CHAPTER IV

The Historical Legacy of the Indo-Portuguese Relations

If we trace the settlements of the Portuguese in Indian subcontinent we can understand that these pockets are mainly on the coastal parts of India. The Portuguese claim over a few areas in India is based on the acquisition of the territories in the procession of European expansion to India. They obtained some territorial possessions in India right in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. They wrested by force of arms the territory of Goa from the hands of Adill Shah of Bijapur in 1510 as soon as the sit was occupied, the then Governor Afonso de Albuquerque issued coins\(^1\) to assert political hegemony over Goa. The Governor encouraged marriages between the Portuguese and the Indian women to have sufficient number of people, through whose veins the Portuguese bloods circulate to defend the interest of the Portuguese. He believed further that the inclemency of the weather of the tropical regions could not affect so easily the people of mixed blood as it could tell upon pure Portuguese blooded men. Later the Portuguese obtained Bassein in 1534, Diu in 1935 and Daman in 1559 through treaties concluded with the Sultans of Gujarat. Thus the Portuguese build up a political territory and all the administrative apparatus needed for political administration. The viceroy or Governor represented the Portuguese Crown in India, built fortresses and factories manned by Portuguese personnel. A population with Portuguese nationality came up in these territories. It consisted persons born in Portugal (reinois) those born in India out of matrimonial relations of the Portuguese with Indian women (mesticos), those born in India from Portuguese parents and also those Indians who by residence in the Portuguese territories, became Portuguese. They have made their settlements starting from the western coast covering the southern coast up to the Cape Camorin (Kanya Kumari) in the Arabian Sea and selecting some points in the south eastern coasts covering the total Bay of Bengal in the Indian Ocean.

The southeastern coasts were the earliest settlements by the Portuguese. The main centres are Cochin (1500-1663), Cannanore (1502-1663), Cranganore (1536-1662), Quilon (1502-1661), Ponanni (1585), Chalyam-chale (1531-1571), Calicut (1515-1525).
In the Indian Ocean, there was a rather peculiar form of Portuguese settlements. They are Nagapattinam (1520-1657), Sao Tomé de Meliapore near Madras (1522-1749), Pulicut, Masulipatnum in the south eastern coasts and Pipi, Angelim, Ugolim, Dacca, Sandwip, Chittagong and Syrium in the Bay of Bengal.

The Portuguese brought exotic fruits, flowers and plants, which became part of Bengali civilization and culture. The potato, cashew nut, papaya, pineapple, kamranga (*Averrhoa carambola*), guava and the Alfonso mango, among others were brought by them, showing their zeal for agri-horticulture and became part of Bengali life. Even the Krishnakali (*Mirabilis jalapa*) plant, with its varied colours, is a gift of the Portuguese. From the early days of their arrival, the Portuguese did not object to marrying local women, although the top jobs were reserved for white Portuguese men from Portugal. As a result, many Portuguese words like chabi, balti, perek, alpin, toalia have come into the Bengali vocabulary. This process was perhaps facilitated by the Portuguese interest in the Bengali language. Portuguese missionary Fr. Manuel da Assumpso wrote *Kripar Shastrer Orthobhed*, which was printed in 1743 in Lisbon, Portugal, in the Roman alphabet. It was a catechism in the question-answer form. He also wrote a forty-page Bengali grammar book and a five hundred and twenty nine-page Bengali-Portuguese and Portuguese-Bengali dictionary, called *Vocabulario em Idioma Bengulla-e-Portuguez, divided em duas Partes*. The first printed book in prose in Bengali was by a Portuguese, as was the first Bengali grammar and dictionary. In 1599, Father Sosa translated a religious tract into Bengali, which is not extant now. But another religious work in Bengali was written by a Bengali Prince of Jessore, who was enslaved and then converted into Christianity with a new name, Dom Antonio. He wrote *Brahman-Roman Catholic Sambad*, where Roman Catholic dialogues with a Hindu Brahmin (priest) and tries to show the superiority of Christianity over Hinduism. His superior, Mansel de Rozario, wrote a dialogue in Bengali along with a Bengali Grammar and a dictionary, which was printed in Lisbon in 1743. Although the Portuguese set up the first printing Press at Goa in 1556, they could not follow it up in Bengal due to the unstable nature of their establishments in Bengal.

Hughli was founded by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. It lies just west of the Hughli River and at present is the headquarters of the district of the same name in West Bengal (India). It is a major road and rail connection. Before the rise of the Portuguese settlement in the sixteenth century, it was a petty village on the right bank of the Bhagirathi, two miles or so east of Satgaon which contained only a number of
straw-huts and bamboo stockades. Here the visiting Portuguese ships used to sell their cargo of salt from Hijli and evacuated it when the transaction was over. It was then called a ganj or mart. In May 1578, a delegation of the Firingis headed by Peodro Tavares, met Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) and received permission to found a city in Bengal for the Portuguese. They were then promised full religious liberty including the right to preach their religion, make converts and build churches. The fruit of this mission was, in fact, the official establishment of a Portuguese colony at Hughli (in 1579 AD). Here the great Augustinian monastery was built in 1599 at a village, which came to be called Bandel (a Portuguese corruption of bandar or port) and also the college of the Jesuits, besides a poor house and some other minor religious edifices. Thus, the colony of the Portuguese at Hughli turned into a flourishing urban centre.

It is learnt from the Portuguese sources that of the various trading ports in Bengal during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the richest, the most flourishing and the most populous was that of Hughli. Due to its importance as a port, it received the name and position of porto piqueno, or small port, a Portuguese term, hitherto applied to the city of Satgaon. To it vessels from India, China, Malacca and Manila repaired in great numbers. Hindustanis, Mongols, Persians and Armenians came there. In its initial stage, it was an open port, which had no fort, no protective wall and no ditch round it. But as the seventeenth century advanced, the growing prosperity and population of the port drew the attention of the authorities in Portugal. Hitherto the inhabitants including the Portuguese of Hughli had been allowed by the Mughal Governors to manage their local affairs including defense, provided that the emperor’s over-lordship was not denied. The King of Spain and Portugal nominated one Captain Convidor to Hughli, as a sort of Mayor with four assistants, yearly elected by the citizens, and placed the port under the protection of the governor of Ceylon, as Goa was too distant. In course of time, owing to the carelessness of the Bengal rulers, many Firingis assembled there, built extremely lofty and strong mansions, and strengthened them with cannons, muskets and other armaments.

But soon the political disorder in the town, the moral degeneration and piratical proclivities of the Portuguese induced Emperor Shahjahan (1628-1658) to instruct Qasim Khan Jwini, Captain Convidor to Hughli, as the Mughal governor of Bengal, to take possession of Hughli, crush the Portuguese power and make captives of them. Qasim Khan laid siege on Hughli on 20 June 1632 and captured it on 15 September. From the beginning to the end of the campaign a total of ten thousand Portuguese
were slain, blown up by gunpowder, drowned in water, or burnt in fires while the imperial army lost nearly one thousand dead. After the expulsion of the Portuguese, the English East India Company established their factory at Hughli in 1651 during the viceroyalty of Shah Shuja (1639-1660).

However, following the quarrel between the Mughals and the English, the latter began to evacuate Hughli and settled at Sutanuti on 24 August 1690. The emergence of Calcutta led to the decline of Hughli. Although the city, from a political point of view, was losing its splendour, culturally it remained important as a Shia colony and a centre of Shia theology and Persian culture, at least up to the time of the growth of Murshidabad. The port city of Hughli was stormed, sacked, plundered and burnt by the English on 10 January 1757.

The important historical monuments of this town include a Muslim Imambara (meeting place of the Shia community) and a Portuguese church (1660). The town, however, seems to have revived under English rule. In 1865 Hughli and Chinsura constituted a joint municipality. At present, it is one of the industrial district towns of West Bengal.

4.1 The Impact of Indo-Portuguese Relations on Indian Society
The contact between Portugal and India created a new blend of socio-cultural connection. Some scholars want to call it a phase of ‘connected history’ and some love to name it a phase of ‘encountered history’. If we consider all the aspects of Indo-Portuguese relations and the coming of the Portuguese in India and its impact on Indian society we can widely classify it like: i) Missionary Activity: Luso-Indian Contact

ii) Science and Technology: Luso-Indian Contact

iii) Socio-Cultural Interaction: Luso-Indian Contact
To understand the proper nature of these impacts we need to clarify these aspects descriptively. Under these three heads, we will discuss all issues regarding their religious zeal related to the spread of Christianity in India. Their influences on Indian Medicine, Indian Botany, Indian Physical Geography, Indian Cartography, Indian Marine Archaeology, Indian Astronomy, Indian Navigation Technology and Instrumentation. We will also focus on their Eastern Pilotage, Calendrical Systems, and Ship Building in India. This portion will also cover the Socio-Cultural Interactions, Piracy and Fortification Techniques.
4.1.1. Missionary Activity: Luso-Indian Contact

Christianity was not new to the coastal Indian society of the sixteenth century. However, with the advent of the Portuguese at the turn of the fifteenth century, a Lusitanian brand of Christianity was introduced in coastal parts of India. When the Portuguese arrived on the Indian coast in May 1498, they were looking for “Christians and spices”. This famous phrase of the *degredado* i.e. a deportee disembarked by Vasco da Gama is linked to the political, strategic and commercial motivations that we have discussed. This phrase and as also the documents dated between 1497 and 1500, demonstrate that the Portuguese expected to find large numbers of Christians in India. Therefore, it can be stated that enterprise of discovering a new sailing route to Asia was not initially conceived as a way to introduce missionary activity on a major scale into this continent. There was always a genuine hope amongst kings, princes, traders and clergymen that by the means of sword the newly found populations would integrate with Christendom. The Christianity has a strong dynamic of proselytisation and therefore most of the men who cruise the sea regarded the spread of Gospel as something natural and even necessary. There was also a strategic interest in this dynamic of proselytisation, because those hypothesized conversations would create the closest relations between the converted peoples and the Portuguese. This could facilitate trade and create conditions for military alliances.

The voyage of Vasco da Gama opened the way for renewed efforts of Christianity in Asia. Coming by the sea, the Portuguese explored major eastern sea routes. By 1513, they had reached up to China, and had explored the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the shores of Sri Lanka. The Bay of Bengal and the Malay Archipelago attracted their attention. For the first time in history, a group of Western people was sailing through eastern seas from the Cape of Good Hope to China and later to Japan.

In Asia, the Portuguese found a different political and religious situation. The continent was ruled by powerful states and most of its inhabitants professed ancient and elaborated religions, closely intertwined with their social and cultural organization. With the support of the Portuguese sailors, Christianity spread itself everywhere, becoming the first religion with a global dimension. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, major efforts of evangelisation were in India, Sri Lanka, Siam, Cambodia, Vietnam and China. A proper and systematic effort at
evangelisation started only by the middle of the sixteenth century, after the arrival of St. Francis Xavier in 1542. In these areas, the Portuguese could not create a colonial empire but rather a maritime hegemony and exercised their authority or military influence only over some points of the Asiatic coast.

Most of the conversations took place among the poor people who lived near their fortresses; women who married Portuguese men were also baptised. Due to political and strategical reasons, an entire caste of southern India, the Parvas, also become Christian. The numerous references to the activities of clergymen in the first decades of the sixteenth century also show the priests blessing troops before they went into action. The propagation of Christianity was still very close to the crusading models either military through conquest or via political alliances, the way would be opened for the spread of the Gospel. During the intervening period, they were much more worried about the religious life of the small exiting communities than with the propagation of the Faith.

The intellectual climate created by the Renaissance in Europe was such that there was a general belief that all peoples would accept the Christian faith eventually. In this context, it is important to take note of the fact that D. Duarte Nunes, the first Portuguese bishop who worked in India never spoke of the necessity of sending missionaries for working among the gentile population and he even suggested the possibility of expelling from Goa all its non-Christian inhabitants. In spite of D. Duarte Nunes’s opinion, there was a coexistence of Hindu temples with Christian churches in the territories of Goa under Portuguese jurisdiction up to the middle of the sixteenth century. In fact, in the first decades of the century, the Christian still influenced by the Renaissance spirit, had an attitude of tolerance towards Hinduism. We have two instances of the giving of gifts by the captain of Cannanore, in 1510, and by the captain of Calicut, in 1514, to the local authorities for Hindu celebrations.

