CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Orient and the Occident are two different worlds of existence and expression. During the middle ages the contact between the two became extinct. With the geographical discoveries, in the pre-modern period the interest of the Occident in the Orient increased. During the middle of the second millennium the closer ties between the two worlds were revived once again. The interaction between the east and the west has been an important theme of historical reflection in recent years.

Portugal, a tiny country of the Iberian Peninsula took lead in this endeavour of establishing contacts with the oriental world that was known for its religious mysticism and luxuries including the much-needed spices. Portugal’s dream project to gain supremacy over the seas of the East by doing away with the monopolistic trade of the East by the Moors was realised with the finding of a direct sea-route to India. Thus a new phase of interaction between the East and the West began. Malabar, which was the spice-growing strip of land, became the first focal point of Portuguese activities in India. The socio-cultural change in Malabar that took place as a result of Portuguese interaction is the theme of the present research. It envisages the study of the concepts like society, culture, socio-cultural changes, acculturation, subcultures and culture patterns.

I. 1. Theoretical Frame Work

Nick Mansfield defines society as “a structured unit of individuals with common characteristics and bonds.” It means that society is a web of relationships in which each corresponds to the needs of the other members. So the society of a given period is the web of interrelationship that exists among various individuals and social groups of a specific geographical area and chronology.

1 Nick Mansfield, Introductory Sociology: Canadian Perspectives, Toronto. 1982, p. 82.
The term culture has different shades of meaning. For the ordinary man culture is a refined way of life. Accordingly, culture is in the domain of the elite, witty and literate folks. This definition throws the illiterate outside the domain of culture.

Frank R. Vivelo adds 'totalist' and 'mentalist' view to the definition of culture. The 'totalist view' of culture interrelates a social group's self-concept, its belief system and the instruments and mechanisms it uses to achieve its goals and perpetuate itself. This view holds that culture is an interaction between who we are and what we have. The 'mentalist view' of culture maintains that it is a thing of mind shared by the members of the group. It is an ideational or conceptual system. According to this view, as it is a conceptual system, material elements do not come within the purview of culture. Therefore 'mentalist view' is not acceptable. A more comprehensive definition in the 'totalist line' is given by Raymond Williams. He defines culture as the whole way of life of the people. Culture, being a mode of living proper to a society includes elements like language, customs, habits, techniques, beliefs, ideas, attitudes, religions, material culture and values. If culture is the way of life of the people it is not something normative but positive.

Culture cannot exist in a vacuum. It requires some form of structure for existence. It is the social structure that contains culture. Though society and culture are closely related both are distinct. The former is the "patterns of association and relations through which persons influence or motivate one another" whereas the latter comprises "certain products of these regulations in the form of communicable values, norms and standards."

The basic unit of culture is called Cultural Trait. There are so many cultural traits in a culture. A group of related traits is called a Culture pattern. The higher unit
of culture above culture pattern is Subculture. A subculture is a "group within society that contravenes the prescribed norms and values of the larger group, yet lives within the confines of the overall society." 

Social organism, just like a biological organism, undergoes change. Society always seeks a balance. But due to internal and external pressures society may seek new balance. This leads to social changes. "Social change refers to the intelligible process in which we can discover significant alterations in the structure and functioning of determinate social system." So social change could be understood as a variation from accustomed interaction patterns. But social change is not a total change. Continuity and change go hand in hand. No society can change totally ignoring its roots. Together with the variations in the accustomed interaction patterns, changes also happen in the culture, which is the ultimate expression of the way of life of a society.

According to M.N. Srinivas, one of the eminent and contemporary sociologists of India, the two means of social change in India are "sanskritisation" and "westernisation". In "sanskritisation", in order to raise their social position, especially for an upward mobility in the caste hierarchy, members of the lower castes adopt some customs of the Brahmins and give up some of their own which were considered impure by the higher castes. "Westernisation" is "the change brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule." 

