts of 1871 and 1874 and was generally confined to Europeans living in India. Indeed, some of the Indian poor may have wished to have recourse to the workhouse, desperate as these institutions were. In practice, many did end up in other institutions, forced there by extreme privation: 'Many destitutes … found refuge in dispensaries, jails, even in the lock hospitals intended for prostitutes' (Arnold, 2008:125).

Significantly, one class of itinerants was largely left alone by the colonial authorities: the Hindu and Muslim holy men and women (Arnold, 2008). Ostensibly, a major reason for this was to show respect for indigenous religions and cultures, though a sceptic may note that it was also good economy to allow established systems

of almsgiving to remain in place. Whatever the reason, the Hindu *sadhus* and *sadhavis* and the Muslim *faqirs* were left largely unregulated by colonial measures to deal with vagrancy and itinerancy. There were exceptions, however. Sleeman – famous as the suppressor of *thagai* (Thuggee) – also believed that Hindu religious itinerants should be controlled. He referred to the 'atrocious characters' of Jogis (*yogis* or *sadhus*) and believed that some engaged in Thuggee or highway robbery. He advocated a system of compulsory registration for all wandering ascetics, though this was not implemented (Singha, 2000:222).

This relative absence of regulation remains largely true today, when it would be almost unheard of for religious mendicants to be arrested or subject to other forms of regulation. There are of course cases where false *sadhus* or *faqirs* come to the attention of the authorities, for example the case of Saligram who was convicted of kidnapping a boy to join him in the begging trade (Shah, 1976). This respect of cultural sensibilities does not extend to groups such as *hijras*, who both historically and today are subject to both formal and informal regulation. Their tradition of begging is open to police intervention, as in the case of five *hijras* engaged in begging who were charged with extortion and therefore were liable to be held without bail (Human Rights Watch, 2008a).

The Criminal Tribes legislation combined Victorian scientific racism with established methodologies of surveillance and spatial control. Although influenced by Lombrosian notions of the 'born criminal', in India the notion tended towards the idea of criminality as a caste tradition, rather than a genetic inheritance. Members of criminal tribes were required to register with the authorities, and experienced

restrictions on their movements and activities. Once registered, they had few legal or civil rights (Nijhar, 2009). A major motivation for the legislation was the establishment of social order, and the containment of populations perceived to be troublesome. The implementation of order was delegated to the police and rural authority structures such as supervision by the village headman. Importantly, Criminal Tribes legislation allowed for the extension of regulation into the villages: formerly, there had been little official regulation of rural India, which had largely been left to be self-regulating (Nijhar, 2009). This was a trend already established by earlier colonists. In Mughal North India the cities were subject to centralised policing and military forms of regulation, while rural areas were left largely to govern themselves, not because they were assumed to be peaceful places, but because officials both feared and despised village life (Saha, 1994).

Within the British Raj – and extending into the post-colonial period – itinerancy was associated with sexual 'deviance' as well as with criminality. Generally speaking, for women this meant an association with sexual licentiousness, while for men who were identified as *hijras* ('third sex' or 'eunuchs') they often faced regulation under Criminal Tribes legislation. The original Act of 1871 was amended in 1897 to include *hijras* as a notified group (Human Rights Watch, 2008b). (Some suggest that the root of the word *hijra* is the Urdu *ezra* which means wanderer, others that the Urdu *hijra* means transvestite or eunuch). Writing of the women of the Vanjari (Banjara) criminal tribe, British army officer MacMunn reflects the imperial discourse of his time: '[they are] bright and comely [with] well-moulded breasts … adept no doubt in venery' (MacMunn, 1932, cited in D'Souza (2001:2)). Such discourse simply reflects the British tradition wherein vagrancy among women was

associated with sexual 'immorality', and where concerns over prostitution and homosexuality were part of the impulse to maintain public social order.