The medieval conception of the Church and Christianity in general started to change by the middle of the sixteenth century. At this time Christianity in Western Europe was reforming, suffering a new schism, a new conception of evangelization was developed, and finally hundreds of clergymen took profit from the door opened by Vasco da Gama and started a new era in the history of Christianity in Asia. In 1545, John III received some notes (apontamentos) which had been sent by the vicar-general of India. The priest wanted the Crown to develop a different attitude towards the Hindus. The religious situation of Europe was then in a quick transition and the
Portuguese court was also rather different from the previous decade; therefore the
king started a new policy and ordered the expulsion of the Brahmins from Goa and
the first demolition of Hindu temples. During these years, the Crown promulgated for
the first time new laws that reserved for the Christians many of the official jobs of the
administrative structure of the *Estado da India*, while others gave privileges to the
converted people. Therefore, from this time conversion was not just a question of
religion. From the middle of the sixteenth century up to the end of the seventeenth
century the majority of the missionaries belonged to the Catholic Church were
members of Portuguese patronage. Through Goa, all members of these religious
orders worked almost everywhere, even in impenetrable or distant areas like Burma,
Timor, Tibet, Laos or Korea. The missionary activity under the Portuguese patronage
was coordinated from Goa, the seat of the first archdiocese created in Asia in modern
times, and the majority of its clergymen worked in India.

In Kerala, there was the Mapilas, an Indo-Arabian community, which had
developed from Arab trade activity in the region, who fought the Lusitanian presence
in that area. In this area, Christianity did not also receive any support from the Hindu
kings; even the king of Cochin the strongest ally of the Portuguese in that region,
dissuaded mass conversions among his subjects.

However, we have the interesting exception of two Indian communities
comprising more than fifty thousand souls by the end of the sixteenth century: the
conversion of the *Paraves* in southern India and the Christian communities of Goa.
Both cases are real exceptions. In case of *Paraves*, it was the conversion of an entire
caste. The political and economic pressures caused by the war between the Portuguese
and the Mapilas facilitated this. Mass conversion, while it facilitated the observance
of Christianity without societal disruption also carried with it the possibility of
transference of the old social system within the new religious ambience. In 1586, the
Jesuits estimated that there were over fifty five thousand Christians on the Fishery
Coast. In Goa, the Portuguese were the conquerors; this means that the Church there
was powerful.

It was always been fascinating to read so much written by Catholic
Missionaries, of the *Estado da India* on Indian culture, science, medicine, life and
manners. The missionaries were not able to convert Asia’s population, but their
activity got a few millions of conversions, and influenced considerably a larger
number of people. Most of the missionaries took with them different aspects of
European knowledge and several elements of western culture that they transmitted to the population where they worked. The arrival of Vasco da Gama to the Indian Ocean opened a new era in the relations between Asia and Europe.

The interests of Catholic Missionaries would extend too many fields. For religious instructions, they wanted easily intelligible local literature to be written in which catechisms, booklets on confession, and the lives of saints would be given pride place. St. Francis Xavier had written *Catechismo da Doctrina Christina*, Fr. Henrique Henriques, working in South India, had composed *Kristiani Vanakkam*, a grammar and dictionary in Tamil, two catechisms, Lives of Christ and of Blessed Virgin and other saints and many other apologetic and devotional works. Later during the Jesuit stay in India, Fr. Thomas Stephens wrote *Krista Purana*, work setting forth the mysteries of the faith in poetic form and Fr. Joseph Constant Beschi his masterful poem, *Thembavni*, in honour of St. Joseph. Together with a growing literature, there was an emphasis on popularizing a distinct religiosity among the converts. In an article by Charles J. Borges namely “Popular Religiosity in 16th century Catholic Goa”, we find the forms taken by popular devotion. Various reports of the period speak of the variety of religious expressions of the people. Jesuit love for the sick always formed an integral part of their work. The aim of the Confraternity of the Holy Faith set up in April 1541 had been to provide for the sick, and it started a hospital attached to St. Paul’s College at Old Goa. One of its rules read:

‘Since it is very conductive to the conversion of the people of this land to let them see us doing them all mercy and justice, and also since they must not be given occasion for saying, as they have commonly been doing, that after their conversion to our holy faith we no more care for them and neither attend to them in time of illness nor give them burial after death, a hospital was ordained for the people of the land. This was built close to the said house (St. Paul’s) so that they might there be attended to and a burial place was bought for them on the rising ground next to the backyard.’

The Jesuits specialized overall in making particular medicines for which they had a secret recipe. The medicines were provided with a miracle aura, and were prepared in a room in which lay holy water and relics of the patron saints connected with the medicine. The original recipe has since been lost. The *Arte Palmarica* was a well-known work by a Jesuit lay brother working in Salcete. In it, he had noted his experiments in developing better yields of coconuts.
In 1605, the Portuguese Province sent the Augustinian priest, Fr. Felix of Jesus to India with the idea of writing a history of the newly founded missionary congregation in India. He was a native of Lisbon and had spent the last thirty-five years of his life in the Augustinian monastery of Our Lady of Grace at Goa, where he had dedicated himself with great zeal to his task as a chronicler. He wrote two chronicles. ArunlF Hartmann\textsuperscript{14} makes the following observations about the account given by Fr. Felix:

Augustinian foundations and the work accomplished by the missionaries of the Order amidst many difficulties throughout the territory controlled by the Portuguese Viceroy of Goa, but it also contains much interesting information on the environment in which they worked. Following the rapid spread of the small band of men, one can almost retrace the victorious march of the Portuguese conquerors…”

Fr. Felix puts before us some colourful sketches of local scenes and customs some more notable events of the history of the church and the tales of his day, like the efforts of the Pope and European monarchs to encircle the Turk, the depredation of the Armenians and Archbishop Aleixo de Menezes\textsuperscript{15} efforts in the church of Malabar etc. His chronicle has become an important source of information on these events. He also throws light on historical personalities, as for example on the changeable temperament of Shah Abbas of Persia\textsuperscript{16} and the open-minded Akbar. The same may be said of many lesser personages of whom mention is made such as native rulers, Portuguese officials and traders. All these descriptions help us to understand the spirit of the time.

Educating the youth was a great need to spread Christianity and popularize it among them. The purpose of educating them was to send them on completion of their studies to their own places along with the missionaries. Writing from Cochin on 15 January 1544, Francis Xavier\textsuperscript{17} writes to a fellow Jesuit:

“I hope in God our Lord that the boys will be better men than their fathers, since they manifest much love and affection for our law and for learning and teaching the prayers. They have such a great abhorrence for the idolatries of the pagans that they frequently quarrel with them; they reproach their fathers and mothers when they see them worshipping idols, and they denounce them by coming to tell me about it. When they tell me about
idolatries that are being practiced outside the village, I collect all the boys of the village and go with them to the place where the idols have been erected; and the devil is more dishonored by the boys whom I take there than he was honored by their fathers and relatives when they made and worshipped them, for the boys take the idols and smash them to bits. They then spit upon them and temple them under their feet; and after this they do other things which, though it is better not to mention them by name, are a credit to the boys who do them against one who is so impudent as to have himself worshipped by their fathers."

At Old Goa, the Confraternity of the Holy Faith had set up a college, later to be renamed the college of St. Paul. This was initially intended for the Portuguese and local youth, but it soon opened its doors for others too. Governor Dom Garcia de Castro, writing in 1543, had remarked that it was edifying to see the boys serve mass so well. He was confident they would become good preachers of the divine word and would bring forth much fruit in the countries from where they had come from. The boys under training at the college prepared themselves for missionary work. They studied grammar, good habits, and the mysteries of the faith. They would engage in the solemn high masses on Sundays, attend funerals and participate in religious processions. Their regular daily exercises included meditation, spiritual reading, examination of conscience, and recitation of the Rosary. For table reading, they had the history of the missions and lives of outstanding missionaries. They confessed once every fortnight, went frequently for communion, and performed an annual retreat.

The Viceroy had guaranteed the people that they would not be made Christian by force and dissuaded them from fleeing the place. The state would not lose the rents paid by them or miss their services, which were indispensable. While Dom Constantino was viceroy, there was an exodus from Diver in Goa and there were none to repair the dams. They gave way, and the major part of the island was flooded. There were other villages too, which were flooded and neglected. The fathers of the Society felt the people laid much store by honour and though they were given to idolatry, they would easily convert not to lose their honour. Keeping this in mind, one of the chief means to bring the Hindus to the faith would be to deprive them of all favors and honours of their trades. It would have been proper if the King of Portugal were to forbid the renting of lands to the Hindus and ban brokers and moneychangers
among them since necessity would lead them to seek God as many of them did when the king ordered them expelled from Goa after depriving of their lands.

One report said that the spread of the faith was hindered mainly by the attitudes of the local kings and lords. Their vassals had converted not because they saw errors in their faith or truth in the other, but because they knew the Portuguese to be powerful and the lords of the sea, who would rid them of many tyrannies and allow them to sail freely, defending them against present and future oppression. Besides, the vassals on becoming Christians helped the captains under whom they were placed, rather than the kings whose vassals they were. The kings were much hurt and complained to the Fathers and to the captains. The converts requested protection when the kings and lords sought some obligation from them, as was the usual custom.

According to one report, it was stated that the chief reason why some parts of India were so much neglected and thus unfavourable to virtue and spiritual strength but inclined to body pleasures and spiritual weakness of the soul, was the climate, which favoured laziness and bodily pleasures and caused harm to the soul making it grow cold. With regard to those born in India, very few of them would be admitted into the Society of Jesus because they were all brought up in pleasure and vices and born in a very unhealthy land with a poor climate, incapable of mortification and of religious perfection and physically so weak that they would be unable to put up with the burden of the training. None could be admitted because they were dark-skinned. They were a people with little capacity and with evil inclinations and of low moral caliber.

Another obstacle was the sensuality common in the whole of the East apart from bed morals and the little store the people set for the honour of their women, there were all the opportunities sensual men could wish for. Freedom was so great, the heat so incessant together with the continuous idleness, the dress so indecent and the diet made up of items prepared with pepper and cloves, the life of pleasure and the easy availability of the Indian women, all making it very easy for one to indulge in vices which were a major obstacle for all the good.

The other obstacle which hindered the conversion of the Hindus were the little care the Hindus showed for their souls imagining that everything came to an end with death. They were in such darkness that they did not have any qualms and it looked as if they were totally blind to the natural light because when one tried to make them understand, they laughed at that. Although they admitted that the tenets of their faith
were false, they were not willing to give them up. They lacked the knowledge of any type of sciences. They were so obstinate in their errors that they were incapable of understanding the arguments put forward and no reasoning would move them except when driven by fear, punishment, or the expectation of any temporal reward.

With regard to the preservation and instruction of the Christians, the difficulties were no less. The Hindus embracing the faith were not doing so under the instruction of the Holy Spirit nor were they convinced by reason. They did not consider their conversion as something supernatural but as a human thing and felt, it was nothing more than a change of caste and way of living. It amounted to giving up their caste and taking the caste of the Christians. The Fathers could not teach catechism to the before they baptized them partly due to the latter’s ignorance and poor capacity and partly because very few of the priests knew the local language. The interpreters who catechized lacked the required fervour and were very superficial in instructing. The people who were a dark-skinned people had a poor natural capacity and understanding, could not lift up their souls, and were incapable of learning matters of the faith. Further, they came for confession when it is too late. Difficulties arose due to the mingling of the converts with the Hindus and Muslim.