The spreading process of the cultural traits and patterns from the society in which it is born is called cultural diffusion. Social changes initiated by external agents like the people of the West, may lead to acculturation and assimilation. Acculturation is "the learning of accepted cultural ways and giving up of old ways by
new members of the culture". In acculturation, one group takes on the characteristics of the other giving up most or all of their cultural ways. It is usually the result of prolonged contacts between two cultures. In many cases it is the result of conquests. Assimilation is "the process by which one group diffuses and comes to share common characteristics with another." This usually happens in the case of the immigrants. The process of assimilation will lead to the disappearance of the minority group.

Acculturation when takes place as a result of western influence in the line of colonialism, it involves different stages. In this process there is a 'host culture' and a 'guest culture.' The stages through which this gradual penetration passes are i) Occasional visits in which the members of the guest culture come either individually or in groups to the host culture without the intention of staying for a long time. Travellers and pilgrims are examples for this. The contacts of the guest culture during such visits are mainly with the creamy lair of the society like rulers, nobles or religious leaders. ii) Prolonged Stay: This stage is dominated by the desire of the members of the guest culture for a prolonged stay. This may be motivated either by religious or commercial purposes. If it is motivated by religious purpose, the 'guest culture' will be accompanied by missionaries and if it is with a commercial motive, with the instruments of commerce. Here the scope of contacts is extended to the common people. iii) Creation of Sphere of Influence: In this stage members of the guest culture will require the support of the ruling classes to serve their religious or commercial purpose. As they are not in a position to obtain political power, they create pockets of influence exploiting the weaknesses of the ruling classes promising them material benefits or political power. Once the rulers become prey to these temptations, making use of the influence they have created on the ruler, the guest culture will work to obtain its ulterior motives. This stage is dominated by cunning alliances and promises of military and economic aids. Once they create a sphere of influence in a particular territory, the number of the members of guest culture increases substantially in that territory. iv) Pockets of Self-Government: In this stage, the guest culture either through alliances or military action or through contracts with

18 Nick Mansfield, op. cit., p. 369.
19 ibid., p. 75.
20 ibid., p. 369.
22 The researcher coins this term to denote the culture that receives foreign culture traits.
23 The researcher coins the term to denote the culture that penetrates into the host culture.
rulers of its sphere of influence, conducts territorial conquests and establish its own system of government subject to the supreme authority of its mother country. Once the 'guest culture' reaches this stage, it will do anything, including the use of force, to satisfy its economic and religious objectives making use of the power it has. The quest for maintaining their own territory, and influences and to exert pressure on the natives, the number of the members of the 'guest culture' will be considerably increased, especially the number of military class and missionaries will be increased with a view to maintaining law and order and evangelisation purposes respectively. v) Supreme Power of a Region or Country: This is the stage of full-fledged colonialism and imperialism in which the legislative, executive and judicial powers of the host culture are exclusively in the hands of the guest culture.

In all these stages there will be reaction from the part of the host culture. The reaction can be both positive and negative. There will be a section opposing the penetration and influence of the alien cultural elements just as there will be another section, which supports the alien culture in spite of occasional differences. The basic reason behind the conflict between cultures is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is “the belief that our own particular cultural ways are superior to others.”

In each of the above stages, we can notice some cultural changes resulting from the interaction, perhaps except in the first. The acculturation affects the society according to the intensity of the interaction and also according to the response of the society under interaction. The socio-cultural changes will be intensive if the interaction is exhaustive and the pace of change will be less if the interaction is minimal. The nature of change also depends upon the strength and response of the society under interaction. If the society under interaction (host culture) is stronger the response of the acculturation will be fission and a fusion in the society whereas, if the host culture is submissive there will be more changes in the society in the line of the guest culture.