Compared to the extensive documentation of the British Raj, relatively little is known of Portuguese Goa, despite its 450-year history. That is to say, little is published in the English language – certainly there is fairly extensive documentation available in Portuguese (Noronha, October 2009; email communication). What little we do know may be placed within the context of an understanding of Portuguese Goa as a 'shadow Empire':

> 'They were too close to the colonies to be considered fully Europeans, and too distant from Europe to be regarded as serious colonizers' (De Souza, 2000).

Certainly the Portuguese established a less centralized bureaucracy than did the British in India, and were perhaps more concerned with religious conversion and maintaining Roman Catholic orthodoxy than with other forms of social regulation such as criminalizing vagrancy (Mendonça, 2002).

A central difference between Portuguese and British India arises from the ways in which the culture and policies of the home countries were exported to the colonies (De Souza, 2009). With regard to attitudes towards vagrancy, we must consider the role of religious and secular institutions. In broad terms we may characterize Catholic countries as being more tolerant of begging than those with a Protestant ethos, and this certainly is true of Portugal (Beier and Ocobock, 2008). Almost alone of European countries during the early modern period, Portugal did not

incarcerate its itinerant population. While there was some legislation on vagrancy and some attempt to distinguish the deserving from the undeserving poor, there was no major repression of begging, no institutionalization of vagrants and no harsh punishments for itinerants (Sá, 2004). Instead, vagrants were fairly frequently exported to help populate the colonies in Africa, Asia and the Americas (Ocobock, 2008). Vagrants were often designated as *degredados* (the banished) and many subsequently became established members of their new homelands (some sources give the term as *degradados* or the degraded ones).

Whereas the Poor Law and its associated institutions took responsibility for poverty relief in Britain, the Catholic Church – with its emphasis on almsgiving - retained this role in other European countries, such as Spain, Italy and Portugal. Of course, both secular and religious institutions for poor relief fulfill a social control function, but they do it in different ways. Across the Portuguese Empire, *misericordias* were established, whose function was to implement a number of charitable activities (Sá, 2004). Administered by the local elites in colonies such as Goa, the *misericordias* offered relief to a wide range of social groups. The general procedure would be to establish lists of the poor who were deemed eligible for relief; these names were then checked by priests and members of the community to establish their worthiness, before aid was given.

There was also a distinction made between the poor in general and the 'shamefaced poor'; the latter received their poor relief in secret, and were not allowed to beg in public. A further level of categorization was that made between the 'Portuguese' and the 'native' poor. Those of Portuguese descent (identified in

patrilineal terms) were eligible for a better level of support than the indigenous population. In Portuguese Goa, for example, there were separate hospitals for 'Old' and 'New' Christians (those of Portuguese descent and Indian converts to Christianity) (Sá, 2004). Needless to say, all of this charitable activity extended only to Christians, whether 'Old' or 'New'. Hindus and Muslims had recourse only to their own charitable or philanthropic traditions. The spatial dimension to this division of charitable aid is that the coastal region of Goa was largely Christian, while those who had resisted conversion from Hinduism had mostly fled inland.

Portuguese rule in Goa ended in 1961, and the newly-independent state began to establish its own legislation. However, as elsewhere in India, this was significantly influenced by colonial regulatory traditions. In Goa there was the unique influence of both Portuguese colonial rule and the legacy of the British Raj which had surrounded the state on all sides. In terms of the regulation of vagrancy, therefore, the Goa, Daman and Diu Prevention of Begging Act 1972 (supplemented by the Goa Prevention of Begging Rules 1975) must be understood within the context of earlier colonial legislation.

Following the criminal tribes and vagrancy legislation of the 19th century, the next significant legislation was developed in the postwar years. The earliest of these was contained in a series of Beggary Acts in 1945, for example in Bombay, Bengal and Mysore (Karnataka). The definitive act was the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959 (later amended in 1976); along with similar acts governing various regions of India. These acts made both begging and all other aspects of vagrancy illegal, and

continue in force until the present day. Section 2(i)d of the Act defines begging in the widest possible terms:

> 'being shabbily dressed, having no visible means of subsistence, wandering about in a public place, singing, dancing, fortune telling, performing or offering articles for sale can all be regarded as a pretence for soliciting alms, at the discretion of the police' (Tipple and Speak, 2009:178).