The Portuguese Missionaries made some solutions of the above-enumerated problems. In the first place, many Brahmins along with their families were expelled from Goa. The vacant settlements were then given to the priests. Among other problems and solutions offered were that the priests had to deal with cultural practices in their work. Apart from their many other superstitions the Hindus believed in two things as essential. They grew a xendi (i.e. tuft of hair left on a shaven head) and did not eat anything that had been touched by a Christian. If any eatable was put into their mouths, even forcibly, they believed they were no longer Hindus and forfeited their caste. They considered that the greatest injury to them. Around baptism time, some brothers of St. Paul’s College would go through the villages and coconut-groves to hunt down Hindus for conversion. Some of these who had a greater fervour than was required would catch some of those they met and would bring them on some charge or would force food into their mouths. Thinking that they had thus forfeited their caste, the Hindus would cut off their xendis and afterwards with threats of being condemned to the galleys they would become Christians. In the order of the Viceroy, Count of Ericeira, it was ordained that the Father of the Christians could take to the house of
the catechumens the orphans of the province of Bardez of which he had the information. The job was entrusted to the Franciscans, as was written in 1719.

When conquest was not possible, gifts were sent on behalf of the king of Portugal to the local kings and lords in places where the faith was spreading. Tributes were also paid to the advisers, since almost everything was in their hands. As far as possible, the ports of those lords were protected for the good of the faith, getting them passes for trade in horses for that led the Christians to being treated better. A look at one or two areas in the Indian subcontinent shows the hardened positions of the missionaries in their dealings with the locals. They praised their script, their astronomy, their medicine, and admired their ability to predict with accuracy eclipses of the sun and moon many days in advance. They saw Indians as frugal yet friendly.

With their arrival in Goa, their attitude soon changed due to a large measure to their strong economic base, which helped them wield their power aided by their vast tracts of land and money. Reactions against them were evident, for instant in a nine-page memorandum that the local Goan Brahmin clergy sent the Crown accusing the Jesuits of persecuting them, and of being ignorant of the local language. They accused them of lacking the fear of God, and of preventing the general assemblies of Salcete villages from meeting. In reply, the foreign-born Jesuits listed their many achievements in education, in providing jobs for the poor, in composing books, in arresting converts in the act of worshipping their former idols and retorted that the local clergy were a dark-skinned people unworthy of any respect. Mention can be made of an important work by a Portuguese Jesuit Fr. Diogo Goncalves entitled *Historia do Malavar*. Born in 1561 in Portugal he reached India in 1591 and from 1597 for about forty years, he was at various places in South India. Up to the last days of his life, he strongly attacked the Muslims in all his sermons. In his *Historia*, he gives us, according to Josef Wicki, a reliable and complete knowledge of the people of the South India coast and offers an instruction on how Hinduism with its corrupt morals and its polytheism can be overcome by Christianity.

This is very interesting to find that the Portuguese, deprived of “the goods of the world” in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, found it difficult to promote Christianity for they compromised with their religious policy to acquire wealth through the agency of the Hindus. On the other hand, the Hindus with the bargaining power of “the goods of the world” obtained concessions from the *Estado*, which at that time was demanding conversion to Christianity on pain of expulsion from their
homeland. They retained and “acquired religion”, even in the flight of their deities, as argued by Dr. Pratima Kamat in one of her writings. Portugal’s meager population at that time initiated the drive for “Christians and spices” and it is obvious that the conquest, administration and particularly territorial as well as commercial expansion of its ‘shoe-string’ Asian Empire would not have been possible without indigenous aid. The Portuguese empire-building enterprise in the East must therefore be viewed as a collaborative effort where Hindu commercial, administrative and diplomatic inputs served as the ‘pillers’of an empire which was steeped in religious intolerance. The Estado da India thus was prompted by the crusading spirit of its ecclesiastical character to ‘cleanse’ the local society of ‘paganism’ while availing of the services of ‘heathens’ in difference to its commercial and financial compulsions.

António Vieira, the Jesuit mercantilist thinker of seventeenth century Portugal, had opined that only “a great deal of money” earned through revitalized commerce could rescue Portugal from its mid-century crisis. Here he envisaged a crucial role for new Christians. Interestingly, in the Indian context, the Hindus replaced new Christians. Interestingly, in the Indian context, the Hindus replaced new Christians.

Hindu marriages were permitted in Portuguese lands with a proviso that they should be solemnized behind closed doors and under clerical supervision. Further, the Estado as well as the Jesuits permitted Hindus to perform their “abominable practices” only on the island of Cumbarjua island town on the banks of the Mandovi River in Goa. It is situated to the east of Goa’s capital Panaji at a distance of twenty kilometers where a majority of the merchant resided. Interestingly enough, the Paulista padre has come to be venerated as Shri Paulista by the Hindus settled in this island.

While discussing the conversions in the Konkan region, Kamat has theorized conversion into three different ways: as an inner psychological transformation, as a change of fellowship and as “transition in belief”. Since in Goa and the Province of the North the word of Christ was spread with the use of force, it was not fully understood and appreciated by the convert community to whom the ritualistic practices of their ancestors continued to lend meaning to their lives. While the lower castes established their Christian identity only in terms of religious affiliation and the Sunday mass, the upper castes aimed at complete integration with ‘Portuguesised Christianity’ which enjoyed great prestige in the colonial society.
Therefore, conversion meant a change in religious affiliation not fellowship. The imposition of an alien culture upon a colonized people in keeping with Portugal’s spirit of *reconquista* and Counter-Reformation endeavoured to ensure the “mental submission” of the converts and through a process of “decentralization” “sought to denationalize and to prepare submissive servants fit only or subordinate occupations”. Portuguese Apostle of the Indies, St. Francis Xavier, who even in death saved the Portuguese from a Maratha attack and earned for himself the title of *Goencho Saib*, the patron Saint of Goa, the Jesuit conversion strategies of education, language, and literature contributed a lot to the success of the Lusitanian colonial rule and missionary influence in India.

The Western civilization was penetrated into India through the missionaries and the Portuguese government, treated males and females on an equal footing. Women received a better treatment in society and higher education. Female converts got the permission to inherit and own property and discontinue with ‘heathen’ practices like ‘sati’, pre-puberty marriages, tonsuring widows, the prohibition of their re-marriage and polygamy. However, it must be remembered that the operative words in the above sentences are “female converts” and “discontinue with ‘heathen’ practices” for these reforms were introduced by way of inducements to local women, especially widows to wean them away from Hinduism and ‘convince’ them to embrace Christianity. This strategy won souls for Christ and estates for the soldiers of Christianity. Therefore, we can follow Rosa Maria Perez by arguing that Indian society is much less rigid than European anthropologists have claimed, being far more adoptive over time or, if we prefer Ainslie T. Embree’s expression, a “culture in the making”.

**4.1.2 Science and Technology: Luso-Indian Contact**

Portuguese maritime expansion in the fifteenth century received stimulation from several sources. In fact the dispatch of caravels to sail the ocean was based on two main factors. On the one hand, there were factors, which could be localized to Portugal; these included the political and strategic interests of state, the ambitions of both of the crown and vassal and social needs of the lower ranks of nobility. The second factor was a reflection of a larger cultural ambiance that of Christianity taken as fulcrum of European religious and cultural manifestations. Eanes de Zurara, the first chronicler of Portuguese overseas activities also noticed these factors.
This maritime activities to India in particular left lots of influences in the society, culture and all the other aspects of life. Science and Technology is one the field where they did influenced a lot. Particularly in the field of Botany and Navigational Sciences they have influenced a lot. India had learnt lots of the navigation techniques from the Portuguese from their early arrival. Towards the middle of the fifteenth century the Ottoman Turks had emerged as a major power in West Asia and Eastern Europe, and continued their thrust into Central Europe. Western trade routes were therefore cut off over land with the East, with the fall of Constantinople (now Istanbul) into the Turkish hands. Western Europe had therefore to find an alternative route for their trade and import of spices from Asia. The Portuguese were the first to take the initiative and in 1497 Vasco da Gama sailed on a long voyage around the African continent to explore the East. His vessel (San Gabriel) was a warship and was accompanied by two others. Portuguese efforts bore fruit when they landed at Calicut ten months later. While the Indians had used the sea for military transportation earlier, the San Gabriel was the first man of war, fitted with twenty guns, to touch the Indian shores. Vasco da Gama was granted trading permission and the Indian seemed quite content as long as their requirements from abroad were met and their own trade was promoted.

The Portuguese initiative would have given them very long-term benefits, had they not made the mistake of selling Indian spices at very high prices to rest of the West European community. Their second mistake was in not being able to maintain cordial relations with the Indian community from the beginning. Their mistakes drew the other European navies into the Indian Ocean. In due course, rivalries and hostilities grew within them, and finally the British emerged powerful and diplomatic enough to remain a pro-dominant power in the area. Portugal-Calicut relations worsened with Vasco da Gama refusing to pay the usual customs levy. It is said, Vasco da Gama and his soldiers had indulged in acts of barbarism unparalleled in maritime history. The situation further worsened due to Portuguese interference with Arab trading interests at Calicut; the latter having had long and friendly trade with the Indian coast. The Portuguese had to seek other avenues and sought Cannanore and Cochin. Besides capturing trade, their primary aim was to gain supremacy over the India Ocean and trade routes. They remained persistent in sending more and more ships to the Malabar Coast and went to the extent of pronouncing that no Indian or Arab ship could ply without their permission.
It is important to review the political conditions of India during this period. India was weak and divided into several small states and kingdoms. There was a Hindu-Muslim divide and even states belonging to the same religion had serious differences and rivalries. India’s maritime importance had ebbed giving way to Arab traders. Armed traders of the West, therefore, took advantages and established their bases with full assent of the weaker rulers. On the west coast Portuguese ships started raiding Indian and Arab merchant ships which ventured without their permission. Following differences with Calicut, the port was subjected to a blockade and therefore commercial starvation. Portuguese intervention at Cochin further aggravated the traditional feud between the rulers of Cochin and Calicut. While these states raised their own armed flotillas, their individual seas power was no match for the Portuguese men of war on high seas and Lisbon continued to consolidate its influence in the Indian Ocean and made other settlements along the west coast of India and Ceylon.

From *Batalhas e Combates da Marinha Portuguesa*, Vol. VIII (1808-1975) by Saturnino Monteiro (Lisboa, Liv. Sá da Costa Editora, 1997) we can have a clear idea about the last Portuguese naval action in Goa in 1961. The author is a retired Naval Officer (*Capitão-de-mar-e-guerra*) and former professor of Naval Academy. The 149-182 pages of the document cover the Goa event including the naval encounter at Diu. The author presents a very objective picture of the Portuguese political and strategic weaknesses at that time. He refers to the Portuguese complacent attitude vis-a-vis the post-World War II hegemonic tendencies and decolonization process. Quotes on page 150 reveal that:

“This has nothing to do with us. There is no racism in our colonies. Our *blacks* (*pretos*) are happy with us and the idea of becoming independent is nowhere in their heads.”

The book describes in quite some detail the military particularly naval) strength and weaknesses of India at the time. Describes how Salazar relied in vain upon the diplomatic support of United States of America and United Kingdom, and had requested Pakistan and China to create border pressures.

The author praises the last Governor General of Goa for ignoring the instructions of Salazar to resist till the last man. According to this account, two batches of artillery men were sent at the very end disguised as football teams. They were to handle the two obsolete anti-air guns the Portuguese had in Goa. A request from Goa military asking for *sausages* meaning ammunition for these artillery pieces
was responded literally by Lisbon authorities with various brands of Portuguese sausages. It became a joke among the Portuguese during a long time to come. Not many in Goa are aware of it as yet. The book provides a very detailed description of the strategy and action with maps indicating the battle positions that ended the last Portuguese naval battles at Mormugão and off Diu. The names of the Portuguese officials who participated in these actions and lost their lives get a due mention. There is reference to Indian navy having sensed the presence of a submarine. This was later confirmed to have been a British submarine on its way to Far East. The Indian navy was prepared for such an eventuality and several anti-submarine frigates, such as “Trishul”, “Kuthar”, “Kirpan” and “Khukri” were inducted in the operation. This book should be read alongside the “Operation Vijay” published by the government of India (ed. S.N. Prasad, National Archives of India) with details of Indian military documentation.