In the present study we deal with acculturation that happened in Malabar as a result of westernisation initiated by the interaction between Portuguese and Malabar

societies. In this study, Malabar society is taken as a macro-cultural unit, different religious groups it contains as subcultures and different varnas and jatis in each subculture as culture patterns. In the interaction between the Portuguese and the Malabar societies, the above stages can be found. In the first stage we see the Portuguese travellers and discoverers like João Peres de Covilhão who came to India to get more information about the trade, trade routes and religion of India and Vasco da Gama, the discoverer of India. Both did not have the intention of staying for a longer period. In the second phase we see the arrival of Pedro Alvares Cabral with necessary instruments and personnel for a permanent stay for economic and religious purposes. In the third stage, making use of the enmity, disunity, superiority and inferiority complexes of the native rulers, the Portuguese established pockets of self-government in Cannanore and Cochin. In the fourth phase, through territorial conquests, the Portuguese obtained territories like Goa where they implanted their own system of administration. But they never crossed the fourth stage in India. As the guest culture advances from the first stage to the following, the degree of acculturation intensifies and reaches its zenith with the fifth stage. In Malabar the Portuguese hardly crossed the third stage. For, the Portuguese had only a few settlements and factories in Malabar and they were not always under the full political power of the Portuguese. The native rulers had some control over them.

1.2. Survey of Literature

Though a few studies have been done regarding the Indo-Portuguese relations of this period, many of them focus on the political, economic and religious spheres of Portuguese activity in Malabar.

One of the earlier studies in this regard has been A. Mathias Mundadan’s *The St. Thomas Christians of Malabar under Mar Jacob (1498-1552)*. It deals with the contacts of the St. Thomas Christians with the Portuguese during the episcopate of Mar Jacob. It is a work, which makes use of a lot of Portuguese as well as indigenous sources. But it deals only with the St. Thomas Christians of that period. Another book of the same author entitled *Traditions of St. Thomas Christians* discusses the various traditions of the St. Thomas Christians. The second part of the book gives a detailed survey of the traditions of St. Thomas Christians up to the time of the arrival of the Portuguese. This is also a historico-anthropological study about the St. Thomas Christians. Another important work done in this line is *Os Portugueses no Malabar (1498-1580)*, by José Manuel Correia. It is a useful work on the Portuguese activities in Malabar. But as the scope of the work is limited to a rather short period 1498-1580 many changes could not be brought out in the work. The doctoral thesis of Jonas Thaliath entitled *The Synod of Diamper* is a serious research, which deals with the feasibility, and the validity of Synod of Diamper which the Portuguese authors like Gouveia uphold as the greatest achievement of the Portuguese missionaries in Malabar. The scope of this study is limited only to the historical background and the juridical validity of the Synod. Geneviève Bouchon’s French work *Mamale de Cananor: Un adversaire de l’Inde portugaise (1507-1528)*, is a work which portrays the native resistance to the Portuguese on the part of the Muslims of Malabar especially the Marakkars. *The St. Thomas Christians’ Revolution* written by Jacob Kollaparampil is a well-researched treatise on the ecclesiastical history of Malabar during the Portuguese period. Then the Ph.D. thesis of Joseph Thekkedath entitled *Troubled Days of Francis Garcia S.J., Archbishop of Cranganore (1641-59)* gives the history of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar during the middle of the seventeenth century through the personality of Archbishop Francis Garcia. He has consulted a mass of Portuguese sources for the study of this period. Another work by the same author is *The History of Christianity in India: from the Middle of the*
Sixteenth to the end of the Seventeenth Century (1542-1700), vol. II.\textsuperscript{34} This covers the entire Portuguese period but confines itself to the area of ecclesiastical history. The Doctoral thesis of Pius Malekandathil entitled *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India: 1500-1663*\textsuperscript{35} deals with the urban development of Portuguese Cochin. This is a well-treated book on the basis of various primary evidences kept in various depositories around the world. But the thesis is mainly concerned with the urban development and trade. The book edited by Prof. K.S. Mathew entitled *The Portuguese and the Socio-Cultural Changes in India, 1500-1800.*\textsuperscript{36} deals with various aspects of socio-cultural changes in India. As it is an edited work on the basis of the proceedings of an international seminar, it contains a lot of vacuum and gives room for further research on the socio-cultural changes in Malabar.