In short, begging became associated with all forms of activities which are associated with vagrancy and migrant labour.

The 1959 Bombay legislation also provided for the establishment of beggars' homes, as did that in other areas of India. Beggars' homes are seen variously as repressive institutions of Dickensian (and Foucaultian) character and as providing for the 'protection, treatment, care and rehabilitation of beggars' (Maharashtra State Gazetteers, n.d.). Of all those arrested for begging, a proportion are committed to beggars' homes, where they engage in work (if they are able) in return for food and shelter. Some are released after a few months, though some will remain there for a period of years. For example, an inquiry into the right to food in Delhi heard testimony from Mandakini (a pavement dweller) that she and her family had been detained by the police and that they were subsequently placed in a beggars' home for several months (Mander, 2003).

There is no record of the use of beggars' homes in Goa. Thus, we can see that – relatively speaking – Goa continues the tradition established under Portuguese rule of adopting a more liberal stance in relation to vagrancy than is the case elsewhere in

India. Within social traditions, there is also a continuation of the Christian ethos of welfare for the poor. The Beggar's Banquet (or Bhick Reamfeavon), for example, is a practice where some local poor people are fed lavishly as part of the rites preceding a wedding (Gajrani, 2004). The intention is to placate the ancestors by means of generosity to beggars. However, as we shall see later, this tradition of relative tolerance of vagrancy and itinerancy has been tested in more recent times. Migrants to Goa are held responsible for most of the social ills experienced there. Such migrants have mainly been those originating from Maharashtra and Karnataka, although the most recent fears have been aroused by the establishment of railway links between Goa and Patna (situated in Bihar, one of India's poorest states).

Goa Dourada (Golden Goa)?

> 'One of the unique characteristics of Goans is that every Goan possesses a house of his own … we do not find Goans erecting illegal huts or houses in communidade or government properties' (Cardozo, 2007:1)

> 'In the particular version of reality we inherited, *ghatis* were always flooding places, they never just went there … Wherever you turned the bloody *ghatis* were flooding the place' (Mistry, 1992:176).

Goa's rural and semi-rural slums provide a counterpoint to the traditional image of South Asian poverty. Small and secluded, often located in woods or by beaches, these

slums seem to reflect a rustic idyll compared to the urban dystopias of Delhi or Mumbai. Of course, this difference is superficial and the inhabitants – mostly migrant workers from the neighbouring states of Karnataka or Maharashtra – experience the same poverty, poor facilities and grinding struggle to survive as their urban counterparts. This homelessness is less obvious, yet it is commonplace: despite rapid urbanization, India remains a predominantly rural country. Paradoxically, rural or semi-rural homelessness is India – although less well-known than urban homelessness - may be less hidden than in the cities. Although it is on a smaller scale, slum settlements in states such as Goa tend to be integrated with other residential and commercial developments. These slum-dwellers are socially marginal, but tend to be located in, or next to, prime space. In urban areas slum settlements are often segregated from the rest of the city: in Delhi, for example, the slum areas are located on the other side of the Yamuna River than the city centre, and (although they accommodate many thousands of people) do not even appear on maps of the city (Dupont et al, 2000).

Goa – the 'jewel of India' and a 'tourist's paradise' - has always been a place of migration, situated as it is on the Arabian Sea, with shipping links to Europe, Arabia and Asia. It has often been thought of as an island, quite unlike the rest of India (Tomory, 2000). Certainly, it has a complex history and – within its small geographical boundaries – encompasses a very diverse cultural, religious and ethnic mix. Goa has around 1.34 million total population, of which around 0.33 million are in-migrants, and the state receives around 1 million tourists each year (Sharma, 2004). The state exists as a marginal place with a distinctive culture, bordered by Maharashtra to the north, and Karnataka to the south. Goa is known to the Western

world as a party place, a retreat for (often ageing) hippies, or as a package-tour destination (Tomory, 2000). For the 'new India' (the burgeoning middle-classes) it is also a place of relaxation, hedonism and escape. Taken together, these social worlds may be said to constitute a Goan 'Touristhan' (Tomory, 2000). Thus, the 'new India' of the affluent middle classes meets the 'old India' of poverty and homelessness. When international tourism is added to the mixture, then we can begin to understand homelessness in places like Goa as a global phenomenon (see Routledge (2000) on the development of Goa as a tourist space).