4.1.3 Socio-Cultural Interaction: Luso-Indian Contact

As Campos says, in his *The History of the Portuguese in Bengal*,

“The association of the Portuguese with Bengal despite the fact that it has disappeared long ago by a number of centuries, is still discernible quite vividly in their relics here that bespeak eloquently of their house have proved to be the site of palaces built by modern architects and many of the site of their factories are lying in desolation today. But it is still more remarkably striking to be taken proper cognizance is not the mere historical remains of the Portuguese in Bengal, speaking eloquently of their old day of prosperity here, but the silent forces generated by the Portuguese in this province, leaving a permanent imprint of their own on the manifold walk of life in India in general and Bengal in particular.”

The Portuguese were the first to have brought the East in close contact with the West. The impressions so created are more profound and lasting than what is generally known and recognized.

The Portuguese introduced in the East new methods of agriculture, new industries, new customs, a new religion, countenancing an unrestricted inter-marriages between themselves and the natives. The result of which in their totality are manifest even today. The later band of Europeans emigrants of different nationalities modified or amplified the efforts of the Portuguese in the direction but even they
failed to obliterate the Portuguese influence in entirety. The Portuguese influence are desirable even today in the population, race, customs and language in Bengal and this also holds equally good of other parts in India where they had their association with Portuguese.

In Bengal, particularly there is strong tendency among its people to remodel himself or herself after the fashion of the ruling nation. The Portuguese stamp can easily be discerned even today in the names of people of Bengal and their institutions, their churches, their language and the archaeological remains speak today about their domination in Bengal.

J.J.A. Campos emphasizes about the Portuguese policy to support marriages between Indians and the Portuguese from the time of Albuquerque. This was also acted as a part of the conversion process. There are numerous communities of the Portuguese descendants all over Bengal. Some have identified themselves with the natives of the place, some have changed their names and form part and parcel of the Anglo-Indian community. In the eighteenth century the community of the Portuguese descendants was a distinct one. They are all called Portuguese in the English records, in the accounts of travelers in the Bengal Dictionaries and by the historians.

As Dr. Schuchardt says in his ‘Beitrage zur Kreolischen Romanisch Volume-V’ the History of the Portuguese Language that it was the lingua franca throughout the East not only among the Portuguese and their descendants but among the different indigenous races and even the Europeans who followed them. It was spoken all along the coast of India, in Malaysia, Pegu, Siam, Tonquin, Cochin-China, Basra, Meca and many other places wherever the Portuguese dominated and extended.

4.2 Present State of Portuguese Language in Goa
Goa is the largest of three former Portuguese colonies in India located on the south coast about five hundred miles from Bombay. Today Goa is growing cultural nucleus as well as a centre for iron and manganese ore, shipping and tourism. In the first half of the sixteenth century the Portuguese conquered the central part of Goa known as the Velhas Conquisitas i.e. “Old Conquests” and Portuguese influence is strongly felt in this region. The Portuguese converted the local population, forced Portuguese customs upon them and took measures which made it difficult for Indians to retain their traditional religion.
The outlying regions or Novas Conquisitas i.e. “New Conquests” were conquered in the late eighteenth century. This region exhibits less Portuguese influence on culture. A study about the Portuguese Language shift in Goa, conducted by Irene Wherritt of University of Iowa made an attempt to obtain a methodical document of the Portuguese influence in this particular place. In 1984 the field work was conducted for three months in Panaji the capital city. Panaji has changed considerably since liberation from the Portuguese in 1961. Because of a great influx of people from neighbouring states, the population has nearly doubled and Catholics number only 20% of the population of the Old Conquests, whereas before liberation the figure was 60%.

Panaji today represents a typical multilingual setting in India where four languages- Konkani, Marathi, English and Portuguese play vital roles in daily affairs of individuals in the community. Portuguese speaking Catholics vary in their use of Konkani. At the time of the conquest, the Portuguese forbade writing of Konkani in its original script and destroyed most written records (Miranda, 1982, 206-07 and Sar Dessai, 1981, 3).

At the time of liberation Portuguese had attained a high level of use in certain areas of daily life. Official business was done in Portuguese: births, deaths, marriages, wills and real estate transactions were recorded in Portuguese. Catholic families typically used Portuguese at home and with friends. Portuguese was used in many shops, banks, hotels, doctors used Portuguese in hospitals, and newspapers were written primarily in Portuguese, Portuguese predominated in radio and movies. the Catholic Church and priests spoke Portuguese in among themselves and used considerable Portuguese in general functions.

But within five years after liberation many of these strongholds of Portuguese language use had diminished. At this writing, after twenty eight years of absence of Portuguese rule official business is conducted in English or to a lesser extent in Konkani. The civil Code is still Portuguese and Portuguese language is still legal for present day transactions. Yet according to one informant about 95% of legal documents today are written in English, although some Portuguese vocabulary is still retained. Primary school is taught in English, Marathi, or Konkani and secondary and university education is given primarily in English. In addition the Catholic Church uses Konkani and English only some Catholics mostly elderly use Portuguese at home and Konkani and English are used for the most part in shops, banks, hotels and
hospitals. Newspapers are printed in English and Marathi radio and Television programmes is broadcast in Konkani and English.

Figure 1 summarizes responses to language uses in business and related encounters. Informants were asked to indicate the language they used most frequently in each situation. Across the bottom of the figure is a list of establishments. In those towards the right individuals tend to speak more Portuguese in those towards the left people tend to use more Konkani. English usage is dispersed among the categories and is most frequent in peoples’ jobs. Language choice in transactions varies and depends upon the place and the interlocutors. Parasher (1980, 157-58) confirms variety of language choice for transactions in other cities in India.

Hindus have predominated in the business world in Goa even before liberation. Many Hindu businessmen learned Portuguese in school. Several Hindus the researchers observed used Portuguese with frequency. This is interesting to note that there is one popular bookstore in Goa whose Hindu owner speaks Portuguese with familiar clients.

Hindus have predominated in the business world in Goa even before liberation. Many Hindu businessmen learned Portuguese in school. Several Hindus the researchers observed used Portuguese with frequency. This is interesting to note that there is one popular bookstore in Goa whose Hindu owner speaks Portuguese with familiar clients. He participated in an interview and stated that at liberation many people, especially women, came in and asked him to save them books in Portuguese until they save up the money to pay. It took five years to dispose of the majority of the books and he still has some. He said that the elderly come and speak Portuguese with him and that Portuguese is more natural for him than English.
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and he still has some. He said that the elderly come and speak Portuguese with him and that Portuguese is more natural for him than English.

Catholic women generally report more use of Portuguese and less use of English than Catholic men. For instance in the part of the language use index that contains categories of language use, the twelve women interviewed state thirty nine categories of Portuguese use and seventeen for English. The twelve men interviewed mention twenty seven of Portuguese use and twenty five for English. Figure 2 and Figure 3 corroborate evidence from the tabulation of language use categories and informal observations. Informants were asked to estimate their daily use of Portuguese and English. Displayed in Figure 2 and Figure 3 are Catholics’ use of Portuguese and English respectively. Figure 2 and 3 also indicate that Portuguese use increases and English use decreases with age. Figure 4 similarly demonstrates that as age increases informants state that they use more Portuguese outside the home.
Portuguese language penetrated the home life of Catholics and the business and professional lives of both Hindus and Catholics. Since liberation elderly Hindus have altered their language use outside of the home by speaking less Portuguese. Elderly Catholics have likewise decreased their use of Portuguese, but are still apt to go out of their way to speak Portuguese when possible. A language shift from Portuguese to Konkani has almost been completed in Goa. Yet Goans have used the Portuguese language for over five hundred years and have taken on elements of Portuguese culture that will outlive the last generation of Portuguese speakers.
FIGURE 4

AVERAGE DAILY LANGUAGE USE: BUSINESS
Age 40 or below

AVERAGE DAILY LANGUAGE USE: BUSINESS
Age 41-55

AVERAGE DAILY LANGUAGE USE: BUSINESS
Age 56 and above
4.3 The legacy of the Portuguese in Bengal

The present study ‘The legacy of Portuguese in Bengal’ is an attempt to examine the different traces of the Portuguese culture in the Bengal region, as a geographical unit. The geographical position of Bengal has considerably influenced its History. Away from the heart of India and intersected by a network of rivers and rivulets unlike any other part of India, Bengal provided a refuge for all sorts of men including adventurers and skilled navigators like the Portuguese. As Campos says, in his *The History of the Portuguese in Bengal*:

“The association of the Portuguese with Bengal despite the fact that it has disappeared long ago by a number of centuries, is still discernible quite vividly in their relics here that bespeak eloquently of their house have proved to be the site of palaces built by modern architects and many of the site of their factories are lying in desolation today. But it is still more remarkably striking to be taken proper cognizance is not the mere historical remains of the Portuguese in Bengal, speaking eloquently of their old day of prosperity here, but the silent forces generated by the Portuguese in this province, leaving a permanent imprint of their own on the manifold walk of life in India in general and Bengal in particular.”

In the centuries referred to or even before that, the region and its component parts under study had been termed differently by different authors at different periods. Most of the specialists have agreed to the idea that the term ‘Bangla’ or ‘Bengala’ is derived from ‘Vanga’, which so frequently occurs in early, and mediaeval Indian epigraphs and literature, and later the English adapted it into their own languages as ‘Bengal’.

H.S. Jarrett’s translation of ‘Ain-i-Akbari’ reveals that the original name of Bengal was ‘Banga’ (1). In Marco Polo’s account of Bengal the name Vangalas was applied to the South-East Bengal including Chittagong and Tipperah. In the more recent times Dr. James Taylor in his ‘Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca’, identified Dacca as ‘Vanga’ with the city of ‘Bengalla’ or ‘Bangala’ in ‘Vangala’ (2). The present Bangladesh can be identified with Bengal or Vangala of Polo and Taylor. So the field of Portuguese activities in this area was more or less confined to the region West Bengal and Bangladesh.
The letter that mentions the earliest Portuguese account of Bengal, describes its general features. Joao de Leyma, a Portuguese nobleman serving in India in his letter addressed to the King of Portugal on 22 December 1518 wrote:

“Dom Joao, my Lord, spent the cold season in Bengal, where he wintered….At the bar of this river, my Lord, there are three fathoms of water at low tide, which swells from there to six fathoms at high tide. The city is said to be two small leagues from the bar. The city is big and populous but very weak. Here was Dom Joao awaiting the monsoon for returning to India” (3).

The ‘Bengal’ of this letter is likely to be the Vangala or Bangala of the later Portuguese, ‘the country with an eventful past, kaleidoscope of sights and sounds.

4.3.1 The Background of Bengal-Portugal Interactions

As early as 1498, Vasco da Gama carried the following information to Portugal: “Bengala has a Moorish King and a mixed population of Christians and Moors”. Some scholars opines that it is possible that Vasco da Gama exaggerated the number of Christians to impress upon the king the necessity of undertaking naval expeditions to a region which already possessed a good number of friendly Christian brethren. The other reason, as Vasco da Gama added was that “The country could export quantities of wheat and very valuable cotton goods. Clothes, which sell on the spot for twenty-two shillings and six pence, fetch ninety shillings in Calicut. It abounds in Silver”. Albuquerque had written to King Manuel I (1495-1521) in the same manner about the vast possibilities of trade and commerce in Bengal. The possibilities were explored and Portuguese maritime supremacy reached its zenith towards the close of the sixteenth century and virtually enjoying a monopoly in the lucrative eastern trade. Referring to this aspect of Portuguese activity Mohan, F.J. writes: “The work done by the Portuguese as pioneers of European Commerce in this part of India (i.e. Bengal) has not perhaps been sufficiently recognized, for it-may truly be said that they paved the way for the commercial ventures of Dutch, the English and other European nations”.