The present treatise is the result of an attempt to shed light on Malabar society of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries against the backdrop of socio-cultural relationships and consequent transformation that occurred in the society due to the interaction with the Portuguese society. Most of the previous works concentrated on commercial or ecclesiastical aspect. This study envisages more emphasis on socio-cultural aspects without laying stress on the trade aspect of the Portuguese period in Malabar.

I.3. Scope, Limitations and Purpose of the Research

The research concentrates itself on Malabar. The Geographical segment Malabar, mentioned in the Portuguese documents, comprises of the region beginning with Mount Eli in the north and extending itself to Cape Comorin parcelled out into various kingdoms like Cannanore, Calicut, Cochin, Thekkenkur, Vadakkenkur, Quilon, and Travancore and stretches out on the Western Coast of India as a distinct strip of land. Though in some of the Portuguese documents the term Malabar is used


in the sense of the whole South-Western Coast of India, in the present study it confines itself to the area that is known at present as Kerala.

The period of the research begins with 1498 which marks the arrival of Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese Admiral and it ends with 1663 in which Cochin, the centre of Portuguese activity in Malabar, was captured by the Dutch who were the rivals of the Portuguese in the Eastern possessions of the Portuguese especially the Estado da India. Such a long period of almost one and a half centuries is taken for this research. To show tangible socio-cultural changes that happened in a society, a study of a longer period is inevitable because as pointed out by Fernand Braudel, the socio-cultural changes take place in a long span of time. Therefore it was considered opportune to take this period. Secondly this period forms one thematic unit of Portuguese influence in Malabar.

The researcher had a lot of limitations. The first limitation was that the primary sources in connection with this thesis were mainly in foreign languages like Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French, German, and Latin. The scholar could overcome this limitation to a great extent by intensive study of these languages from various foreign universities and institutes. Secondly most of the primary sources related to this topic were kept in various Archives and libraries in various parts of the world. The researcher had to collect a host of primary sources from different parts of the world within a short duration of time available. Thirdly as the research pertains to the socio-cultural aspects and a vast Geographical area as well as extensive period, the study could not be very deep. In spite of all these shortcomings, the researcher has tried his level best to show justice to the topic under consideration.

The purpose of the study was to shed more light on the society and culture of Malabar during the pre-Portuguese period and also to show the changes that happened in the society and culture of Malabar over a period of one and a half centuries of Portuguese interaction. The study also intends to show how the interaction affected

37 See B. N. L., Fundo Geral, Reservados, N° 3141. In this document the author Henrique Henriques S.J. deals with the Grammar of the language of Malabar. Though the document says it deals with the language of Malabar, it actually deals with Tamil. This is an example for the confusion that some of the Portuguese authors had regarding the geographical segment called Malabar.

the Malabar society and culture and how far ethnocentrism played a decisive role in
the socio-cultural changes in Malabar.

1.4. Design of Study and Methodology

In addition to the introduction and conclusion, the present study has four
chapters. The introductory chapter deals with parameters of study- the conceptual
framework, scope, survey of literature, limitations, sources and methodology of the
research.