The migrant workers who reside in the slums come to Goa to service this economy: the men to work in construction, the women to work in the tourism industry, and both to provide goods and services to the tourists, often in the unregulated sector as beach vendors. Others – including many of their children – work as rag-pickers and recyclers of glass and paper (De Venanzi, 2003). Some groups – such as the Lamanis – are trafficked into Goa, the women to work in the sex trade and the children as domestic labour or as beggars; sometimes children are trafficked in order to be 'sold' to rich families under the guise of adoption (Nair and Sen, 2005). Sex tourism is not a new phenomenon. During the 19th century Goa was seen as a place which offered anonymity and relatively liberal attitudes. Consequently, many British imperial military men visited Goa for the purposes of what today we would call sex tourism (Burton, 1851; 1992).

Homelessness is here defined to encompass a wide range of populations, including slum-dwellers, itinerant groups, and residents of institutions such as hostels and beggars' colonies (Frank-Sharjah, 2006). Particular reference is made to the

Lamanis, a tribal group from Maharashtra and Karnataka who often settle in Goa, becoming migrant workers and slum-dwellers. As discussed above in relation to the historical regulation of 'criminal tribes', Lamanis are often referred to as a gypsy group, and the response to them is similar to that made to itinerant groups across the ages. Known locally as *ghatis*, they are commonly viewed as a troublesome and marginal population. The derivation of the word *ghati* is complex, in that it may mean various things across the sub-continent. Here its meaning is taken to be (literally) those who live beyond the Western Ghats, that is not Goan in origin – mainly those originating from the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. *Ghati* also has the meaning of uncultured or uncivilized, and this pejorative term is certainly attached to those who migrate to Goa.

Interestingly, the Banjaras (of whom the Lamanis are a sub-group) are excluded from official definitions of homelessness (Bannerjee Das, 2002). They are therefore excluded from access to any State help designed for homeless people. Religious itinerants such as *sadhus* are also not defined as homeless. While this definition may respect cultural and religious traditions and seeks not to impose official definitions on specific groups, it also serves to exclude them from mainstream welfare provision (with economic benefits for the State, just as was the case under the British Raj). This returns us to the older definition of vagrant and vagabond, and confirms the focus of this article on definitions which are not confined to official understandings of homelessness. Rather, the central issue is the extent to which groups are perceived to be problematic specifically because of their itinerancy: dangerousness is deemed to be inherent in uncontrolled or unsupervised wandering, rather than in the conditions of poverty and homelessness *per se*.

Often it is asserted that Goa had no significant social problems such as poverty and homelessness until the fairly recent arrival of large numbers of migrants (an arrival facilitated by the completion of the Konkan railway in 1998, and encouraged by the burgeoning tourist industry). Of course, the history of migration to Goa is much longer, encompassing both the period of Portuguese colonialism as well as pre-colonial times when the area was colonized by a succession of Hindu and Muslim dynasties (Pereira, 1973). Nor is the phenomenon of homelessness a new one. As we have seen, Portugal itself exported a number of its own vagrants to the colony of Goa (Ocobock, 2008), while the establishment of slum areas to accommodate migrant workers may be dated to the late 19th century when migrant workers from Uttar Pradesh arrived in the port town of Vasco to work on the Western India-Portuguese Railway (Faleiro, 2009). Some of these slums still exist today. Others have been recently cleared, such as the Baina slum in Vasco. The ostensible reason for this clearance was to tackle the organized sex trade, but critics suggest it was also a way for the authorities to remove those seen as socially undesirable – the migrant slum-dwellers (Sequeira, 2005).