The Portuguese made their maiden visit to Bengal in the sixteenth century. It was in many ways an important period in the political, social, religious, cultural and economic history of Bengal. Portuguese were the foremost Europeans who revealed the mystery of East to West and were the first to establish intimate contact between the two. The first impression of the West about the East were largely such as the
Portuguese created. These impressions were therefore more profound and lasting than it is generally recognized. Particularly the Portuguese as pioneers of European Commerce in Bengal has not perhaps been sufficiently recognized. In real sense, the Portuguese paved the way for the commercial ventures of the Dutch, French, English and other European nations in Bengal. The Portuguese, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, occupied a position in Bengal comparable to that of the British in the middle of the eighteenth century. In this process, their tools were the settlements and the factories not only at the principal ports, Hooghly and Chittagong but also at many other places in Eastern and Western India as far up the Ganges as Patna.

However, the earliest European settlements in the gulf of Bengal were in Orissa. As early as 1514, the Portuguese settled in Pipi in Orissa. In the beginning of the 16th century, the Portuguese established themselves on the coast of Madras. Alarmed at the strength of the Portuguese the natives rose against them and the Portuguese fled northward and founded a new town at Pipi about four miles from the mouth of Subarnarekha River and established settlement on the coast of Bay of Bengal. Pipi was then an important harbour and trade centre. Pipi served as the centre for sale of slaves brought by the Arakanese and Portuguese pirates.

Portuguese penetration into the interior followed at a quicker pace. Joao de Silveira was the first Portuguese official representative. He was sent from the Maldives as the Ambassador to Arakan. Silveira commanded the first expedition to Bengal in 1517, landed on the coast of Arakan, moved towards Chittagong, and stayed there for some time with a view to open trade and commerce. During this time, Sultan Alauddin Houssain Shah (1493-1519) ruled Bengal and Chittagong was the chief port and gateway to the capital Gaur. Before Silveira, many Portuguese came to Bengal in ‘Moorish’ ships as sailors and traders.

We have to agree with J.J.A.Campos “It is much to be deprecated that no adequate account is left of the Portuguese system of government either in the official or individual writings while so much is written about the Portuguese possessions in western India, their doings in Bengal, and the names of the chief actors have comparatively been consigned to oblivion”.

The earliest European traders who settled in Bengal in the first half of the sixteenth century enjoyed some amount of autonomy. Some of their settlements in Bengal became virtually independent of the Mughal rulers, being directly subject for a time to the jurisdiction of the Portuguese government of Ceylon after paying due
taxes and obeying laws set by the Mughal Government. They did not enjoy any extra-territorial rights in Bengal.

Portuguese expansion in India and Bengal ran parallel with the progress of Mughal rule in India. Bengal, was ruled by the Sultans, and enjoyed a sort of autonomy by virtue of its remote situation. In 1536, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah, favoured the Portuguese and allowed Martin Afonso de Mello to build factories in Chittagong and Satgaon and also offered them the custom dues of the two ports. When Sher Shah invaded Gaur for the second time in 1538, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah requested Portuguese help. This was the beginning of the use of the mercenary services of the Portuguese in favour of the Sultan. With the progress of the time, Portuguese piracy and buccaneering activities increased and followed the same pattern as the Arakan Maghs in Bengal. Together they created an atmosphere of terror. Tapan Roy Chowdhury describes these Portuguese freelancers during the first fifty years of Mughal rule as men “who truly live under no fear of subjection to God or man”. He gives their numbers as “more than 2500 persons, pure Portuguese and Mestiços………living in Bengal as refugees and outlaws serving native chiefs”.

During the years between 1575 and 1627, the Portuguese contributed a greatly to the growth of Bengal’s economy by assuming supremacy over Bengal’s commerce. In 1579-80, Pedro Tavares had already founded the settlement of Hooghly under the authority of a ‘Farman’ from Akbar and in 1557; the Ain-i-Akbari asserted the inclusion of Satgaon within the Portuguese fold. Portuguese settlements sprang up at various points. Following the footsteps of the Portuguese, other minor ethnic groups added to the foreign adventurers between whom Bengalis could hardly distinguish and used to describe as ‘Firingis’.

Portuguese settlement in Eastern Bengal presently Bangladesh, gained impetus with increasing trading activities in the high seas of Chittagong. It was the greatest harbour of Bengal while Gaur was the capital and one of the ‘Queens of the cities’. It should be noted that Bengal came under the great Mughal Akbar in 1576 although the Mughals had not yet extended their authority to Chittagong side. About 1590, Antonio de Souza Godinho captured Chittagong and made the Island of Sandwip, tributary to it.
Towards the last two decades of the sixteenth century the Portuguese settlement in Satgaon presently Hooghly of West Bengal was also flourishing. In those days, Hooghly River was the main way for transportation and Hooghly served as an excellent trade port. Before the rise of the Portuguese settlement, it was a petty village in the right bank of Bhagirathi. Here the visiting Portuguese ships used to sell their cargo of salt from Hijli and evaluated it when the transaction was over. In May 1578, a delegation of the Portuguese headed by Pedro Taveres met Emperor Akbar the Great (1556-1605) and received permission to found a city in Bengal for the Portuguese. They were then promised full religious liberty including the right to preach their religion, make converts and build churches. The fruit of this mission was the official establishment of a Portuguese colony at Hooghly in 1579 A.D. Here the great Augustinian monastery was built in 1599 at a village, which came to known as Bandel i.e. a Portuguese corruption of ‘bandar’ or port and also the college of the Jesuits besides a poor house, and some other minor religious edifices. Thus, the colony of the Portuguese at Hooghly turned into a flourishing urban centre.

It is learnt from the Portuguese sources that of the various trading ports in Bengal during the sixteenth-seventeenth century the richest, the most flourishing and the most populous was that of Hooghly. Due to its important as a port, it received the position of ‘Porto piqueno’ or ‘small port’ a Portuguese term. In Hooghly, vessels from India, China, Malacca and Manila repaired in great numbers. In its initial stage, it was an open port, which had no fort, no protective walls and no ditch round it. However, as the seventeenth century advanced, the growing prosperity and population of the port drew the attention of the authorities of Portugal. Hitherto the inhabitants including the Portuguese of Hooghly had been allowed by the Mughal Governors to manage their local affairs including defense, if the Emperor’s over-lordship was not denied. The king of Spain and Portugal nominated one Captain Convidor to Hooghly as a sort of Mayor with four assistants, yearly elected by the citizens and placed the port under the protection of the governor of Ceylon, as Goa was too distant. In course of time owing to the carelessness of the Bengal rulers, many ‘firingis’ assembled there and built extremely lofty and strong mansions and strengthened them with cannons, muskets and other armaments.

Soon the political disorder in the town, the moral degeneration and piratical proclivities of the Portuguese induced Emperor Shahjahan (1628-1658) to instruct
Qasim Khan Jwini, the Mughal Governor of Bengal to take possession of Hooghly, crush the Portuguese power and make captives of them. Qasim Khan laid siege on Hooghly on 20 June 1632 and captured it on 15th September. From the beginning to the end of the campaign a total 10,000 Portuguese were slain, blown up by gunpowder, drowned in water, or burnt in fires while the imperial army lost nearly 1,000 dead.

4.3.2 Visualizing the Traces of the Portuguese in Bengal

The Portuguese introduced in Bengal new methods of agriculture, opened new industries, established new customs, taught a new religion and countenanced a policy of inter-marriages between themselves and the natives. The results of each of these spheres of activities are manifest today. The later European comers often modified or sometimes amplified the work of the Portuguese but they have not removed the traces of original influence. Dr. Heyligers recognizes this Portuguese influence in the Indian Archipelago as an absolutely singular force in its history and traces it under the headings: population, race, customs and languages. This is equally true of Bengal as of India in general.

It is interesting to assess how the Portuguese were perceived by the people of Bengal. A Portuguese stamp can be discovered on whatever they came in contact with. Their names, their blood, institutions, churches, languages and their archaeological remains are the traces of their deep routed influence in Bengal.

Medieval Bengali Literatures specially the Mangal Kavyas are an important source of the social, religious and the cultural history of Portuguese in Bengal. The central characters of the Mangal Kavyas being mostly sea-going merchants, there are some references to the geography, particularly navigational routs, of lower Bengal and to maritime activities.

The fifteenth-sixteenth century were the best periods for these compositions. Bijay Gupta, Biprodas, Gangadas Sen, Dwija Banshidas, Dwija Madhava, Manik Dutta, Mukundaram Ganguly, Kanka, Sridhar, Sabirid Khan and countless others have written ‘Manasa Mangal’, ‘Chandi Mangal’, ‘Dharma Mangal’ and ‘Kalika Mangal’ Kavyas. The early Bengali ‘Charyapadas’ and ‘Manasa Mangals’ refer to boats oncluding sea-going vessels and mention their component parts. In sixteenth century Manik Dutta, referred to Firingis (Portuguese) who had settled in the town Kalketu Nagar:
Manik Dutta mentioned the rivers and ports near Gaur, the medieval capital of Bengal, when the merchant, Srimanta Sadagar, moved through the river routes. References are available to the ports of Moregram, Bargacha, Agala, Kanchan Nagar, Sannyasi Patan and lakes of “Chhatta Bhetta”. The ‘Ain-i-Akbari’ also notes these lakes.

Manik Dutta wrote:

‘Moregrame kori snan
Randhan bhojan pan
Chhatta Bhetta eraila tathi,
Bargacha Agala
Sakal Ganges par hoila
Budha ratre bania Dhanapati’

(After bathing, cooking, eating at Moregram, the merchant Dhanapati crossed the river Ganges on Wednesday night by touching Bargacha and avoiding the lakes of ‘Chhatta Bhetta’.)

Mukundaram Chakraborty of the late sixteenth century also described the route of the present Hooghly River when his ‘bania’ hero sailed towards the sea. In this verse, we identify Calcutta (Kalikata) as a village on the bank of the Hooghly River. This is the oldest reference to Calcutta in Medieval literature.

‘Tawaray chalila taritilek na roy
Chitpore Salikhaeraia jay
Kalikata eraila beniar bala
Betorete uttarila abasan bela’

(The ship moved rapidly crossing Chitpore, Salikha, Kalikata and the benia’s son reached Betor in the evening.)

Mukundaram has referred in growing terms to Satgaon and Gaur as being the premier ports having the best shipbuilding yards in Bengal.

Alaol, a seventeenth century Muslim poet of southeastern Bengal, recounted an actual event- a pirate’s raid and the death of his father. Alaol, escaped with much difficulty to Arakan. In ‘Padmavati’, Alaol narrates the event:

Karya hetu jaite panthe bidhir ghatan
Harmader nauka sange hailo darshan
Bahu yuddha achiла shahid hailo tata
Ranakshate vogayoge ailu ethato
(As ill luck would have it, we met the Harmad’s boat on the way. There were many pirates on the boat; my father died a martyr’s death. I could escape with wounds)

Alaol’s personal tragedy found its place in the popular narratives preserved in the oral traditions in Bengal. Elsewhere in the narratives the ‘harmads’ are described descending on the coastal villages and capturing men women. Among them was a woman Nurannehar, of exceptional beauty:

Harmadyar nukre sei dheuiyer tale tale  
Chil udni uder nuka batas laigya pale  
Behuns haiyachhe kainya kandea kandia  
Nukar deray tare raikhachhe badhia

In some areas of Western Bengal the dreaded Portuguese pirate and the slave-traders entered into the domain of folklore. Here the Portuguese pirate was transformed into an elusive creature in popular imagination, stealing unsuspecting children. This is how the villagers in Howrah and Hooghly districts of West Bengal have a visualization of the ‘Ekanade’, the child-stealing phantom.

Talgachher ar  
Achhe ekanade  
Chheledharar baya hoyachhe  
Pathe jeyonare baba  
Chini debe thaba thaba  
Mukhe balte debena goba  
Eka pathe jeona baba

(Do not venture out alone. ‘Ekanade’ hides behind the ‘Tal’ tree. He entices you with mouthful of sugar. He makes you mum. Do not venture out alone, child.)

Two renowned scholars, Tarapada Santra and Gautam Sengupta are of the opinion that nowhere does the rhyme mention the Portuguese category but to villagers the ‘Ekanade’ is none other than the dreaded pirates and slave traders. They also sited that there are instances of families being declared ‘patita’ or outcaste because of the contact with the ‘Firingis’.