The second chapter entitled the “Portuguese Society and Culture at the Close
of the Fifteenth Century” portrays a short history of the formation of Portugal as well
as the fifteenth century Portuguese society and culture. Iberian Peninsula, the
Geographical area in which Portugal is situated, has a different socio-cultural milieu.
The study of the Portuguese society and culture will help us comprehend the
underlying principles of some of the activities of the Portuguese in Malabar during the
subsequent centuries. The Portuguese society and culture of the fifteenth century were
typically a west European one dividing the society into three estates- the clergy, the
nobles and the commoners. The former two were known as the privileged estates that
engaged in ecclesiastical, military and administrative functions respectively. The
commoners were the unprivileged section in the society. In economic terms, there
were three different sectors of production- Primary Sector in which agriculture,
fishing and animal husbandry dominated; secondary sector where certain industries
and crafts dominated and the Exchange sector where internal as well as external trade
flourished. The Portuguese society of this period was dominated by anti-Islamic, anti-
Jewish and fervent catholic mentalities. There developed certain institutions of charity
and an enlightened society, which had its roots in education. The efforts to open a
new maritime trade route to India, the chief source of spices especially pepper, was a
national dream of the Portuguese. To fulfill this dream various kings and princes had
started geographical explorations as a national enterprise. So economic aspirations
and missionary zeal were combined together in this dream project.
The third chapter entitled the "Malabar Society at the Arrival of the Portuguese" describes the Malabar society as seen by the Portuguese at the initial phase of their contact with Malabar society. The fifteenth century Malabar society is reconstructed on the basis of various primary sources. Malabar society and culture had its roots in religion and caste system. The society was divided into various religious communities. The main religious communities were the Hindus, Christians, Muslims and the Jews. Each religious section is taken as a subculture. Among the Hindus themselves there were different varnas and jatis such as the Brahmins, Nairs, Tiyyas, Mukkuvas, Vettuvas, Pulayas, Parayas, Chetties of Coromandel Coasts, Gujarati merchants and so on. The membership in a varna or jati was determined by birth and each member had to follow the occupation of his varna or jati. There was a strict hierarchy of varnas or jatis. An upward mobility in the hierarchy was not possible. Among the Christians, there were the St. Thomas Christians who were indigenous Christians and also the Quilon Christians who had already been latinised. Among the Muslims there were indigenous Muslims who were converts from the Muslims as well as the children born to the Malabar women from the foreign Muslim merchants, and the Arab, Persian and other Muslim merchants who were here in Malabar for the sake of trade. The former was known as the Mapillas and the latter foreign Muslims. There was also a Jewish community that comprised the White Jews and the Black Jews. In the present study each of the above is taken as a culture pattern and its socio-cultural life is studied with the help of primary as well as secondary sources. As all cultural traits cannot be brought under the religious subcultures, another part, which deals with various other traits of socio-cultural life in Malabar is also given.

The fourth chapter is "Interaction between the Portuguese and Malabar Societies 1500-1567." It was in 1567 that the First Goan Provincial Council was convened. It was the first council, which has been convened in India since the days of St. Thomas, the Apostle, the founder of Christianity in India. After 1567 there had been a series of Councils and Synods in India, which brought about a lot of socio-cultural changes in Malabar. From the first Goan Provincial Council onwards we find a deliberate attempt on the part of the Portuguese to latinise the St. Thomas Christians, one of the major

Brahmins form part of the traditional varna system of India whereas all the other sections of the Hindu society in Malabar formed part of the jati system.
religious communities in Malabar. These attempts really affected the social framework of Malabar. Till 1567, the interaction between the Portuguese and the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar did not exceed other than some economic, socio-cultural and religious exchanges. The St. Thomas Christians considered the Portuguese as their co-religionists. Though there were stray attempts to bring the St. Thomas Christians under the control of the Roman Church, the relationship was rather peaceful. In this chapter the relationships between various religious communities like the Hindus, the Christians, the Muslims, the Jews, the New Converts and the Portuguese community, are dealt with. The most interesting thing is the emergence of two other sections in the society such as the new converts to Christianity and another community of Portuguese descent. As all areas of socio-cultural interaction cannot be brought under the banner of religious subcultures, the other traits of cultural contacts are discussed under the heading various other realms of interaction.