The Baina slum is situated on the beach in the port town of Vasco. There were around 6,000 people living in the slum, around one-quarter working in the sex trade, and 2,500 people lost their homes during the demolition in 2004 (Mani with Noronha, 2008). Some residents moved elsewhere, others remained in the slum, some waiting at least a year to gain alternative accommodation (Sequeira, 2005). The residents were mostly migrants from states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, and many of the women had been trafficked into Goa to work in the sex trade. Local media reports

compared the clearance of Baina to the mass clearances of slums or pavement-dwellers in cities such as Mumbai (Mani with Noronha, 2008).

Not all beggars are homeless, nor all homeless people beggars, but begging is perhaps the single activity most closely associated with homelessness. For those with no skills or goods to trade, this remains the one economic activity with which they can engage. However, it is not a risk-free activity. They may be vilified by the public (although many also provide donations of money and food), picked up by the police, and controlled by the beggar 'mafia'. Perhaps best described as pimps, there are those who control the streets and 'rent out' begging pitches (Dupont et al, 2000). Physically disabled children are particularly vulnerable to being taken by traffickers, since they are able to earn more money as beggars. Others may be deliberately injured: 'As disabled children induce sympathy among givers, any child beggar is at serious risk of being deliberately maimed in order to increase his or her earning potential' (Nair and Sen, 2005:136). As well as children who have been trafficked into Goa, local families may be involved in this trade. Writing of the Baina slum in Vasco, Nair and Sen (2005) note that children may be 'rented out' on a daily basis by poor families in order to be used in begging. NGOs working in North Goa also reported 'rent-a-baby' begging, whereby babies are 'borrowed' by women who are engaged in begging (Fieldwork, March 2009).

This theme is echoed in the popular movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. In the scene where the slum children are learning to become beggars, Salim tries to persuade Latika to take a baby with her while begging:

> ‘You’ll earn double. I’m doing you a favour, Latika … Triple if it’s crying’ (Beaufoy, 2008: Scene 57, pages 39-40).

Interestingly, this theme also resonates across the centuries. Stealing or borrowing babies and children to use in the begging profession was a well-established practice in early modern England.

> ‘A baby or child was a useful ploy to gain the goodwill and pennies of the public … a woman taken into Bridewell in 1624 was described as “a common child-bearer, to beg with”’ (Beier, 1985:68).

Agency staff who work with the children of migrant workers are aware of the dilemma the families face: they must work to survive, but in doing so often engage in illegal activities. Little Acorns in Calangute is part of the El Shaddai charitable organization and provides a night shelter and day care centre for street children, many of them from migrant worker families. One of their workers described it thus: ‘Begging is illegal in Goa. Children are quite often arrested by the police and taken to headquarters overnight, or sometimes they make them stay till the end of the season. Sometimes they bring the parents in also’ (Fieldwork, March 2009). Other hazards include the ‘fines’ imposed by the tourist police on beggars and beach vendors (Tomory, 2000). For ‘fines’ we may understand that the payments are treated as bribes payable to the police. The Goan tourist police unit was established in 1990 to protect tourists from ‘anti-social elements’ (Goan Police website, 2009).

Begging is indeed illegal in Goa, under the Goa, Daman and Diu Prevention of Begging Act, 1972. This legislation is similar to that in force elsewhere in India,

perhaps most notably the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959, which served as a blueprint for subsequent forms of regulation elsewhere in India (Mukherjee, 2008; Ramanathan, 2008). The Goan legislation provides penalties not only for the beggar but also for those 'wholly dependent on the beggar' (II:9) and those 'causing persons to beg' (II:11). In practice, however, it is much more likely that it is the beggars themselves – and in the case of children, sometimes their parents – who will be detained, rather than the beggar 'pimps'. In the latter case they are in a position to pay bribes to the police in order to evade criminal proceedings. Unlike Delhi, Goa does not, as yet, penalize those who give alms to beggars (Hindustan Times, June 1, 2009).