4.4.3 Portuguese Language in Bengal

As Dr. Schuchardt says the history of the Portuguese discoveries and conquests is the history of the propagation of the Portuguese language. It was the ‘lingua franca’ throughout the East among not only the Portuguese and their descendants but among the different indigenous races and what is more among the European nationalities that
followed the first conquerors. It was spoken all along the coast of India, in Malaysia, Pegu, Siam, Tonquin, Cochin-China, Basra, Mecca and in fine whenever the Portuguese domination had extended. Portuguese was the common language of intercourse among the European community and its influences continued throughout the eighteenth century. The church service was conducted in Portuguese, which was not understood by the general mass. The missionaries would therefore engage interpreters and catechists for their work. These catechists who were mostly Bengali played a vital role in converting the local people to the Christian faith by their indigenous simple and interesting methods.

The influence of the Portuguese language on the languages of Bengal is very striking. Long after the Portuguese power was extinguished, their language was freely spoken in Bengal as in other parts of India. The Portuguese language was not confined to Hooghly and Chittagong only, but it was generalized in the settlements all over the Ganges and on the lower parts of the Brahmaputra and of the various rivers that flow into them. Hence, enormous number of Portuguese words has found their way in the Bengali language. Mons. R. Dalgado in his work “The Influence of the Portuguese Vocabulary on the Asiatic Languages” mentions about a hundred and seventy Portuguese words current in the Bengali Language.

4.3.4 Portuguese Descendants in Bengal

Among the various relics, which the Portuguese have left in Bengal the most notable, are their descendants. Professor Akanda says that the Portuguese played three different roles in the course of their expansion towards the East and such as in Bengal, these roles were of sailors, soldiers, saints. Broadly speaking their role as was common to other roles. The Indiatio (s) were those Portuguese born in India or else assimilated by long residence there, Casados were those Portuguese who married and remained in India, whilst the others who came out from Portugal and eventually returned there were termed Reinoses i.e. European born Portuguese. Goan born Portuguese were termed as Mesticos.

When settled in India, Portuguese policy as inaugurated by Afonso de Albuquerque, who at first tolerated the Hindus, “while actively persecuting the adherents of Islam”. This policy was soon modified for the Portuguese who found it
impossible to do without the services of the Muslims especially in the fields of navigation, sailing and shipping.

The materials for a statistical account of the Luso-Indians are scarce. In F.D. Birch’s census of 1837, the numbers of Portuguese in Calcutta was given as 3181. Another report in 1911 by O’Malley stated that those who declared themselves as belonging to Portuguese nationality are speaking the Portuguese language was two hundred and fifty four.

Near Geokhali in Midnapore, there is a community of Luso-Indians, who numbered hundred and twenty-nine in 1911. They call themselves descendants of some gunners whom the Raja-Rani of Mahishadal brought from Chittagong in the latter half of the 18th century to protect his property against Maratha raids. These soldiers settled on some rent-free lands granted by the Raja-Rani and intermarriage with women of the place. Many of them seem however to be pure Indians as the census report has “they bear both Bengali and Portuguese names such as Delruz, Rosario, and Lobo but they are Bengali in everything but name and religion”. Most of them are Roman Catholics but some of them were converted to Protestantism by Rev. J. Bower of the S.P.G. Mission, who visited them in 1838 and described them as ‘nominal Christians with scarcely any sign of Christianity except a few images of the Virgin Mary and saints no public worship of prayer, no scriptures, no sacraments’.

4.3.5 Portuguese archaeological remains in Bengal

The most vivid and apparent remains which bear testimony to the Missionary work of the Portuguese are their numerous churches and convents all over India. Excepting the doubtful remains of some Portuguese forts and factories, the churches are practically the only archaeological remains of the Portuguese in Bengal.

The most conspicuous enduring role of the Portuguese was that of their church, which left its legacies practically in all spheres of life. “No nations came to India with a religious zeal more fervent than that of the Portuguese”. It was a combination of sword and cross. The first words of a sailor of Vasco da Gama in reply to the question of a Tunisian Moor were, “we have come to seek Christians and spices”. The Portuguese were the first to introduce Christianity in Bengal and their missions of different orders were active at all their settlements. Therefore, besides trade and commerce the other main objective of Portuguese entry to Bengal was the propagation of Christian faith.
Ahmad Hasan Dani a great archaeologist of India writes in his book on Dacca that the earliest European who came to Dacca were the Portuguese where a mission was established as early as 1616. The settlers did not belong to the other section of the Portuguese who were powerful in Sandweep and in Arakan and who during Shaista Khan’s vice-royalty settled in Dacca at a place called “Feringi Bazar” about 12 miles from the city (Dacca) on the bank of Ichhamati.

Dacca possessed another relic of the Portuguese, the Portuguese factory a part of which existed in 1905 near the Church of C.L. Rosary. Another Portuguese church, The Holy Rosary Church, the only one that still survives with regular services today stands four miles away from the city of Dacca at Tejgaon and was originally built in 1677.

There are other relics found in present west Bengal at ‘Bishnupure’ in the district of Bankura, which bear the traces of developed European skill in architecture brought over here by Portuguese traders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is a temple there named, ‘Zor-Bangla’, decorated with terracotta plaques having a beautiful motif of two long narrow boats (for quicker movement) a symbol of piracy, used by the Portuguese. The motif is very meaningful as passengers are in position about to attack with guns, and dressed in jacket, trousers and typical Portuguese hat.

In another two temples of the village of Harirampur and Halishahar in 24-parganas, relics of the same nature depicted the same type of scene in terracotta plaque, reminding one of ‘Harmad’ pirates of that age. The terracotta plaque with a motif of three Europeans at drinks is still preserved in the Ashuthosh Museum in Calcutta. It can easily be assumed that those three Europeans represented in the motif are of Portuguese nationality, as their tight clothes, big lace collars, trousers, long curly hair, and typical hat show.

Another preserved relic in the same museum attracts the attention of historians and artists alike. A terracotta plaque with a motif of two similar persons seated on much decorated wooden chairs, engaged in drinking with two women dressed in indigenous dresses. They could be their companions in time of relaxation; again, they could be their wives. As the traveler, Sebastian Manrique’s account says that, many Portuguese married the ‘natural born women’ of Bengal. Therefore, the artist here could have depicted the pattern of usual family life spending leisurely hours. It is very interesting to notice that the scenes during this Portuguese period as used by the artists, like big loaded foreign ships of different nationalities carrying persons dressed in
jacket and trousers, have not missed the eye of the potter, who has treasured it by his skill in the temple walls of Krishnapur at Hughli. Similarly, the Damodar Temple of Amaragarir and Barijhati are decorated with terracotta plaques having a motif with similar and other scenes, portraying the life and living pattern of those Portuguese in Bengal. The scene of the ship depicts human beings as cargo and sharing the same space with animals. It confirms the existence of the slave trade, which was rampant at every important market centre in the then Bengal. There motifs contain some pictures of Portuguese hunting animals especially in some temples like that at Kanta in Dinajour District.

**Table 1: The Portuguese churches in Bengal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Church</th>
<th>Date of Establishment</th>
<th>Name of the Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Bandel Convent</td>
<td>1599 A.D.</td>
<td>Hooghly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Roman Catholic Cathedral</td>
<td>1690 A.D.</td>
<td>Murghihatta, Kolkata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Our Lady of Dolours</td>
<td>1809 A.D.</td>
<td>Boitakhana, Kolkata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of The Sacred Heart of Jesus</td>
<td>1832 A.D.</td>
<td>Dharmatala, Kolkata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church of Jesus, Maria, Jose</td>
<td>1740 A.D.</td>
<td>Chinsura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Santa Madre De Deus</td>
<td>1783 A.D.</td>
<td>Serampore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Patrick’s Church</td>
<td>1822 A.D.</td>
<td>Dum Dum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of St. Nicholas of Tolentino</td>
<td>1664 A.D.</td>
<td>Nagori, Dacca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Our Lady of Rosary</td>
<td>1679 A.D.</td>
<td>Tesgaon, Dacca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Our Lady of Rosary</td>
<td>1777 A.D.</td>
<td>Hasnabad, Dacca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of the Holy</td>
<td>1894 A.D.</td>
<td>Tuital, Dacca</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.6 Other Portuguese influences on Bengal’s culture

Most enduring and noble of all the Portuguese contributions is the development of Bengal’s prose literature. Father Francisco Fernandez and Father Domingo de Souza who did the pioneering job in propagating Christianity in Bengal also acted as the first catechists in the Bengali language. In a letter from Sripur to his supervisor at Goa, dated 17th January 1599, Fernandez states that he composed a small treatise explaining the key points of Christian religion and proving the superstitions of Moors and Hindus as erroneous. He also wrote a short catechism in the form of a Dialogue. Father Domingo de Souza translated both works into Bengali. Father Frey Sebastian Manrique says in his *Itinerario* that he arrived at the convent of Hooghly in 1628 and learnt Bengali and Hindustani to cope with smoothing the problems of carrying on the missionary works. Many others followed his footsteps in evangelical works of conversion. This is how Portuguese missionaries prepared themselves to confront those belonging to other faiths, by not only learning the Bengali vocabulary but also writing down in the form of books, treaties, dialogues in simple language. Father Fernao de Queyros the Jesuit Provincial of Goa gave the following instruction in 1680 to these missionaries like “and your Reverence must do your best that the translations of the prayers and of the doctrine (catechism) be exact and perfect….”. Dom Antoio de Rozario, himself a convert and a very successful preacher, composed a dialogue, the first Bengali work of its kind to give fresh start to the birth and growth of Bengali prose literature.

Coming to another fine folk art in Bengal involving stitching on old clothes, i.e. “Katha”, for use as quilts, one wonders to see the presence of the hunting scenes by the Europeans, chasing different animals like tiger, deer and monkey tapestries beautifully. Katha becomes one of the main seventeenth century articles of export.
goods supplied on order. Like Katha, which the Portuguese encouraged as an item of export trade, they patronized embroidery work in Bengal by introducing certain new features to this art. Their initial exposure to Indian textiles was limited to categories, which played a part in the pattern of exchange associated with the spice trade. We agree with Prof. Akanda that “Textiles categorized as Indo-Portuguese comprised items featuring monochrome and polychrome embroideries and couched embroidery”.

The sixteenth century was most productive for European couched work and this tradition continued until recently. This was a very popular item in the Portuguese market. The great monochrome embroideries commissioned by the Portuguese in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the result of harmonious blending of blending of European and indigenous traditions. Apart from manifestations, such as ‘chikan’ i.e. silk embroidery with couched work in the centre and the ‘nashidi’ i.e. quilt with monochrome embroidery developed in Bengal in the seventeenth century, revealed a display of colors. With these fine arts, which focus many so far obscure facts, yet another can be added through of different type of artistic skill. The ‘Victoria Memorial Hall’ in Kolkata among many articles in different halls, devotes to painting, pictures, printed matters and manuscripts. There are rare cartographic relics belonging to the Portuguese period still preserved there. Maps printed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries showing the relative positions of the respective colonies of the Portuguese, French and English are hung for those interested in that field.

4.4 Portuguese Descendants at Christianpalli, the Christian Village of Mirpur, West Bengal: A Study

In West Bengal the living evidence of the strong Indo-Portugal relationship is still present in the forms of Portuguese descendants in a Christian village called Mirpur near Geonkhali, West Bengal. The Christian community settlement is located exactly on the border between Suklalpur and Bethkunda. This place is known as Christianpalli (literally the Christian village) though, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was known by the same religious groups as Feringui Para (Campos 1919). Today Mirpur is the name used in cartography, in the works of Basu and in O’Malley’s census. Mirpur is also used in a very particular and friendly way by the Christian self-styled “upper class” with Portuguese surnames. They have properties and live in houses made of bricks and with electricity. They are also the most highly educated and the religious and social leaders come from among them.
Though Mirpur does not exist as a topographic reality today, it does in scientific and journalistic literature, and it exists, as a socio-historical entity, in the memory of those who claim Portuguese descent. It has already been studied in relation to demography, anthropometry and human genetics by a team led by Basu from the Statistical Institute of Calcutta. It is also an issue in a newspaper in English and in magazines in Bengali. Calcutta TV has made a documentary about it. In fact, it is said that Mirpur is a vestige of an important Portuguese settlement called Hijili from where the Moguls expelled the Portuguese in 1636 (according to W. Hedges).