The fifth chapter depicts the interaction between the Portuguese and Malabar Societies 1567-1663. Here also the interaction between various communities such as the Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Jews and the New Converts, is discussed. The intensity of interaction between different religious communities varied depending upon the response and the degree of contact of various religious communities of Malabar with the Portuguese. During this period the interaction between the Christians and the Portuguese was deeper than what was common with other non-Christian communities. The nature of the relationship between the Portuguese and the non-Christians was not affected greatly; instead it remained almost unchanged. But the contact between the Portuguese and the New Converts to Christianity was very cordial, as they subjugated themselves to the Portuguese whereas the relationship between St. Thomas Christians and the Portuguese was rather complicated. The Portuguese through a series of Councils and Synods tried to bring the St. Thomas Christians under the jurisdiction of Pope, the Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church. These council and synodal decrees were sharp means of socio-cultural changes in Malabar, which alienated the Christians from the main stream of the society and also created a change in the societal relationships. All these attempts on the part of the Portuguese ultimately resulted in a fusion and fission in the society dividing the St. Thomas Christians into two fractions one which surrendered itself to the Portuguese and the other protested against the Portuguese. All those aspects that could not be
dealt with under the subculture level are clubbed together under the heading various other areas of interaction which discusses different cultural traits. The study ends with the occupation of Cochin, the most important stronghold of the Portuguese in Malabar, by the Dutch in 1663.

The concluding remarks are incorporated in the last chapter. In addition to these chapters, a select bibliography consisting of various primary as well as secondary sources consulted for present research, as well as a documentary appendix and a list of illustrations are also given.

The methodology applied in this thesis is mainly descriptive and analytical. Primary sources collected from various depositories around the globe have been used profusely for this study due to the dearth of indigenous sources.

I. 5. Sources

Various Primary and Secondary sources essential for this research were collected from various archives and libraries in India and abroad. The most important Archives and libraries the researcher has consulted for the present work are given with the important collection of sources.

I.5.1. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

The codex of manuscripts called *Manuscrits Portugais* is consulted at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Besides some rare books are also made use of.

I. 5. 2. Archivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisboa, Portugal

Archivo Nacional da Torre de Tombo of Portugal is a great depository of primary sources for the present research. The collection of manuscripts named *Corpo Cronologico, Coleção de S. Vicente, Cartório dos Jesuítas, Cartas dos Vice-reis da Índia, chancelaria de D. Manuel, and Documentos Remetidos da Índia*, is used for the
present work. In addition to that some rare books belonging to *Serie Vermelha* are also consulted.

**1.5.3. Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Portugal**

The collections entitled *Reservados, Colección Pombalina, Fundo Geral* and many rare books included in the collection *Reservados* are used for the present research.

**1.5.4. Archivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa, Portugal**

The main collection useful for the study of Indian History in Archivo Histórico Ultramarino is *Caixa da Índia*. Many documents which were classified and kept according to the periods, are made use especially for the study of the seventeenth century History of Indo Portuguese relations.

**1.5.5. Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisboa, Portugal**

The codices like *Códice 49-IV-49, Códice 49-IV-50* and *Códice. 51-VII-32* are used for the history of the seventeenth century Malabar in this thesis.


From British Library, the researcher has made use of the collection called *Additional. Additional MS. 9, 853*, which deals with Portuguese British relations and *Additional MS. 26,578* which is related to the history of the *Mapillas* in Malabar have been consulted for the present work.

**1.5.7. The Historical Archives of Goa, Panjim**

The Codice Nos. Like *3025, 3027, 7693, 9529* and *Monções do Reino* are utilised for the study of Indo-Portuguese relations.
1.5.8. Various Archives and Libraries Consulted

Apart from the above libraries and Archives, the primary and secondary data was collected from Bibliothèque de Université de Nantes, France; Bibliothèque C.R.H.M.A, Nantes, France; Archive Departmentales de Nantes; Bibliothèque de Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, Paris; Bibliothèque Asiatique des Missions Etrangeres, Paris; Maison de l’Asie Bibliothèque, Paris; Biblioteca da Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal; Biblioteca do Seminario dos Olivais, Lisboa, Portugal; Houston University Library, U.S.A; Pondicherry University Library, Pondicherry; I.C.H.R. Library, New Delhi; St. Thomas College Library, Palai; St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary Library, Kottayam; and the personal collections of Prof. K. S. Mathew in Pondicherry and Prof. Luis Felipe Thomaz in Lisbon.