Recently, some success has been claimed for the implementation of the 1972 Act. It has been reported that in South Goa arrests under the legislation fell by 25% between 2001-04, and that the particular target of police attention has been 'the activities of organized gangs forcing begging in public places' (Goanet News, February 16, 2004). Interestingly, this recorded fall in arrests for begging could signal either that the amount of people begging has indeed reduced, or simply that the police – for whatever reason – had made fewer arrests than in previous times. However, in more recent years the number of arrests for begging has remained fairly stable, with 380 in 2005, 430 in 2006 and 395 in 2007 (Express India, August 19, 2008). Goan police express some frustration at the effectiveness of the legislation on begging (as do police forces across the globe):

> '"Beggars are caught and fined a sum of Rs 50. They pay the money and walk off. Soon, the same faces are seen begging on the streets again"' (Superintendent Atmaram Deshpande, Times of India, June 10, 2009).

While itinerant groups have been subject to legal and social regulation for centuries, in recent times the reasons for regarding them with suspicion have changed. In Goa in 2008, for example, police took action against a number of slum dwellers and migrant workers (Times of India, December 4, 2008). Following the terrorist attacks on Mumbai in November 2008, the neighbouring state of Goa experienced considerable fears of similar attacks, given the stated aim of targeting British and American tourists. Consequently, security was tightened, with, for example, some markets catering for tourists being closed for the 2008-09 season.

There would seem to be a clear connection between these fears and consequent heightened security and the identification of itinerant groups as a threat:

> '"The Lamani women are often a nuisance along the coastal stretches and go very close to the foreign tourists to sell their wares … [and] that can always be a tactic employed by those engaged in spying activities" … observed DySP [Deputy Superintendent of Police] Umesh Gaonkar' (Times of India, December 4, 2008).

While many tourists do indeed experience the beach vendors as a nuisance (although others welcome or at least accept their attentions), the connection between this economic activity and engagement in spying or quasi-terrorist activities seems tenuous at best. Nevertheless, in Goa in December 2008 around thirty Lamanis (mostly women) were detained by the police for verification of their status, along with larger numbers of slum dwellers and migrant workers from elsewhere in India, mostly

Kashmiris. The connection between heightened fears of terrorism, along with ancient fears of the outsider, combines to identify groups such as the Lamani as targets for regulation. Goa experiences itself as particularly vulnerable, in part because of the high numbers of migrants, and in part because of the geography of the state: 'As the attacks in Mumbai were carried out by terrorists who entered the city from the sea, Goa is making special efforts to ensure that its shores are safe for tourists …' (Indo-Asian News Service, December 02, 2008).

Conclusion

Goa has served as a case-study of the regulation of vagrancy in India, along with the surrounding states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. There were significant differences in the ways in which British India and Portuguese Goa chose to regulate poverty and homelessness. The British tradition of criminal tribes and vagrancy legislation contrasts sharply with the Portuguese adoption of Catholic welfare principles. Both techniques served to regulate vagrancy, one by secular state legislation, the other through Church institutions. Both historically and today, Goa may be characterized as avoiding the more stringent forms of vagrancy regulation. For example, Portuguese Goa seldom punished the vagrant directly, preferring to control through inclusion in Church traditions of almsgiving. Of course, the often heavy price paid for Church charity was forcible conversions and enforcement of Catholic orthodoxy by means of the Inquisition.

Today, Goa has not as yet participated in some of the measures adopted by the large cities, for example the institution of mobile courts for beggars in Delhi, or the collection of biometric details of those involved in begging by the Department of

Social Welfare in the same city (Times Online, July 20, 2009; Down to Earth, March 31, 2008). This is consistent with the argument that:

> 'In India … [the] state varies greatly in its accommodation with beggary, appearing to be most complicit in rural areas and small towns and most intolerant in metropolitan cities' (Harriss-White, 2005:884).

Nevertheless, around four hundred people per year are arrested for begging in Goa, a significant level in an affluent state with a small and largely rural population. In addition, there are high levels of concern over the social ills allegedly associated with the migrant population. As the place where 'old India' and 'new India' meet, where there is a huge tourist industry catering to an annual one million visitors and where around one in four of the population is a migrant, Goa has served as an instructive case-study of the regulation of vagrancy in India.

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