Literature relating to the historical past of Goa, particularly in Portuguese language, is abundant. However, only a superficial survey of such literature may lead one to the conclusion that spending any more time, energy and stationery on the same subject is almost a criminal wastage in the context of the economic strain of our country. A more judicious scrutiny of the relevant bibliography reveals the contrary to be true: The bulk of this bibliography consists of songs of praise to, or lamentations about the Portuguese colonial masters of Goa. There are publications that can stuff a reader to the point of saturation with details regarding the aims, the establishment, the development and the decline of the Portuguese empire in the East. In all such accounts, whatever be the aspect that takes prominence, the attention is always focused upon the colonial masters, either to praise them or to deprecate and condemn them.

A noticeable feature of this kind of bibliography is a total or quasi-total silent role ascribed to the native populations in the epic adventures of the Portuguese. Very few writers, as the survey of our sources will confirm, have tried to do justice to the people of this land. By and large
one interested in the past of the Goan people is still left to imagine their actions and reactions while going through the available details about the various types of State revenues, or about skilled and menial labour employed by the Government and private agencies, or about the crowds of Goan villagers who accepted Christianity through mass baptisms, or about many others who preferred to remain stubbornly faithful to their ancestral heritage.

In the context of the re-introduction of popular democratic institutions in Goa after nearly four and half centuries of colonial rule, the need of transposing the roles of the actors in the Indo-Portuguese historiography stands perfectly justified. Besides, there are two other considerations which back the present attempt: Firstly, the need of regarding economic factors as the prime movers in the process of historical change is gaining increasing acceptance among the Indian historians and the socio-economic trend is gaining ground in Indian historiography with the blessings of the Indian Council of Historical Research. Secondly, the archival records in Portuguese language available close at home in the Historical Archives of Goa is a mine of information which has been little appreciated by Indian historians for want of adequate linguistic equipment.

The choice of the 17th century as the period of study was determined by two facts: Firstly, that was the earliest period for which the Goa Archives presents the bulk of its documenta-
tion. Secondly, it is only by studying the situation in the 17th century that one can assess fairly the net result of the socio-economic changes initiated in the previous century when the native population of Goa was for the first time brought into contact with a western-styled Christianity and colonial capitalism. It was therefore decided to study the socio-economic past of Goa in the 17th century. This was to be done, however, in the light of the trends set in motion by the arrival of the Portuguese and by the political, commercial and religious policies pursued by them during the course of the previous century.

The choice of the 17th century also helped in restricting the geographical extent of this study. The Portuguese jurisdiction of Goa during the first two and half centuries of their arrival in India did not include more than the three provinces or talukas of Bardez, Tivadi and Salcete (which then included the present day Mormugao taluka as well), all together known as "Old Conquests". The remaining seven talukas which also form part of the Union Territory of Goa today did not come under the Portuguese sway until the latter part of the 18th century, and they were for that reason designated as "New Conquests".

The methodological approach of the present study is indicated by its sub-title as "socio-economic history", which goes to show that the concentration is on the social and economic aspects of the historical past of Goa. A survey of
the political history has been included for providing the indispensable context in which the socio-economic changes were taking place. This approach presupposes our conviction that any significant socio-economic changes at the headquarters of the Portuguese eastern empire had to be intimately connected with and needs to be assessed in a wider context of their overall imperial fortunes. This survey contained in Chapter Two of the Introductory Part also throws light upon the repercussions which the changes in the political sphere had upon the trade fortunes of the Portuguese. The study of the trade decline includes the consideration of coastal and hinterland trade upon which the Goan population depended not just for luxury goods but even for their essential food commodities for a major part of the year. This feature makes this survey a more integrated element in the structure of the present monograph.

Part Two deals with the Rural Economy and Corporate Life and Part Three covers the salient features of the Urban Economy and Municipal Organization. These two parts, consisting of three chapters each, form the main body of this study. The presentation of data is conspicuously descriptive. It had to be that way, because the research in the field has still to outgrow the stage of establishing and clarifying most of the basic facts and concepts. Data of statistical nature continue to be scarce, and consequently the success of our attempt at quantification has been minimal. Much effort was required
to gather whatever figures have been presented here. However, the predominantly descriptive approach has not proved to be a total bar to critical analysis. The search for data was guided all throughout by a determination to seek answers to a number of problems: What were the peculiarities of the Goan village communities? What was the prevailing pattern of the agrarian and social relations? How did the growth of money economy influence the agrarian economy and the village crafts and industries? What was the impact of Christianization upon the Goan society and its economy? What was the degree of town development and what was the extent of its interaction with the surrounding villages under its political jurisdiction? What were the class interests in the urban and rural economies? Were there definite ideological principles guiding the colonial policies of the Portuguese administration at Goa?

All the problems that have been posed may not have been met with clearly formulated answers, but it has surely been possible to arrive at some fresh, though tentative, conclusions suggested by the critical reading of the available relevant documentation. Chapterwise, Parts Two and Three proceed with the study in the following manner: Chapter Three is a summing of the written history of the Goan village communities and it serves as an introduction to the two following chapters. This chapter describes the geographical distribution, the historical origin and the customary legislation of the Goan village communities. It has also been tried to point out certain misinterpretations and
omissions in the written history. Chapter Four goes into the details of the working of the agrarian economy: It covers the village functionaries and their functions, the modes of land tenure, the assessment and collection of revenue, the distribution of profit and loss, and some other akin topics. Chapter Five deals with the social aspect of the corporate life of the village communities, and delves into the administration of justice, the practice of religion, the promotion of education, and the organization of social welfare. The economic implications of these issues have been highlighted.

With Chapter Six begins the study of the urban economy: It describes the topographic features of the town and introduces its different population groups and their respective roles in the town life. The role played by the slave-labour has been duly emphasized. The grip of the Hindu minority group upon the Goa-based Portuguese economy, in spite of the anti-Hindu official stance, has been analysed. Chapter Seven narrates the history of the establishment of the municipal government, describes its organization and administrative policies, and analyses the nature of its clashes with the State authorities and some other challenging interests in the context of the prevailing mercantilist behaviour. Chapter Eight marks the end of the monograph with the analysis of some salient features of the urban economic life, such as the labour and market organization, and a rough estimate of the cost of living.

There is a Companion Volume bound separately in order to
enable the reader to refer to the Appendices contained in it more easily and less tediously while perusing the Text Volume. The Companion Volume carries four Appendices: Appendix I consists of translations of nine unpublished Portuguese documents and of two documents in Marathi (in Kandevi script) bearing on the rural economy of Goa in the seventeenth century. Appendix II includes translations of fourteen select unpublished documents in Portuguese and one in Italian relating to the urban economy of Goa during the same period. The documents that have been selected have been drawn from the State Archives of Goa and Lisbon, as well as from a private collection in Goa and from the missionary archives of the Society of Jesus and of the Congregation "de Propaganda Fide" in Rome. Photocopies have been included to prove the genuineness of the documents obtained from private sources. Appendix III consists of a note on currency, weights and measures that were current in Goa during the seventeenth century. Finally, Appendix IV is a glossary of unfamiliar terms, chiefly of vernacular derivation, that occur in the text and in the other appendices. Wherever possible a given meaning is justified with reference to the source from where it is derived.

Perhaps it is a common experience of all young Ph.D. seeking scholars to find that their search for evidence ends up with many more loose ends than those they succeed in tying up. This monograph has been no exception to the rule.