4.4.1 Sociological Study of the Portuguese-Indians at Mirpur
At the beginning of the 19th century, the descendants of the Portuguese were registered in the Census Report of O’Malley under two different classifications: Eurasians and Anglo-Indians. Following the typical demographic author’s description of the beginning of century, the first were divided into “pure Indians”, those who received surnames by baptism, and “true descendants of Portuguese” or Luso-Indians, who were a result of more than two centuries of intermarriage. They kept their surnames and spoke the same Portuguese dialects, which the “pure Indians” had learned to speak. This last group used the traditional Indian dhoti and they were known to others as “Kala ferengui” (literally black foreigner). The two groups had in common religion, physiognomic features and the same dialect, already becoming extinct.

Within the category of Anglo-Indians, other “true descendants of Portuguese” were described. They were children marriages between British descendants and Portuguese. They had Anglicized surnames, therefore making an individual social extinction of connections with their origins. We find Correia transformed into Currie, Leal in lea, Silva into Silver, Sousa into Sauseman, Rocha into Rotha, and Teixeira into Tesra. Some of them changed their surnames into a completely different one: Pereira into Johnson and Gomes into Fitzpatrick (Campos 1919).

The Goans, though they were integrated within the category of “the true descendants of Portuguese”, were described as “pure Christianised Indians” with Portuguese surnames and European customs and manners”. O’Malley included them in this category using, as criteria, the fact that they were living in “a European atmosphere for more than four centuries”.
Father Bower visited the village in 1830, and described the inhabitants of Mirpur as “nominal Christians, with scarcely any sign of Christianity except a few images of the Virgin Mary and saints. The other communities did not have a good impression of them, as they were Portuguese and descendants of pirates”. In another description of the Mirpurians, also made by a protestant priest, Peter Thorman, they were considered “untouchables”:

“If they touched the Hindus, the latter had to go through purification rituals. When the English missionaries went to live in the village, some Hindus converted to Christianity and came to live in Mirpur. The Christians of Portuguese and Hindu origin have very good relations, perhaps because both of them are marginalized by other casts. They are also positively differentiated from the neighbours because they do not have better and are more disciplined than “regional linguistic traits”, dress them” (Pari Bartan 1982).

The Portuguese ancestry of Mirpurians made them case studies of demography that revealed they were in decline due to bad nutrition and parasitic infections. These in interaction had affected the fertility and mortality parameters (Basu et al. 1980). The indication of total selection, a measure for the capacity to survive, is the lowest among a group of neighbouring communities. This datum and the drastic population decline between 1891 and 1911 reinforced the forecast of Mirpurian extinction made by Basu.

However, since that drastic population reduction, Mirpur’s population has been increasing. It appears that they have had a notable capacity not only to survive but also to increase the population in spite of migration to the industrial towns like Tamluk, Haldi, and Calcutta. According to the data available, we have to conclude that the recent increase of population is due to the arrival of families with Portuguese surnames, and other converted Hindus from Bangladesh, and also to the constant conversion of Hindus from low-status castes that came to live in Mirpur.

Another study, made by Bharati (1980), concludes that Mirpurians can be genetically differentiated from the Hindus and the Muslims. The conclusions are based on blood analyses of certain enzyme systems present in the erythrocytes without any kind of group control. These kinds of very ambitious generalizations can reactivate old and false notions of ethnicity based on genetic traits.
4.4.2 Identity, identification and identity Strategies of Mirpurians

By identity is meant here an identity that can be broken down into several identities. Mucchielli (1986) looks at identity as a set of criteria to define individuals or groups, and as a set of criteria to define inner feelings. On the other hand, the feeling of identity is a combination of several feelings (unity, cohesion, belonging, value, and coherence) organized by a determination to live. For Lévi-Strauss (1977), identity appears as a combined and unstable function and not as something that never changes. It depends upon the power of nature and historical occurrence and is subordinated to changes and conflicts.

Identity is, thus, conceptualized as a whole. However, “it is only an identity that is manifested in a crisis situation” (Lipiansky in Camilleri et al. 1990) and it is only possible to become an object of study when some of its components emerge from the whole, i.e. the identity itself. Erickson (1966) saw this crisis situation as a conflict that was a result of a double cultural reference. Lipiansky and his team (ibid) tried to find an identity concept that could be a synthesis of all the perspectives of human and social sciences that have been studying the issue of identity.

As external factors of the crisis we point out (a) the scientific studies, articles in newspapers and reviews and TV documentaries about Mirpur; (b) the political position of some parties in India; (c) the administrative extinction of Mirpur; (d) the interaction of the neighbouring community; (e) our presence and their confrontation with an ideal.

We consider as inner factors the migrations and the conflicts between Catholics and Protestants. According to oral tradition among the Mirpurians, the land where Mirpur is settled was a reward from the Maharaja of Mahisadal to a group of Portuguese gunners. They helped the Maharaja to fight against the Barduis. Thus are tooted some characteristics of the original group: protector heroes and brave fighters. These are also the same characteristics of the same characteristics transmitted by the Mirpurians and by their neighbours. During the struggle for the independence of India, the older Mirpurians were freedom fighters. During the Pan-Indian movement in 1942 and in earlier anti-British movements, the Christians fought alongside the Hindus against British rule. The Muslims in the district allied themselves with the British, hoping that such an alliance would ensure the creation of Pakistan (Chakrabarty 1992). The Hindus frequently evoked the anti-British struggle of the
Christians as a very important affinity that united them, as opposed to the Muslims, who has fought against them on the side of the British forces.

The social manifestation rooted in a historical past and in a mythic origin had the opportunity of being updated again. It also reinforced the identity nucleon of protection and martial characteristics, and had a structure and cohesive function, as it gives a feeling of union and belonging when it recreates the primordial time of their origin. At the same time it gives a new status and social prestige among the other communities. In this way they are repairing the negative and anti-social image (identity) of being descendants of the Portuguese. When families from other communities have problems, Mirpurians with Portuguese surnames are required to help to solve them. This present aspect of their social life is also a characteristic that belongs to the “Portuguese ancestry” identity: peace mediators.

Therefore, they use a kind of mechanism of sublimation. From pirates they become protector heroes to restore their out-group image and status. The analogy between the peace mediator role and the physical space they occupy between the two villages is also very interesting. It is a space and a place of intersection.

The association of the Portuguese with piracy, murder, assault and rape is very common in Bengali popular literature, and it is also frequent in the oral stories parents and grand-parents tell to their children. The paradigmatic part of the Mirpurians’ myth of origin can be resumed as follows: They are descendants from a Portuguese group who were awarded a large property as reward of their action. The primordial groups were outlaws. According to Catholic myth, they were pirates brought from Bandle.

We can say that the elements of the social-cultural reality that have more importance are, thus, solved at a symbolic level. We mean that the conflict related to the double origin (protector heroes, a symbol of courage and strength, a positive identity, versus pirates, rapists and murderers, a symbol of destruction and immorality, a negative identity) can be solved on the level of social reality” outlaws became protectors and allies of the Raja of Mahisadal, a symbol of power and prestige. “Negative identity is, in turn, a bad feeling, a feeling of being impotent, a feeling of being thought badly of by others, of activities and actions and the self being misrepresented. The feeling of negative identity provokes suffering, especially when one’s image does not depend upon one’s actions” (Malewska-Peyre 1990).

At the end of the nineteenth century, when a Protestant priest visited the village, the major part of the inhabitants converted to Protestantism. Although they
were Catholic they had not had a priest for more than fifty years. In the 1940s, a Roman-Catholic priest from Holland went to the village and a major part of them reverted to Catholicism. They were in this way socially divided into Protestants (31.8%) and Catholics (58.2%).

Supported by the Dutch Church, the priest built an attractive church in Mirpur with an image of the Virgin Mary. It is in this place that the kindergarten for all the children of Bethkunda, no matter their religion, functions. Besides the division into Protestants and Catholics, are found other social discontinuities, either in their social and affective interactions or in their discourse. Inside the two subs-groups, Protestants and Catholics, we find families who say they are the “true Christians” as opposed to those who are converted Hindus. The families Pereira, D’cruz, Rotha, Rosario, Nunis, Isac, southa, Lobo and Tsera affirm they are “true Christians” and differentiate themselves from the Sardar, Mondal, Haldar, Doldoi, Makal and Mitra families, the “converted Christians”. The division between Protestants and Catholics is a religiously-based differentiation and a division of power that is reflected in the socio-political and cultural life of the Christian Community and in the relations between its leaders.

In interviews with the men, very often represented by the leaders of the Protestant and Catholic groups, two levels were in evidence, manifest and latent, with internal differentiation having as its reference purity/religious truth and true origin/pure, with an ultimate religious reference. The Catholics spoke of themselves as being true Portuguese, because “Portugal is a Catholic country”, and they are the true Catholics because they have been so since the beginning: the primal group in the myth of origin was Portuguese. The Catholic/Portuguese education functions as an identity strategy which the Catholic group presents to differentiate itself as a group and to legitimize its prestige and its power. The social leader of this group, in yet another identity strategy, ordered a funerary monument to be built in the cemetery, to his own design, in honour of his ancestors, symbolizing, in the monument, his own status, his different origin and his power. Among the Catholics there is a current practice of marriage with individuals from the “converted Christian” group and from the Hindu community.

The recourse to the past, the affirmation of ascendancy and Portuguese identity and the struggle to return to legitimacy emerge as strategies for intra-group differentiation which allow the stratification of the Christian community. This allows
a social stratification based on the concepts of “true” and “pure”. “True” is associated with birth, even though indirectly, to origins, to the past, to being of Portuguese ancestry and to being Christian. “Pure” is equally connected to birth in the Protestant group. This group, through an endogamic strategy, claim they are “pure Portuguese descendants”.

The leaders of both sectors (the Catholic sacristan was not the leader of his group) were concerned with what we were going to write about them. They requested us not to write “bad things”. It was in this context, and in social intercourse with various families, that we came to know about the studies on them already completed and published. They had in their possession the study conducted by the team of Basu, comparing contrasting habitation ecosystems, Mirpur in Bengal and Echay in Himalayas.

Though their own interpretation of the scientific language, extremely technical and outside their experience, they concluded that they suffered from a major infestation of intestinal parasites and, for this reason, they were labeled with the classification “backward”, which they completely rejected. They protested, arguing “it is not true, because we take every care hygienically, more than in neighbouring communities”. In the study referred to, the infestation by parasites was correlated with the fact that the groups under comparison had different dietary regimes and inhabited different ecosystems, a fact that those who read the study in the village did not understand. Indignantly, they showed us another article in Bengali, from the magazine Pari Bartan (1982). They complained about it, reading us the part concerning “the Hindus who consider us impure, untouchables”.

These written documents have, decidedly, a great importance when communicating the image which the wider society has of them. It was, however, with the Hindus that they maintained their most friendly social and familial relationships. The television documentary, according to the, showed them, to other groups, to be descended from a valiant group who aided the Raja, and not from pirates. This, consequently, restored their extra-group image.

Everything that social communication revealed concerning the Mirpurians emphasizes who characteristics: their Portuguese origin, and their low social status or backwardness. The first is considered positively, and embraced by the leaders of the two religious groups to be displayed as their dominant symbol and to validate their myth. The second is held a dishonour to which they react, trying to find elements
which place the Hindus in an inferior and unfavourable position: “They are pagans, primitives, who worship many demonic gods and goddesses”.

From the beginning of out in the village, we explained that we had come because of an article in The Statesman newspaper, which had aroused in us a curiosity to get to know them and a wish to live with them for a time. Naturally, the fact that we were Portuguese, and that they knew that the article which we had read spoke of them as descendants of the Portuguese, not only activated in them the mechanisms connected to the strategies of identity which involved their origin, but also confronted them with some of their ideas concerning “being Portuguese”. These ideas, projected in their expectations concerning us, represented us as Catholics and “guardians of the Christian faith”. We were, for a long time, thought of principally as Catholic, like “Church Inspectors” who had come to verify whether they were “practicing the faith adequately”. They wanted to know what we thought of them and whether we considered them to be good Christians, trying to justify or even hide the ritual practices associated with Hinduism. In death rituals they cut their nails, and individuals of both sexes with family connections with the deceased, even though distant, refrain from using cosmetics during the week of morning after the funeral. The Protestant sacristan became very worried when he learned that his own family had not kept these facts from us. The women, as opposed to the leaders, acted normally, making no distinction between what there was in their culture that was Christian and what Hindu.

In confronting us as Portuguese they frequently included themselves in a larger group as a strategy of collective identity: “They say that I am Portuguese; I can be Portuguese Indian; but I don’t accept any culture other than Indian”. The effects caused by the articles of Basu et al., and by the magazine Paribartan, which they gave us to read, manifested themselves in their concern to know if we were going to write that they were Portuguese only in name, and were underdeveloped. Our presence was, without doubt, an opportunity for the leaders of the two religious sub-groups, Protestant and Catholic, to score victories over each other in a battle to win our sympathy.

The change in administrative boundaries was interpreted by the inhabitants of Mirpur as a destructive attitude to which they reacted with paranoid mechanisms, natural view of the fear of annihilation and separation. Declarations by some political leaders that “India is for the Hindus” contributed to reinforcing this feeling further.
The dispossession of their won lands (loss of cohesion, disintegration) and their division, and separation (fear of being cut-off, the threat of auto-extinction) unleashed a latent crisis, creating the need to belong, to be enveloped by a concrete group. They looked back to their past, to their history, returning to the “myth of blood” in order to feel protected, and members of a larger family with the same origin, becoming again a group of Portuguese descendants, in a differential category between the Christian of Bethkunda and those of Suklalpur.

4.4.3 A universalistic Portugal or a Mirpurian Portugal

The writing of this study, in the context of a meeting on “Asiatic Lusophonies” requires certain considerations. Recourse to the past and an exaltation of warrior and protector characteristics in relation to ancestors on the part of Mirpurians with Portuguese ancestry, brings to mind, as analogy, Portugal’s perception of itself in recent years. Through massive publicity about the Time of the Discoveries and the times of splendour, Portugal has set out on a quest for a past which restores its identity, each time more undifferentiated, owing to the process of Europeanization to which it has been exposed. By this strategy, it seeks to bring itself back, even it illusorily, to a position of prestige in Europe and in the world. Let us then reflect on the proliferation of historical studies in relation to the Portuguese and the Discoveries. They are our deeds set against our ignorance of the “Other” with whom we interacted, and of what the “Other” thought of these deeds and of us. The meager knowledge and interest we show in the customs, languages and ideas of other cultures and societies is almost a scandal. India, for the majority of Portuguese, continues to be Goa. Even for the more informed, India continues only to be seen from the perspective of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a pagan people who worship a multitude of gods and live in misery; or “the country of a thousand and one nights”, with fabulous palaces; or, following the Orientalist’s maxim of the nineteenth century, the country of “exoticness and spirituality, with a disdain for material goods”.

With all these deeds of glory, there remains for us the poverty of being convinced that we know everything. We persevere, like the Christians of Mirpur, surviving on past achievements and approaching India as an underdeveloped country with an idolatrous people. No-one pays any attention to the advice given by Vasconcelos Abreu, at the end of last century: “We risk losing India, and with shame”,

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when he tired, in his reports, to draw attention to the importance of Indian culture, to its philosophy, to its religions and to its languages.

We can end with this question: How is it possible to understand this ethnocentricity in a nation that sees itself as people who traveled to the four comers of the world, uniting all of humanity by sea, mixing with all races and leaving behind linguistic and cultural vestiges, but who nevertheless have cast into oblivion the image that others have of them?

Notes and references

1. Struck at Goa in the months of that town’s first occupation by the Portuguese viceroy, Afonso de Albuquerque (January-August 1510), this extremely rare manoel (or cruzado) had been known only from a line drawing published in T. de Noronha & A. de Toro, Numismatica Portugueza a Dicionario de Numismatica Portugueza (Porto: 1872-1884), and subsequently reproduced in modern catalogs on the subject. Although gold half manoels were known, the existence of this larger denomination had been a subject of scholarly speculation. However, a small hoard of gold coins discovered in the vicinity of Goa in October 2005 contained two specimens of this type. Our coin, a previously unknown specimen and not one of those reported from the hoard, represents the fourth known example. Although there is a great similarity in style between this coin and the one illustrated from published report of the hoard, the lack of any die-link among these coins indicates that they were part of a large issue.
2. Paribartan, Calcutta, 24 March, 1982
5. Quoted by R. B. Singh (1979)
6. Although this perspective can reflect the situation of the author himself, it invalidates neither his basis nor his scientific reference. The study of mankind of societies of cultures is not the “Utopian maxim” of analysis, free from any
values or judgments underlying ideologies. Rather these studies are above all studies in which the researchers involved makes transparent the individual characteristics which as in any other social individual, are influenced by the processes of socialization and acculturation.

7. Recorded by Rev. Bower in 1838 and later by O’Malley in the census of 1911.


13. Dom Antonio da Rozario, a local Hindu prince converted by the Portuguese, was successful in making mass conversions (20,000 to 30,000) among low-caste Hindus in the region north of Dhaka.

14. A team of foreigners led by Pedro Tavares sought Emperor Akbar’s permission to establish a Portuguese colony in Bengal. Akbar being a benevolent believer in all religions readily agreed and even conceded to their desire for practicing their own religion and building their own churches and cathedrals.

15. Qasim Khan Jwini Subahdar of Bengal under Shahjahan (1628-32), who on his accession to the throne had removed Fidai Khan. He was a son of Mir Murad who was appointed by Emperor Akbar to train up Prince Khurram (Shahjahan) in archery and later was made Bakhshi of Lahore. Qasim Khan served in Bengal as Khajanchi during the viceroyalty of Islam Khan Chisti. Later on Qasim Khan
married Manijah Begum, Empress Nurjahan’s sister. The most notable event of his viceroyalty in Bengal was the capture of Hughli from the Portuguese.

16. On appointment Shah Shuja by Sher Khan found Dhaka as the capital of the Subah, but later (the date is unknown), he transferred the capital to Rajmahal. During Shuja’s administration, the provinces of Bengal and Orissa were more or less peaceful, no serious disturbance took place in any part, and in fact the Zamindars, and miscreants were overawed by the presence of a prince holding the office of subahdar. Moreover, Shuja was not only invested with the Subahdari of two provinces (Bengal and Orissa), but the conquered kingdom of Kamrupa and the vassal kingdom of Kuch Bihar, which were equal to a third province, were also placed under his control. In fact, Shuja was made the viceroy of Eastern India.

17. The Imambara is an institution more popular with the Shias, a sect of the Muslim community, who assemble here during Muharram, the first month of the Islamic Calendar. Imambaras do not have a set pattern like the mosques. Its style, architecture and unity vary with local cultural influence.

18. Connected History – a modern concept of studying History. This kind of history takes two or more cultures simultaneously to understand the actual situation of a particular time and space.

19. Encountered History- a modern concept in studying History. Mainly deals with the nature, modes and characteristics of two or more cultures of a similar time.

20. The Lusitanian Catholic Orthodox Church identifies its origins in the original undivided Christian Community founded by Jesus for salvation, with its traditions first established by the Twelve Apostles. The Lusitanian Orthodox Church accepts the seven ecumenical councils. The Lusitanian Orthodox Church keeps the original Nicene Creed, accepted universally by the Church, East and West, during the first millennium without the addition of Filioque.

21. Pearl fishing was seasonal but the revenue it yielded was high. So the Portuguese carried out a systematic administration of the coast from the island of Mannar. Their officials extracted the maximum benefits in different forms. By introducing the cartaz system, the monopoly of the Portuguese was established in all the trading routes of the Indian Ocean. During the latter part of
the sixteenth century, well informed persons like the Jesuit visitor, Fr. Valignano, had no hesitation to say that the Christians of the Pearl Fishery Coast, especially those from Manappad to Vembar, were the best among the new Christians of India. The man chiefly responsible for bringing about this happy result was Fr. Henry Henriques who laboured with great dedication on this coast.

22. More than technical language books what earned him the title of *Father of Christian Literature in India* is Fr. Thomas Stephens’s *Krista Purana*, an epic poem on the life of Jesus Christ written in a mix of Marathi and Konkani. Adopting the literary form of the Hindu Puranas it retells the entire story of mankind, from the creation days to the time of Jesus in lyrical verse form. The Christian Puranas - 11,000 stanzas of 4 verses - were very popular in the churches of the area where they were sung on special occasions up to the 1930s. Although no copy of the original edition is extant it is believed to have been written or published in 1616.

23. Thembavni, one of the Tamil classics, a poetical work of Veeramamuniyar (Constanzo Beschi), on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. This Tamil “Divina Comedia” is divided into thirty-six cantos, containing 3,615 stanzas. “It is,” says Baumgartner, “the noblest epic poem in honor of St. Joseph written in any literature, East or West”.

24. The Arte Palmarica explains the technique of growing more and better cacao-trees in a given space and the manner of growing them. The work and the knowledge implied seem to have made a big difference to the Portuguese coastal territories. An anonymous traveller remarked that these regions were marked with denser cocoa-tree cultivation.

25. *The Augustinians in seventeenth century Japan* by Arnulf Hartmann, Augustinian Historical Institute, New York, 1965

26. Aleixo de Menezes (1559-1617) was Archbishop of , Archbishop of Braga, Portugal and Spanish viceroy of Portugal. Aleixo de Menezes, laboring under the shadow of the Reformation and the Council of Trent, was unwilling to give an inch to the customs of the Saint Thomas Christians. Instead, he forged ahead with the latinisation of the St. Thomas Christians started by the Portuguese in the early Sixteenth century.
27. Abbas I (1571-1629), called “the Great,” was a shah of Persia, the fifth king of the Safavid dynasty. He brought Persia once again to the zenith of power and influence politically, economically, and culturally.

28. Francis Xavier devoted much of his life to missions in foreign countries. As King John III of Portugal desired Jesuit missionaries for the Portuguese East Indies, he was ordered there in 1540. He left Lisbon on April 7, 1541, together with two other Jesuits and the new Viceroy Martim de Sousa, on board the Santiago. From August of that year until March 1542, he remained in Mozambique then reached Goa, the capital of the then Portuguese Indian colonies on May 6, 1542.

29. António Vieira Portuguese author and diplomat 1608-1697 Vieira worked among the Indians and black slaves until 1641, when he went with a mission to Portugal to congratulate King John IV on his accession. The king soon fell under the spell of Vieira’s self-assured and magnetic personality and came to regard the tall, lean, dynamic Jesuit as “the greatest man in the world.” The king made him tutor to the infante, court preacher, and a member of the royal council. Vieira’s devotion to the king was such that after John’s death (1656) he formed a fixed idea that the king would return to inaugurate a prophesied golden age of peace and prosperity.

30. Gomes Eanes de Zurara (1410 – 1474), sometimes spelled Eannes or Azurara, was the second of the notable Portuguese chroniclers, after Fermao Lopez. He adopted the career of letters in middle life. He probably entered the royal library as assistant to Lopes during the reign of King Duarte (1433-1438), and he had sole charge of it in 1452. His Chronicle of the Siege and Capture of Ceuta, a supplement to the Chronicle of King John I by Lopes, dates from 1450, and three years later he completed the first draft of the Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea, our authority for the early Portuguese voyages of discovery down the African coast and in the ocean, more especially for those are taken under the auspices of Prince Henry the Navigator. It contains some account of the life work of that prince, and has a biographical as a geographical interest.